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Dedicated

to the memory of my three men
who knew how to live a dream and
to the patience of the fourth
who waited in the wings.
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Abstract

The autobiographies of three men who are Canadian by birth or by choice--Will James's Lone Cowboy, Grey Owl's Pilgrims of the Wild, and Frederick Philip Grove's In Search of Myself--provide examples of self histories that have achieved popular acceptance and merit critical re-evaluation. Called autobiographies by their authors, and accepted as such by their readers, the stories of their lives as presented by James [Ernest Dufault]: 1892-1942, Grey Owl [Archibald Belaney]: 1880-1938, and Grove [Felix Paul Greve]: 1879-1948 do not conform to the demands or to the traditional conventions associated with autobiography. In part, each story tells of the author's life as he claimed to have lived it (his life-story) and, in part, each story tells of the life as it was lived.

The introduction includes a short history of each man, but it also presents a range of problems and approaches associated with a discussion of veracity in autobiography. Chapter One is an overview of theory and criticism of autobiography. Chapter Two introduces the application of concepts from other disciplines, particularly sociologist Erving Goffman's principles involved in "presentation of self" to autobiography and Joel Fineman's terms "anecdotal role" and "historeme" when considering the historical implications of autobiography. Each of the third, fourth, and fifth chapters deals with one of the three authors, discussing the way that he presents himself and the way that he draws upon his past. The concluding chapter considers the ideas and examples brought forth in the earlier chapters and suggests that the three Canadians are not exceptional in their approaches to telling their life-stories, but that they provide examples of the way that the self and personal history frequently are presented in autobiography.

Beyond the discussion of the three autobiographers and their work, this thesis offers two other aspects for consideration. It shows that criticism based on actual autobiographies, rather than on theories of autobiography, may allow acceptance of a broader range of life writing--acceptance based on what an autobiography is, rather than on what theorists say it should be. It also encourages the promotion of the acceptance of Canadian examples in critical discussion of autobiography.
Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Not Estrangers in a Strange Land

We cast [the prominent] in roles, and it is only right to consider them as players, without trying to discredit them with knowledge of their off-stage life--unless they drag it into the middle of the stage themselves. (Davies 87)

Stories of people's lives are recorded by biographers but the subject of a biography, the person who is participant and witness and who may be expected to be aware of the causes and the effects of events in the life, is often assumed to be its most competent chronicler. When the story of a life is recorded by the person who lived it, the shift in authorial perspective and narration from the third to first person leads to a change of designation, from biography to autobiography. This shift affects readers' reaction to the text, stimulating responses that range from interest piqued by curiosity to interest tempered by suspicion. Curiosity and suspicion are appropriate responses because autobiography stresses, ignores, or changes aspects of personal history. Events presented which initially are accepted as fact can be found occasionally to be otherwise, and, when readers discover or sense that there is a change in the relationship of writer to text, the relationship of reader with text changes, and the text is open for re-evaluation.

The autobiographies of three writers who are Canadian by birth or choice--Frederick Philip Grove's *In Search of Myself*, Grey Owl's *Pilgrims of the Wild*, and Will James's *Lone Cowboy: My Life Story*--provide well-documented examples of the acceptance, rejection, and
subsequent re-evaluation of self-histories which have proved in part to be falsified, in part to tell of their authors' lives as they claim them to have been lived and, in part, to tell of the lives as they were lived. Until research revealed the discrepancies between versions of the lives, the men's stories as presented in the autobiographies were accepted by most readers. A review of their autobiographical writing, of their approach to autobiography (and, to some extent, to life), and of reader reaction to the stories that they told of their lives can contribute to the study of autobiography.

The three autobiographers had much in common, allowing ease of comparison and decreasing the number of variables that affect discussion. Each of the three men spent at least fifteen years of his life in two of four countries—Britain, Germany, the United States, and Canada. Each gained a measure of prominence through his work and through his writing. Grove won a Governor-General's award for non-fiction for his autobiography, James was awarded the Newbery Medal for his, and the sales from Grey Owl's autobiography kept Lovat Dickson's publishing company in business during the Great Depression. None of the three men realized that while he was writing under an assumed name about a life that had a different beginning than he claimed, two men who were his peers were doing the same thing. The death of each was prominently noted in the New York Times obituaries, but subsequent recognition of the contributions they made is limited, both in the countries of their

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1 The irony of the fact that the Canadian Encyclopedia (1988) lists the names of Grove and Belney (born out of Canada) but not that of James or Dufault (born in Quebec) is inescapable.
which they did most of their living and writing and in which they died. They are not discussed in general critical literature pertaining to autobiography, but their work challenges the traditions of autobiographical writing and resists the stereotypes of autobiography while avoiding the rules proffered by critics and theoreticians.

These are not, however, the only autobiographers in the history of writing to misrepresent themselves. Others have presented, and still more others will present, themselves in autobiographies that are misshapen by memory or are written to reshape memories. Traditional critical discussion of autobiography has included several prominent writers (usually Jean-Jacques Rousseau, André Gide, and Mary McCarthy) whose autobiographies have been accepted, but whose stories or intentions have been questioned. That which is important in this discussion of the Canadians' autobiographies is their presentation to readers of extreme examples of the extent to which authors can stretch the truth upon which life-stories--stories of life which both modify and are modified by the life led--are based. Rationalization of the borders and limits of the genre to include these autobiographies provides precedent for insightful examination of other autobiographies. Many autobiographies, including some currently accepted, have the potential of being proven to be misrepresentations and, theoretically, of facing critical limbo because of their testing of genre boundaries. Discussion should clarify or remove some of the problematic aspects of boundaries.

In order to appreciate the relationship of the written autobiography to the criticism of autobiography, confirmation of the positions taken historically by critics is necessary. Concern about
obligations in the relationship between autobiographer and reader has been particularly apparent since the mid-twentieth century when literary critics turned their attention to autobiography, focusing on reader expectations of both the text and of the author. The result has been an abundance of critical writings that explain—or explain away—the apparent links between author and life, life and life-story, life-story and readers. What has recently become evident, however, is the unique position that autobiography as a genre holds. Although by formalist standards an author’s background should have no bearing on the material being read or on the readers’ response to a text, autobiography, centred as it is on the life of the author, demands reference to the background. Moreover, if what is found in an autobiography is not historically verifiable, there are ramifications that influence the reception of the work. In some cases, readers’ expectations are frustrated. In others, moral and ethical considerations are involved. All of these lead to debate about the limits and the scope of the autobiographical genre.

Part of the debate hinges on the question of the reliability of any history, a concept that becomes increasingly relevant as events of history are seen in new lights and as versions of historical fact are subjected to greater questioning than they once were. Other aspects of the debate centre on the degree of creativity that is inherent in any attempt at recollection and the extent to which an autobiographer can present and pattern events in the past to create a functional but distorted version of it. Moreover, some critics have set forth or have implied requirements and rules for autobiography that are not applicable
in other literary genres, and the legitimacy of these limitations on the
author is also debatable.

Entering into the discussion can be a consideration of the moral
and ethical concerns about the writers' interpretations of their own
lives. These interpretations may include elements that breach the
boundaries that have been assumed by critics. Critical reaction varies,
but often the transgressing autobiography has been treated as an
exception, or has been excused, or a means of rationalizing the
transgression has been found. Where the line drawn by the critics is
crossed, the autobiography challenges traditional standards. As Paul
de Man observes, "autobiography lends itself poorly to generic
definition; each specific instance seems to be an exception to the norm;
the works themselves always seem to shade off into neighboring or even
incompatible genres . . ." (920). The resulting ex post facto
compromises are usually unsatisfactory, and have left the genre in a
literary limbo of shifting standards.

New approaches to the study of autobiography are necessary, but
they must also take into consideration discrepancies between life as it
actually has been lived, life as it apparently has been lived, and life
as it is described by the person who lived it. These approaches also
must recognize that there can be a range of interpretations and
presentations of the life by the autobiographer. In some cases the
autobiographer's sins are those either of omission or of
over-elaboration. Some transgressions may be minor and for superficial
or cosmetic effect, allowing the autobiographer to be seen as he or she
wishes to be seen and to be judged by history without requiring a major
rethinking of a period of history; a side road is created but it runs parallel to the major thoroughfare. At the other end of the scale, some autobiographers demonstrate how lives can be reshaped thoroughly for public presentation. Only the well-informed reader can discover that particular events from the past have been moulded and put in writing to support the form that the life that has been set forth requires. Such autobiographies are models of the extremes to which texts that claim the title "autobiography" can extend. Major or minor, discrepancies raise questions about the genre, questions that challenge autobiography from ethical, historical, and literary perspectives.

Each autobiography is unique, however, and the evaluation of each in the context of the life writing genre requires turning to each autobiography itself; from the cases, principles can be derived. A pragmatic approach is necessary because the validity of the concepts of any autobiographical theory can only be tested through its practical application. Through references to the lives and works of James, Grey Owl, and Grove, some of the problems can be explored that arise when considering autobiographical representation and misrepresentation. The three Canadian writers published purported autobiographies based on events in their lives but each includes a fanciful arrangement of events of the past that integrates fact and fiction. These are exceptional autobiographies because in each case the author has discarded one life (including the name under which he lived it), moved to a new country, adopted a new name and lifestyle, and written an autobiography that reaches into a past which is fabricated. Each has not only rearranged fragments of events in his life, but also has claimed a fabulous past
and has written about it as if it were real. Each of the stories presents an extreme example of the editing and embroidery of basic facts. These examples may be used to demonstrate principles of the approach to the reading and criticism of autobiography.

Autobiography as a genre is problematic because it is one of several types of life writing. Traditionally it has been considered separate from (yet may include) other forms of personal writing such as diaries, memoirs, and letters. Although, over the past fifty years, varied opinions have been voiced concerning the acceptance of these as autobiography, recent focus has been on non-traditional autobiography, and has been on the requirements to re-categorize and to reconsider life writing that are not expressed in the traditional format accepted to be autobiography. These are usually the stories of minorities or of disadvantaged people that are recorded in letters and diaries, or they are personal histories that are presented as the spoken word. New approaches to life writing can be set in the context of criticism of autobiography, but they also take into consideration changes in contemporary evaluation of literature. Critics may be likely to accept a broader range of autobiography than they have in the past because scholars now recognize that the rejection of all but academically acceptable literature silences entire groups of people by refusing them access to a forum where they may be heard and their work discussed. This current focus encourages a wider base for autobiography, one that permits the re-evaluation of older texts which have not always met earlier critical standards.

One benefit of the current focus on non-conventional autobiography
is that it provides a climate where the unconventional elements hidden in conventional forms are more likely to be given reconsideration. New standards should also allow re-assessment of autobiographies which, as is the case with James, Grey Owl, and Grove, appeared to be traditional when they were published but which time has proven to be unconventional because they were written by people who donned masks of the conventionality they needed to function in their chosen world. In this new climate, the work of James, Grey Owl, and Grove can be examined together, encouraging a new evaluation that takes in all the common threads of the men's lives and writings. Such a review also encourages a discussion of reasons for autobiography requiring a new approach and a discussion of the degree to which James, Grey Owl, and Grove present life-stories that challenge traditional and current genre conventions in both literature and criticism.

Autobiographical writing can be considered to be literature because it is a creative act, more so in fact than most literature: in the process of presenting selected material the author can re-create the self. André Gide, writing of sincerity in expression, notes that "the word must never precede the idea" and that "the word must always be necessitated by the idea" (Elliott 50). For the authors under consideration, it is "the idea" that has led to the assumed life, and it is through autobiography or self-life-writing that legitimacy and validity for the reconstructed life has been sought: the auto and bio precede the graphy. In each of the autobiographies, there is some verifiable basis to the recreated history, but beyond the inevitable distortion normally expected in the process of relating the history,
there is planned distortion. The major obstacle to traditional acceptance of these autobiographies is the alteration of elements of personal history that would usually constitute vital statistics: name, birthplace, parents, and in Grove’s case, date of birth. New perspectives on authenticity and falsification in autobiographical writing, however, can allow readers to see beyond factual representation and around moral and ethical barriers.

Certainly the issue of historical verification arises in autobiography, but historians themselves respect the difficulty in supporting one version of an event. Hayden White considers the concept of historical recall and points out the weaknesses in it, noting the difficulty in determining historical fact. A refreshing perspective of the literary historian is presented in the article, "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction" by Joel Fineman, in which Fineman presents two ideas which may be used to indicate how autobiography, especially fictionalized autobiography, evolves. The first is the concept of anecdote as "historeme," the smallest minimal unit of historical fact. The other is that of the "anecdotal hole," a narrative opening within historical discourse. If one thinks of historemes as the seed of each narration of an event, and of the anecdotal hole as a passage which promotes metamorphosis, it is easy to see how history can be altered in the telling of it. In Orwellian actions reminiscent of Nineteen Eighty-Four, James, Grey Owl, and Grove went one step beyond Fineman and re-shaped their histories, dropping historemes of their original lives into "memory holes" where the past disappeared for a period of time. When the men told of their past, altered versions of
events appear to have been incorporated. As if to legitimize the changes in his history, each man reinforced his claims through autobiography, where he confirmed the life he claimed and led. By fashioning both their lives and the stories of their lives around colourful anecdotes that society was willing to accept as fact, the authors provided a frame and link that allowed acceptance of the images which they created of themselves, both literary and biographical.

Each man is now known to have taken aspects of his past and, through manipulation and presentation of remembered events, opened access to a new life but closed doors on the old one. Once a new life was declared, there was no return. Each lived as if the past he invented was true, and indeed, if the concept of anecdotal metamorphosis is accepted, the autobiographies do have factual as well as fictional bases. The key to fuller understanding and acceptance of autobiography is in the recognition that there can be a correspondence between an event that the autobiographer says happened at one time and place, and a similar event that research indicates occurred in the rejected period of the life to which the author cannot openly refer. Where such stories are adapted to fit into the new life, it is clear that the anecdotal material has been processed in the autobiography to appear in a form that becomes an entity disassociated from the original. Although Fineman's ideas provide clues as to how autobiographies evolve, they do not consider the question of why some people rewrite their lives.

When the lives of Grey Owl, Grove, and James are reviewed, however, there are reasons clearly evident that suggest why each man might want to hide aspects of his past. Sociologist Erving Goffman's
work can be used as a basis for understanding the determining incentives that led the men to take on entirely new roles and names. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman demonstrates that, in daily interaction, people may be seen as actors who take on roles as circumstances require. He notes that even in mundane situations, individuals attempt to control both their lives and other people's perceptions of their lives. Using references to the theatre, Goffman indicates that people present, at the front of the stage that is life, the image that they wish to create, but that most have a backstage area where aspects of the self are hidden. Extending Goffman's theories into autobiography, it is possible to see that, just as this stage-managing of life is possible in daily interaction, the written record of a life also might be styled to foster and promote a chosen image. Thus, by carefully arranging the settings of their lives, people may take on roles. Autobiographical writings confirm and consolidate these roles, giving validity to the lives of those who adopt them.

Before one can investigate and appreciate the implications and the applications of sociological or historical concepts to James, Grey Owl, and Grove, an overview of the backgrounds of these writers and the discrepancies between the ways their lives were lived and the ways that the general and reading public perceived them to be lived is necessary. The name and story of Will James are familiar to relatively few Canadians. He was born Ernest Dufault in St. Nazaire d'Acton, Quebec, and he was raised there and in Montreal. Intrigued by stories he had heard of range life, he headed west when he was fifteen years old. He subsequently claimed that, born in Montana while his mother and father...
were on their way north from Texas, he was orphaned as a toddler and was raised by a friend of his father’s, a French-Canadian trapper named Jacques Beaupré (Bopy) with whom he travelled for several years until Bopy’s death when James was in his early teens. This story conveniently explained why James had a French accent and why he had no apparent family. According to his autobiography, the twice-orphaned James made his way to a ranching area and began to lead the life of a cowboy. At this point in the autobiography, verifiable material predominates, and reality intersects the fantasy. Throughout his life, James developed his natural ability to draw, and he used this talent to depict the people, animals, and activities of the West which he came to know. He began his literary career by illustrating, then by writing stories and books, but he also worked in movies that required horsemen; later his own fiction became the basis of several screenplays, as did the autobiography, Lone Cowboy. Anthony Amaral, while doing research for an article on James, discovered that Ernest Dufault of Quebec, who was mentioned in James’s will, was actually Will James. James had never told his wife about his Quebec childhood, and the secret was not revealed publicly until a quarter of a century after his death. James’s native country lost its association with the writer it produced, but, although James may have been seen to be an American who lived in California, Arizona, and Montana, he spent his youth in Eastern and Western Canada and, as Ernest Dufault, was a Canadian.

Archibald Belaney made a fairly gradual transition to Grey Owl. He emigrated to Canada from England when he was fifteen years old. He lived first under his real name but he later changed it, most notably to
Grey Owl but also to McNeil. He claimed to be the son of an Apache mother and Scottish father, and he created a romantic version of his family and of his adoption by the Ojibwas with whom he lived periodically, but he gained fame because of his interest in the Canadian woods and waterways and in the beavers that lived there. He eventually made the study and conservation of these animals his lifework. He became a self-declared spokesman for nature, touring and lecturing to promote his cause. Many of those closest to him claimed that they had no knowledge of his British upbringing, but within hours of his death stories of his identity and background circulated and were published.

Of the three, F. P. Grove was the most thorough and arguably the most successful in his adoption of a self-created history. A quarter of a century passed between Grove's death and the disclosure by Douglas Spettigue that a German writer and translator, Felix Paul Greve, and Frederick Philip Grove were the same man. Greve had disappeared from Germany, an apparent suicide, three years before Grove arrived in Canada, teaching and writing in Manitoba before moving to Ontario. Despite the unfavourable cultural and economic climate of the Great Depression and the Second World War, he achieved relative success as a writer, critically if not financially. Grove went on two Canadian speaking tours under the auspices of the Canadian Club. He became prominent enough to arouse curiosity about his past and suspicions about irregularities discovered in his biographical data; no record could be found of his life prior to 1912 that could be used to either confirm or disprove his claims. To a large extent, his Canadian identity was divorced from his European past. His family and colleagues in Canada
knew only what he chose to tell them, and he lived and wrote as if his fictionalized past were his actual background. His autobiography, *In Search of Myself*, and an early novel which is considered to be to a large extent autobiographical, *A Search For America*, were based on both truth and fantasy. During his life and in his work he did not reveal himself, but, in both published and unpublished writings, he does present thoughts and philosophy on the presentation of the self.

James, Gray Owl, and Grove provide a Canadian context for a discussion of autobiography.

The authors of these distorted self-histories have been the subjects of a variety of biographical presentations. Because evidence about the hidden pasts varies for each of the three men, the artifacts, autobiographies, and biographies provide a range of steps in the recognition and acceptance of the life-stories. Material in Anthony Amaral's biographical narrative, *Will James: The Gilt Edged Cowboy* and the later version of it, *The Last Cowboy Legend*, has been used as a basis for a William Bell's comprehensive *Will James: The Life and Times of a Lone Cowboy*. Canadian director Jacques Godbout's film, *Alias Will James*, tells of James's pasts in both Quebec and the United States, and includes footage of the areas where he lived, as well as excerpts from films made from his stories. Provincial and national archives and James's nephew, Robert Dufault, provide new insights into James's past. Grey Owl's story has been presented in basically undocumented narrative form by Lovat Dickson (*Half-Breed, Wilderness Man*), Anahareo (*Devil In Deerskins: My Life With Grey Owl*), and Thomas Raddall (*"Grey Owl"*). He also is the subject of the film, *Grey Owl*, which includes footage taken
while Grey Owl was alive and which features interviews with those who knew him. The most scholarly and most annotated biography of Grey Owl is by Donald Smith (From the Land of Shadows: The Making of Grey Owl). Well-documented and verified research on Grove is presented by D. O. Spettigue in FPG: The European Years, affecting earlier biographies (all entitled Frederick Philip Grove) by Desmond Pacey, Margaret Stobie, Ronald Sutherland, and Spettigue himself. All but the early American years have been accounted for; some of this period is covered by Lynn DeVore ("The Backgrounds of Nightwood: Robin, Felix and Nora") and Paul Hjartarson ("Of Grove, Greve and Other Strangers: the Autobiography of the Baroness Else von Freytag-Loringhoven" and Baroness Elsa, Elsa’s autobiography co-edited with D. O. Spettigue). Their findings indicate that F. P. Greve’s German wife, Else [Elsa], moved to the United States to join Greve was subsequently separated from him, and wrote her own unpublished autobiography which includes references to him. Despite the amount of material that has been compiled on all three men, however, there are transition periods in their lives about which biographers speculate because gaps remain in the histories.

In order to fill in these gaps, biographers become sleuths who examine records and the comments made by peers. It is sometimes possible also to find clues to the unknown as well as confirmation of claims--or of suspicions--about an author’s life in his writing. Even written work that does not claim an autobiographical basis may record attitudes or events that can be related to the author. The more that is known or can be discovered, the more biographers have upon which to base their speculations about the unknown. Where an autobiographer is
discovered to have two pasts upon which to draw, a historically verifiable one and a fantasized one, updated biographical materials may be correlated with the autobiographical writing in order to trace influences on the texts.

James, Grey Owl, and Grove affect autobiographical study because of the extent to which they both hide and reveal their pasts through autobiography. If they had wanted to keep secret the lives they had lived, they could have said little and written nothing about their pasts, but through autobiography they have brought attention to their lives and to themselves. These three encouraged or allowed the public to come to false conclusions about their pasts, and they then committed fabricated elements to the printed page. In many instances, each author can be said to have taken a core of truth and expanded upon it. The expansion may not be true in itself, but researchers provide information that indicates the basis of the story, and they suggest the process through which the anecdote passed to become the expanded version.

Discussion of the Canadian autobiographers is valuable because, through their life-stories, the men present on a grand scale an attitude in personal relationships and social living that Goffman finds generally apparent in everyday living. What they have achieved in their autobiographies reflects that which is attempted on a lesser scale by many in the population. When part of the life is based on imaginative extension of reality, the autobiography—true to that form that the life has taken—contains the fabulous, and reinforces and supports the imaginative extension. One can question what incentive there could be for any autobiographer to confess to an off-stage life in autobiography
if confession has not occurred in the life as lived, especially if the
confession would jeopardize continuation of relationships; autobiography
as the story of a life reflects the way its author lived. If readers
accept the role that the autobiographer has played in life, they will
likely accept the depiction of that role in autobiography. As they
discover the off-stage aspects of life, they view the presentation with
new insight, insight that enriches more than it undermines the life
history and life performance and the depiction of both in autobiography.

The study of autobiography is clarified through discussion of the
component aspects that contribute to the concepts behind the word
autobiography. This requires the reader to explore the presentation of
the auto, the presentation of the self, as it is discussed by Erving
Goffman. The historical/biographical approach to the life of a subject
is achieved by extending and applying the ideas of Joel Fineman and
Hayden White. The third element to be considered in autobiography
emphasizes the graph or writing dimension of autobiography; it is
through this aspect that autobiography can be claimed as a genre of
literature. The written presentations of the self and of the life of
Will James, of Grey Owl, and of Frederick Philip Grove provide
opportunity for appreciation of the visions and versions of each man and
of each man's staged story, the story he presented through
autobiography.
Chapter One
Telling Lives: a History of the Art

The autobiography of Magnus Eisengrim was a great pleasure to write, for I was under no obligation to be historically correct or to weigh evidence. I let myself go and invented just such a book about a magician as I would have wanted to read if I had been a member of his public. (Davies 229)

Autobiography as a means of written self-definition existed long before it was recognized as a literary form or genre. Coined less than three hundred years ago, the term autobiography has served as an umbrella heading for discussion of several diverse types of writing and has been retrospectively applied to earlier works such as the Confessions of Augustine and J. J. Rousseau, the Essays of Michel de Montaigne, and the Life of Benvenuto Cellini. Scholarly criticism of autobiography, however, did not begin in earnest until the mid-twentieth century. A review of the history of that criticism is the most revealing way of clarifying the theory of autobiography (including the wide range and diversity of the definitions, the criteria, and the opinions involved), of appreciating its rapid evolution, and, most importantly, of seeing it

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1 Although Robert Southey is generally credited with coining the term in an 1809 Quarterly Review article, Thomas Cooley points out that William Taylor referred to autobiography in a 1797 edition of British Monthly Review (Cooley 2). Several earlier self-histories were republished and retitled as autobiographies, thus consolidating the term at the same time as placing an altered emphasis and perspective on each book's contents. Marlene Kadar points out that life-writing (with an Anglo-Saxon root), a term popular earlier in the eighteenth century, was replaced by two words, autobiography and biography (Essays on Life Writing 4). Life writing has re-entered the critical vocabulary.
in relationship to the self-proclaimed autobiographies of Will James, Grey Owl, and Frederick Philip Grove.

The first significant historical and critical appraisal of autobiography is that of George Misch who began the History of Autobiography [Geschichte der Autobiographie] in 1907, but James Olney's claim that modern criticism of autobiography begins with the 1956 publication of Georges Gusdorf's "Conditions and Limitations of Autobiography" is generally accepted (Olney, "Autobiography" 8). Yet, even in these primary works, the problems of autobiography and its criticism is evident. Misch begins with writings from ancient civilizations, but Gusdorf believes that autobiography is a fairly recent, occidental phenomenon requiring a social setting and culture that recognizes the concept of the self and of individuality in a larger framework of community and history (29).

Gusdorf makes other observations that both limit and extend the autobiographical genre. He goes beyond placing autobiography in its historical context in society to suggest that the recognition by people of their own historical significance and context--past, present and future--is a prerequisite for autobiography. Gusdorf also makes clear distinctions between autobiography and other non-fiction personal writing: autobiography differs from the more immediate reactions of a private journal or other personal writing such as letters and apologies ("Conditions" 35). Gusdorf's attitude toward autobiography anticipates that found in the critics who follow him: perspective as well as memory has an influence on recollection and recapitulation of events, and thus autobiography is more than a dry chronology of events and a list of
facts. Gusdorf introduces the elements that critics continue to debate concerning the problematics of autobiography, situated as it is on the genre boundary between historical and imaginative personal writing.

Gusdorf suggests that in autobiography, in its purest sense, "the truth of facts is subordinate to the truth of the man, for it is first of all the man who is in question. . . . The literary, artistic function is thus of greater importance than the historic and objective function" (43). Moreover, although artistic merit is important, even that may be secondary to the symbolic significance of autobiography when autobiography is "the parable of a consciousness in quest of its own truth" (44). Along with the historical, symbolic, and literary facets of autobiography, there is in Gusdorf a recognition also of the ambivalence that results when an individual, retracing the history of a life, has a secret agenda of justifying his own actions in that life, "of perfecting this destiny and of bringing it to a successful conclusion" (39). Gusdorf considers the effect and the inherent problems involved in the process of consciously choosing, ordering, and examining past events in the context of a known outcome, but he also acknowledges that the life continues to be lived by the author while he or she writes the story of it. Will James, Grey Owl, and F. P. Grove adapted their stories of their lives to conform to and to confirm what they had become. They demonstrate the degree to which writers will go to achieve their aims and the extent to which conservative and conventional criticism can be subverted. They present examples of how the author-ization of a version of life may have an impact on the living of the life as much as on the autobiography that deals with it. What
Gusdorf says concerning the secret agenda of justification and concerning the complexities of writing about an on-going life implies that issues pertaining to truth are considered—at the very least unconsciously but often quite consciously—by the autobiographer.

As a result of his deliberations, Gusdorf concludes that through autobiography a writer can produce his own "mythic tale" (48). Certainly there are elements of this demonstrated by each of the three Canadians under discussion. Possibly it is in Grove's writing that Gusdorf's ideas can be illustrated most effectively. In writing his autobiography and in his other projects, Grove attempted to produce work of literary merit and of significance. One of the most powerful examples in his autobiography, In Search of Myself, is the encounter he claims to have had with the Kirghiz herdsmen (153). This description comes to have historic, artistic, and symbolic functions because in these lines is found Grove's statement of intent: "Already I felt that one day I, too, was to be a voice; and I, too, was perfectly willing to remain nameless" (In Search of Myself 154). The irony of the situation lies in the assumption that Grove felt a need to hide because he was unwilling to connect himself with the past or with the self whose name might be recognized. He chose to sacrifice the name that would have provided him with literary accreditation. Grove could not include the works of Felix Paul Greve in his bibliography or claim the positive

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2 D. O. Spettigue postulates that Grove never made a Siberian trip and that the anecdote is untrue. He also notes Rudy Wiebe's comment that Grove could have had the same experience in Canada if he heard an Old Mennonite congregation singing (FPC 189). Relating this to Gusdorf, one might say that the effect of the experience (whatever it was) is as important as the truth of the description of it.
aspects in his past without bearing responsibility also for those aspects which he wished to remain hidden; however, he was able to create a situation which he could endow with a metaphorical link between himself and the herdsmen.

A parallel to this figurative linking can be found in the stories of Will James and Grey Owl. James presents in *Lone Cowboy* the near-mythological Bopy, a figure James uses to fill what would be a void in his past and to explain his presence in the West. Bopy gives voice also to some of James's own philosophy of identification of self. *Lone Cowboy* 's appeal is firmly established in the first ten chapters in which James presents his chosen past, including Bopy, and in which he makes and writes about his bond with the cowboy life. Similarly, in *The Men of the Last Frontier*, Grey Owl's explanation of his encounter with Ne-ganik-abo allows him to introduce his spiritual heritage within the Indian context he claims (242-247). The men sought ways through their writing to explain themselves to their readers, grove urbanely, and James and Grey Owl more rustically, but each including an element of the mythical.

Gusdorf writes that any autobiography speaks of a "person in his inner privacy, not as he was, not as he is, but as he believes and wishes himself to be and to have been" (45); to this could be added "and to be seen to be and to have been." What is interesting about the three Canadians is that some truth about the life is affirmed beyond the fraudulent aspects of their claims, and the reader is challenged to determine whether the images of the self-in-the-world have merit even
though (behind them) one discovers that there has been a different self in a different world.

Autobiography, as the story of the self in the world, implies a narrative element. In *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, Roy Pascal goes beyond Gusdorf's work to suggest that autobiography "imposes a pattern on a life, constructs out of [remembered incidents] a coherent story" (9) whose "symbols are not invented by the imagination, but chosen and arranged by the evaluating memory" (186). The interaction of self and society leads to the creation in autobiography of "a consistent series of mental images out of [the personality's] encounters with the world" (188); however, the actual record of interaction should be subject to historical verification. For Pascal, autobiography includes the types of personal writing noted by Gusdorf, but it is also a synthesis, "the record of a man's life-illusion, . . . a review of life from a particular moment in time" (3) which "involves the reconstruction of the movement of a life, or part of a life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived" (9). The juxtaposition of these statements allows an appreciation of the problems faced when discussing truth in autobiography, especially when determining the source of symbols, the limit of "illusion," and the extent to which "actual circumstances" apply.

Even though Pascal calls autobiography "the record" of a "life-illusion" (vii), he bases that illusion on biographically confirmable data, adding that autobiography is the "representation of the self in and through its relations with the outer world" (8). Pascal believes that, although autobiography does present particular
information about the past, accurate reporting on the events of a life or detailed insight alone are not enough to make an autobiography successful. For him the purpose of true autobiography must be a search for one's inner standing. It is an affair of conscience. ... But in autobiography conscience has developed beyond the obligation towards a social, and one may add religious, set of values, and has become obligation to oneself, to one's own truth, and in this respect has become a principle that may be burdensome or hostile to the needs of social life. (182)

When, in the process of writing, autobiography becomes exploration of self-knowledge, Pascal concludes that it shapes and interprets both the individual and the society--for autobiography speaks also of the society in which a person functions--so that events are presented "that are symbolic of the personality as an entity unfolding not solely according to its own laws, but also in response to the world it lives in" (185). Pascal also presents a concept of hostility "to the needs of social life." One might infer that the response to society can take the form of resistance to what society expects, but Pascal does not go so far as to indicate anything close to the extent of reaction that is demonstrated by the three men, each of whom called Canada "home" at some point in his life. The position and the identities that James, Grey Owl, and Grove took, and the stories that the men told of their lives, include a rejection of societal expectations. Beyond the replacement of a rejected past with an imagined one, they do have, however, a basis in the past for their stories, and they include verifiable experiences and events that happened after each man changed his name. Moreover, the three men had an influence, both on those with whom they related socially and on society and the world in which they lived.
Truth and design both are the foci of Pascal's book. Pascal points to Leslie Stephen's comment that "distortions of the truth belong to the values of autobiography and are as revealing as the truth" (62). This observation is especially valid if it is assumed that all authors have reasons--conscious or unconscious--for making choices about the material selected to go into the autobiography. Not only do current and past circumstances affect decisions made about what is to be revealed and what is to be omitted, but hindsight as well as a new perspective are acquired by the time an autobiographer writes about past events, all factors which affect the version related. Although he believes that the writer should seek to tell a truthful story, Pascal accepts that a change in the writer's situation may provide extenuating circumstances that lead to distortion. Nevertheless, he states that the "truth must emerge from the text itself" (189) and that readers will discern what is genuine, will find clues of omissions, and will discover external contradiction, internal discrepancies, or stylistic evidence if there is consistent misrepresentation.

Pascal's inclusion of the question, "[D]oes the author's representation of himself as a personality correspond to what we can get to know of him through other evidence?" (188), implies that he sees autobiography as a genre that challenges the reader to interact with the material presented and to introduce material from other sources, but it again stresses personality as much as history. Despite Pascal's caution, however, there is no guarantee that any absolute truth is bound to emerge. If readers are exposed to versions of a life other than that given by the autobiographer, they may be led to question particular
aspects or to find contradictory information in order to discover which version seems most credible and in order to determine how much is lost or gained in the telling of the life-story. A lapse of time between the writing and the reading of the story of the life is necessary sometimes in order that conflicting versions of material might be found and investigated, especially if an author's own contemporaries accept and reinforce only his version. Indeed, later generations of readers may discover cases where alterations of fact become apparent only because of the passage of years and, through their discoveries, they may gain fresh insight into the autobiographer's life. Despite the encouragement Pascal gives to investigation, he does not acknowledge the degree of misrepresentation that is possible in autobiographies (such as those of James, Grey Owl, and Grove) where readers' suspicions may be aroused, but satisfaction of the resulting curiosity about background details is not easily attained.

As Pascal suggests, personality has an influence because autobiography can be seen as the history of a personality as much as a history of the person. In "The New Biography," Virginia Woolf reacts to the words of Sir Sidney Lee: "The aim of biography . . . is the truthful transmission of personality." Woolf notes that "no single sentence could more neatly split up into two parts the whole problem of biography. . . . On the one hand there is truth; on the other there is personality" (149). This same dichotomy is found in autobiography. There are autobiographies where the data is presented (the facts of the life) without capturing the essence (the personality) of the individual who has lived the life; there also exist autobiographies which capture the essence of a person but where biographical information and
confirmable data have been overlooked or altered in order to strengthen the presentation of the personality.

In an autobiography, then, those who read the work must be aware that a version of history and a version of self are recorded. The author purports to be the narrator and chief character, and, although the point of view presented is thus limited, it is expected to have the benefit of being an interior one that may be assumed to be witness to the life. This concept, in conjunction with the tendency to believe that an author is assumed to be forthright until proven to be deceitful, puts autobiography in a privileged position. Even those readers of autobiography who suspect that bias is present tend to anticipate that it will be balanced by insightful narration. They may be discouraged from being suspicious if confessional aspects of autobiography promote a sense of intimate confidentiality that disarms critical faculties. Even the shaping afforded by narrative plot and sequential development in autobiography can promote a seductive sense of revelation, and, as a result, readers overlook the fact that more information or a different point of view could alter their acceptance of what the autobiographer claims. Few readers are prepared for gross misrepresentation, and (despite Pascal's assertions) few can unfailingly detect it.

It is because the Canadian trio were relatively consistent in their presentation of self in life and in writing that their duplicity was not apparent during their lifetimes. Will James's personality contained elements of that of Ernest Dufault as described by his brother; in some ways he changed little as an adult. Subsequent to leaving Quebec, James's attitude would have been affected also by people
and events encountered during the period of transition from Dufault to James, but the acts and adventures of the man Will James can be seen to be typical of those embarked on by Default as a youth. In Grey Owl's case, the biographical information presented by Anahareo and Lovat Dickson confirms that they believed that Grey Owl was the man he led readers to believe he was. Even though his aunts knew the truth of his life, they also knew that the tendencies that Belaney displayed as a child were carried into Grey Owl's way of living, and that, although data about family matters contradicted the biographical information he gave about himself, the personality of the adult named Grey Owl was much the same as that of the child named Archibald. His life-story presents (in Gusdorf's words) the "truth of the man, images of himself and of the world, who for his own enchantment and that of his readers, realizes himself in the unreal" (43). Similarly, Grove's fairly consistent presentation satisfied most people; he appears to have been seen by his Canadian contemporaries as a serious, aloof, self-conscious yet self-confident man about whose past there was an air of mystery. Spettigue's research corrects the biographical misinformation that Grove submitted, but it introduces us to Greve, the man who researchers now know exhibited, in the years immediately prior to his alleged suicide, many of Grove's characteristics. Even with the three men's name and lifestyle changes, and even when readers discover these changes, a constancy of personality remains that is affirmed by the stories. The reader who knows what has been omitted or what has been reshaped in an autobiography may have a different impression than would a naive reader,
but the informed and reformed impression does not totally devalue the autobiography, for it remains the story—not the history—of a life.

Each of the Canadians wrote about the life he adopted, but the life that each chose to live was based to some extent on illusion also. When the men used facts from their past lives in their stories, these were distorted often to confound confirmation and were refashioned to fit and to support the life that each author was living. There is no room in Pascal's writings for people, like the Canadians, who seek self-fulfilment or begin new social arrangements under new names. Pascal asserts that readers expect truth from autobiography and that the actual record of interaction should be subject to historical verification. Indeed, he claims that authors should "make more or less successful efforts to get at the truth, to stick to it, or at least try to persuade us they are doing so" (82). The autobiographies of James, Grey Owl, and Grove reflect obliquely the men's responses to the society each rejected but more openly reflect their responses to the chosen environment. A change in environment led to a new interaction between the person and society, a society in which he chose to live. The imaginative creation of the story of a past life predates the writing of the autobiography, thus making the autobiography the record of the story of the life, but not the record of the life itself. Pascal would only be able to verify a portion of the life-story because much of it, although derived in part from facts, is not evident in verifiable data.

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3 Anyone wishing to clearly define critics' stands on the question of truth in autobiography recognizes a cautious ambivalence in comments such as "at least try to persuade us they are doing so."
Unlike Pascal who focuses on content, Jean Starobinski, in "The Style of Autobiography," addresses the issues of the relevance in autobiography of content to form, rejecting from the outset any suggestion of a separation of the two (as would arise in a discussion of fiction written in a pseudo-autobiographical form) (Starobinski 74-75). His concerns draw to the reader's attention the influence of style and format on the reader's response to the text. On the one hand, if everything fits together perfectly, readers may suspect that events have been manipulated; reality is less perfect than are planned, invented narratives. On the other hand, perfection of style can set up a "screen between the truth of the narrated past and the present of the narrative situation" (Starobinski 74). Thus, the more self-consciously literary the act of autobiography is perceived to be, the more suspect is that which is written. Conversely, Starobinski believes that a simple, less consciously literary work may be assumed to be sincere. Starobinski does not anticipate that a guise of sincerity might be donned through adopting a comparatively non-literary approach, as is demonstrated especially by Will James but also by Grey Owl.

Of particular value in a discussion of Starobinski's work and the three Canadian autobiographers is his introduction of the concept that

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4 This thesis does not deal with fiction that transparently adopts the guise of autobiography. The distinction is an important one for it is often style, not genre, that is the issue for debate when the autobiographical format and approach is used for fiction. Starobinski, like most critics, limits autobiography to "A biography written by a person himself... [I]t is essential to avoid speaking of an autobiographical 'style' or even an autobiographical 'form,' because there is no such generic style or form" (Starobinski 73).
"radical change" in a life is a stimulus for the autobiographical impulse:

It is the internal transformation of the individual--and the exemplary character of this transformation--that furnishes a subject for a narrative discourse in which "I" is both subject and object. Thus we discover an interesting fact: it is because the past "I" is different from the present "I" that the latter may really be confirmed in all his prerogatives. The narrator describes not only what happened to him at a different time in his life, but above all how he became--out of what he was--what he presently is. (78-79)

According to this idea, the roots of the narrator's present are in his past, but it is the recognition of an abrupt deviation from anticipated direction that provides the impetus for the autobiographical act. Such a concept takes on an interesting twist with the work of James, Grey Owl, and Grove. Although their new lives did have roots in their actual pasts, the narrators do not present what actually happened. Moreover, they decided--to some degree--what they were to become, chose the route by which they could achieve their goals, and then manipulated their versions of their pasts in a way that would allow them to play the parts that they adopted. Consequently, their autobiographies were an amalgam of fact, fancy, and fictionalized fact.

Starobinski's comment on change as an impetus for autobiography is one of the few remarks made by critics that has even glancing application to the situation of the author who tries to escape his past. Not even Starobinski, however, takes into consideration the situation where a shift in life-direction is so extreme that a metamorphosis is concealed and the previous direction and life are simply ignored. Change may have an impact greater than Starobinski realizes when it is also seen to be behind the rationalization and subterfuge of Frederick
Philip Grove, Will James, and Grey Owl, thus providing the incentive for the writing of their autobiographies. The mature men hid the connection between what they were and what they became. Instead, in the autobiography, each offers a past that might have served as the foundation for his situation at the time of writing. Their stories of their lives do to some extent meet Starobinski's standards, but they lack the degree of truthful disclosure that he requires.

Autobiography as a genre presents a set of problems peculiar to its location on the fringe of both writing that is based on history and writing that is creative literature. When considered as "life-illusion" (Pascal) or "mythic tale" (Gusdorf) or the result of "transformation" (Starobinski), autobiography can be appreciated as a creative work; if considered as an arm of history, it is subject to verification as a factual work. Because much autobiography is too related to fact to be considered imaginative literature and too interpretative to be accepted as biographical history, it may not be considered to be a legitimate offspring of either of its possible parents. Even though autobiography may be seen as the history of a personality as much as that of a person, and even though it may be construed to be an explanation given by a person writing in the present more than a history of that person, the word biography within autobiography has connotations that imply and impose limits on autobiographical works. Freedom of expression that applies to most other literary genres is likely to be rejected when critics consider autobiography because, for many readers, the conventions of writing a data-based history apply; poetic licence is repealed. The differentiation between the historicity of "my written
account of my life" and "the written history of my life" presents problems. Writers like James, Grove, and Grey Owl, in their attempts to satisfy their own needs of self-presentation, do not satisfy the needs of those who put restrictions on the genre.

Even those who acknowledge the creative and imaginative aspects of autobiography have difficulties when factual presentation and imaginative presentation intersect. For instance, Francis R. Hart, in "Notes for an Anatomy of Modern Autobiography," claims to offer a "less prescriptive approach to truth, form, and intention in modern autobiography" (221). Yet when Hart compares creativity in autobiography to the creativity one can seek in the writings of poets, he states that "there is--or should be--no such freedom, no such total imaginative access or response, for either writer or reader, in the historiographical transaction that is autobiography" (224). Although Hart notes that Pascal enjoys reading autobiographies because in them he can watch "a wrestling with truth" (225), and Hart himself sees the benefit of observing how the "individual autobiographer wrestles with options of truth and integrity in the recovery of his personal history" (247), that which both Hart and Pascal overlook when they introduce the concept of wrestling with truth is that there may be, in fact, no absolute truth which may be proclaimed victor.

Hart does recognize that more than one kind of "I" can be selected to tell a story; he only requires that the reader should be able to discern the perspective of the narrator: an intentional creation or an invented self that evolved; a single or multiple self, with limited or broad access to the past; or a hidden or misconstrued self, lost or
gained, regained or sought after in vain, cultivated, imposed, preserved, or developed (228-229). Although within this list are categories into which Grove, Grey Owl, and James would fit if these terms were applied in their most obvious and literal sense, Hart considers them only in the context of a personal search for the self. His discussions do not consider those autobiographers who truly do hide their identities and actually "gain," "cultivate," and "impose" new "I"s. He goes on to indicate, however, that instead of "deducing fixed expectations from distinctions of intentional 'kinds'" of autobiography (memoir, apology, confession), critics "should observe and interpret" individual autobiographies and from accumulated examples make "meaningful descriptive generalizations about the historical development of modern autobiography" (247). This process might circumvent the traditional approach of attempting to make autobiographies fit into predetermined categories, and is one aspect of the aim of this discussion.

Where autobiography is based on a misrepresentation--or on a re-representation--of life, it is evident that theorists may contrive rules and principles, but writers do not always recognize, acknowledge, or obey them. Starobinski notes that the conditions of the genre "are of an ethical and 'relational' order and require only the truthful narration of a life . . ." (74); however, for anyone concerned with truth in autobiography, including discussion of its definition and its misrepresentation, conditions set forth by critics can present difficulties when authors do not acknowledge limitations or rules. Although the writing process encourages retrospective examination of the
self, it results in an act of creation because the selection and description of events are the genesis of unique new situations that are similar, but not identical, to the original event.

In *The Voice Within*, Roger J. Porter and H. R. Wolf discuss the selection process. They, like Pascal, consider the patterns that, based on selected pivotal events in life, trace recognized representative actions and trends. These patterns evolve and emerge when individuals consider their places socially, generationally, geographically, and historically, both at the time of writing and during the time about which they write. Porter and Wolf fleetingly address the influences which these socio-environmental factors exert on the roles that individuals play, and, paralleling an idea found in Erving Goffman, they also note that individuals may choose the roles they wish to establish in their relationships (65). They do not consider, however, instances where a life-long role is adopted or those instances where the pattern is not established until the autobiographer reaches maturity, at which point a description of activities prior to the patterned period is omitted from the autobiography and another is substituted, as seen in the cases of the three Canadian writers. Porter and Wolf accept that individuals play roles, but they condemn deliberate manipulation of facts in autobiography. The criticism of such manipulation hinges on underlying assumptions about autobiography: an autobiographer has an obligation to truth which can be realized only when he tells everything "just as it really happened"; the autobiographer knows himself better than does any other person who may write about him, and he is naturally in the best position to record the truth; and finally, readers turn to
autobiographies for the facts—novels are read to share the writer's created world, but autobiographies should reveal actual deeds of a particularly important or interesting person (Porter and Wolf 17). These comments re-establish the discrepancy possible between the readers' expectations and the writer's purpose in writing because these two critics do not acknowledge any literary or psychological predispositions of the writers.

The demands of both the writers' and readers' perspectives might be satisfied if the range of relationships between readers and text are recognized. Readers who have been informed about a fantastic element in an autobiography have different expectations and a different appreciation of the work than do uninformed readers. If the latter accept as truth what has been read but later discover that there is little that can be substantiated, they will react differently than those who read initially with suspicion, scepticism, or knowledgeable insight. Although background information on James, Grey Owl, and Grove is generally available, there remain readers who are uninformed. Among those are some who will eventually learn that which research has come to reveal about each of the lives; thus, even years after any autobiographer's death, there is the possibility of new or of new-to-you revelations, the result of increased societal or individual insight. If readers expect only truth, facts, and chronological sequence, they have potential for going through stages of appreciation, disappointment, and re-evaluation of any autobiography because any autobiography satisfies varying degrees of these demands. The readers' expectations may be validly considered in relationship to the material read, but
autobiography should not be inhibited or limited by those expectations. Even when the author of a work is recognized as being also the subject and the narrator, the creativity associated with literary freedom should be acceptable in the writing of the life-story. On the other hand, if it is recognized that the autobiographer is free to set his or her own standards, then it should also be realized that the individual reader is granted freedom to explore the text with scepticism. With this balance of the privileges of both author and reader established, autobiography increasingly may be seen as a legitimate genre that invites verification or rebuttal but which resists attempts to define or limit it.

By the mid-1970s, critics were seeking to determine differences in genres that can draw on common sources and can speak in similar voices, differences such as those between autobiography and biography, and between autobiography and fiction. In Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre, Elizabeth Bruss attempts to set limits on autobiography, noting that each literary genre serves particular purposes and that in each there are specific links between language and context. She assumes the reader learns to recognize the signals in a text that indicate autobiography is being presented. This signalling is not infallible, however, for other genres can adopt the format of autobiography. Like critics and theorists before her, Bruss grapples with the problem of author's and reader's roles.

Bruss's textual basis for discovery of discrepancy is more precise than is Pascal's. She charts actual words and phrasing that she calls "linguistic markers sensitive to context" that affect how the reader interprets the text (31-32).
and expectations in autobiography and she includes in her book a series of rules for autobiography.\(^6\)

According to Bruss, writers of autobiography must themselves write about their own lives, and the person who the author claims to be must be an actual person. The information that the author gives must have truth-value, whether it can actually be verified or not, and the autobiographer must have believed at the time of writing that what was written was true (10-11). For most practical purposes, the rules set up by Bruss may be fair and appropriate. They appear to allow freedom to the writer to chose both form and focus, and they give the reader the guidelines for responding to the writing. Nevertheless, they impart a legalistic aspect to autobiographical literature that is not applicable to other genres and is not appropriate for all autobiography. The rules appear to be based on some ideal of autobiography, not on the actual

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\(^6\) Bruss's rules for autobiography are precise:

Rule 1. An autobiographer undertakes a dual role. He is the source of the subject matter and the source for the structure to be found in his text.
(a) The author claims individual responsibility for the creation and arrangement of his text. (b) The individual who is exemplified in the organization of the text is purported to share the identity of an individual to whom reference is made via the subject matter of the text.
(c) The existence of this individual, independent of the text itself, is assumed to be susceptible to appropriate public verification procedures.

Rule 2. Information and events reported in connection with the autobiographer are asserted to have been, to be, or to have potential for being the case. (a) Under existing conventions, a claim is made for the truth-value of what the autobiography reports--no matter how difficult that truth-value might be to ascertain, whether the report treats of private experiences or publicly observable occasions. (b) The audience is expected to accept these reports as true, and is free to "check up" on them or attempt to discredit them.

Rule 3. Whether or not what is reported can be discredited, whether or not it can be reformulated in some more generally acceptable way from another point of view, the autobiographer purports to believe in what he asserts. (10-11)
conditions under which an author lives that inspire the writing of an autobiography. Bruss assumes that authors pledge to tell the truth to the best of their ability, but the reader cannot always discover if they have done so; nor can the reader determine if autobiographers have come to believe their own stories, or, where it is present, if self-delusion justifies and excuses deception. Moreover, Bruss and other rule-setters do not acknowledge that among the reasons for writing are those which deal with an intent to deceive. This is not an age when the common person lives and writes as Saint Augustine did, as if God were witness to all events. People can--and do--move and resettle and start new lives. They avoid discussing their pasts, or they adapt incidents from the past that lead to a re-structuring that is acceptable in the newly chosen social setting, or they allow misinformation and assumptions about their past to go uncorrected. People live (and some write about) lives that are based on an arbitrarily selected past and history. Rules cannot ensure that masks worn in life will be removed in autobiography.

Considering the uncompromising and legalistic language in which her rules are expressed, the ultimate conclusions which Bruss draws in her book are surprising for she suggests that the genre is evolving and is self-determining. In a discussion centred on Vladimir Nabokov, she indicates that writers should be "aware of how much fiction is implicit in the idea of a 'self'" (18). A concept that is important from the reader's point of view is Bruss's recognition that, for her, Nabokov set a precedent which introduced the "prospect of autobiographical bad faith" (166). Thus, although Bruss's rules would impose limits on autobiography, she also implies that the reader should be suspicious.
One may infer, then, that sceptical reading of autobiography is recommended despite her rules.

Early in her book, Bruss presents only the conventional variations of form in autobiography and personal writing, but later she offers a wider range of options:

\[
\text{[A]utobiography sanctioned in different ways takes on different colorings, alterations which include the scope and the interests of the intended audience, the shape of the autobiographer's own role and assumed identity [emphasis added], and the style and structure of his composition. (167)}
\]

The apparent contradiction in Bruss's discussion may be indicative of the ambivalence that pervades much criticism and theory of autobiography: from the point of view of the literary academic side of a scholar, the author's free search and free expression should be recognized; the critical academic side of the scholar, both as an individual within society and as a representative of society, has expectations concerning the responsible portrayal of a life according to the mores and codes of society and according to the demands of convention. Moreover, Bruss is more generous in her views of autobiography when she discusses the "restlessness which separates the quick of living literature from moribund predictions and prescriptions" (172). Comments such as this imply that there is room for writers like James, Grey Owl, and Grove to make acceptable contributions to the genre of autobiography. As critics come to the realization that there is a discrepancy between theory and the reality of what actually is included in published autobiographies, they must deal with the fact that autobiographers are not necessarily familiar with the demands and
theories of autobiographical critics and academics; ultimately theory
must engage and embrace practice.

Philip Lejeune is one critic whose theories of autobiography have
evolved to become more pragmatic. In his early work, he shared many of
Bruss's opinions. His initial definition of autobiography in

"The Autobiographical Pact" restricts autobiography to a

retrospective prose narrative written by a real
person concerning his own existence, where the
focus is his individual life, in particular the
the story of his personality. (On Autobiography 4)

Lejeune writes from the point of view of the reader--the person holding
the book--and specifies that the person whose name is listed as the
author of the book must be the same individual whose story is told in
the book, usually, but not necessarily, in the first person, and must be
"real," that is, "a person whose existence is certified by vital statis-
tics and is verifiable" (11). Although Lejeune either overlooks or
ignores instances such as those presented by James, Grey Owl, and Grove,
he does consider plausible contingencies that would affect his
definition. One of these is the pseudonym, "a name that is different
from the one found in vital statistics, which a real person uses in
order to publish all or part of his writings . . ." (12). Different

7 "The Autobiographical Pact" was first published in French in
1975.

8 Like Pascal, Lejeune, at this stage in his contemplation of
autobiography, excludes many forms of personal writing from his
definition (4). Although he realizes that some of the types of writing
he excludes can be found within works that are accepted as
autobiography, their contribution must be peripheral, not focal. He
does not indicate which specific individual works are or are not
autobiography, but stresses that the author, the narrator and the
protagonist must be identical, a combination that excludes fiction from
consideration.
than a false name, it may be used "for reasons of discretion," but he feels that it is "almost never [associated] with work being passed off as the autobiography of an author. Literary pseudonyms are in general neither mysteries nor hoaxes" because the person who writes has a name in life and activities divorced from writing that is different than that on the cover of his books (12). For Lejeune, the name is paramount in ascertaining validity. He rejects also any autobiography whose author remains anonymous because such a work promotes "a state of legitimate mistrust"; there is no identified party with whom the reader can carry out the autobiographical pact: "What defines autobiography for the one who is reading is above all a contract of identity that is sealed by the proper name" (On Autobiography 19). He demands verification within the autobiography that the identities of the protagonist and the narrator—despite the fact that neither are usually named in autobiography—are the same as that of the author. Lejeune does not include in his discussion instances that would parallel the situations of the three Canadians who wrote under the same names by which they were known but who were not known by the names found in birth records.

One of the few critics who mentions autobiographical fraud, Lejeune does not do so with any intention of legitimizing it; indeed, he states that narratives that appear as autobiography but that are based on fraud do not qualify as autobiography (26). He also suggests that cases of such literary fraud are uncommon "because few authors are capable of renouncing their own name" (15). In this he is like James Olney; both overlook what might be called self-creating people who write
the autobiographies of their created selves. Lejeune senses that where actual fraud occurs "the referential character attributed to narrative is . . . easily called into question by a survey of literary history" (26). The examples of the three Canadians undermine Lejeune for they prove that gaining access to history may be difficult, even in cases where the autobiographers are well-established writers. The fact that thousands of readers believed James, Grey Owl, and Grove is evidence that theorists and critics expect readers to be capable of detecting more than they apparently can or do detect.

On the other hand, Lejeune recognizes that where fraud is found, it has some value because it can disclose something about the author:

at the level of its utterance, . . . the falsehood of the autobiographical pact, as behavior, will still reveal for us, at the level of enunciation, a subject that is, despite everything, intentionally autobiographical and one that we will continue to assume beyond the trumped up subject" (26).10

9 Olney makes a direct connection of individual self and the naming of an individual:

And like the peculiar, private consciousness that it signifies, the proper name is something always there and essential to the individual, something that one cannot imagine being without: being named (for example) "James," or being "James," I cannot conceive what it would be to be "John" or "Byron," what it would be to have another consciousness with another name, or to hear, as one might say, the echo of heartbeats other than my own. (Metaphors of Self 327).

What Olney has found impossible to conceive, Ernest Dufault, Archibald Belaney, and Felix Paul Greve did, possibly to avoid the very societal imperatives that Olney describes. They adopted new names underwhich they could live in new places as the selves they felt themselves to be.

10 Eakin points out that the difference between the utterance (enonc) and the enunciation (énonciation) is the difference between "the past as re-created in autobiography and the re-creation of that past in the present unfolding of the autobiographical act" (Lejeune x).
Implied in this comment is the suggestion that an act of falsification itself tells something about the author, the individual whose personal make-up allows him or her to abandon a way of life and all of the people associated with it.

Using some of Lejeune's principles, readers can recognize that there is a legitimacy in the autobiographies of people like James, Grey Owl, and Grove, for, despite the falsification, they are of real people who have actually lived. The authors' names are not temporary pseudonyms and the narrators are not characters in fiction. Although vital statistics may not record the births of the autobiographers according to the names found on the covers of their books, the authors did exist and cannot easily be dismissed or disqualified. Each lived and died with the same name that he used as writer, as narrator, and as protagonist of his autobiography, but the name by which each man is known was adopted at a time when a new lifestyle was adopted. Moreover, readers who know of the subterfuge of James, Grey Owl, and Grove can find within the falsified autobiographies much that is true, and may find traces of the men's attempts to rationalize their past lives. The autobiographies may be said to include a variation of what Lejeune refers to in "The Autobiographical Pact" as phantasms of the

\[\text{The New York Times} \text{ obituaries which recorded the deaths of Grove, James, and Grey Owl can be seen as validation of the existence of each of the men. Headed by a photograph and the headline, "Grey Owl, Worker for Conservation: Indian Naturalist, Ex-trapper Who Sought to Preserve Wildlife Dies in Canada," Grey Owl's obituary is two-thirds of a column in length (14 April 1938: 23). With his photograph, the obituary of Will James is a full column long: "Noted As Author, Painter, Interpreter of Cow Country in Self-Illustrated Stories Dies in Hollywood at 50" (4 September 1942: 23). The paper's untitled obituary of Grove is forty lines long and has no photograph (21 August 1948: 15).}\]
individual" (27). To some extent these phantasms may take on a more concrete form as the autobiography gives validity to the unreal and as the figment of the imagination becomes part of the life.\textsuperscript{12}

James, Grey Owl, and Grove have written autobiographies that cannot be entirely rejected under Lejeune's early criteria, but neither can they be accepted unless those criteria are expanded to include a self who imagines a past which can be incorporated into the personality of the author at the time of writing.\textsuperscript{13} The Canadian authors can be seen to fulfil some aspects of Lejeune's Autobiographical Pact and to break others. They fuel debate about the fictionalized aspects of their life-stories and about the ambiguity of what might be called their "selfhood." Lejeune's autobiographical pact may be contrasted with other of the pacts that he later proposes, but James, Grey Owl, and Grove are not comfortably discussed in relationship to these either. None of the three made any "affirmation of fictitiousness," implying a "fictional pact" (14-15). No admission of misrepresentation was ever made, despite particular points in the autobiographies being challenged during the authors' lifetimes because of discovery of conflicts and gaps in the histories related. Nor can they be considered to have made what Lejeune calls a "referential pact": "a definition of the field of the

\textsuperscript{12} Ruth Hoberman gives Sidney Lee's definition of phantasm: "Character which does not translate itself into exploit . . . is for the biographer a mere phantasm." She goes on to indicate that "For Woolf, on the other hand, that phantasm is precisely what personality is" (9).

\textsuperscript{13} The transition from one life and name into the new life and name may involve legal issues and implications: "Autobiographers convicted of 'insincerity' risk fines for libel, imprisonment for fraud" (Eakin, quoted in Stone, "Modern American Autobiography" 107).
real that is involved and a statement of the modes and the degree of
resemblance to which the text lays claim" (22).

As Lejeune explores the implications of the referential pact,
however, a place for the Canadian autobiographers can be found. In it,
instead of biographical, historical accuracy which involves
"information," Lejeune looks for "fidelity" which he equates with
"meaning" (23). He suggests that even when a referential pact is in
place, it can be broken, for autobiography includes aspects of truth
that differ from those of biography or of history which are debatably
objective. The difference as seen in autobiographical narrative is

in the rather paradoxical fact that this accuracy has no
essential importance. In autobiography, it is indispensable
that the referential pact be drawn up, and that it be kept;
but it is not necessary that the result be on the order of
strict resemblance. The referential pact can be, according
to the criteria of the reader, badly kept, without the
referential value of the text disappearing (on the
contrary)--this is not the case for historical and
journalistic texts. (23)

If the reader can discover what the writer has as his prime material,
the references to it can be informative; even misrepresented it can be
seen as an aspect of the autobiography. Thus, when research and
biographical study--what Anna Burr calls "corrective supplemental study"
(46)--reveal that material has been altered, the reader is aware of
other versions of events but also is shown the manner in which the
author explained events and--or--the degree to which events were
suppressed. Again it should be noted that investigation of the
suppressed material exposes new information not only about the life that
was set aside but also about the reasons why elements were rejected.
Aspects of the emerging person are revealed at all stages of disclosure.
Extratextual information allows the image of the autobiographer to undergo further development. These aspects of Lejeune’s work introduce ideas that can be used to defend the autobiographies of the three Canadians. What must be remembered too is that Lejeune is not concerned about an "unverifiable resemblance to a real person" as much as he is interested in the reader’s response to what has been read for "the history of autobiography would be . . . a history of its mode of reading" (30). This supports the idea that the level of insight that a reader has affects how an autobiography is read and received.

Since the publication of "The Autobiographical Pact," Lejeune has reconsidered the stance he had taken, especially when he finds that where he and others have tried to put his ideas into practice, the theory conflicts with the practical application. In the article "The Autobiographical Pact (Bis)," the evolution of his thinking becomes evident, and he appears to be more open-minded as he tempers many of his earlier ideas. His strict definition of autobiography is loosened for, "isolated from its context, cited as an ‘authority,’ it could appear sectarian and dogmatic, . . . a falsely magical formula that blocks reflection instead of stimulating it" (Lejeune 121). He does not imply, however, that one can begin without considering definition:

Anyone who goes on about "autobiography" (or about any literary genre whatever) is obliged to confront the problem of the definition, if only in practice, by choosing what to talk about. Like periodization, the generic definition seems to pose a kind of insoluble problem, a sort of vicious circle: impossible to study the object before having defined it, impossible to define it before having studied it. . . . It matters little how we get into the vicious circle. It’s all part of the same merry-go-round. (121)

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14 This was published first in French in 1982.
It is important to know at what stage of its cycle people hop on and off the merry-go-round. C. D. E. Tolton in his book *André Gide and the Art of Autobiography* points out where he thinks Lejeune positions himself in "The Autobiographical Pact": "Although Lejeune does not mention the term, his definition also bans 'confession.'" Tolton goes on to discuss Gide's work with this in mind. (9). Lejeune himself, on the other hand, commenting on his recognition of a need for free play as it relates to identity, in "The Autobiographical Pact (Bis)" comments:

I have always reasoned as if the center of the autobiographical domain was the confession. I have evaluated the whole thing by imposing upon it the functioning of one of its parts: confessions must be signed for them to have any value; there can be no compromise with the truth. But such a choice is open to criticism only if the existence of possible degrees is denied; as soon as they are accepted, the point of reference of the confession allows other strategies of writing and reading to be evaluated. (125)

He recognizes that his earlier work misled others as it did Tolton, and it misrepresented his own views, but his comments emphasize that much of the problem of acceptance of autobiography operates on the theoretical level, a level that can be on a different plane than is either the autobiographer or the reader of the autobiography.

Although in "The Autobiographical Pact (Bis)" Lejeune claims to allow no compromise with truth and continues to require a signature, he does accept that, depending on how it is indicated, truth can have a wide range of degrees of acceptance. He concedes that his original pact is idealistic, and that discussions of principles of autobiography based on idealism lead to contradictions. He makes the observation that, strictly speaking, autobiography is an impossible act and that
presenting "the self as complete subject . . . is a fantasy. In spite of the fact that autobiography is impossible, this in no way prevents it from existing" (131-132). Lejeune's views, as modified in "The Autobiographical Pact (Bis)," and the three Canadians' autobiographies can be considered together and can be seen in a symbiotic relationship: his ideas contribute to the acceptance of these autobiographies as legitimate, while the three autobiographies provide examples of the way that art and artifice found in autobiography can distort the biographical-historical aspects of a work even while they reveal much about the individual whose life is its subject. The aspect of latent disclosure that Lejeune stresses in "The Autobiographical Pact (Bis)" indicates that he realizes that insight into the reasons for autobiographers choosing the roles they play contributes to the presentation of the personality. Certainly the reader learns more about James, Grey Owl, and Grove than their subterfuge would indicate that they wished to have known.15

Verifiable information as the basis for autobiography is not always required by critics. James Olney, drawing on Ernst Cassirer's Essay On Man, clarifies what he sees as the demands and objectives of autobiography: "What one seeks in reading autobiography is not a date, a name, or a place, but a characteristic way of perceiving, of organizing, and of understanding, an individual way of feeling and expressing that one can somehow relate to oneself" (Metaphors of Self 37). Readers

15 This is a debatable point. Although the three men took extreme measures to keep their origins hidden, they also left clues, which will be discussed later, that would allow confirmation of those origins if they were discovered.
ostensibly interested in the particular "individual way of feeling" of the subject of an autobiography may find applications to their own situations or may find universal applications. Aware that in their own lives they embellish or dismiss particular events, they can recognize how similar modification can affect autobiography. Autobiography is seen, then, both as model and as mirror. Within the life portrayed one can see both what the autobiographer would like to show (that is, what he or she would like to have been) and what he or she is at the time of writing.

Much of the problem with autobiography continues to centre on the discrepancy between truth to the self and historical truth as seen in data. William Spengemann recognized early the two schools of thought concerning autobiography:

On the one side are those critics who continue to insist that autobiography must employ biographical— which is to say historical rather than fictional— materials. On the other side, there are those who assert the right of autobiographers to present themselves in whatever form they may find appropriate and necessary.

(The Forms of Autobiography xii)

In Fictions In Autobiography: Studies In The Art of Self-Invention, John Paul Eakin (the editor of Lejeune’s On Autobiography) expands on these categories, arguing that "autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation, and, further, that the self that is the center of all autobiographical narrative is necessarily a fictive structure" (3). Although Eakin balances this with the observation that most "readers naturally assume that all autobiographies are based on the verifiable facts of a life history..." (3), he sees the need to
accept the proposition that fictions and the fiction-making process are a central constituent of the truth of any life as it is lived and of any art devoted to the presentation of that life. (5)

Leah D. Hewitt, in Autobiographical Tightropes, stresses the intertwining of concepts dealing with autobiography when she uses the word "between" in her appraisal of the position of autobiographers:

In walking the tightrope "between" fact and fiction, experience and language, the autobiographer hesitates "between" performance, description, and interpretation, while balancing the demands of truthfulness and literary inventiveness. (193)

Autobiographies deal with a combination of art, fiction, truth, life, and self, but often what is read is a projection of these based on the reader's speculation about why the autobiographers deleted elements from --or added incidents--to their lives. Ironically, the effect of the author manipulating the action in the life is an emphasis in a trend which James Olney notes, a shift from the acts and action to the self--the auto of the autobiography. ("Autobiography" 19).

Any story varies with a change of perspective and a different motive for telling it. Although readers may have to investigate the authenticity of some aspects of an autobiographer's presentation and may discover discrepancies, they should be prepared also to seek out the basis for the versions of the life in order to find the story behind the story, the reason for changes. In cases of people like James, Grey Owl, and Grove, it can be conjectured that a desire to fit an image associated traditionally with the roles they chose to play precipitated name and nationality changes that required disassociation from the past. A French Canadian turned cowboy, an English schoolboy turned wilderness guide, and a Continental dilettante turned school teacher do not come
from traditional moulds, and the men saw the need to shape themselves to fit their parts.

Exploring—with the intent of explaining--some of the discrepancies between James's, Grey Owl's, and Grove's histories (histories more fully revealed to readers now but originally hidden) and the lives they describe has benefits. The merit of discovering what is untrue in a life history is found in Leslie Stephen's comment as quoted by Avrom Fleishman: "an autobiography is valuable in proportion to the amount of misrepresentation it contains. . . . [I]t is always curious to see how a man contrives to present a false testimony to himself" (185).¹⁶ Patricia Meyer Spacks, also echoing Stephen, observes that "every lie tells some truth," and, using a Pascalian concept but approaching it from a different angle, goes on to say: "One can maintain that all autobiography is fiction, the imposition of form and the discovery of meaning automatically converting life into its imitation" (Imagining a Self 154). For Spacks the effort to assert a distinct identity seems a way to defend against the world's encroachments on the self, [and suggests] some attempt to invent a valid identity for defensive purposes. . . . We assume the happenings of autobiography are more or less given, although the writer obviously selects among his memories and shapes them to his purposes. . . . [and] one may feel the central character of an autobiography has created a self, then written the book to validate the creation. (Imagining 15)

This latter process is common to most autobiography, but what varies is the degree and extent of both self-creation and society's acceptance of the final work. Although there is no reason to believe that Spacks has

¹⁶ Leslie Stephen, in Fleishman, 8: footnote 7.
ever heard of the three Canadians, in these few lines she comes closer than other critics to defining the situations of the autobiographies of Will James, Grey Owl, and Frederick Philip Grove. It becomes increasingly evident that sophisticated readers, suspecting that distortion of events is inevitable, look beyond the autobiography for information. William Spengemann concludes that autobiography as a genre is "more imaginative--which is to say, literary--than passively reportorial" (The Forms 209). He suggests that in reading an autobiography in isolation, readers discover only what the autobiographer wishes to admit. Hewitt's comments that the women about whom she writes "make us suspect that reality is somehow always already bound up in distortions and fabrications" tends to affirm Spengemann's statement (201). 

Observations like these must be integrated more openly into autobiographical criticism because they allow tacit acceptance of a wide range of autobiography, including the acceptance of the situation of the writer who invents an aspect of life, lives in the present as if the fictitious past were true, and writes about the life as if it were composed of fact. James, Grey Owl, and Grove each claimed and wrote about a life that he had created for himself. Their life-stories challenge genre conventions, but new approaches to the problems of authenticity and falsification in autobiographical writing may be considered through them because of their position on the extreme limits of the creative borders of the genre. Insight into their lives  

17 Hewitt discusses Simone de Beauvoir, Nathalie Sarraute, Marguerite Duras, Monique Wittig, and Maryse Condé.
encourages those conventions of reading and criticism that allow avowedly autobiographical work to include fictive entries, with or without authorial intent to deceive. Biographical studies indicate that all three of these men disregarded recorded historical data, overcame or hid incriminating evidence of their pasts, invented stories that would support the life that each adopted, and then wrote an autobiography. Greater familiarity with the individuals and their society, and increased insight into how and why society accepted some of both the true and the false aspects of their pasts, can make a contribution to a fuller understanding of the place of their autobiographies in critical theory that deals with autobiography.

Factors beyond the primary autobiographical works come into play as readers approach the texts with new attitudes. The fact that the three men all wrote fiction for publication indicates that they saw writing as an art form, but in the writing of their autobiographies it is more likely that they required, not a re-invention of their lives as art but, instead, a confirmation of their lives as they were reinvented. Some readers, indeed, may find in the works the ironic and parodic elements that Linda Hutcheon recognizes in postmodern work that takes the past as referent (23-24). What must not be overlooked, however, is the fact that late-twentieth century readers approach autobiographical texts from the past with a different bank of reading experiences than those of the authors or of earlier readers.

Those who study James, Grey Owl, and Grove are involved with aspects of the postmodern because the documents and archival materials with which researchers work and to which they refer are shadows and
reflections of fact, not fact itself. As has been demonstrated with other autobiographical approaches, theory can lose touch with actual, individual autobiographies. For this reason, emphasis should be put on an easily overlooked statement of Hutcheon: "any theorizing must derive from that which it purports to study" (ix), in this case, the autobiographies and lives of particular individuals, not some aspect of the theoretical approach to the reading and interpretation of them. Hutcheon's work demonstrates that the parodic elements of the postmodern text, based on a series of events or contexts, can also undermine the credibility of its source as the text overwrites it. These parodic elements can be of form, content, or convention.

To some extent, James and Grove take advantage of the expected form of autobiography to achieve their ends. They use conventional, chronological presentation, but they also include pseudo-mythic aspects of their early lives: James's parents die tragically; Grey Owl is the son of an aboriginal princess; Grove's birth home is struck by lightning and destroyed. Their life-stories thus become parodies of the form, twisting the usual with the unusual, depending on the conventional to act as a vehicle for the unconventional. Grove's story of his privileged childhood and his travels becomes, when the truth of his youth is made evident, a parody of the life of the privileged. Grey Owl's story lacked the conventions of a European autobiography, but he was claiming other roots. His story, fashioned to be in keeping with a Native person's approach, can be seen to be a parody of what a Native might tell about his or her life. Will James's autobiography was acceptable because it had the elements of a tall tale that might be
presented by a cowboy; once exposed as an imaginative creation, the autobiography can be seen as a parody of the cowboy life. It is through retrospective evaluation, however, that this element in each story is recognized.

There is a danger in seeing the Canadians' stories of their lives as postmodern, however, because the texts can, in their rearrangement and rejection of history, be interpreted as ahistorical, a term that detractors of postmodernism apply derisively to postmodernism; thus, if the Canadians were to be considered postmodern, they might be caught in a theoretical loop, seen as examples of a concept that is liable to be rejected. Whereas postmodernism tends to question authoritative pronouncements, Hutcheon quotes Jean-Francois Lyotard's concern that a reaction against the postmodern may take the form of "a conservative call to unity, order, identity, security, consensus" (208). Since this would be a call to return to the very elements that have limited autobiography, association with the postmodern might be a retrogressive step for the Canadian autobiographers. Moreover, if postmodernism falls out of fashion and is devalued, so also might works associated with it, including the autobiographies of James, Grey Owl, and Grove. This will be the case if the next generation of critics returns to the conservative demands for verifiable, documented fact and chronology.

Critics should be aware of another reason for being cautious about finding reasons for associating a particular theoretical point of view with the autobiographers being discussed: the perspective taken can affect and can alter that which is seen. Looking into the lives and the life-stories that Will James, Grey Owl, and Frederick Philip Grove
constructed, we can assume that they reacted against the expectations of the societies into which they were born. From what is known of their childhoods, each of the three appears to have set himself apart.

Pursuing his interest in woodcraft, Archibald Belaney was unlike his Hastings schoolmates. Discussions of Ernest Dufault's youth indicate that he lived a fairly isolated life, entertaining himself with his imaginary cowboy activities and with his drawing, his brother mentioned as his only friend. Felix Paul Greve rejected the social and economic class into which he was born as he sought to be accepted by the arts community, affiliating himself with Stefan George's circle, with Gide, and indirectly with Oscar Wilde through his translations of Wilde's work into German. Each of the men chose to leave their homelands rather than to live and work as their communities might have expected of them.

After their moves, the three men adjusted their lives and their life styles in order to be accepted by the communities in which they chose to live. Instead of being absorbed into the communities, however, each of the three became outstanding in some way, a notably unique individual, just as he had been unique as a child because of his qualities, his activities, or his personality. To some extent, none of the three was recognized as belonging to the mainstream of society, either as an adult or as a child. Although the autobiographies of the three could be read as current theorists and critics read the autobiographies of women or of marginalized members of society, such a reading would be unjustified: this critical approach is inappropriate for application to the discussion of James, Grey Owl, and Grove because each of these men consciously chose the character which he wanted to
play, chose the society in which he wanted to live, chose the position which he would take in that society, and chose the past upon which he would base his present. The decisions and the positions, based as they were on choice, place the three men in a category that differs from that of women or minority groups who are marginalized at the initiative of others. The reorganization and the re-authorization of their pasts, along with the conscious donning of a mask and the voluntary adoption of a role to be performed, puts each of these three men in a position that is unlike that of a member of a marginalized or minority group. Much general postmodern criticism and feminist criticism would be inappropriate if applied to the autobiographies of the three Canadian men, especially here, where the focus of the thesis is on the role-playing and on the selection and the disguising of material from the past.

What must be remembered, however, is that although the story of a life may be an autobiography, the reader always reads a biography, albeit a special one written by the person about whom it is read. For readers who are open-minded and willing to accept the altered states that authors adopt, autobiography can give insight into other ways of living and allow readers vicarious enjoyment of experience. The

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18 Marlene Kadar suggests that marginalized groups are in the same position as females. For this reason she notes:

The difficulty with a strictly feminist (in both form and theme) view of life writing is that it may institutionalize a defensive posture for women, or for the unofficial writer of either gender. Though she is often female, 'she' may also be male (think of black slave narrators such as Frederick Douglass). That is, gender has determined genre in the past; in the future, we want to avoid any further 'gendarification.' (Essays on Life Writing 7)
autobiography serves as a culmination for the writer, but it is a point of commencement for readers. As readers become aware that any account is only one version of reality, they may take the next step in their response and be more willing to question the autobiographer's story. The need for questioning, however, is a positive rather than a negative factor because the reader can gain much from searching to discover the base or bases for the story, from ascertaining any changes made, and from speculating as to why changes were made. The results of the questioning can lead to a fresh reading of the autobiography. If readers respond to what they have read, and if their actions are affected by what the autobiographer has written, the autobiography can be seen to have value in the eyes of those readers.

With the revelation of each of the Canadian autobiographer's birth name and country of origin, reader-appreciation of the life experiences may shift to a recognition--and sometimes an appreciation--of the men's opportunistic ability to gauge the degree of factual distortion necessary to rationalize the present and to shape the future. Each of the three presents stories to readers that indicate how lives could be manipulated even in difficult times. Readers can sense--and may even admire--the control that the men had over their lives, or they can be impressed by the authors' decisions to bear witness, through published autobiography, to the life they claimed. These men demonstrate Olney's argument that autobiography often formalizes experience: "form implies an end, and an intention, and so a meaning" (Metaphors of Self 270). Autobiography affirms, in writing, both the life and the survival of the self.
Because James, Grey Owl, and Grove were all figures who lived in the public eye, the false fronts (behind which they hid but by which they were known) would have been shattered if their actual pasts had been revealed. The autobiographies which the men wrote offered security as they reinforced the foundations upon which the lives were built, but, on publication, the claims made within them became more widely circulated and more irrevocable. As each generation of readers becomes aware of the roles that the writers are now known to have adopted, it has to ascertain whether (or the degree to which) the subterfuge invalidates the autobiography, or whether the past reveals beneficial information about the autobiographer, about the society in which he lived, and about people in general as they—like James, Grey Owl, and Grove—shape their acceptance by others. In the Canadians’ cases, the process of writing about the self achieves a new and bizarre complexion, and readers confront authors who may turn magician, creators of the life and of the self as well as of the story, performing for a public prepared or unprepared for "telling lives."
Chapter Two

Fable of Contents: New Views

Had you thought that we are all three of the company of the twice-born? We have all rejected our beginnings and become something our parents could not have foreseen.

(Davies 262)

Stated in the simplest terms, autobiographies are the stories of people's lives written by themselves. Yet, because no one theory of autobiography appears to be reconcilable with the life-stories of people who push rationalization of their claims about the past and justification of their actions in the present to the limits by shifting into new identities, other approaches to these problematic autobiographies must be considered. These may be adapted from strategies used in other disciplines that deal with individuals, with society, and with history. The theories of Erving Goffman, an exponent of sociological investigations that deal with how people control the images they present to others, can be seen to have application to autobiography, one form of presentation of self. Similarly, the work of Joel Fineman is not focussed on autobiography, but the concept of the power of the anecdote which he puts forward is relevant to autobiographical study and criticism. Hayden White recognizes the value of idiosyncratic and less traditional approaches to historical viewpoints. Gregory Ulman considers the interaction of foundation materials with the medium through which they are presented. These men may not be writing specifically about autobiography, but in their work
they make references to situations that are similar to those of James, Grey Owl, and Grove, situations that experts on autobiography almost--but never quite--touch on in their writings. To some extent, then, ideas which are referred to peripherally by critics of autobiography are consolidated and elaborated upon in fields that would generally be considered to be beyond the expected realm of autobiographical criticism. Autobiographies which present idiosyncratic problems to those who would study them invite broad searches for solutions. It is to these genre-testing autobiographies that the theories from sociology and history may be applicable particularly, for these disciplines both influence how an individual person relates a life-story and relates to the world that hears that story.

Writers of autobiographies do not exist in a vacuum. They share the lives of wh’c: they write with people who both know them and who read their versions of their lives. If an autobiography reflects how friends, family, and society have come to know an individual, it may be seen to be as valid as what history and biography claim. This may be the case despite contradictory elements that documents disclose about the autobiographer, that is, even where conflicts arise between the ostensible past and the revealed past. Controversy over the representation may extend to the limit of any one autobiographer’s sphere of social influence. Thus, although the autobiography of a person who has a low public profile stimulates little debate, the
autobiography of a more prominent individual attracts a larger audience and gains relatively more attention.¹

General public interest in the work and lives of James, Grey Owl, and Grove has risen and fallen throughout the years as tastes and issues change and as discoveries about the men became available.² That which is important in a study of these three is not limited to their lives, to the relative popularity of their work and of them as individuals, or to their literary styles. What also is important is the recognition of the development of self, of each man's presentation of self, and of the evolution of versions of the self, all of which have had their genesis in events in their pasts. As Will James, Grey Owl, and F. P. Grove have demonstrated, some people not only live under assumed names, they adopt a past and roots that allow them to live the present which they have chosen to live. When a hidden past is disclosed the effects may be far-reaching, as the history of the Canadians' work can demonstrate. These effects may expand to include not only those influenced or affected by the autobiographer's life and work, but also all those who would debate the status of any specific autobiographies or of autobiography in general. Publication of an autobiography that is later found

¹ Goffman notes that we are relatively unconcerned when an individual impersonates a member of a lower social rank, but it is seen as "an inexcusable crime against communication to impersonate someone of sacred status, such as a doctor or a priest. . ." (Presentation 60). The social status of the person impersonated will also affect the degree of public response.

² Grey Owl has recently returned to public notice with a renewed interest in the environment and nature. His portrait by Karsh was featured in the promotion of the major Karsh exhibition organized by the National Art Gallery of Canada in the late 1980s. Material on Will James is now increasingly available to the Quebec and Saskatchewan francophone communities, contributing to a resurgence in interest.
to be based on a fabricated past presents particular problems. One glib solution might be to republish all such autobiographies in two volumes, with one part moved to the library section dedicated to autobiographical nonfiction and the other to that which houses fiction. Since such a judgment of Solomon is neither acceptable nor practical, some sort of insightful compromise is necessary.

Including the theories of Erving Goffman (1922-1982) in autobiographical criticism may in part facilitate that compromise. Goffman's unpretentious writing style is disarming, but he is a well-respected, serious sociologist. In the first of the dozen books he wrote, *The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life*, Goffman uses terms that can be applied to comments that autobiographers, biographers, and literary critics have made when discussing written records of the self. Goffman's views, dealing particularly with face-to-face interaction, are not designed explicitly for autobiography; however, he makes statements that can be applied to autobiographies of those who adopt new identities and who make new presentations of themselves. To some extent the "I" of autobiography implies a personal interaction with the reader.

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4 The use of Goffman in this discussion of Canadian autobiography is appropriate. Born in Alberta, Goffman received his undergraduate degree from the University of Toronto. He went on to achieve international recognition following his graduate work at the University of Chicago.
Moreover, current readers, accustomed to technology-assisted interaction that decreasingly relies on face-to-face communication, are readily able to adjust their connotation of personal relationships to include those that encompass various types of inter/facing with limited personal physical contact and interaction. The reading of autobiography can be seen to provide another channel of personal interaction.

Goffman indicates that the initial impression given in any interpersonal encounter has social implications. Because readers gain personal knowledge of an autobiographer, autobiography is a relatively social genre and can be discussed as an opportunity for social interaction, as Anna Robeson Burr noted when she compared reading an autobiography to going for a walk with a new friend (73). According to Goffman, the individual introduced in a new social setting has some control over the impression given, but the "individual's initial projection commits him to what he is proposing to be and requires him to drop all pretences of being other things" (Presentation 10). When Goffman uses the words "commits" and "requires," he is not making demands of the individual; he is recognizing the demands that the social situation makes.\(^5\) If Goffman's guidelines are applied to autobiography, it can be seen that writers put themselves in a social situation requiring that any ambition to be, or to benefit from claiming to have been, anything other than what the autobiographers state they

\(^5\) It is important that a distinction be made between the demands made of the projection that becomes the self in a given situation and the demands made by autobiographical critics who limit the presentation options available to autobiographers.
are must be set aside. Nevertheless, Goffman leaves room for responsible role creation.

Goffman recognizes that the social habits of individuals include deception. Indeed, he presents the idea of the "secondary adjustment": "any habitual arrangement by which a member of an organisation employs unauthorised means, or obtains unauthorised ends, or both, thus getting around the organisation’s assumptions as to what he should do and hence what he should be" (Asylums 189). He considers that much social interaction is an "information game--a potentially infinite cycle of concealment, discovery, false revelation, and rediscovery" (Presentation 9). In proposing that these cyclic elements exist, Goffman may be suggesting that individuals in society--and society itself--tacitly accept concealment and false revelation. If this is the case, much of everyday life may be seen as a process of attempting to cover and to uncover both our own actions and those of people with whom we relate. Because of this general tendency, one may be able to rationalize both the actions of James, Grey Owl, and Grove, and their autobiographical impulses and processes. The balancing acts of discovery and rediscovery meant that these autobiographers constantly faced the possibility and the humiliation of disclosure that would not only have led to a loss of reputation, but that could also have resulted in a loss of identity--the identity that they claimed and that their families, friends, co-workers, and public accepted. In the end, this would have been tantamount to a loss of self. Despite and because of their personal and career achievements, none of the three could chance undermining their current successes through confession about their pasts.
To some extent, the manipulation that can accompany the presentation of the self introduces the concept of the morality involved in autobiographical presentations of self. Because the primary work used when one studies an autobiographer's output is the story of the writer's life, the life is liable to be judged as much as the story is, making it difficult to separate the morality of the life led from any moral implications in the telling of the story--the presentation--of the life. If the autobiography is of a person who is dishonest in his or her dealings, readers expect that justice (civil or poetic) will administer appropriate punishment, but the autobiography itself should not be judged as the author is judged. Moreover, what readers expect traditionally of autobiography is insight into the author, and when an autobiographer is discovered to have secretly adopted a new name and lifestyle, the morality of the action affects some readers' acceptance of the autobiography. Confusion increases when the autobiography is found to span three lives: the one in the past into which documents indicate one was born but which was rejected and is being overwritten, an imagined past life which is a personal fantastic creation, and an ongoing and current life through which one is known to one's peers.

In Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity*, ideas are presented which have application to the problems involved in the presentation of self in autobiography, ideas that have philosophical and literary implications. These deal with aspects of etymological searches for root meanings and the evolution of definitions. In exploring its etymology, Trilling postulates that *sincerity* traditionally indicates a "congruence between avowal and feeling" but has come to mean "the
absence of dissimulation or feigning" (12). Authenticity is a word which he feels denotes a more strenuous moral requirement than does sincerity, including a better understanding of the self and of what being true to it consists (11). But Trilling also comments on the Greek derivation of the word authentic: "]\text{Aluthenteo:} to have full power over; also to commit a murder. \text{Authentecd:} not only a master and doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide" (131).

If considered from this semantic position then, authentic autobiography may include the murdering of those aspects of the self and of the past that do not contribute to the picture that is drawn in the present. Ernest Dufault imagined parents for the man he was to become, and Will James described their deaths as he explained the story of his own life. Archibald Belaney told of a fabricated family, and wrote his real mother and father out of the life of Grey Owl. In order for Frederick Philip Grove to live, Felix Paul Greve committed suicide. Although James, Grey Owl, and Grove can be accused of presenting material that cannot be authenticated, ironically, their autobiographies fulfil an aspect of the early meaning of authentic.

Trilling also discusses villain, another word that has a particular bearing on the rationalization of the pseudonymous lives of Grove, Grey Owl, and James. A villain may be seen to be a "dissembler, his evil nature apparent to the audience but concealed from those with whom he treads the boards" (14), but the original social meaning of the word 'villain' bears decisively upon its later moral meaning. The opprobrious

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6 The \textit{O.E.D.} notes the Greek word but does not include this extended meaning in its definitions.
term referred to the man who stood lowest in the scale of feudal society; the villain of plays and novels is characteristically a person who seeks to rise above the station to which he was born. He is not what he is: this can be said of him both because by his intention he denies and violates his social identity and because he can achieve his unnatural purpose only by covert acts, by guile. In the nature of his case, he is a hypocrite, which is to say one who plays a part. . . . (16)

Trilling goes on to note that as the rate of social mobility increased, especially as geographic mobility became more common, people found ways to improve their situations. Indeed, Trilling reminds readers that Alexis de Tocqueville felt that to "the degree to which the gratification of social desires begins to be possible, impatience at the hindrances to gratification increases" (15). This impatience may be the impetus for taking whatever means are possible to improve one's condition. One means is the removal of the self from an established society into another where no one has roots, and where everyone is a newcomer, a circumstance which allows ambition to be uninhibited by societal expectations. Such have been the conditions found in areas of the United States and Canada, where villains—true social-climbers—strive to make a place for themselves in a world new to them.

From what Trilling writes one might assume that the hypocrite-villain was of a past age ("marginal, maybe even alien, to the modern imagination of the moral life"), but Grey Owl, James, and Grove proved that masquerading to set one's self on a new track in a new social setting continued to be possible in the twentieth century (16). In the process of being true to the image that each had of himself—and in the process of setting aside their pasts—these Canadian men misrepresented themselves to the people who were or became their supporters, their
friends, and their family. Felix Paul Greve and Archibald Belaney left the Old World behind to seek new lives in Canada; Ernest Dufault left old French Quebec in order to establish himself in the Canadian and American West. Ironically, through falsification of the past and the creation of their own places in a new world, all three gained credentials and credibility that led to fame and fortune that they would not otherwise have achieved. They went on to write about those lives and successes but they never removed the masks that they put on when they adopted new identities.

Trilling reminds readers that Oscar Wilde said, "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell you the truth" (119). The three Canadians had an idiosyncratic definition of truth, but one of which Wilde, who noted that "Lying is the proper aim of art," might have approved (Wilde 930). Wilde expressed the ideas of a segment of literate society at the turn of the century, a society that included Grove who knew Wilde's work well because he translated much of it into German. Indeed, Wilde's notoriety might have been such that James could have heard of him through his Hollywood or New York contacts. Grey Owl read widely and might have encountered material by or about Wilde. Even if neither Grey Owl or James had heard of Wilde specifically, they were part of a generation that had begun to investigate the hypocrisy of the post-Victorian world. To some extent their new lives were a reaction to the times, and they rejected tradition and convention in their ways as Wilde had in his. In their search for fulfilment James, Grey Owl, and Grove found it necessary to retire from the societies into which they were born, but,
wearing the masks of new identities, they were able to function and to be integrated into the societies in which they chose to live. When they wrote their autobiographies they wore the masks that allowed society to recognize them, but they hid the pasts that, if visible, would have exposed their current disguises.

James, Grey Owl, and Grove wanted to write about the selves that they had become, the selves with which readers were familiar. The men offered stories that both supported the lives which they claimed and satisfied their readers. Their readers did not realize that there was much manipulation of material and facts. Indeed, it may be that moral stands or the rules about what autobiography can and cannot include put heavy demands on these and other autobiographers. The requirements for personal integrity, historical accuracy, and critical acceptability can frustrate authors whose intentions and reasons for writing are remote from the expectations of readers. In reviewing such autobiographies, Goffman's research is valuable. Although it has led him to recognize the attempts people make to fashion their lives, his findings also have implications for any study of how people write of their lives.

Goffman does not ignore the moral questions that are raised, however. Instead he seeks new perspectives on the moral issues:

In stressing the fact that the initial definition of the situation projected by an individual tends to provide a plan for the co-operative activity that follows--in stressing this action point of view--we must not overlook the crucial fact that any projected definition of the situation also has a distinctive moral character. . . . Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way. Connected with this principle is a second, namely that an individual who implicitly or explicitly signifies that he
has certain social characteristics ought in fact to be what he claims he is. (Presentation 12-13)

This last statement would appear to preclude the adoption of a new identity, but later Goffman explores social interaction and the roles individuals play in the life process, and he acknowledges that people choose to be what and whom they wish to be. When Goffman says that a person has "to be what he claims he is," his stress appears to be on the present--to be now--not necessarily to always have been. This reading is consistent with the completion of his statement:

In consequence, when an individual projects a definition of the situation and thereby makes an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind, he automatically exerts a moral demand upon the others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect. He also implicitly forgoes all claims to be things he does not appear to be and hence forgoes the treatment that would be appropriate for such individuals. The others find, then, that the individual has informed them as to what is and as to what they ought to see as the "is." (Presentation 13)

That which Goffman appears to require is behaviour which is reliably consistent in interactions with any single given audience or in situations that are similar. When the three autobiographers being discussed adopted new roles they gave up all claims to treatment that would have been expected in their original ones. James did not and should not have expected to be treated as a working-class French-Canadian; Grey Owl did not and should not have expected to be treated as a middle-class Englishman; Grove did not and should not have expected to be treated as a fin de siècle German writer. Each became what he projected himself to be, and each required a response to that projection. Significantly, each recorded and confirmed the success of
the social interaction by writing an autobiography. At his death, each was what he claimed to be.

Although they misled people about their pasts, James, Grey Owl, and Grove were not confidence men in the usual connotation of the word; their chief focus was not the deceitful acquisition of money at the expense of others. They were engaged actively in the particular lifestyles and livelihoods about which they wrote, and they never reverted to the previous identity. By contrast, as Goffman notes, when "we think of those who present a false front or 'only' a front, of those who dissemble, deceive, and defraud, we think of a discrepancy between fostered appearances and reality" (Presentation 59). For these three men, the front presented was a fairly consistent reality from the point where each adopted a new name, that is, for most of their adult lives and until they died. In one sense all three were twice-born; their autobiographies deal with the self that they present in their second lives, the reality of which contemporaries could verify. The pressure to conform to society led to the creation of a past that was accepted by the new society. Enlarging on Goffman's discussion of the self as it is presented to society, Randall Collins makes a comment that has a bearing on the position in which the three Canadians found themselves:

The self in Goffman is not something that individuals negotiate out of social interactions: it is, rather, the archetypal modern myth. We are compelled to have an individual self, not because we actually have one but because social interaction requires us to act as if we do. It is society that forces people to present a certain image of themselves, to appear to be truthful, self-consistent, and honourable. But the same social system, because it forces us to switch back and forth between many complicated roles, is also making us always somewhat untruthful, inconsistent, and dishonourable. The requirements of staging roles makes us actors rather than spontaneously the
roles that we appear to be at any single moment. (*Theoretical Continuities* 50)

Each of the men found themselves forced by society to take a position and to remain in it.

While discussing how all people to some extent adopt roles that they play in life, Goffman draws analogies between social interaction and stage performances. This comparison leads to the application of theatrical terminology to social encounters where individuals become the performers and those with whom they interact serving as the audience. According to Goffman, a "'performance' may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (*Presentation* 5).

This activity includes management of the performance area or "front", where "the expressive equipment of a standard kind [is] intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance" (*Presentation* 22). Because the audience (or social group) is meant to see only the aspects of the self that the performers wish to present, front consists of setting, personal front which includes manner and appearance, and any props necessary for establishing these. During the time of interaction, performers (whether on stage or in social groups) relay messages either directly through verbal expression or less directly through appearance and decorum. Usually invisible to the audience is the "back region" where the performers can retreat and where they do not have to maintain appearances. This area must be carefully guarded: "If an individual is to give expression to ideal standards during his performance, then he will have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards" (*Presentation* 41). Goffman
relegates to the back region of social interaction those activities that are done surreptitiously as well as the processes by which end results are achieved (especially where mistakes, illegal activity or "dirty work" are concealed) (Presentation 43-44). As an example of this, one can consider how Grey Owl strove to look like an Indian. According to Allison Mitcham, Mrs. Ed Sawyer (the Native wife of Grey Owl's white friend who lived with her people) indicated that Archie modified his appearance by curtailing his smiles in public and dyeing his hair and skin with tag alder in private (33). The latter process would have been confined to the back region of Grey Owl's activities, but the result of it contributed to the public presentation.

In the theatre, in order for a successful performance to be achieved, the audience must be willing to suspend any sense of disbelief, thus co-operating with the performer's aims. In real life a sympathetic public also supports the performer. In our interactions, we unconsciously sustain the roles that are being played before us, although often we may not realize that we are doing so because daily performances are not isolated on a recognizable stage. As situations change and are redefined, the social audience can also be seen to adapt unconsciously its participation in events, and to play an appropriate interactive role. Appropriate role-playing is necessary for social intercourse to progress without disruption. As Paul Smith indicates: "A person is not simply the actor who follows ideological scripts, but is also an agent who reads them in order to insert him/herself into them--

7 Goffman wryly notes, "All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify" (Presentation 72).
or not" (Discerning the Subject xxxv). This dual perspective is one that is evident in much social interaction, but it is particularly valid when considered in conjunction with Goffman's dramatic linkings.

Goffman's approach is especially applicable to James, Grey Owl, and Grove, men whose lives included a blatantly theatrical aspect because each of these three was involved with public performance and knew how to act in front of a defined audience. As well as being an artist, Will James was a rodeo rider, a Hollywood movie actor, a stunt man, and a screenwriter. His experience would have made him aware of the process whereby appearances could be made to simulate reality; indeed, particularly during his Hollywood years, he lived in a society which depended on the art of illusion. Grey Owl effectively practised stage management that included setting up his early nature talks, filming life with the beavers, and dramatising his public presentations. So important was stage management to him that Grey Owl allowed the roof of his cabin to be removed to allow camera access for filming of the activities of the beavers as they moved in and out of his living quarters, despite the fact that Anahareo was bringing home their newborn baby. In order to ensure a dramatic presentation in a private Command Performance for the Royal Family on his second British tour, Grey Owl demanded (contrary to protocol) that the king and his family take their places in advance of his presentation so that Grey Owl might stage an effective entrance. Grove dramatized events from his experience to incorporate into his writing. In Over Prairie Trails he condensed observations from several trips to create seven powerful descriptions. As a public speaker he was very aware of audience reaction. In his
autobiography, as in his letters to his wife, he indicates that he appreciated the attention he received: "After Ottawa, where I had perfected my speaking technique . . ., I went from triumph to triumph. Wherever I appeared I was lionized . . ." (In Search of Myself 396). He, like the James and Grey Owl, knew how to prepare and play to an audience.

Lejeune recognizes the theatrical aspect of the presentation of self, as Goffman does, and he goes on to adapt it for autobiography. In "The Autobiographical Pact," he notes that

[Autobiographers are actors too. And some of them take this game seriously, in front of their public. But since they are at the same time the authors of the role they are interpreting, the procedure has an entirely different function for them. It helps them to express their problems of identity and at the same time to captivate their readers. (Lejeune 31)

In their daily, lives Grove, Grey Owl, and James functioned as if they followed scripts that they had written in advance themselves. Those with whom they interacted were not only captivated, they were part of the act. In preparing his biography of Grove, Desmond Pacey used material which Grove provided. Lovat Dickson, with whom Grey Owl lived and travelled for several weeks, saw him approach the stage, tired and sometimes drunk, yet become transformed into the speaker that the audience expected. The general public would have been aware that these men, like all public figures, had a private side, but there was little reason for the general public or more intimate acquaintances to expect to find under the public face a mask that hid a secret self.

It is when an individual moves to a new geographical area and adopts a new identity there that the rules of social interaction are
most easily confounded, as is demonstrated by the examples of the three Canadians. Individuals in the adopted society may react in different ways. The majority only see the current front region; they have no reason to suspect that the role they see being played varies from that played by the same person elsewhere. Indeed, many people have not come to recognize that those around them and they themselves do adopt different roles in different situations. The general public, as well as many acquaintances, accepted James, Grey Owl, and Grove with no doubt or reservation. Those who are more familiar with an individual may recognize actions and expressions that appear to be out of character, either for the individual or for the part being played, but although their suspicions may be aroused, the matter is not questioned. The unverifiable claims that both Grey Owl and Grove made about their pasts raised doubts among those who personally knew the men, but initially no one attempted to investigate further. Grove appeared to be German but said that he was Swedish and British, an assertion that could be rationalized through a recognition of the anti-German sentiments of the period. Although Grey Owl's chants and dances were accepted by most non-Natives, people who could discriminate between them and those which were authentic saw little benefit in pointing out the discrepancies. Certainly the Native peoples had nothing to gain by challenging the man who served as their advocate and who was accepted as an eloquent spokesman. Of more concern to people were the unconfirmable dates and place names that Grove presented and the chain of unconfirmable matrimonial links that Grey Owl had forged, and it was the
investigation into these that would eventually contribute to the disclosure of the original identities.

Discovery of evidence that actually contradicts appearances is possible only where there is access to the back region. In Grey Owl and Grove's case, this back region included documented proof that they had lived the early parts of their lives in areas geographically and socially different from those described to their later contemporaries. Like Grove and Grey Owl, James unconsciously was aware that if a new role is to be played, the back region must be closed to public view. He succeeded not only in having documents and individuals from a former aspect of life intercepted or prevented from entering the front currently being displayed, but, even after his death, in having few people suspect that there was a past that should be being investigated. In their multi-layered lives, Grove, Grey Owl, and James had to be constantly aware of themselves and of their audiences, and each had to take care that responses were appropriate for the role being played. During every exciting performance or mundane interaction, each must have been conscious of avoiding references to incidents and individuals remembered from a secret past.

Autobiography, as a genre, claims to focus on events from the past, but the retrospective element of autobiography allows control of what material is chosen for personal disclosure. If a writer has a hidden past or a back region, then the events in it can be a secret resource. Moreover, the author is relatively free to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding events and alter time sequence in the narrative. Although other approaches to the writing of autobiography are possible, the most
common is that which adopts a chronological, narrative format which appears to satisfy the needs of both writer and reader for logic and order, one which allows a continuity that apparently replicates natural sequential temporal development. This sequence satisfies the reader while supporting establishment of links in a well-thought-through creative process on the part of the author. The autobiographer, relying on the reader's customary dependence on linear time, can propose a believable chain of events to account for a part of the life which no local peers have witnessed, and thus present a past that contemporaries believe is true and which readers may accept as plausible. Although autobiography that presents modified or falsified information often relies heavily on actual events from the back region, alteration of chronology and change of emphasis disguises the truth. The kernel of truth upon which the story is based, however, promotes credibility of the self being presented.

Recalled events, then, or anecdotes concerning them, may become a basis for aspects of the autobiography; the parts, even if grossly altered, serve to establish the whole. In "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction," Fineman discusses anecdotes and the purposes that they serve in presenting history and in the study of the literature of the past, matters relevant in a discussion of autobiography. He demonstrates that the anecdote, as "the narration of a singular event, is the literary form or genre that uniquely refers to the real" (56). Composed of historemes, or itself acting as historeme, the anecdote is the literary form that uniquely lets history happen by virtue of the way it introduces an opening into the teleological, and therefore timeless, narration of beginning, middle and end. (Fineman 61)
The anecdote is a narrative form that can be insinuated into a history but which, although allowing the narrative succession to continue, is affected by the history at the same time as it affects the history: "The anecdote produces the effect of the real, the occurrence of contingency, by establishing an event as an event within and yet without the framing context of history. . ." (61). In particular, the contingency factor of the anecdote has a bearing on historicity and creativity in autobiography because how stories are presented affects how readers receive them. If anecdotes in an autobiography are presented in an order thought to be chronological, a post hoc, ergo propter hoc logic is often evident to the reader.8 If an autobiographer alters the order of events as the life-story is presented, the cause-and-effect sequence is disrupted, allowing a new, false logic to be introduced through disruption of the order of historical presentation.

This, of course, may be what the autobiographer chooses to have happen if events from a hidden aspect of the life are introduced into autobiography. If a person cannot disclose the reality of an event without exposing a back region, then the event may be reconsidered and recounted as a revised version of the anecdote. Effective fictionalization of fact may result if events from the past are

8 Chronological presentation is traditional; however, artistic, literary, and philosophic inspiration may lead to other approaches to writing autobiography. Paul John Eakin discusses the "associative autobiography" which "avoids the distortion of biographical truth latent in chronological narrative"; he refers to Michael Leiris's concept of the autobiographical act as "a whole, unfinished series of points in time" (Eakin, Fictions in Autobiography 168).
parachuted into a chronological reconstruction that simulates historical order. It is thus possible for a falsified autobiography to present itself as the actual life by taking advantage of readers' expectations, miming the regime of chronological order. Readers are likely to believe autobiography when plausible anecdotes are introduced at plausible junctures of the story of a life if the context can support the discrepancies. Joel Fineman discusses "laws of historical causation by reference to which it becomes possible to fit particular events into the intelligible whole of a sequential, framing narrative--a whole that then becomes a pattern in accord with which one can understand an altogether different set or sequence of historical events" (52). As Fineman notes, "the seductive opening of the anecdotal form" allows the anecdote, as an independent entity, to itself be "anecdotalized" (61). Clearly a variety of versions of a story could result from such a process.

Theorists may see autobiography as a way of looking for meaningful patterns in one's life or as a way of searching for meaning, but, contrary to the accepted idea of the evolution of a life-story during its telling, the stress for the three Canadians is on creating rather than recognizing patterns. The men do not tend to form new identities as they write; instead, it can be shown that their autobiographies are carefully written to confirm their chosen identities and are the result of both planned and accidental patterning of the lives themselves. They include carefully chosen and disguised anecdotes. The selection and idiosyncratic adaptation of roles and the expansion of relatively commonplace incidents assists the projection of a desired presentation of self; the autobiographies act as fixatives for
the created history. To a great extent they were successful in that, when published, they served to confirm the legends that surrounded the men.

The reader may be able to trace the narrative that is projected by the autobiographer to an incident that is its source--the anecdote. What Fineman does not recognize, however, is that the anecdote may serve both as a grounding in truth of the autobiography and as an aperture through which a version of the self may be revealed to the audience. Grey Owl furnishes an example of how the reader eventually may discern more about an autobiographer if there is an opportunity to see what is behind an anecdote. Grey Owl discusses the influence that his aunt had: "In my young days I had received some pretty intensive home tuition from an ever-blessed aunt ..." (Pilgrims 14). He alludes further to his relationship with this woman in The Men of the Last Frontier which is "[d]edicated as a tribute to my Aunt, whom I must thank for such education that enables me to interpret into words the spirit of the forest, beautiful for all its underlying wildness." Grey Owl, however, does not indicate that the aunt is in Hastings, England. Because he led people to believe that he was born in Mexico or the western plains of the United States, many assumed that Grey Owl learned his English in primitive conditions or very quickly on a visit to his father's sisters, thought by some to live in Scotland. Lovat Dickson notes that Anahareo knew about Aunt Ada, but even she "imagined someone in Mexico" (Wilderness Man 42). Once the aunt was identified, however, the public had a glimpse of the person whose presence in Grey Owl's life had influenced him, albeit in a different way than his ambiguous writings.
might have led readers to expect. Just as Grey Owl transposed a person from his past, James shifted an event. His version of a lye-swallowing incident captures the essence of the reality but not the details. The Dufault family claims that Ernest did swallow lye as a child, but when Will James included this traumatic incident in his autobiography, he had to change the circumstances in order that the truth of the setting of the original anecdote not reveal the fiction of the setting--Bopy’s camp--of the story as told in the autobiography. Similarly, Grove could discuss meeting with an individual now assumed to be Gide but he could not give the details or Gide’s name because to do so would leave him vulnerable should anyone make the connections between Gide and Greve and Grove. This connection was a distinct possibility because, in the prologue to his autobiography, Grove mentions that one of the library books brought to him is a biography of an author he knew that includes an eighteen-page bibliography of the man’s work. Assuming that Gide is the author in question, Grove may have been aware that Gide had published his version of his interview with Greve, and although he wanted to benefit from the association with a European author, Grove, like Grey Owl and James, had to mould details to fit his own autobiography. He could not allow anecdotes to provide entry to the back area which he kept hidden.

In order to understand more fully how an autobiography has evolved and how the presentation of self has been affected, exploration of the off-stage area for the source of the anecdotes is necessary. If a reader has access to withheld information--that information restricted to the back region--a better perspective of the life and work is
available. One way of understanding this is by comparing an author’s treatments of the back region in literary biography and in autobiography. Depending on one’s definition of the terms, the ideally objective biographer might be expected to try to reveal all that is possible about the subject and the life; the autobiographer, to reveal only that which he or she wishes to reveal. Evident is the tension that arises between the demands of historic reckoning, those of literary expression, and those of self-representation.

The scholarship of biography, as opposed to that of autobiography, incorporates ideas similar to those of both Goffman and Fineman. According to Ruth Hoberman’s discussion of Lytton Strachey’s approach to the writing of Eminent Victorians, Strachey (a contemporary of the three autobiographers) claimed that he presented “certain fragments of the truth which took my fancy and lay to hand” (Hoberman 40). Hoberman comments that Strachey’s “fragments, of course, are to be shaped into artful wholes” (Hoberman 40). Fineman’s concept of the anecdotal hole opening up to expose a new whole demands a close inspection of parts rather than a reassembly of them, but it is an idea that might be compared to the same material with which Strachey begins, although it aims in a different direction and deals with a different perspective. In a trope not unlike that of Goffman, Hoberman notes, while discussing Strachey, a comparison of biography to a searchlight which exposes that which has been hidden:

Strachey’s subjects are actors denying their artifice, and as long as the only lights on them are footlights, the stage set will be mistaken for reality. This repressed theatricality is for Strachey synonymous with Victorian self-delusion. “The old comedian,” he writes of Disraeli, "preferred not to question the solidity of the fairy palaces
in which he played his marvellous part" (Biographical Essays 267). But thanks to Buckle and Monypenny's biography, readers "have been provided with seats in the 'ings [and] [sic] can see only too clearly what lies on the other side of those flimsy erections. Such is the doom of the egotist." Strachey's sudden searchlight has a similarly deflating effect, revealing the stage unreality of his subjects' self-concepts. (Hoberman 42)

With these remarks, a relationship between the sociologist, Goffman, and the biographer, Strachey, can be established. The theatrical analogy, used for one purpose in the literature of sociology and for another purpose in the study of biography, encourages the application of a similar idea to a third area, that of autobiography where the story of an individual member of society is written by that member for the self and the society. As readers become aware of how the autobiographer casts light on particular past events, they may understand how Goffman's and Fineman's ideas may be applied to the study of autobiography. Like Strachey, informed readers can be prepared to find openings through which to refocus the light on the backstage, illuminating aspects which have been altered for presentation.

Emphasizing that which an individual wishes the public to notice requires careful stage management. Goffman notes that in order to convince his audience, the actor

infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure. For if the individual's activity is to become significant to others, he must mobilize his activity so that it will express during the interaction what he wishes to convey. (Presentation 30)

Information carriers or "sign-vehicles" are used to give the impression that the performer wishes (Goffman Presentation, 1). An unquestioning accepting audience can easily be "duped or misled" (Presentation 58); on
the other hand, if signs are misread, the audience can misinterpret a message that the performer is attempting to communicate.

Because most actions in daily life are impromptu, the likelihood of misunderstanding is greater than in a rehearsed stage presentation. An incident related by Grove illustrates Goffman's point and shows how meaning may be conveyed to an on-looking audience. It also indicates the repercussions of misjudged actions. A door-to-door salesman was turned away by Grove who, having second thoughts, attempted to recall the man. The salesman had looked back at the house and had begun to shake his fist in anger and disappointment. Seeing Grove coming toward him, but not understanding why, the man turned and ran. Grove comments:

The picture this man carried away of me was very far from resembling myself—if, for the moment, I may talk of myself as though I were something. Yet it was occasioned by actions and sayings done and uttered by those outward appendices which form my body and which stand, to the world at large, as controlled by myself and, therefore, indicating a hidden entity, namely my 'I.' ("Thoughts and Reflections" 308)

As Grove continues his tale he contemplates possible repercussions of this incident, demonstrating—as Fineman might—how the anecdote can be imaginatively extended:

That picture has now assumed an independent existence and is travelling through the world. It may be very potent in the so-called actual world: the stranger may be profoundly influenced by it in his attitude towards capitalism: for, he must necessarily assume that, since he saw me in a large house surrounded by plantations of flowers... I must be, as compared with him, a wealthy man... Perhaps he will address a crowd of starving men on the point of an emotional outburst: and when he tells them of the incident, that outburst will take place and they will be swept off their feet with anger and indignation: perhaps it will precipitate a rebellion and an ultimate revolution... ("Thoughts and Reflections" 308)
With the telling of this story, Grove indicates how he can take a mundane incident, place it in a narrative, and imaginatively extrapolate possible repercussions. In his mind, his interaction with the salesman can evolve into a more significant event peopled with powerful actors, and he can project from the limited interaction a credible result. Grove's example also demonstrates the power of the anecdote to be both base and springboard of a narration, and it indicates that a Canadian model could be added to Fineman's discussion.

James, Grey Owl, and Grove created versions of their life-stories before they wrote their autobiographies. These versions included anecdotes based on reality but manipulated beyond easy recognition. Their autobiographies did not serve to help them to find or to form themselves, as critics often suggest is the role of autobiography. The writing confirmed a past that they had already narrated because they had been required to explain and defend themselves. Goffman quotes W. I. Thomas, pointing out that

'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.' . . . Presumably a 'definition of the situation' is almost always to be found but those who are in the situation do not create this definition, even though society often can be said to do so; all they do is assess correctly what the situation might be for them and then act accordingly. (Frame Analysis 1-2)

Will James may have invented the years spent with Bopy to define his solitary situation and to provide a reason for his French accent, but the stories of early horseback-riding experiences that Will James describes could have parallels that took place in the backyard of Ernest Dufault in St. Nazaire or on his Uncle Napoleon's farm. For Archibald Belaney this need to assess and explain may have surfaced while he was
very young, for he knew little about his father. Donald Smith suggests that his aunts themselves, or his mother, may have presented to the child a fiction of George Belaney which he retained and, as an adult, found convenient in the shaping of his own image. Similarly Grove, after he arrived in North America, would have begun working on a version of the past that he felt would satisfy curiosity without raising too much interest, a version that he fine-tuned in his autobiography, linking it with reality. Spettigue finds hints of the truth in Grove's story of his life. He notes that when Grove writes of his father's death in In Search of Myself, he indicates 1892, the year that his father and mother separated, not that in which his father died (FPG: The European Years 179). Actual events in the lives of the men are recorded in the autobiographies but the authors are able to incorporate twists into the anecdotes to avoid revealing traces of their true identities and origins.

All three autobiographers wrote of journeys. These add an element of adventure to their tales, but serve also to confuse anyone trying to trace the men through geographical research. Grove's story of his early life is based on travel, much of it imaginary, but within the travel accounts can be found aspects of his one actual voyage to North America, the trip which he cannot fully describe because to do so would be to reveal that which he wishes to keep secret. His novel, A Search For America, may reveal more about the pre-Manitoba travelling in his life than does the autobiography, and one poem, called or date-lined "At Sea.
Nova Scotia, 1909" may provide another clue. There can be no assurance that the poem was inspired or written at the place and time indicated, but the routes of ships destined for New York--where Grove is known to have gone--did include Nova Scotia. Much else that Grove writes about his early years is inaccurate or evasive, but his interest in boats, emphasized in his autobiography and repeated in the short story "The Boat," appears to be authentic (Tales From the Margin). The poem captures the sentiments of a man who was rising, phoenix-like, not from the ashes but from the sea in which he was thought to have perished. Unlike Grove, Grey Owl avoids giving details of his early years, and he only alludes to his move to Canada, one he claims is not a transatlantic but a transcontinental journey from the Mexico area. He transfers his true travel experiences into his reference to being under the "sheltering wing of irascible but benevolent old Bill Cody" with whom he "had seen plenty territory through the windows of a day coach" (Pilgrims 65). James writes of his travels as a child with Bopy, but the route he claims they took is a reversal of that taken by Ernest Dufault; they head north to Canada, not south to the United States as

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9 According to Spettigue, the poem is entitled "Nova Scotia, 1909," and he claims Grove indicated he wrote it at "the taffrail of a labouring bark" [sic] (PPG 169). Henry Makow includes this poem in his doctoral thesis on Grove but entitles it "At Sea" and indicates a dateline "Nova Scotia, 1909":

Who can say nay? For adding each to each
The grains of knowledge that so precious seem,
We judge all science but a trope of speech
And wisdom but a dream.

Perhaps we, too, by such a tempest tossed
As rocks this barque are fragments of some sea
From which we rise and into which are lost
When we cease to be? (19)
Dufault did. Nevertheless, the experiences of the teenaged Ernest Dufault were likely the basis for those attributed to the child, Will James. Moreover, because Bopy is characterised as a man who travelled incognito, he may act as a vehicle for the presentation of some of the experiences of James himself. The man could not write the true stories of their travels without revealing the pasts that they chose to hide. They present stories that include enough fantasy to lead away from actual events. Their travels allowed them to find a new way of living while they lost the identities that would have inhibited them, and the stories of these travels include a balance of fact and fiction that eludes historical verification even though it contains elements that are historically authentic or, at least, are based on anecdotes from a verifiable past.

This balance misled even the confidants of the three who (for the most part) were convinced that the stories were true. Lovat Dickson heard Grey Owl's story and believed it to the extent that he initially rejected the posthumous reports that Grey Owl was a fraud. Anahareo, in a filmed interview, claims that she knew Grey Owl by the name Archie Belaney but believed that he had an Indian mother. Desmond Pacey considered himself lucky to have access to primary material in Grove's unpublished autobiography while writing his biography, and naively used it as his source. Catherine Grove may have known more than she publicly admitted knowing.\footnote{Catherine might have known why there are portions literally cut from some of Grove's papers. Some of the excisions may have been to remove signatures. She is thought to have destroyed all copies of \textit{Felix Powell's Career}, a novel that Grove, at her request, did not publish (continued...)} Whatever there was about her husband that she
knew but did not tell, Catherine Grove, like her husband, lived as if the story he told were true.

Careful control of his version of the past was also exercised by James. When asked for details of his life to include in a book that Guy Weadick was writing, James suggested that he read his autobiography or a publicity sheet that was a summary of it. Before his death, Alice James is thought to have known nothing of Will James' background, but Earl Snooks, and possibly his publisher, his lawyer, and his doctor knew prior to his death that James had family in Canada. The three autobiographers attempted to keep their secrets to themselves, and, living in a time when traditions were breaking down and travel was relatively common, but before a time when communication and bureaucracy could have easily exposed them, they were amazingly successful.

Problems did arise, however, both because of the tensions of living with a hidden past and because contradictions arose which created suspicions and problems. Grove's tale of his origins was difficult to believe but hard to refute; instead critics challenged him on details where they could catch him in a lie, such as his activities during years where his versions are contradictory. During a period when it was later revealed that Greve was actually still in school in Germany, Grove

10(...continued)
(Pacey, Letters xxv, xxvi; Spettigue, FPG 197). In 1969, Catherine told her daughter-in-law Grove's nationality and name, indicating that there had been a previous woman in his life. Makow suggests that she may have known more ("Letters From Eden" 125).

11 In a letter to Guy Weadick (18 September 1934), James writes: "But I'm sorry that I won't be able to give you any data about myself, the boys I rode with nor the outfits I worked for. I'm knid [sic] of finicky about that and I never cared for names, nor dates what I done, where I done it or anything else that way" (Weadick Papers).
claimed that he was either "working on a bush farm in northern Manitoba and writing A Search For America, or he was hauling wheat in southern Saskatchewan, or he was back in Europe after a first visit to Canada, or he was teaching school somewhere near Toronto" (Spettigue, FPG 21). His letters indicate his discomfort as he attempts to explain to Carleton Stanley his confusion about a professor under whom he said he studied in Munich. The professor would not have been at the university when Grove said he was there (1892) but did teach Greve in 1894, two years after Grove said he left Germany (Pacey, Letters 492-493). The tensions of telling direct lies also presented problems for Grey Owl. Smith notes that in 1935 Grey Owl went on a three-week drinking binge after he mailed the letter to Deacon in which he vehemently denied charges made that he had no Indian blood (165). James also went on drinking binges, including one during a visit to his family in Ottawa in which he destroyed much that would have linked him to his Canadian past. Despite attempts of these three to hide their secrets by erecting a front, some gaps were detected that indicated a weakness in the stories, and which allowed both a sense of insecurity to develop in the men ar an air of mystery to develop about them.

Ironically, the more of the past that James, Grey Owl, and Grove tried to hide, the more they appear to have relied on the good faith and co-operation of those who read their stories. Moreover, the lack of complete disclosure, and the resulting demand on the reader to fill in the blanks, puts the reader in a prominent position. The autobiographies demonstrate a variation on principles as pointed out by P. M. Spacks: "Every literary product involves three crucial aspects
beyond the reader: the document itself, the reality to which it refers and the audience that apprehends it" (Imagining 139). What the authors could not anticipate was that, ultimately, for those readers who have come to know that the authors had hidden their pasts while writing their autobiographies, they unconsciously reveal aspects of themselves. Readers discover answers to their questions concerning the authors' motivations for hiding the pasts by examining extratextual material that contributes to the re-interpretation of the self-history. Although the authors recognized their audiences and depended on their positive responses to their stories, they did not appreciate fully the extent to which readers may contribute to the tale and to the author's story.

Just as Goffman sees a role for people who may be called audience in a social interaction, Lejeune confirms that the reader plays a necessary role in the communication process (On Autobiography 29-30, 123). In autobiography, Meredith Skura notes that the narrator of an autobiography "needs someone to hear [the message], bear witness to it, give it substance and reality" (Spacks, Gossip 239). The reader, whether ideal or actual, plays a creative part in autobiography. As Sidonie Smith remarks: "For those who assert that the self inscribed in autobiography is a rhetorical construct, the 'fictive' reader created by the autobiographer to help bring that self into existence assumes prominence" (6). The reader's presence and response is thus an integral part of the act of autobiography.

This role of the reader as audience is acknowledged by the three Canadian autobiographers. In the prologue to In Search of Myself, Grove voices his need to communicate:
But even the lack of an audience is not the important thing. The important thing is that you have an audience in mind when you speak. Whether it is really there does not matter. In case of need you can imagine it. But was there any need for me to imagine it? If I could explain, to someone, why I had failed, the explanation might more than compensate for the failure to have made myself heard so far. Could I explain it? I did not know. I saw the reasons clearly enough. I must try. And "to someone"? To whom? To whom but my friend the young Frenchman who was now a man of seventy or more? Whether he ever read the explanation, what did it matter? There would be others, if not today, then ten decades from now. And if there were none, at no time, did it matter? The only thing that did matter as far as I was concerned, was the fact that the attempt had been made.

(10-11)

Similarly, Will James introduces his autobiography with a handwritten prefatory letter which personally invites readers to ride along with him, thus supplying himself with an audience: "Here's a gentle horse for you. Climb on and follow me." Grey Owl's autobiography is ostensibly Pilgrims of the Wild (written in 1934 but published in 1935), but in it he presents only a limited portion of his life. In it, he alludes to his past and to his heritage as he does in all of his books, which depend heavily on his personal experiences. His most explicit recognition of the audience being addressed is found in Sajo and the Beaver People (The Adventures of Sajo and Her Beaver People) (1935):

"And now as chance travellers from the distant settlements tell to these black-eyed, smiling Indian children stories of a land they have never seen, so I, who once was one of them, will tell to you a tale from that great wilderness that is so far away" (4-5). Even in Tales of an Empty Cabin (1936), Grey Owl interjects an aside that indicates that he is conscious of an audience. Following one of his descriptions of his actions, he addresses the reader, "I think I heard you say you would not have done so" (109). The choosing of a particular target
If those being addressed are seen to be real, what is being written acquires credibility. Correspondents also serve as audience. It is in letters to friends and publishers that Grey Owl was most outspoken about his origins. He depended to a large extent on others spreading the word; close examination of his published works indicates that his public lies and exaggeration were limited but he did not refute in writing those rumours that enlarged on his legend once they were started. Manipulation of audience reaction affects how the autobiography’s version of his life is accepted.

Autobiography, strictly speaking, is not historical writing, and certainly the three Canadians had limited concern for the history of the society in which their autobiographies were situated. Nevertheless, as fields of study the two are related closely enough that the history involved with autobiography has to be considered. Theorists who discuss historical discourse are involved in debate about how the past can be preserved or presented in words, and, just as autobiographical theorists are, they are concerned about the validity of such preservation and presentation. It is apparent that autobiographical discourse exists in a grey area between literary discourse and historical discourse. Of these two, Hayden White writes that literary discourse is based on "imaginary" events while historical discourse is based on "real" events.

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12 This practice is not uncommon; the life story of Bill Guppy (one of Belaney's first north woods contacts), written with the assistance of Hal Pink, begins with words that use the same technique: "... we'll reckon you one of the party, and begin the adventure. And if we ask you to grab the axe and do your share of wood-cutting, we guess you won't mind" (17).
but "the two kinds of discourse are more similar than different in virtue of the fact that both operate language in such a way that any clear distinction between their discursive form and their interpretative content remains impossible" ("Figuring the Narrative of the Times Deceased" 24). In autobiography, the selection of "the real" in the past and the presentation of it in an interpretive, literary form presents problems for the genre and for those who would distinguish autobiography from both literary and historical discourse. White quotes F. R. Ankersmit who describes history as "a complex linguistic structure specifically built for the purpose of 'showing' a part of the past" but White rejects that historical writing actually answers the question of "what really happened" ("Figuring" 24). Ankersmit's concepts concerning "a part of the past" may be aligned with Fineman's discussion of anecdotes and with Goffman's sociological theory of presentation--or showing--of the self in order to create a link that overcomes the problematics of the treatment of fact in autobiography.

If it can be seen that autobiography is liable to be criticized because it lacks historical verification but that historical discourse itself cannot claim to produce anything more than "interpretations of whatever information about and knowledge of the past the historian commands" (White, "Figuring" 20), then the two genres can be seen to share a common quality. Thus, when inexactitude is found in autobiography, it may be viewed less as a weakness inherent in that genre than as a property of much historical discourse. Moreover, because the three Canadian autobiographers consciously moulded their interpretations of the past, they were able to manipulate how they and
their stories were received at a given moment. That moment, once spent, became history but the men were able to affect the direction of its course. In their autobiographies, they could not have admitted that they had orchestrated their lives because to do so would have resulted likely in another shift of life direction, requiring a new presentation of self, and, as a consequence, a renegotiation of their relationships.

Another aspect of the intersection of history and autobiography is presented by Gregory L. Ulman in "Mystery: the Law of Idiom in Applied Grammatology." He introduces the term mystery, a neologism he derives from history through herstory and mystery. It is a conflation of maistrie and mystery with some of the properties of myth. Although his use of the word mystery does not denote the range of meaning for autobiography that the concept might suggest—my story—in his discussion Ulman does refer to the "embedding of the narrator within the narrative" (306) whereby the narrator makes himself the hero of the story he tells, which is certainly the case of autobiography. Although there is no indication that Ulman has considered the work of the three, he correlates ideas that have been discussed in Goffman, White, and Fineman:

For mystery is never a question of a theory representing an autobiography, or vice versa. Rather, mystery . . . proposes to conjoin the personal anecdote with the narrativizing of any and all metastories, but in a way that puts the narrative structure and the historical document, the narrative document and the historical structure, into an alternative arrangement, perhaps to tell a personal anecdote by means of the materials of theory. (Ulman 314)

Ulman deals with the theoretical; however, aspects of his proposal have practical implications for autobiography. He explores the implications of "site-tation" which he describes as
telling what I happened to find convincing in terms of the . . . anecdotal memory I have of my experience with learning the theory I am telling: the site, place, location of the general in association with my particular encounter with it. (316)

Although he focuses on other aspects of writing, in his neologism sit- ation, Ulman takes advantage of the dual function allowed through the homonym citation to explore accreditation of sources of anecdotes and to consider the personal interpretation of them. It is this recognition that anecdotes in the past can be manipulated to rationalize a stand taken in the present that is important when discussing the three Canadians.

Ulman departs from a discussion of literary texts to make a relevant comment on television presentation. He notes the anecdotal framing of news stories that enables them to gain "the format of truth" (323). Excerpting and isolating a story from its context allows modification of stress and re-vision of perspective. This news presentation technique may be compared with the telling of a life-story, and the comparison can be used to remind readers to be alert to the influence that the format of the telling has on the credibility of the anecdote and on the acceptance of a tale as a whole. The frame is the structure that holds the anecdotes together and gives them sequence and context, yet it is part of a symbiotic arrangement for the frame is made relevant only by the anecdotes. Ultimately the anecdote, the recounting of a personal version of history, either reinforces or contradicts the traditional broad and general historical view which is itself merely a frame which holds long-accepted anecdotes. History—which is simultaneously both the individual anecdotes and the frame that holds
them—varies depending on the reader's point of view and depending on
the reader's acceptance of the anecdotes. Similarly, both narrow and
broad views have a bearing on how autobiographies are written and read,
and both views provide the context for the anecdote.

The term "frame" provides another link between autobiography and
the work of Goffman and Fineman. Fineman asks the question: "How does
one identify an event within an historical frame, first, as an event,
second, as an event that is, in fact, historically significant?" (54).
Goffman provides one answer when he indicates that there are "basic
frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense
out of events" (Frame Analysis 10). In The Presentation of Self in
Everyday Life, Goffman introduces background as one of the framing
concepts that might be as convincingly applied to autobiography as it is
to social interaction:

When an individual enters the presence of others, they
commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring
into play information already possessed . . . Information
about the individual [his general socio-economic status, his
conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence,
his trustworthiness] helps to define the situation, enabling
others to know in advance what he will expect of them and
what they may expect of him. (Presentation 1)

When Goffman's theory is applied to the interplay between
autobiographical text and reader, one can see some aspects
that relate to Lejeune's autobiographical pact and to Bruss's
rules for the writing of autobiography; within the framework of the
autobiographical situation the reader expects certain things from the
writer. In Goffman, however, there is a more active role for the
reader/audience to play than either Bruss or the early Lejeune assign,
and the writer/actor has a great deal more latitude of action
and a greater latitude in telling the life-story because the autobiography is seen as a presentation of the self rather than as a narrowly historical text. Most critics of autobiography and proponents of autobiographical theory agree that an autobiography tells much about the person in the present who is remembering the past; what is chosen for inclusion and what is excluded depends on how the person who is writing reacts to past events and how those events would affect the writer's present life if they were known. Any rejection of autobiography based on rules that critics may or may not have extrapolated accurately from perceived societal mores does not take into account the fact that the author either may not be aware of an inherent autobiographical pact or may have rejected it in order to react to past and current events in a way that promotes social survival more than it recognizes literary theories.

Of the three Canadians, Grey Owl and James in particular may have felt justified in writing about a past that they claimed to have lived. The level of education that they had attained and the society in which they functioned would not have promoted a consciousness of literary standards and precedents beyond those accepted around the campfire. Grove's background would have made him more aware of the implications of his writing, but, as a translator of Wilde and Gide and Rousseau, he would have been aware also of the testing of the bounds of what society claimed was acceptable. Prior to the current period of exploration, of testing, and of consciousness of the genre, there was little reason and no demand for definition of the terms of reference of autobiography. One might suggest that there usually has been an expectation on the part
of genteel but naive readers of something akin to Lejeune's autobiographical pact, but even if authors inherently were aware of the concept, there was nothing to prevent them from rejecting it.

From a factual point of view, it was as true in the early twentieth century as it is now that any historical, documentary, or biographical confirmation or judgement of an autobiography requires information beyond the text, information which itself will include material that is open to question.\footnote{13} How this basic material is incorporated into or why it has been excluded from autobiographical writings is only made evident by an overview of what is known of the writer's life, again confirming that autobiography can best be read in the context of other writing and information.

There are benefits in considering the Canadian trio when discussing principles of autobiography. All three men came from different cultures and different types of family units, spoke different mother tongues, and had different levels of education. Shirley Neuman considers how the "autobiographical subject" is affected by and "exists at particular and changing intersections of race, nationality, religion, education profession, class, language, gender, sexuality, a specific

\footnote{13} It has been noted that among the most famous of autobiographies are those that include discernable misrepresentation which traditionally is justified or rationalized or in some other way is accepted. Although tradition accepts that the autobiographies of Rousseau, Cellini or Chateaubriand can include fabrication, the question must be asked: by what measure and to what extent can others? Yet even definition would present as many problems as it might solve. If some law of degrees or total prohibition were to be imposed, or any strict definition of measure or degree were to be established, the problem of accepting any autobiography at face value without questioning it, or before material in it is verified, leaves in limbo autobiography at the early stages of its reading history. These difficulties are compounded in situations like those of James, Grey Owl, and Grove.
historical moment, and a host of material conditions" (224). By controlling conditions as the three Canadians did, they were able to affect their "historical moment." In doing so, they achieved some basis of similarity despite the fact that they are not seen to have obvious common life experiences. Within the range of factors that influence the attitudes they brought to autobiography are common elements that have a bearing on their autobiographical impulses. Based on a study of these men, one can consider the national and cultural factors that affect—or force—the autobiographer to present the self in a particular light.

For all three the period between 1905 and 1910 was the one in which they initiated their new lives. Belaney and Dufault were teenagers looking beyond their tradition-bound communities for adventure and opportunity; Greve, older than the other two, had been frustrated in his attempts to succeed in Europe and wanted the opportunity of a fresh start. All three were old-fashioned (that is, their lives were fashioned by, and based on, conservative and traditional values), all three were conscious of the rapidity of the changes being manifested in society, and all three expressed in their work and in their lives their response to these changes. Ernest Dufault had sought a life as a cowboy, and Will James insured that that life—one which he could afford to maintain on his own land at one point in his life—was preserved on paper. Archibald Belaney wanted to live like an Indian woodsman, and Grey Owl lived that life, wrote about it, and spoke out to educate others about the need for conservation. Felix Paul Greve experienced the restrictions that were a function of class, money, and education in
Europe, and Frederick Philip Grove wrote and spoke about the freedoms, responsibilities, and benefits of life in Canada. Despite their differences and despite their ignorance of each other's existences, what all three did have in common was an interest in the imaginative and the artistic. By the 1920s and 1930s, each was successfully presenting himself to a public that was willing to receive messages of hope and idealism, and each, mindful of his successes and acceptance, felt compelled to maintain his status and identity by insuring that only his version of his pre-emigration life was evident. In effect, each was twice born, the second time into a chosen life.

The common aspects of their lives and their appearance on the literary stage at one time may be a coincidence as much as a function of the eras in which they lived, but considered together, they cause a significant peaking on the autobiographical chart, a peaking that draws attention to Canadian examples in the study of autobiography. Exploring the previously unknown and the known aspects of James's, Grey Owl's, and Grove's presentations of themselves is important, not only because of what can be learned about the individuals and their autobiographies, but also because it is one way of establishing a place for these Canadian autobiographies in the larger field of autobiographical studies.
Chapter Three

Who Was That Masked Self?: Will James

"What did you say your real name was?"
"My real name is Magnus Eisengrim; that is who I am and that is how the world knows me. But before I found out who I was, I was called Paul Dempster. . . ."
(Davies 258-259)

The world learned long after his death that the man known as Will James (1892-1942) was born Ernest Dufault in St. Nazaire d'Acton, Quebec, Canada. James kept secret the identity that was his by birth, claiming instead a name and lifestyle that allowed him to play the role of the man he felt he was meant to be. That he arranged to be seen as he wanted to be seen is reflected in the style and content of his autobiography, Lone Cowboy, and only in retrospect do readers recognize that the life experiences of Ernest Dufault were embellished or ignored, rationalized or augmented, to produce the version of his early life recorded in it.

His Canadian roots may be omitted from the autobiography, but James adds one more Canadian face to those whose life-stories should be considered in autobiographical criticism. Included in his life-story are descriptions and anecdotes from periods of his early years spent in Canada. If Goffman's terms are used, James presents material in a way that contributes to the front while hiding his past. A comparison of extratextual materials with the story of his life as presented by Will James reminds readers of the extent to which autobiography can be used
for purposes other than to record historically verifiable facts. Those who read his work have an opportunity to consider how biographical material can be manipulated to present a version of the self, and how that self can play a role accepted by society. His life and works present an opportunity to consider how stories of lives can deviate from the verifiable and biographical information upon which they are based.

Using the cowboy of the popular fiction that he had read as a child as his basis, and augmenting it with his own experiences, James matured to be seen as--and to be--a working cowboy. He was an author and illustrator whose writing and drawing had the authenticity which he had found lacking in most cowboy stories and magazines. James’s cowboy life covered all aspects of fantasy and reality. Because he was an experienced cowhand who had charisma and was physically attractive, he easily found roles as a stuntman and as an extra in movie Westerns. In 1933, two of his own books, Smoky and Lone Cowboy, were adapted for the movies.¹ In his life and in his art, James affected the style of the western cowboy he had become, even as he portrayed the cowhand’s life as he knew it truly was.

In order to maintain control of the version of life presented in his work, James discouraged any editorial correction that might have weakened the presentation of the characters, and, through association, presentation of himself. He emphasizes the importance of his colloquial writing style in his preface to Cowboys North and South:

¹ Smoky was filmed in 1933, starring Victor Jory; in 1945, starring Fred McMurray; and in 1966, starring Fess Parker. Lone Cowboy was filmed in 1933, starring Jackie Cooper (Bell 118). In his James film, Jacques Godbout indicates that other movies were based on stories by Will James: Behold a Pale Horse, Sand, Shoot Out, and The Bravados.
What I've wrote in this book is without the help of the dictionary or any course in story writing. I didn't want to dilute what I had to say with a lot of imported words that I couldn't of handled. Good English is all right, but when I want to say something I believe in hitting straight to the point without fishing for decorated language. . . . (n.pag.)

There is little difference in James' approach in his personal letters, and nothing to indicate that he adopted a primitive writing style for publication only; he wrote the way he learned to speak from the cowboys who taught him English. Although James's work has been criticized for its bad grammar, his presentation supports the authentic tone of his stories. The debate over the acceptability of the unsophisticated writing style of a cowboy, and the effect of this style on young readers, may have detracted from any suggestions that he might be anything other than a cowboy. His relaxed—but evasive—style is evident in the opening of his autobiography. Dated "Pryor, Montana/1930," the introduction is printed as a hand-written letter:

Dear Folks--

Here's a long story for you with no names in it to speak of--so, you won't be bothered by the names of the creeks and cow camps you might never heard of--And of riders you wouldn't know--But if you have been in the cow country and are acquainted with the lay of it you'll have a lot of fun recognizing the spots where I drifted thru--If you don't know the cow country I think you'll like to come out and get lost in it for a spell--You'll know it by the time you ride with me thru these pages--The whole West from the Far North to the South--

There's more than plain riding and covering territory in this story--There's the sunshine, rains, blizzards and crosses of life on the range,--from the times I first remember--my raising amongst cowboys and trappers--my teachings from them, the open country and animals--More teachings after I'd grewed up while always sitting on a horse--sowing my wild oats--reaping 'em--cutting my wisdom teeth on sharp edges of experience, and then finally lining out to ride for High Points------

Here's a gentle horse for you--
Climb on and follow me.

(n.pag.)
It was this very evasiveness, however, that raised some suspicions. In Guide To Life and Literature of the Southwest, J. Frank Dobie points out that Lone Cowboy was "without a date or a geographical location less generalized than the space between Canada and Mexico" (108). Anthony Amaral adds that Ross Santee told him that he had complained to James: "Goddamnit, states have names, and when a cowboy works for an outfit the brand is known" (Amaral xv). Readers now know that James avoided giving specific information which would provide a traceable trail, or he gave a trail that led to dead ends. The lack of place names and dates does for James what avoiding making specific references does for Grey Owl, and what incorrect place names and dates do for Grove; few real clues are left that can allow the men to be followed into their pasts.

Anticipating rejection if his ancestry were known, James created a past that conformed to the juvenile vision of cowboys that he had acquired. In order to mask his trail, James adopted a new language, spoke and wrote in an appropriate dialect, and gave few specific details.

To further circumvent discovery of his origins, James maintained limited contact with his family in Canada. Although he was troubled by his isolation from them, particularly from his mother, he returned home three times only, once while still young (in 1910) and twice (in 1925 and in 1934) after he became established in the United States. A 1934 letter which James sent to his brother prior to the last visit begins in French as Ernest—for so the letter is signed—writes of his concern for his aging mother, but it shifts into English as he expresses his fear to Auguste that his Canadian identity might be revealed:

... I often wish that I hadn't misrepresented myself as I did, but I couldn't dream of the success I've had and now
it's too late to change. And if what you all know ever got in the right hands I'm so well known now that it would be in all the papers overnight and I'll be classed as an imposter which would ruin me for good. Of course I'm not an imposter but I'd be classed as one, and after that I'd just as well go and bury myself. (Appendix A)

Of the three Canadians, James is the only one for whom we have a confession that indicates guilt and doubt about the position in which he found himself.

James's concern is understandable for, as Goffman notes, "a discreditable disclosure in one area of an individual's activity will throw doubt on many areas of activity in which he may have nothing to conceal" (Presentation 64-65): James feared that discovery of a misrepresentation of his early years would discredit all that he had accomplished since he adopted a new life. James claimed that he was not an impostor. It can be argued that, despite the initial deception, the self that he had become as an adult was genuine, was "the product of a scene that comes off, and [was] not a cause of it" (Goffman, Presentation 252-253). Goffman's theories can be used in other ways to support James's position because he accepts that a person can play two roles as long as the audiences for the roles can be kept separate and isolated from each other. The explanation he makes, reminiscent of the words of de Tocqueville, is easily applied to James's situation: "Persons who are strongly upward or downward mobile accomplish this in a grand manner by making sure to leave the place of their origins" (Presentation 138). James corresponded and visited with his family secretly, discouraging them from publically associating him with the Will James who was becoming a Hollywood celebrity. On his last visit to Ottawa (where the Dufaults then lived), James destroyed anything he
could find that might be seen to connect him with the family and his French-Canadian past.

When James died in 1942, the 1934 letter (which Auguste had not burned as he had been directed), helped Auguste Dufault prove to American courts that he was the brother of the American cowboy. Although James had named Dufault in his will, he had dictated the name Ernest Dufault, calling him "the sole heir and survivor of my dear old friend, Old Beaupre [sic] who raised me and acted as a father to me" (Bell 107). That Ernest's name, not Auguste's, was in the will may have been intentional or may have psychological implications, but included consciously or unconsciously, Ernest Dufault's name was linked with James. The reference to "Old Beaupre" indicates the extent to which James attempted to have the story of his Western origins maintained, but it also acknowledges his French-Canadian background.

Partly because of his concern that incriminating materials might destroy him, there are few extant artifacts and documents from James's early life. Even after his death, the Dufault family respected James's wishes to keep his past secret and took no initiatives to reveal it. Auguste Dufault may not have been fully aware of the degree of success that James had achieved in the anglophone community, nor does he appear to have been cognizant that James's public following would have been

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2 Excerpt from Will James's will:

All the rest and residue of said estate, whether real, personal, or mixed, of which I shall be seized and possessed, or to which I shall be entitled at the time of my decease, I give, devise, and bequeath unto Ernest Dufault, 45 St. Andrew Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, he being the sole heir and survivor of my dear old friend, Old Beaupre [sic] who raised me and acted as a father to me. (Bell 107)
interested in the Canadian past. Any comments made about James suffer from distortion as they pass through barriers of time, culture, and language. When the truth became public, twenty-five years after his death, few people who knew him well were intimately and actively affected. Few of his Québec peers--outside of family--came to know of his fame by associating Ernest Dufault with Will James. No one, therefore, had occasion to reminisce about the home-town boy who had succeeded, or to pass on nostalgic tales of his childhood. As a consequence, few stories have survived of his childhood that would indicate what impetus there was for him to leave Quebec to travel west when he was fifteen. Moreover, he had been considered for so long to be an American and had been for so long part of the American film, art, and cowboy communities--an anglophone world--that when it was revealed that he was from St. Nazaire, there was relatively little impact in either the United States or Quebec. Few in the West cared any longer, and few in the Francophone community heard of the published English report; as a consequence, until a recent revival, neither English-speaking nor French-speaking Canadians had an interest in pursuing the Canadian chapter of James's life.

The major versions of James's biography are written by Americans, particularly Anthony Amaral and William Gardner Bell, and lack a Canadian perspective as well as insight and knowledge of Canada and Quebec. The biographies are important, however, because in order to identify and discuss the twists of fact found in the autobiography, one

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3 The Quebec link was made available to the French-speaking public when Paul Morisset published "Un Québécois au Far West" in L'Actualité in December, 1986 (109+).
has to be familiar with several versions of the life. Through comparisons, the concepts of anecdotal hole, historeme, and presentation of self can be demonstrated in James's work. Amaral stumbled on the truth about Will James when he was writing a story about the last decade of James's life (Amaral xi, xiv). His discovery was made early enough for him to interview people who knew James, but Amaral admits that his book is incomplete: "Some definite items about Will James have been left unsaid because I was unable to prove these stories of him. Also, certain individuals are still alive (and left unmentioned in this book)" (179). William Gardner Bell, building on the earlier Anthony Amaral biography, does for Will James what Donald Smith does for Grey Owl. He pieces together fragments of stories that come from many sources, including the Dufault family, and constructs a fairly complete version of the life. He does not have the same constraints as Amaral because fewer of the individuals who knew James were still alive when Bell wrote his biography. Anyone writing after Amaral, however, will wish that he had recorded privately those "definite items left unsaid" for they might provide more intimate information.

The Canadian perspective on James is limited. Jacques Godbout, who directed a film documentary of James's life, Alias Will James, focuses on the Quebec countryside and culture which nurtured Ernest Dufault. He suggests that seeing the touring Buffalo Bill show may have been an impetus for Ernest's interest in the wide open spaces of the
West. It would have had a particular interest for a boy who was fascinated already with ideas of the Wild West. Until he was nine years old, Ernest lived in or near the small village of St. Nazaire d'Acton, but part of his early childhood memories would have included time spent on his uncle's farm set in the open, rolling countryside of the St. Lawrence River valley, just down the road from where Ernest's family lived. The family later lived in the village, running the general store from a building which still stands, although now it is a post office. Behind it is an old shed which is said to have been a blacksmith shop when Dufault was growing up, and beyond it are fields and clumps of trees and brush. The countryside, one in which a child still could imagine being a cowboy, would have been the setting for some of Dufault's childhood dreams of cowboy life.

A paper prepared for presentation to a women's reading club by Auguste Dufault's wife is an informal biography. In it she describes how the family remembers Ernest. When he was a small boy he spent hours, immobile, studying the things he saw around him and especially "des chevaux (son grand amour)." He would then return home to draw what he had seen (Appendix B). As he grew, Ernest began to read comic strips and stories about cowboys and, according to Madame Dufault, "commença a

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4 One should note that both Grey Owl and Will James are assumed to have been encouraged in their aspirations by the travelling Buffalo Bill shows. Grey Owl perfected knife throwing as if he were part of an act, and he claimed that his traces of English accent were the result of a time when he had toured with Buffalo Bill. Like Grey Owl, James appears to have been introduced to the concept of a linkage between real skills and real showmanship, both of which were evident in the Buffalo Bill shows. This association allowed the men to accept the openings and opportunities to explore both the fantastic and the real in their lives.
fermenter en lui ce désir, cette passion pour tout ce qui est grand, immense, sans limite" (3). After the family moved to Montreal, Ernest attended school only as long as was necessary, and, as Madame Dufault notes, he became "irascible, emporté, rien ne l’intéressait." The stage was set for his move. Like all reviews of the past, Madame Dufault’s retrospective may not be entirely dependable for it may rely on the version of James’s life that the family constructed after members began to talk about the uncle that they learned had become famous. Nevertheless, it may help to preserve aspects of the life that were recoverable at the time that people began to realize that Ernest Dufault’s story should be recorded.

In a draft of an undated letter to William Gardner Bell which Robert Dufault possesses, Auguste writes what he recalls of his brother:

[When the family store was sold and we] moved to Montreal, my brother was then 9 years old and continued his schooling in Montreal, ["where" crossed out] left school in 8th grade; he was an average student, although very intelligent but with a one track mind on drawing and adventure, reading extensively the periodicals such as Buffalo Bill, Sitting Bull, Nat Pinkerton and others and all his spare time was used in drawing on whatever scrap of paper he could find and even at that time, the titles he was putting on his works and observations thereto were showing a high degree of natural ingenuity, originality and [literacy?: word unclear]--

More about the young Ernest is included in a rough draft of Auguste’s reply to a letter from Joe DeYong, a cowboy artist who knew Will James. What Auguste writes is important because he suggests that within his anecdotes are found the bases for aspects of James’s version of himself:

[Ernest] bought a 32 calibre revolver, with which we went practicing [sic] shooting in the stone quarries close to the city, and . . . we had to hide from policemen who now and then were hearing the shots—that was a great secret between the two of us because dad or mother never knew of
Another time he could not resist the temptation of riding on horseback, he hired a livery horse in Montreal, came right through to St. Hyacinthe with it, left the horse on the road, walked the rest of the way to the town and hid for two days from the searching cops without eating, the poor fellow wanted to ride, and as he was broke he did it the only way it could be done—Yes Joe, it is strange how he had the western lure in his blood. He was born with it, and although he was raised thousands of miles from the range and cow country, he was a full-fledged cowboy right from the beginning. (Auguste Dufault)

By 1907 Ernest was determined to become a cowboy and, according to Auguste's letter to Bell, "he left for Western Canada with a ticket to Regina, $10.00 in his pocket and a bag of biscuits." This seems to be the lasting image of Ernest Dufault that the family has.

There is little concrete information available on Dufault for the several years spent in Western Canada. When he returned East to visit his family in 1910, he told some of his adventures, including, as Auguste explained to Bell, his experiences working for English-speaking "farmers who exploited him at will making him work for just a bunk and meals." Ernest may have sensed that a French Canadian raised in and near the city of Montreal would have little credibility with a ranch boss, and this may have convinced him to disguise his roots and to change his name. The transition to being the cowboy named Will James thus may have been a natural consequence of opportunities that presented themselves as Ernest Dufault adapted himself to fit conditions when he moved where he could find work. Auguste Dufault's wife also suggests that in some areas French names were usually associated with Métis, and an English name may have been chosen to avoid discrimination (Speech to Ladies' Group 5). In his writing, James occasionally does declare what a cowboy should and should not be. A group of immigrants is described
in *Lone Cowboy* as being "dressed queer" and they are avoided and dismissed: "I can’t guess where they’d come from and what they was doing, but I sure do know that they didn’t belong to the cow country" (132). Although, in fact, people of many nationalities moved into the Canadian west, James had an image of Westerners which he expected that he and others should fulfil.

Except for the 1910 trip home, little is known of the period from 1907 to 1911, but during this time Dufault, as a greenhorn, would not have looked as though he belonged to cow country. He may have drifted on both sides of the border between Canada and United States, but eventually Dufault made his way to the southern part of Saskatchewan, an area which was still being settled after the turn of the century, often by people who were French-speaking. Although few artifacts from this period exist, the Dufault family has postcards written in French from Southern Saskatchewan dated April, 1909 and September, 1911. Bell includes photographs of these in his biography of James (Bell 10-11). Bell also includes a photograph that confuses the trail that James left. Bell claims that the picture was taken in 1907 on Sage Creek in southern Alberta during James’s "first winter on the frontier" (14). Acknowledgement by Bell for use of this photograph is made to the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada-Reno Library. Amaral used the same photograph in his book, noting that it belonged to Virginia Snook who would have inherited it from her father, Earl Snook, the man who stood by James in his last years. An identical print of this photograph, and another that appears to have been taken at the same time, is on file in the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta. Here,
however, J. M. Moir of Calgary is given credit for original ownership, and the accompanying remarks state that James "spent winter of 1911 on the John Moir and brothers ranch in Cypress Hills, Sask., when this photo was taken" (Glenbow Museum, The Archives NA-862-1). Such contradictory evidence makes tracing James's progress difficult, but it also underlines the problems of defining historical truths.

Possibly more reliable information on James's activity and intentions can be derived from an application for two quarter-sections of land southeast of Val Marie made on June 23, 1911 by W. R. James of Notre Dame, Saskatchewan, who claimed that he was an American citizen, born in Arizona (Kalmakoff, 15 May 1992). The application is signed with a script signature but, because signatures on letters and paintings that can be attributed unquestionably to James are printed, a comparison of the signatures is difficult. Local residents confirm that this W. R. James was both an amateur artist and a line rider for the "76" ranch. They claim that James's account in Lone Cowboy of establishing his homestead is actually set in Saskatchewan (Val Marie Echo 14). Lise Perrault indicates that "[h]is homestead in Val Marie on the old Walter Larson ranch, now in The Grasslands National Park, still has his old homestead shack on it . . . ! The hole that was his cellar is still clearly visible" (Perrault, 4 March 1992). Perrault feels that landmarks in southern Saskatchewan may also have found their way into James's fiction: "He describes specific places [:] 70 Mile Butte nearly 3000' above sea level and a landmark for the early pioneer travellers because of the river crossing just below it, and other places around his homestead" (4 March 1992). The Saskatchewan chapter of James's life
offers researchers the first evidence of his activity in the West. It is tempting to think that a line may be drawn between what is fact and what is fictionalized, but as is true of Grey Owl and Grove, the line that separates fact from fiction, past from present, and events on both sides of the anecdotal hole is blurred.

Bopy is one of the problematic characters straddling this line in James’s history. He is an individual who may have some basis in either the Quebec or the Saskatchewan period, or he may be a fabrication. In Lone Cowboy he appears to be a real, if somewhat exaggerated, individual; however, once the Quebec and Canadian West aspects of James’s past were revealed it was easy to dismiss Bopy and to assume that Beaupré had had his genesis in campfire yarns told to explain James’s accent and his familiarity with French. Robert Dufault counters this explanation by proposing a link between the Dufault family and Jean Beaupré (Bopy) that allows a cross-over from fact to fiction. He feels that the sketches of Jean Beaupré resemble Jean Baptiste Dufault, Ernest’s father. The names themselves are similar. The provision in James’s will for “the sole heir and survivor [presumably Auguste Dufault] of my dear old friend, Old Beaupre, who raised me and acted as a father to me” can be seen to confirm this link.

On the other hand, possibly a person actually named Beaupré had had an influence on Ernest Dufault’s life. Perrault claims that Bopy is not a fictitious character, but is a reference to Pierre Beaupré whose homestead was not far from that which James established. She feels that this man “was a father figure to him” (4 March 1992). The Saskatchewan Archives find no Pierre Beaupré connected with Val Marie, but several
"further east in the Willow Bunch area. . . . [The] names Pierre Beaupre and Jean Beaupre are not uncommon in southern Saskatchewan now and would not have been uncommon in 1907" (Kalmakoff, 6 April 1992). The provincial archives also note that a Pierre Dufault applied for a homestead near Val Marie in 1911 but abandoned his claim later the same year; the timing of these moves is intriguingly coincidental to the moves of the man called Will James. Although suspicions may be raised that lead to a belief in a real individual who became Bopy in the autobiography, there is no record of anyone resembling him travelling with Will James or Ernest Dufault. Whether the man known as Bopy is regarded as a fictitious creation, as an actual person, or as James’s alter ego, it is possible that by including him in the will, James was obliquely completing the connection between him and his own father when he named his true father’s son as the heir of Beaupré who had been like a father to him during the transition years of his life.

Fitting that which is claimed by Will James with that which is indicated in the extant records of his life helps to define the link between truth and fantasy--between truthful anecdote and fictionalized anecdote--in his autobiography. In Lone Cowboy it is long after Bopy’s death that James explains that he "filed on a homestead and preemption" on "the bend of a big creek," slightly north of the border between the United States and Canada (218-219). In fact, the land for which W. R. James filed a claim in 1911 (Southwest and Northwest Quarter Sections of Section Number 25, Township 2, Range 12W of the 3rd Meridian) can be found on current maps (National Topographical Series [Canadian]: Maps 72G/4 and 72G/3), and the topography of the area conforms to the
description given by James in his autobiography. The period that James indicates that he was on the homestead coincides with provincial records. Saskatchewan archivist Elizabeth Kalmakoff notes: "It appears that William R. James did not stay long on this land. He failed to 'prove it up' and both quarter-sections were homesteaded by other people in later years" (15 May 1992). In the autobiography James claims to have been a homesteader and cowman for about a year and then became involved in conflicts with the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, first because he was mistakenly accused of the attempted murder of a sheepherder during a bar-room brawl and subsequently jailed and, secondly, because he possessed a horse—which he claimed he had been given—that came from a bunch that had been stolen. Unsure if he could clear his name of a charge of theft, James says that he left before he could be arrested because "the fear of being locked back in a cell and waiting there till all was straightened out, and maybe getting the blame after that in case I couldn't prove I was innocent, was a plenty to make me hanker to move, move fast and get far away" (232). According to the autobiography, James left the area before formal charges could be laid, probably heading south. In the autobiography, this escape coincides with the abandonment of the homestead according to the Saskatchewan archives. Although RNWMP [RCMP] archives do not reveal any entry on Will James or Ernest Dufault, it is possible that when the arrest was made he gave a false name not yet discovered.

A clue about James's timing and philosophy of name changes may be found in the autobiography: "It was lucky for me, I thought, that I wasn't connected with the stealing of them horses while I was at the
Post [in regards to the sheepherder incident]. That's where changing my name as I had, might of saved me . . ."(233-234). It is evident that he was using the name James in Saskatchewan at this time, as is known from his homesteading claim. Therefore, if his claim about name changes is accepted, he must have been using a name other than James when he was given the horse. The name "James," however, appears to have been the one he used fairly routinely from this Saskatchewan period on, despite the impression he gives that it might be connected with the unresolved crime.

In Lone Cowboy James indicates that he might have escaped from the Nevada authorities who apprehended him for rustling, a crime of which he was guilty, but he "decided to stay, and take a chance of clearing the name [he] was then using" (322). Evidently he did not feel the need to make any substantial name change after 1911; he was imprisoned in Nevada under the name Will R. James (Bell, 113), signed "Will James" to sketches made in prison, and enlisted in the United States Army in 1918 as William Roderick James (Bell 12, 91). The few extant postcards he sent home are usually signed Ernest, but one dated November 24 (which Bell has determined must have been written in 1911) has two signatures: Ern and W. R. JAMES. He reverts to signing "Ernest" to his August 30, 1917 postcard from Goldfield, Nevada (in the possession of Robert Dufault), but it is only with his Canadian family that he uses his original name.

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5 James used variations of his names over the years (C. W. Jackson, W. R. James, William Roderick James, Bill James) and occasionally signed his work, Frank Farrington.
There is, however, no confirmation of either the name under which James travelled or of his activities between 1911 and 1914. In his autobiography he says that he rode as far as Mexico and worked there under another name, returned to the States, re-entered Mexico where he worked again before he started heading north, and eventually made his way back to the area where he had homesteaded in Canada. There he picked up Smoky, the horse he had left with a cowman in Saskatchewan before his escape (234, 275). Although it is possible that James rode from Saskatchewan to Mexico and back before his imprisonment in Nevada (a journey of about 6000 kilometres as the crow flies), current information indicates that he did not get as far south at this stage of his life as he claims to have been. Bell writes that "a drifting cowboy named Ed Blackmore" claims to have worked with "Bill James" in the fall of 1911 in Idaho (13). The Default family has a postcard with the date November 24 (no year visible) sent from Idaho. Bell uses another postcard to the family to continue tracing James during this period: "In a postcard from Pocatello, Idaho, dated November 1912, he informed his parents that he was 'heading for southern Nevada, the real horse country'"(14). It could be that James's experiences as a drifter, recorded in his autobiography, are basically accurate, but that the range of his travels may not be as broad as is claimed. The introductory remarks to Lone Cowboy present one reason for not including names but there is another one possible: anyone trying to trace him, using the itinerary he provides, would have difficulties.

To some extent, James warns readers to question his name, for he expounds at length in the autobiography on Bopy's philosophy about
changing names, and, through what is written, some idea of James's own point of view may be gained:

He'd tell me that it always pays to keep a good disguise in case a feller got in trouble, and another thing, to take on a new name with every new country while drifting around, whether you get in trouble or not, because then, if you do get in trouble more than once, it would be hard to trace you back and connect you with the other. Besides, he'd say, while you're drifting around and not doing no particular good to your right name there's no use packing it. Save it till the time comes when you're settled and when you can make it sound like something besides just a name. (Lone Cowboy 72)

James comments that he did as Bopy advised, but he also admits that it was confusing remembering which name was the current one if he needed to sign his name or answer when he was called: "So, with all of that, and soon as I thought I would behave myself, I began to use one name for good" (73). From this point in his life and in his story of his life, Will James became the name that signified the person, the narrator, the artist, and the author, fulfilling to some extent Lejeune's original demands for autobiography. It is worth noting that although James hid his Canadian roots, he did not hesitate to tell of his criminal activities. The latter fit into the image he was trying to create; the former did not.

Concern about discovery of his initial identity, kept in the back region of his life, continued to haunt James, and the change of name that had seemed to be a good idea at the beginning of his cowboy career was one that by the 1930s he could see had some disadvantages. The letter that he wrote to Auguste Dufault in 1934 indicates that James was deeply troubled that the name by which his family knew him might be revealed. The time would never come when he felt confident that Dufault
could be used; he feared that the "something" that it would sound like besides "just a name," as Beaupré put it, would in his case be "imposter."

After his imprisonment for rustling (14 November 1914 to 16 April 1916), James's activities as recorded in the autobiography appear to be verifiable, but they do not necessarily happen in the order he describes. People remember working with him when he began as a riding extra in the movies in 1916 (Amaral 16). Bell says that a postcard from Goldfield, Nevada was sent to his family in August, 1917 (26), but Anthony Amaral also says that James rode the rodeo circuit in Alberta that August (19-20). At some time, James must have been involved with Calgary area rodeos or the Calgary Stampede for he appears to have known Guy Weadick, one of the Stampede founders. In an undated letter in response to an invitation from Weadick to attend the Calgary Stampede he writes of "hightailing it up that country again next summer--I would like to be present at the Calgary doings sure enough, but anyway--when I go up again I'm thinking of making a noise on your back porch" (Weadick W361 f2).\footnote{The Calgary Stampede was held in 1912 and 1919 and became an annual event in 1923. Weadick was general manager until 1932. (Cass, 23 April 1992)} Heading the first page of the letter to Weadick is a sketch of James chained to his drawing table with a Corona typewriter at his feet; it must have been written after James was well established as an author and illustrator (about 1924). This correspondence helps readers to verify or question the chronology of the autobiography.

James was reluctant to deviate from his official, sketchy, version of his life. Weadick wrote James again in 1934, this time asking for
information to be included in a book he was writing, *Alberta Cow-

Country.*7 The response to this letter indicates James's outlook on his past at that time:

Maybe you've noticed in my books that I seldom mention a known place or name. Most of the stories I write are from true happenings, what I've seen or experienced myself but I never mention the right names of the parties that's in them. That's a sort of careful habit with me.

So, the only way I see, if you want to put me in your book, is to make a sort of a story around me, like with in *LONE COWBOY,* and you'll find about all I care to leave out [sic] in that book. . . .8 (Weadick, W287 f30)

James goes on to say that he is including a copy of biographical data he prepared for a lecture bureau, but the five typewritten pages are a summary of much that is in *Lone Cowboy.* James never appears to break his "careful habit" of silence about his past. The *Lone Cowboy* account tells a full story of James's supposed life, indicating that James had a natural ability to draw, learned to be a cowboy, looked for advice and encouragement from an unnamed Western artist, wasted some money on a confidence man, became involved in a rustling scheme, was imprisoned, discovered his horse Smoky had been stolen while he was in jail, had an opportunity to do film work in Hollywood, enlisted in the army, found Smoky on his discharge, worked at a rodeo both as a rodeo hand and as an artist, and subsequently made contacts that allowed him access to the publishing world. The range of activity and the shifts between a lack of detail and an abundance of it in the accounts of his adventures are


8 This choice of words has an ironic effect; readers would very much like to know what it is that James leaves out!
reminiscent of Grove's *A Search For America*, yet records of Will James's activities confirm that much of what he wrote of this stage of his life is basically true.

In his autobiography, James indicates how his careers as artist and as cowboy complemented each other. His experiences as a cowboy and broncobuster furnished him with material for his stories and illustrations, and, eventually, when riding injuries caused him to consider retiring, he investigated a future in which he could be an artist exclusively. In *Lone Cowboy*, James describes how during the recovery period from one of these accidents, he decided to visit "an artist feller in a big town not far away which the cowboys all knowed or heard of" (283). James says that he had "been packing some post cards which had been printed from his work" (277). The artist, unnamed in the autobiography, was C. M. Russell, and a postcard featuring a photograph of "The Cowboy Artist," sent in 1911 from Kelvinhurst, Saskatchewan to the Dufault family, indicates that James was aware of Russell quite early. Joe De Yong confirms that James visited Russell but was not encouraged by him (Bell 27). James's account of the meeting with Russell indicates that it took place before he went to jail (*Lone Cowboy* 328) and before his Hollywood experiences (358), but this is a rearrangement of actual chronology: the jail term was served first, the early movie work followed, and, according to Amaral, James met Russell between 1917 and 1919 (Amaral 21). The changes in chronology and the excluded information contribute to James's romanticising of some aspects in order to make his story fit the image one might have of a cowboy. He includes very little, for example, about Alice in his autobiography:
real cowboys don't have wives. Despite the changes, much about which James writes can be seen to be based on actual events remembered from his past.

Like Grove and Grey Owl, James includes descriptions of vicarious experiences and those that he has imagined, so that many of the details of a frontier childhood are known now to be part of James's lifelong engagement with fantasy. Nevertheless, the description, captured both in sketch and in word, of areas and events may be based on reality, with the dates and James's chronological relationship to them adjusted as the story undergoes changes while it is pulled through the anecdotal hole. When James describes how ineffective he was the first time he tried to help Bopy build a fire or picket the horses, he may be drawing on personal experiences of his own years as a teen, not those of a toddler. On the other hand, the northern experiences, which supposedly took place somewhere between Yellowknife and the MacKenzie, and the descriptions of dog teams and pet wolves probably have no basis in fact (Lone Cowboy, Chapter 7). The shading from truth, to factually-based untruths, to total untruths makes the story of his early years fascinating yet challenging to read as insight into the life is confounded by the imaginative presentation of fact and the addition of fantasy.

This shading of fact into fantasy is found also in the artistic depictions of the past. Memory was important in James's art work because he worked from memory, not from life models; thus, the settings and subjects of his art work are all from the past, as he remembered it. James said that when he drew horses he was guided as much by the memory of how they felt as they moved under a rider as he was by how he
remembered them looking. With this in mind, it is worth considering how James explains one illustration of himself as a child which is included in his autobiography: "I layed flat on my belly and, propped on my elbows, I drawed till the sun, beating down on my backbone, made me hunt a tree for shade" (Lone Cowboy 29). It would be interesting to know whether Auguste Dufault's wife's description of the young Ernest lying on his stomach drawing on wrapping paper was the result of a family recollection of Ernest or whether it was inspired by the sketch in Lone Cowboy. If the former were true it would support the argument that hidden aspects of the past find their ways into autobiography, even pictorial aspects of autobiography. Sketching in the prone position in St. Nazaire might be a memory that James pulled through an anecdotal hole to emerge as an experience described as taking place in the West. Drawing while lying on one's stomach, however, is neither easy nor comfortable; based on this observation one might question whether this could be a possible depiction of an authentic memory. On the other hand, if it is remembered that children can take positions that adults cannot, James might very easily have recorded a memory from his Dufault childhood.

The art work that James includes may provide clues to the areas of the country through which he travelled. A sketch that Bell reproduces in his biography of James is entitled "The Winter of ,09 & ,10 [sic] On the [brand indicated] Range" (27). Just as most of James's cowboys have similar features and cannot be distinguished or identified, the livestock in his illustrations rarely are branded, possibly because James has taken precautions to remove clues; this sketch is one of the
few where a brand is visible. Bell feels that the style of this sketch indicates that it was executed during the period between 1915 and 1917 and "takes James back to his days on the Canadian range" (121). According to Wallace Stegner’s recollections of the area, as recorded in Wolf Willow, longhorns (featured in the sketch) would have been found in southern Saskatchewan and Alberta when James was in the area. These cattle are frequently found in James’s illustrations and in his stories of ranch life in which he seeks to perpetuate the ways of the Old West. James laboured to live up to the image he created, and he tried to preserve the Old West in his art, in his writings, and even on his ranch where he banned hunting, refused a paved road, and raised longhorns (Amaral 99-100).

Myself, I liked the old longhorn best and always will, even tho they don’t bring as much money. And, regardless of what all’s been said about the longhorn being of the past, . . . [sic] popular talk, I’m saying now that I’ve rode for many outfits that owned many a thousand longhorn; and I don’t have to go any further back to tell of the time than 1914, only sixteen years ago. (Lone Cowboy 168-169)

James’s autobiography may be seen to be written not only to verify the version he has of his own past but also to support his claim that the West, as he writes about it, did exist in the twentieth century. He describes working with herds of wild cattle on one occasion: "It strikes me funny now when I hear tell that the cow country was all shot in 1890. . . . This was sometime no earlier than 1907" (172). It is worth noting that this was the year that Ernest Dufault left Quebec and, although it is unlikely that he would have had the ability or

7 During part of this period James was in jail.
opportunity to work a herd himself, the date he gives indicates that he has not claimed to have seen something at a time when he would not have been in the area. He creates his story of his past out of events that he could have witnessed both before and after he became Will James.

Further links between the experiences of James and Dufault are possible. James's description of the incident when he ingested the lye that Bopy used to clean traps parallels Amaral's description of an incident in St. Nazaire when Ernest was ten years old (Amaral 128-129; James, Lone Cowboy 37). James indicates that he was about thirteen years old the spring that he returned south to "the prairie and cow country again," the year Bopy disappeared (Lone Cowboy 123). If his June birthday is seen as his fourteenth, then James is allowing the young hero of his autobiography to begin his lone travel in cow country in 1906, about a year earlier than Ernest Dufault actually headed west. Like Ernest, the young Will James had difficulty telling his story to those he met because he had spoken French exclusively for many years. James stayed with the "home ranch of the big cow outfit," where he had spent several months with Bopy years before, buying and breaking in a new saddle, outfit and boots. This period can be compared to Dufault's apprenticeship years in Saskatchewan. When the boy in the autobiography left the familiar home ranch, he was about the same age as Ernest Dufault was when he struck out on his own. Both had left the only family they had known, "and there was nothing ahead for [either] but great scopes of country and a freedom to match it" (James, Lonesome Cowboy 140). Will James had a gun, a six-shooter of his father's that he found in Bopy's wagon (James 141). Just as Dufault's revolver would
not have been practical for shooting small game, James's gun was not appropriate so he "decided [he] would get . . . a saddle-gun" (Lone Cowboy 147), a decision that Dufault also would have made at some point. According to the autobiography, when James stopped at ranches in his travels, he left behind sketches of horses, just as Lise Perrault indicates he did in Saskatchewan.

Other parallels between Dufault's life and that which Will James claims are easily found if one looks closely at anecdotes and compares the James and Dufault experiences. Although the Will James of the autobiography headed south, looking for the area where he had been raised which he and Bopy had left, the young man who left Quebec headed for the country he had always felt should be his home, the Southwest which he had experienced vicariously: "The further South I went the more familiar it got and I begin to feel mighty contented, like as if I was at home and amongst my own folks" (Lone Cowboy 158). As he recounts his life-story, James lingers over his description of two of the ranches he visited. At one the "old lady, widowed, had two boys but she seemed to figger like she ought to have one more" (148). A clear correlation can be found with the Dufault family. Jean-Baptiste Dufault died in 1926, the year after one of Ernest's visits home. When Will James was writing his autobiography four years later, it is possible that he was looking back on what might have happened if he had returned home when his father died, for he knew that his mother would once again like to have all three of her sons with her. In the autobiography he may be transferring sentiments from his Canadian emotional experience into the American situation about which he writes:
The mother said she had a plenty to keep me on if I would only stay, but I felt I had a plenty too, plenty to learn, and I was aching to see what was ahead. Experiencing my freedom kept me going. I left a few drawings of bucking horses which I'd made of evenings. The old lady kissed me goodbye, I shook hands with the boys and I rode on. (148-149)

The next ranch James describes has a family of three girls and a boy: "Another good table was spread out for little me, another good lady kept a filling my cup and plate, and many questions was asked that I didn't answer" (149). The description of the periods that James spent with these families may be based on memories of his own family and of visits home. Ernest Dufault had been raised in a family of three girls and three boys, but the oldest brother, Phillipe, had moved to the United States before Ernest did. Auguste, the youngest in the family, was the one upon whom his parents depended, the one who settled nearby, and the one who maintained the family traditions. If Auguste is the prototype for the boys in the families that James visited, Ernest Dufault may have felt that Auguste both admired and envied his adventurous brother, just as the boys in his story admired Will James. In the account of his travels after Bopy's death, James appears to make the transition from the verifiable aspect of his life in his mid-teen years to the role he has assumed as an orphan, but his family in Quebec is not forgotten as he writes.

As part of his transition, James uses basic facts from his past experiences, both those experiences he can acknowledge and those he must keep hidden as he assumes his new role. He also incorporates displaced

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8 Monique Pelland of St. Nazaire d'Acton remembers that her mother had seen sketches sent by Ernest Dufault to his mother.
experiences into the autobiography. Although James claims that he had been "riding pretty steady from the time [he] could walk and riding had got to be a lot more natural to [him] than walking" (165), the descriptions of his first riding experiences as a working cowboy could easily be those of Ernest Dufault as he learned the difference between riding work horses or urban saddle horses in Eastern Canada and working with the rougher Western horses. As Amaral notes: "There's no use saying they was wild, for the range-bred horse is just as wild as any wild horse. He's just as different from the Dobbin of the city or farms as a wolf is from a poodle dog . . ." (Amaral 211). Ernest Dufault would have known of the temperament of the Dobbins he rode in Quebec but, as Will James, wrote of his experiences as if he had only encountered Dobbins in Hollywood and on the farms on which he worked.

Throughout the James autobiography there are subtle rewritings of the Dufault past. Just as Ernest Dufault in his early years in the West would have had to explain where he was from and why he was travelling alone, so also does the young Will James. On one occasion, James has to convince a prospector that he had not stolen Bopy's wagon which he is trying to sell, and he tells of Bopy's death. On another he tells his story when he is job-hunting to ensure that the foreman to whom he is applying does not think that he is a wild youngster who has run away from home. Whether these incidents, or variations of them, actually took place does not matter as much as does the fact that Dufault apparently realized that the story of personal tragedy that he had adopted increased his stature in the eyes of those to whom he told it. As the orphaned Will James, Dufault possibly discovered that he was
received more sympathetically than he would have been if he were merely a French-speaking boy in search of fulfilment of a dream. Once he had established a new life on the story he fabricated, however, he was not able to return to the life upon which the fabrications were based.

James's hidden past and his limited contacts with his Canadian family do not appear to have presented problems for him until he was in his forties. As a young drifter on the Canadian prairies, he was in an unestablished society that included many non-English speaking immigrants. There was little about him that distinguished him from others, and there is no record of how he projected himself during the period when he learned to be a cowboy and learned to speak English. Because James subsequently cut all links with this transition period in Western Canada, he was secure behind the front which he created in the United States. By the time he had settled and established contacts there, James was what he claimed to be; only his story of his past was fictionalized. He adapted himself to live the part he chose to play, but the unrevealed aspects of his history remained in his backstage area.

James's concern about his hidden past was not discussed openly, but it may have led to periods of brooding and the drinking that led to his death. For the last decade of his life alcohol interfered with James's writing, with his art, and with his friendships. Eventually, he lost his best friends, Elmer Freel and Fred Conradt (who was also his brother-in-law and foreman), and separated from his wife, Alice Conradt.
James. It is assumed that neither Alice James nor any of James’s buddies knew of his Canadian background. Although they were aware that James and some of his money disappeared occasionally, they would not have known that money and time were spent with family in Canada. James’s alienation from the family of his birth and from the friends and family of his adopted home meant that none of these was left to promote or care for him or for his work in his last years. On his death, at his request, his ashes were scattered from an airplane over the area in Nevada where he rode, drew, and wrote. In death, as in life, he left an unmarked trail.

James’s work and the story of his life survived him. Ultimately it took an outsider, Anthony Amaral, curious about the people named in James’s will, to make public the connection with Ernest Dufault. As has been indicated, by the time the secret was revealed, too many years had passed to acquire extensive first-hand information about James/Dufault that might have given greater insight into the man. Moreover, cultural and language differences between the people from the stages of his life interfered with investigation and publication of material that might have been obtained from living individuals who knew James or Dufault and

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9 The trio called themselves the “one-elevens,” an association James acknowledged by including "111" as part of his signature in some of his paintings.

10 Bell wonders how the family in Canada could have remained a secret because James commented in his 1934 letter to Auguste that he had been glad to find letters from his relatives waiting for him at the ranch one day (Bell 118); however, unless Alice opened all his fan mail and correspondence, letters from family could have arrived unnoticed.

11 In the end, he relied on Earl Snook, an art supplies dealer and friend, for both personal and business guidance and support.
who might have been able to explain why and how Dufault became James. His audiences were kept separate even after death because of geographical and language differences.

James' life is better celebrated in the United States than it is in Canada. The Will James Junior High School is named after him, and there is a bronze statue of James branding a calf in Billings, Montana.\(^{12}\) He has been the subject of several biographies and film documentaries. His art was collected for a special exhibit in Casper, Wyoming in 1985, and several articles have been published about him in American magazines dealing with the West. On the rare occasions when reference is made to Will James on radio and in newspapers, the English-Canadian press tend to depict him as a curiosity of our history. It was not until L'Actualité published an article on Will James that francophone Canadians learned of the Ernest Dufault in Will James's past.\(^{13}\) He became promoted locally in Quebec by Pierre St. Germaine, beginning when he was the principal of a school in St. Nazaire d'Acton, and by Lise Perrault of Val Marie, Saskatchewan. In 1988 Jacques Godbout produced the film, Alias Will James, in which working cowboy and singer Ian Tyson presents his song "The Ballad of Will James." Tyson comments that Will James is responsible for his "whole life," for he had read James's books as a child and been influenced by them. Tyson was not alone for, as Godbout indicates in his film, francophone Quebecois

\(^{12}\) Lise Perrault includes this information in a short history of James that she added to the March 1992 letter.

\(^{13}\) Yves Alix attempted to translate Lone Cowboy into French but he limited his translation to the early chapters only (Will James: L'enfance d'un cow-boy solitaire). With this exception, James's work is not currently available in a French translation.
cowboys in the late twentieth century still move West, now proudly claiming Will James as a role model.

*Lone Cowboy* tells the story of Will James. Before he found out who he was, Will James was called Ernest Dufault. Included in the autobiography, but out of sight in the background, are anecdotes from the past. The autobiography, however, does not acknowledge the story of Ernest Dufault, a man who changed his name, his language, his nationality, and his history. It was Will James, cowboy and artist, that the world came to know, and more recently has come to know in a new way as his props are exposed, as details of his history are revealed, and as the anecdotes from his Dufault past are explained.
Chapter Four
Fly-By-Night: Grey Owl

We all forget many of the things we do, especially when they do not fit into the character we have chosen to be. (Davies 262)

The character that Grey Owl (1888-1938) chose to be was an Indian with Scottish blood who was concerned about the effects of civilization encroaching on the Canadian wilderness and its inhabitants. He is remembered primarily for his work with beaver and for his speaking tours and his books about them and the wilderness of Canada. By adopting the role of an unsophisticated chronicler of the beaver and of their land, Grey Owl appealed to a wide and sympathetic audience. He came to represent the concept that one individual can make a difference in the world. In order to take on the role of a legitimate chronicler, Grey Owl had to ensure that people forgot or did not connect him with the Englishman hidden in his background, Archie Belaney. He withheld from his readers and from his audience the fact that while he lived in the woods he drew on the experiences, the reading, and the dreams of the English schoolboy he had been. This aspect of his past was absent from his own story of his life, but it has been presented by biographers who have examined the process whereby the young Archibald Belaney became Grey Owl, a man who gained international fame both for being a Native advocate of nature and for being a Native who wrote about what he had seen and done during his life.
Grey Owl's own published history, *Pilgrims of the Wild*, is more limited in scope than the version presented by his biographers or the one he fashioned orally. In it, he focuses on the period in his life when he made the transition from hunter to caretaker of the beaver and he tells of his experiences as he became a conservationist and writer. Like James, Grey Owl achieved his aim of living and working in the world about which he had read as a child, and, like James, he gained fame telling about his work. Moreover, like both James and Grove, he wrote about his life in a way that led people away from access to facts about his early years that conflicted with those given in his own versions of his life-story, facts that might have jeopardized the success achieved under his chosen identity. After he died and his original identity was revealed, debates about whether he had been a fraud arose and were recorded in the news media, both in Canada and England. In his defence it can be said that he played the role that he had adopted so successfully that the person who died was Grey Owl, not the Englishman Archibald Belaney; he had become the person he presented himself to be. He nurtured those aspects of his past that could be developed to support the front which he erected and he hid those that undermined it. His autobiography became a record of the years for which he wanted to be remembered, and a record of the way in which he wished to be remembered.

Grey Owl endeavoured to present himself as a person with a primitive background, but although he claimed to be ignorant of many of the values and skills that were identified with the English and European settlers of Canada, hints of his British education and background could slip into his foreground. In a 1932 letter to Lloyd Roberts (quoted in
Wilderness Man), he gives his version of his past and he attempts to
defuse doubts:

"Say, Lloyd, there is a most damnable misrepresentation going around that I am a college man. This hurts me badly, as anything I may have accomplished in the literary line, little that it is, has been the result not of education, but thought, observation, a sympathetic insight into my life-long environment, and an absolute lack of training in writing. . . . An aunt gave me, during her own vacations, a ground-work, English, History and Geography, and the rudiments of Arithmetic; but particularly English, and I have made but little use of it until urged by the desire that, having spent my life assimilating a host of impressions of the Wilderness, I now desired to express them. Civilization has been kind to me, taken my message to heart, elevated me to a position above what I rightly deserve; but it did not produce me, and it almost never evolves my kind. (Dickson 223)

Although much of what Grey Owl writes here is true, in an attempt to promote himself as a rustic, Grey Owl had to claim that the education he received never went beyond the incidental vacation attentions of an aunt; in this letter, though, his vocabulary betrays him. Indeed, when he corresponded or relaxed with friends and associates, he could adopt the degree of sophistication or rusticness that they set. In order to maintain the image he wished to create in his articles and books, however, he chose his words carefully. He was aware that unsophisticated language acted as a buffer between him and his background. Because of this, he demanded that no change be made in his writing style. Assumed during his lifetime to be a sign of aboriginal pride, a sample of which is expressed in his letter to Deacon, his refusal to be corrected was likely due to his desire to present a less
than perfect product in order to conceal the level of his education and
to deflect attention from questions about his past.¹

Infuriated by editorial interference in *The Men of the Last Frontier* [Men] when it was published by *Country Life*, he arranged that his next publisher, Lovat Dickson, make no stylistic corrections or editorial changes to *Pilgrims of the Wild* (Dickson, *Wilderness Man* 218; Smith 265).² It was published as a "genuine book of nature" (Dickson, *The House of Words* 163) and, because it was accepted by the public and the publisher as such, it complemented instead of interfered with Grey Owl's chosen role.³ W. A. Deacon commented that *Pilgrims of the Wild* [Pilgrims] was superior to *Men* for the very reason that it did not bear "the same evidence of conscious care and high polish" (Thomas and Lennox 152). Grey Owl knew how to write for his chosen audience, an audience with which he was familiar for it was to a great extent the young people of Britain. He knew from his own experience what people who did not live in the wilderness wanted to read.

Despite his conscious appeal to an audience, it can be argued that Grey Owl's lack of polish might be for reasons innocent of subterfuge. In *The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life*, Ernest Goffman comments

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¹ School records indicate that English, along with French and Chemistry, was the strongest of Archie Belaney's subjects (Smith 19).

² Principles as well as image-creation were compromised by the change of title of his first book from *The Vanishing Frontier*. Grey Owl did not approve of the shift of the focus to the "men" of the frontier; his stress was on the frontier that was being threatened by civilization.

³ Control over his own work was very important to Grey Owl. In a letter to Anahareo (dated 27 September 1934) he writes that the English publishers have "conceded every point" (Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 2 Folder 3).
that "the performer can be taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality" (17). This could be the case with Grey Owl. By 1935, when he published *Pilgrims*, he had lived away from settled life and remote from many of the influences of civilization for almost thirty years. In his own autobiography, Bill Guppy recalls that Archie Belaney had an English accent in 1906, but in the 1930s Grey Owl spoke as did the people with whom he lived (128). Although he had received a good early education, Belaney was in his midteens when he left for Canada. It is possible that in the twenty years which passed between the time the reluctant student, Archie Belaney, left school at age fifteen and the woodsman who came to be known as Grey Owl started writing for publication, he may have lost confidence in his writing skills.

Grey Owl insisted that several self-improvement books, including *The Irving Writing System* and *The Power of Will* brought by Anahareo when she joined him near Abitibi in 1925, were his inspiration and guide (*Pilgrims* 18). Certainly he may have benefited—or believed that he would benefit—from consulting them when he began writing after years of non-intellectual activities as he lived as a backwoodsman. When he mentions in his autobiography the books that he consults, he brings into his front stage area props which he can exhibit that explain why he is able to write as he does. On the other hand, the very claim of his reliance on books allows them to be props in his performance, props used to divert the attention of those who might suspect the actual reason for his ability, the one he has hidden and which the audience must be discouraged from finding—his middle-class English education.
Although Grey Owl may have attempted to write in a way that was neither sophisticated nor literary, his published work is highly readable and reflects more familiarity with words and writing conventions than he cared to admit—or than he could have gained from self-help books.

In fact, Grey Owl's background was ideal for the naturalist-author which he became; he had enough education to know how to write, enough interesting experiences about which to write, and enough common sense to know how much of his education to use, how to supplement it—and when not to use it. The front that he presented was carefully structured to allow him to represent himself in a way that would allow few suspicions of the materials and resources which he kept in the wings and upon which he drew to facilitate his presentation of self in his daily life and in his writings. Just as he adopted a severe public visage which he felt was Indian-like, so also he thought he succeeded in adopting a writing style that might be attributed to a person who had rudimentary education (Smith 118, 267). In From the Land of Shadows, Donald Smith presents the reaction of Belaney's nurses of 1916 as it was reported in the People's Journal (Dundee) after Grey Owl's death:

He spoke English very badly. He wrote me dozens of letters. His spelling was simply awful. No educated Englishman could spell so badly. His father, he said, was a Scotsman, and his mother an Apache Indian. (Smith 60)

If the letter to a nurse included in Tales of an Empty Cabin is an example of the style used in those letters—or is a copy of an actual letter sent by Grey Owl as Smith suggests (Smith 250)—Grey Owl was struggling to present a version of himself that would fulfill an English woman's expectations of a Canadian Indian:
Dear Miss Nurse:

... March 20th/18 Well I lay up today all day in my camp and it is a soft moon which is bad believe me, so I write some more to your letter. I travel all day yestdy on the lakes in water and slush half way to my knees on top the ice. It will be an early spring. My wound is kinda p. me on the blink, to hard goin. ...

... Once I walked amongst flowers in the spring sun and now i stand on dry leaves an the wind blows cold through the bare tree tops. I think it tells me that wind that pretty soon no one cannot ever hear me. That must be so because I cannot see my own trail ahead of me. a cloud hangs over it....

... Now the curtain is pulled down across the sun and my heart is black. A singing bird comes and sings an says I do this an I do that an things are so with me an I will listen an forget there is no sun, until the bird goes, thats good, I am ony an injun and that bird sang for me. ...

(Tales 91-95)

Belaney's presentation of himself is evident here; this, as the nurse pointed out, is not the writing of an "educated Englishman," not even one who had lived in the woods for many years. An excerpt from a manuscript, dealing with learning to paddle, that Archie gave to Ivy in 1917 indicates the entirely different writing style he used when writing to her, about the same time he wrote to the nurse:

Michelle was a revelation to me. His movements when instructing me were quick and decisive; almost startlingly sudden at times, and in direct contrast to his demeanour when unoccupied. I despaired of ever learning a tenth part of what he showed me. (Smith 62)

When Belaney began publishing his work a decade after his war service, he adopted a style aimed at a general readership, neither as crude as that of the letter to the nurse, nor as elegant as that of the letter to Ivy. Pilgrims of the Wild is written to be accessible, descriptive of Grey Owl's world and of his association with it:

Wet, heavy, clammy days, such as I had not believed possible at that time of the year, settled down over the land, smothering it; days when the snow packed and sagged,
clogging the snowshoes so as to reduce walking to little more than a struggle to successfully shift the weight from one unstaple [sic] foot-hold to the next before punching through to the bottom. This was followed by cold that covered the dripping trees with an icy coat, and crusted the snow with a brittle glassy shell that would not support the weight of a man. So that no matter how warily I walked I now broke through at each successive step, and with a crash that jarred my whole body, effectually breaking the steady rhythm so essential to the proper manipulation of snowshoes. (108-109)

By describing his setting and his reaction to it, the man who called himself Grey Owl was able to take his readers into his world.

What is clear is that in his presentations and in his writings, Grey Owl had the hidden benefit of an Englishman's insight to know what his non-Native audience would anticipate and would accept from an Indian in both style and content. Consequently, what he presented fulfilled his audience's expectations; occasionally, however, in public performance, this presentation could be at the cost of authenticity. Ironically, if he had been born and raised an Indian, Grey Owl possibly would not have known how to act in order to be accepted by the non-Indian people; as a white man he recognized the artifice necessary to be accepted by the public and to give the public what it wanted. On the other hand, he might not have been able to achieve initial success and acceptance as a woodsman if he had retained his English identity; he might have been dismissed as one of Canada's many remittance men. For Grey Owl the manner of presentation of the self-that-he-chose-to-be allowed him success.

Grey Owl hid much of his background, but he never severed his links with his past. The family of Archie Belaney had some contact with
him from the time he sailed for Canada, and it is possible that he returned to Hastings for a visit (in 1907, according to Smith, page 38; in 1911, according to James Shortt--National Archives: RG84 "A Study in Conviction and Fantasy"). Although there is no evidence of initial financial support from his family, he received monthly cheques for a period after the 1912 death of his grandmother, presumably from her estate (Smith 46). When Grey Owl as an adult explained his education, he gave credit to his aunts, especially Ada, but he avoided indicating that they were in England, not America. On the other hand, old schoolmates would have known that Archie was in Canada because an article about his life was published in the Hastonian, his old school paper, in 1911 (Smith 242). Smith notes that in it Archie, who even as a child had claimed that he had "Red Indian" blood in his veins," tells of hunting in the backwoods of Canada but does not mention his Indian wife, Angele, or their daughter (Smith 17).

Raised by his two aunts, the young Archie allowed those who questioned or teased him about his parentless household to believe that his missing father still was in

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4 Archie left England on March 29, 1906. He sailed on the SS Canada, arriving in Halifax on April 6. Records indicate that he was to catch a CPR train to Toronto the same day (The Public Archives of Nova Scotia, MFM 12513).

5 According to information derived from Smith, Archie married Angele Egwuna in 1910, and they had two daughters, born in 1911 (Agnes) and 1925 (Flora). He fathered the son of Marie Girard (Gerrard, Jero) with whom he had had a relationship since 1913, but he left before the boy's birth in 1915, possibly unaware that Marie was pregnant. Marie died of T.B. later that year. He married Ivy Holmes in England in 1917, and was divorced on grounds of bigamy in 1922. Anahareo and he claimed to have taken part in an Indian ceremony of marriage and lived together intermittently from 1926 to 1936; Dawn was born in 1932. Using the name Archie McNeill, he married Yvonne Perrier in 1936. Dickson mentions a son born to Angele in 1918, but John Diefenbaker indicates that Archie did not father this child (Wilderness Man 106; Diefenbaker 120).
North America, birthplace of his mother, an Indian (sometimes later described by Archie as the daughter of Cochise). His own move to North America seemed to be a natural consequence of the stories he had heard of his father's travels. Later, when stationed in England during the war, Archie renewed ties with his aunts in Hastings but was even then in a state of transition to his new identity; he declared to his army unit that he was Mexican-born, the son of a Scottish father and an Indian, and claimed to have fought with a Mexican unit. He saw his aunts again while recuperating from the foot wound he received in Flanders, and he later corresponded with them from Canada. He wrote about his Indian wife, Anahareo—"my wife Gertie"—and sent a picture of her in 1927 (Smith 79, 98, 251), but this correspondence with them is infrequent and subsequent contacts were apparently more secretive because, as his fame increased, he could not have the truth of his English birth publicized, have people exploring his family relationships, or have his true self revealed. Nevertheless, the connection between Belaney and Grey Owl was easily traced, several people knew of it, and his subterfuge was revealed immediately after his death.

Archie's mother's lack of knowledge about her background, his own reactions to seeing the touring Buffalo Bill Show, stories from boys' magazines, a vivid imagination, a curious sense of adventure, tales about his father's American years, and a restrictive Victorian home atmosphere could all have contributed to Belaney's distorted sense of self. These aspects of his childhood also found their way into the story that Grey Owl told people. Using facts as a basis, but shaping them as they were manoeuvred to fill gaps in his story and to pass
through anecdotal holes, Grey Owl fashioned his past. The child who had
defensively explained his father's absence with claims that the man was
travelling with Buffalo Bill grew to be the man still willing to offer
the story. This is demonstrated in an undated fragment of a letter
(probably to Anahareo) in which he seems to accept the implications of
his own version of his life:

Two maiden ladies living in some part of Scotland, have
written me thru Country Life, & claim to be first cousins or
some kind of cousins of my fathers [sic] side of the family.
It seems genuine, although they do not know my uncle
(McNeil) but seem to have heard of him. They are called
"Belanys [sic] of Mac-" something or other, & are very old,
& are very proud of me, & dont [sic] want anything except to
know me as they have independent means of their own,
although not rich or anything. They have a letter from
Buffalo Bill which they treasure very much in answer to an
enquiry as to his (my fathers) whereabouts time [this word
appears to be "time"] he was in the old show, in which he
speaks very highly of my dad. Gee I must get that letter of
old man Codyo [sic] about him, or a photograph of it.
Anyway, I have written the old ladies. I beleive [sic] they
are the real thing.
(Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 2 Correspondence File 8)

The irony of Grey Owl commenting on the authenticity of the women is
inescapable, but, if the letter described actually did arrive, he must
have been surprised to receive this verification of his tale. Later,
when Grey Owl became uncomfortable with the growing number of people who
could associate him with Archibald Belaney, he extrapolated greater
significance from this letter when he found it convenient to claim
another name: McNeil. Through the years, he demonstrated that he could
take an isolated incident or piece of information and build upon it the
version of truth which would augment his story.

During and after his first author's tour of Great Britain (from
November 1935 to February 1936), Grey Owl gained fans and media
attention, and the story of his life was featured in newspaper articles. Needless to say, the versions of his past that circulated during his tours of England did not mention the aunts in Hastings or the child, Archie Belaney, who had stalked in the woods near their house years earlier. Nor did they include that, as Archie Belaney, Grey Owl had married an English woman in 1917 who had stayed in England when he returned to Canada when he was pensioned off from the army. The *Manchester Guardian* (19 November 1935) notes that Grey Owl was first in England as part of the touring Buffalo Bill show (Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 3).  

Considering that many British papers were publishing variations of this story, one would have thought that any connection with English relatives would have compromised his Indian status; nevertheless, Archie kept in limited contact with the aunts, whether because of affection or because of a need to prove his success. At the time of his first British tour, he arranged to dine with his aunts on December 2, 1935 in Hastings (Smith 5, 24). Yvonne, his last wife, was with him on his second tour when he next visited his aunts at home on December 15, 1937. Neither he nor they appear to have revealed the relationship between them to Yvonne (Smith i90).

Because Archie was raised by his aunts, he did not have a close relationship with his mother. Memos in his notebook indicate, however, that he did correspond with Kittie Scott-Brown, as she came to be known

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6 In one version of his personal history Grey Owl explained that he had a trace of English accent because he had gone to England with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, lived with his father's sisters, and received some education there (Smith 51). He would have been able to see the touring show in Hastings on August 20, 1903 (Smith 19).
This correspondence led to the establishment of his writing career: one of his answering letters "'was so poetic that [his mother] sent it to Country Life.' Their reply was that they would like him to write an article. They were so pleased with it that they published it" (Smith, 83). It was Country Life that subsequently published *The Men of the Last Frontier*. Even when Archie, as Grey Owl, became famous and could not afford to have an English woman claiming to be his mother, he did not reject all connection with her. An undated fragment of a letter written by Grey Owl, presumably to Mrs. Winters in Regina, refers to overtures for money from "Mrs. Brown," and in it he establishes a reluctant, adoptive relationship: "I wrote her and told her they [the literary society that she had approached for money in his name] have informed me and to lay off as I would contest the legality of the so-called adoption. She thinks I am a millionaire having written a book, and claims the credit, saying she inspired the book!!" (Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 2 Folder 8). In *The Dictionary of Literary Biography* Stanley McMullen says that in a letter to the editor of *Country Life* (19 March 1930) Grey Owl claimed that his real mother was

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7 Donald Smith notes that the two met and talked privately on November 30, 1937, and that she saw his show (187). He would not have seen her since she visited him in hospital during the war (Smith 256). One version of their meeting was that as she approached him for an autograph she quietly asked if he recognized her as his mother. He is reputed to have dismissed her with the comment that someone in every town claimed to be his mother (J. Darebury Hatton, "A Brief Account of Grey Owl's Life"; Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 4). Smith's version does not reflect this attitude.

8 It was attributed to H. [sic] Scott-Brown because his mother's name was on the manuscript. (Smith 257, endnote 53). Kittle Belaney Scott-Brown first contacted *Country Life* in 1927 or 1928 (Smith 83).
an Indian and that Kittie Scott-Brown was really his step-mother (139). Lovat Dickson felt that Archibald Belaney, who likely would not be able to remember his father and who had been separated from his mother, could in time believe the stories that he had concocted from the sketchy information he had. When Dickson spoke with Kitty after her son’s death, she could not account for her origins nor for the fact that she felt that she had been born in England but had memories only of “camp life on the Plains” (Dickson, *Half-Breed* 29). Because there is some confusion about each of the women to whom George Belaney (Archie’s father) was married, no one has been able to satisfactorily ascertain Kittie’s roots.9 Grey Owl may have convinced himself initially that she had Indian blood. Those who look for some vestige of fact in the background that he claims may at least grant that possibility as a legitimate basis for the fantastic elements of his childhood that he expounds. The unanswered questions about his parents confuse speculation on reasons for Archibald Belaney’s processes of transition to Grey Owl. Lacking facts about his parents, it is possible that Archie accepted or invented a history based on what he had been told and on what he wanted to believe. As an apparent orphan who lived with maiden aunts, his embellishment of the history of his mother and father would have been the defensive tactic of a schoolboy.

Although by the 1930s, Grey Owl attempted to limit his contact with people from his past, it is now known that a great many of them were aware of his dual identity and had access to his back region. His aunts

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9 In *Half-Breed*, Dickson notes that the name Kittie Morris, not Cox, is on Archie’s birth certificate (23).
knew of his roles in life but never considered themselves or their	nephew to be compromised by them. They had accepted him as an
imaginative child, as a restless teenager, and as an injured soldier,
and they were prepared to accept him as a Canadian wilderness advocate.
Obviously, though, as Grey Owl's fame increased, so also did the chance
of exposure of his assumed identity. Several Hastings neighbours,
including the McCormick family, recognized that the Grey Owl on tour had
been the boy they knew as Archibald Belaney. People he had met when he
first came to Canada easily associated the conservationist and woodsman
known as Grey Owl with the young English immigrant who avidly learned
the ways of the wilderness and the watercourses; indeed, some had
witnessed his transition to half-breed status. Two Canadian branches of
the Belaney family recognized Grey Owl as a cousin (Smith 107-108) and
Smith conjectures that it is through one of these that the two Scottish
ladies, to whom Grey Owl referred in a letter, were able to trace their
family to Grey Owl (Smith 108).

The women with whom he had once lived were among those who
recognized that Belaney became Grey Owl. His English war bride, Ivy
Holmes, did not speak out during Grey Owl's lifetime, possibly because
she too wanted to save face. The circumstances of her acknowledgement
of her association with Grey Owl were both bizarre and crucial; Ivy knew
that Archie had had one toe amputated, and her information about the
missing digit provided one of the links between Belaney and the dead
Grey Owl when the undertakers confirmed that he lacked the same toe.
Angele Egwuna claimed a right to his estate when she saw Grey Owl's
photograph and recognized him as her husband.\textsuperscript{10} Anahareo had seen part of the metamorphosis of Grey Owl from Archie Belaney, but she claimed to lack details of his early life.

Among those in Northern Ontario who knew that Belaney was Grey Owl were Bill Guppy, his first employer; Jane Espaniel, with whose family he had lived to learn Indian ways; and Arthur Stevens, the Justice of the Peace "to whom he had applied for a marriage license to marry Angele Egwuna in the summer of 1910" and with whom Grey Owl re-established a friendship in the mid-1930s (Smith 144). Half a century after his death, Mrs. Ed Sawyer noted to Allison Mitcham that she remembered that Archie "worked at being an Indian" (33). She had had access directly to his backstage area when he prepared to be Grey Owl, but (in the terms that Goffman uses to describe a person who supports a performance) assumed the role of a team member in his performance. More surprising is that Ed Bunyan, the editor of the North Bay Nugget, knew as early as 1935, but he did not publish the reports filed by Britt Jessup, by Mort Fellman, and by Bert Bach that would have exposed Grey Owl (Smith 171-172). As long as Grey Owl did not put him in a position where he had no choice but to reveal what he knew, Bunyan was willing to support the role that Grey Owl played. The positive factor of having a news scoop did not outweigh the negative demoralization that would have resulted from destroying the image and the man in whom so many people believed.

\textsuperscript{10} John Diefenbaker represented Yvonne Perrier, who had married Grey Owl (apparently unaware of his complicated matrimonial past), in the case (Diefenbaker 120).
Even where a direct Belaney/Grey Owl connection was not made, there were those who doubted aspects of Grey Owl's story. The father of a boy he befriended, Bernie Graham, is said to have been suspicious and doubted his heritage: "If you're an Indian, I'm a Chinaman" (Wilderness Man 210). Smith indicates that Indians recognized that the war dances Grey Owl performed were not authentic and that some Indians doubted that he was an Indian. Grey Owl, nevertheless, received Native support because, half-breed or not, he was an eloquent spokesman (Smith 161). Indian language experts questioned some of his rhetorical idiosyncrasies. Many found his English speech too correct for him to have the background he claimed, and others must have wondered how a woodsman of any race could be well-read, interested in classical music, and able to play the piano. Grey Owl was careful to be consistent in his public presentation of himself, however, generally allowing people to see him as a unique individual, but avoiding putting himself and his audience in an awkward position that might require a declaration that would reveal him and his background. When Grey Owl visited his aunts, for instance, he indicated the role that they were to play and that he was playing: he was a soldier returning to visit the elderly ladies he had come to know when he was recuperating from war injuries in England.

When Grey Owl heard the rumours that he was not what he claimed to be, he responded by ignoring them, by re-asserting his claims, or by anticipating and undermining criticism. In Pilgrims of the Wild he records that on the way to Temiscouata he and Anahareo were questioned: "A reporter gouged us for our life history, refused to believe us and gave us his opinion that we were cleverly masquerading, warning us that
there was a law against it" (63-64). By publishing such a challenge, Grey Owl disarms many readers who might harbour a similar suspicion. By the time of his death, however, the rumours and questions were no longer easily ignored. The Department of Indian Affairs was investigating his past because of questions being raised, some prompted by a *Time* magazine article which stated, incorrectly, that Grey Owl had had seven wives (3 January 1938: 17). One of the more interesting aspects of Grey Owl's masquerade is that, even with suspicions about him growing and despite the fact that several people knew who was behind the Grey Owl facade, no one was anxious to rip the mask away during his life. Yet, within a few days of his death, it became clear that many knew of his secret.

Goffman has an explanation for the situation where observers avoid declaring a person a fraud or an impostor. That so many people were suspicious or knew who Grey Owl was and did not reveal his identity is an example of what Goffman calls the tact whereby an audience will "save the definition of the situation projected by another" (Goffman, *Presentation* 13). He comments: "We may have some sympathy for those who have a fatal flaw and who attempt to conceal the fact, making an honourable attempt to live it down" (Goffman, *Presentation* 60). If we consider that a desire to live a life other than the one into which one was born, and to adopt a new identity in order to escape one lifestyle and to achieve another, can be equated with Goffman's flaw, then Grey Owl, like James and like Grove, stimulates empathy in informed readers. Moreover, where the exchange of one role for another requires drastic adjustments, the audience may add admiration—and possibly even respectful envy—to the sympathetic understanding. All of these
contribute to the support of the audience for the role-playing. Basically what Goffman suggests is that people will support a performance if the performer is careful not to put the audience in a position where it has to admit that it knows that the performer is misrepresenting himself. Goffman goes on to make a comment that relates to Grey Owl, and to Grove and James as well. He says that an impostor "can be defined as a person who makes it impossible for his audience to be tactful about observed misrepresentation" (Presentation 235). Cooperation in social interaction allows the presentation of the chosen self. Just as we as individuals chose to "forget many of the things we do, especially when they do not fit into the character we have chosen to be" (Davies 262), so also may an audience overlook clues that might reveal facts that it does not wish to acknowledge.

When the newspapers reported that Grey Owl was a "fraud," those who had avoided questioning his credentials or who had supported him despite their private knowledge of the truth continued to find positive elements in his subterfuge. They could see that, although he may have adopted a life and misrepresented himself, the role he chose to play was important to them and to other members of Grey Owl's larger audience. At a time when people were depressed by the economic situation and by forecasts of war, Grey Owl's story offered hope mixed with elements of the pastoral, the natural, and the romantic. After his death, people who knew of the Belaney in Grey Owl's past began to explain why they had been willing to allow others to accept his story. For some, such as his aunts, Archie Belaney had always led an idiosyncratic life, and the "Grey Owl" aspect of it was not out of character or remarkable for him.
From those who knew schoolboy-Archie, to those who had seen him make the transition from an English greenhorn to a backwoodsman to a half-breed, ultimately the feeling was expressed that supporting Grey Owl was harmless; exposing him was pointless.

Some who had been exposed to the creative versions Archie gave of his parent's history saw the North American chapter of his life as a valid reflection of Archie's exploration of his past. Lovat Dickson learned the truth after Grey Owl's death, but, although he resigned himself to having been deceived by Grey Owl, he retained his respect for the men. He voiced his opinion that Belaney, who had not known his father and barely knew his mother, made up stories of his origins to satisfy his schoolboy dreams of Indians: "Long years had passed since his birth and schooldays in England, and he had truly assimilated himself to the Indian way of life. He had willed himself into believing the fantasy about his birth" (Wilderness Man 233). If this claim were substantiated, Grey Owl could be seen to comply with one of the demands of Bruss that would lead to acceptance of the autobiography under her terms.

Grey Owl's identity was revealed immediately after his death became known, allowing contacts to be made with people who knew him as Archie Belaney in England. Verifiable anecdotes of his childhood were available quickly, and immediate correlation could be made between Archie's childhood experiences in Hastings and parallel situations presented in his conversations, letters, and creative works. It was from childhood friends that reporters learned of his activities as a child that were to be incorporated into his life as an Indian. Both
Dickson and Smith indicate that all who remembered Archie as a child and youth commented on his imaginative play that usually included woods and Indian lore, and all noted his interest in the outdoors and in animals. Moreover, Lovat Dickson was able to visit and talk to Archie's aunts, gaining insight into the man and his past. He notes in *Wilderness Man* that the two women kept the books about Red Indians that Archie had read as a child, books whose margins held illustrations sketched in by Archie:

One very good ink sketch ... was of an Indian in fringed buckskins, wearing one feather. It might have been a drawing of Grey Owl himself ... standing on the lecture platform, hand raised. ... (8)

Like James, Grey Owl attempted to illustrate his own writings, but he lacked James's talent. Archie grew up with books written by relatives. His grandfather had written a lengthy (five cantos) poem, *The Hundred Days of Napoleon*. A Treatise on Falconry [In Two Parts; Smith 9] written by Archie's nature-loving great-uncle, James Cockburn Belaney, was on the shelf with Grey Owl's books when Dickson visited Hastings following Grey Owl's death (*Wilderness Man* 8; Smith, 9). Archie's great-uncle Robert, an avid defender of animal rights, was also an author. He wrote *Vivisection viewed under the light of Divine Revelation* [1877] (Smith 8). Writing and an interest in animals were part of Archie's heritage as a Belaney and of his future as Grey Owl; it can now be seen as natural for him to keep diaries and natural that he should record his version of the life he led.

The change from Englishman to Indian was made over several

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years, but Anahareo was present during much of the transition period. She indicates that the person named Grey Owl evolved as he moved out of the woods and into public, beginning with his talks to tourists at Métis Beach. Although he claimed to be nervous in his initial presentations, the mask that Archie Belaney adopted allowed him to play the role that he had always wanted to play. This was not only the role of a person who could present himself as a woodsman and naturalist on stage; it was a role that he did not step out of, one that he continued to play when he returned to his life in the woods after he fulfilled his speaking obligations.

Smith records the invention and evolution of Grey Owl by noting which name is used and when it is used, and, by recording the way in which Grey Owl refers to Indians, he charts the evolution of Grey Owl's development to Native status:

From Cal-ano on May 6, 1929, he wrote to Country Life of Indians as "them," but claimed to have been adopted by the Ojibwa about twenty years earlier. By November 5, 1929, he reported to his English editor that "for about 15 years he spoke nothing but Indian." On November 12, 1930, he signed himself "Grey Owl" for the first time, after once trying out the name, "White Owl." The choice of his new name came easily. Had he not imitated the hoot of an owl since his boyhood days in Hastings? Like him many owls were active at night.

On February 2, 1931, the new Grey Owl announced to Country Life that he had "Indian blood." Five months later he completed his transformation. On July 1, 1931, he declared himself an "Indian writer" who "writes as an Indian." (Smith 85)

After the Montreal Convention of the Canadian Forestry Association at which he spoke (January, 1931), he adopted a new Ojibwa name to
reinforce still further his Indian image, Wa-sha-quon-asln. From this point there could be no easy return to Archibald Belaney because the public eagerly accepted Grey Owl.

Variations in his name likely gave Belaney the sense that he could distance himself from his past as he attempted to succeed in his chosen life. Nevertheless, Grey Owl had to contend with the fact that the name Belaney officially followed him because of his army pension and his civil service connection; his cheques were issued in this name. It

Smith notes several variations on the spelling of this name. He also notes that it refers to the screech owl, or more exactly, to the "shining beak of the owl" or a "white beak owl" (92). Grey Owl's translation—"He Who Walks By Night"—has no basis. It is when considering Grey Owl's name that Smith reveals a psychological side to his historian's interest in Grey Owl. Smith feels that in choosing the name of a small owl rather than the true Indian name of the Great Grey Owl, Belaney indicates that his "self-image was so poor he saw himself as common, small, insignificant" (91-92).

Smith refers to an article in the Regina Leader Post in which Yvonne explains her understanding of Grey Owl's background. She had been told that his father was an American, George McNeil, and that his mother was an Apache Indian. Grey Owl had been born in Mexico while the family was there to visit an aunt who was a school teacher. His mother died in 1921; his father died when Grey Owl was young (171). Smith also notes that the name of Archie's mother recorded on the wedding certificate was Catherine Cochise (282, Endnote 52). A clipping in one of Grey Owl's scrapbooks indicates that McNeil was used on his passport (Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 5).

In 1933, Grey Owl authorized Mrs. Winters (the woman in Regina who cared for Dawn) to cash his government cheques in order that she have money for Dawn's needs. In granting permission he acknowledged that cheques might be made out to either Archie Belaney or Grey Owl (Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 6). He must have had some hesitation about the Belaney/Grey Owl link because he tried unsuccessfully to have his government cheques issued to Archie Grey Owl (Smith 118). Although his cheques were not issued in the name Grey Owl would have liked, Smith points out that the government consistently misspelled Archie's last name as Bellaney (Smith 262). The personal letters to Mrs. Winters are usually signed "Grey Owl" but this is followed often by a post script which is signed "Archie" (Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 2). Many acquaintances in both England and Canada, however, knew him simply as "Chief" (Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 6).
was also the name under which Anahareo first knew him, and she claims that it was not until Archie sent her a telegram in 1931 asking her to meet him in Montreal that he told her to address him as Grey Owl.\footnote{There is no dispute that he went by his original first name. He playfully signed one of his letters to her: "Archie bald? Not yet."}

After he returned from his first British tour (1936), he began to connect himself with the name McNeil, claiming that was his father's family name but that he had used Belaney because it was the name of the aunt with whom he had spent some of his childhood.\footnote{When Archie Belaney enlisted in Digby he claimed as next-of-kin an individual from New Brunswick whose name may be read as George McVail or as McNeil. No record of the man has been found by Smith or by Raddall. The claim to the McNeil name by Grey Owl in the 1930s adds mystery to the identity of this next-of-kin. The key to part of Grey Owl's history may be hidden here, just as the key to Will James's past was the name Ernest Dufault found in his will.} It was as Archie McNeil that he married Yvonne Perrier in 1936 (Smith 170-171), and in his will he is referred to as "Archie McNeil, 'familiarly known as Grey Owl'" (Smith 279). Moreover, Bill Guppy indicates that most Canadian half-breeds have Scottish or French names so the shift to McNeil from Belaney would have promoted his claim to be part Indian (176). It is worth noting that Ernest Dufault, like Archibald Belaney, changed his name to one that reinforced the image he was trying to create but, whereas Dufault may have chosen an English name to avoid being confused with a half-breed, Belaney may have abandoned his English name in order to be accepted as one. For each man the name chosen contributed to the impression he sought to make, minimizing the discrepancy between appearance and reality.
Another co-relation between Grey Owl and Will James is that each had exposure to books as a child and to an oral story-telling tradition as a young man. It is from the period when he knew Bill Guppy that Grey Owl would have heard his first Canadian tall tales, and he would have heard stories in the camps of the woodsmen and of the Indians with whom he travelled. In Half-Breed and Wilderness Man, Lovat Dickson suggests that it was through fireside yarns that Archie Belaney acquired his stories of the area of Temiskaming. Hearing yarns in the woods of Canada may have encouraged Grey Owl to fabricate his own. Of trapper tales he exclaimed: "How well we know them, how we love to hear them—and tell them" (Pilgrims 62). He confesses his delight when he remembers one outrageous tale and its presenter: "It was a lie—an unblushing, stupendous, glorious lie; but give the man credit—it was a good one" (Tales 194). That a lie could be overlooked if the tale were acceptable may have been a principle that directed Grey Owl: if the back area were hidden, the presentation itself might be acceptable.

Grey Owl as emissary of the wilderness to civilization had no role models beyond those that came out of the fiction he heard and read as both adult and child: Hiawatha, American frontier stories for boys, the works of James Fenimore Cooper, the adventures of Baron Munchausen. That he was familiar with these stories demonstrates his interest in romanticized adventures (Tales 314). He knew of Long Lance and admired him (Men 210). He did not realize, however, that Long Lance, like Grey Owl, was a man of questionable lineage promoting himself as an Indian. With fantasy as his guide, Grey Owl was able to play the role for which he had prepared himself. He was able to convince others of his identity
through maintenance of the image he felt he should project, but he had to present a daily performance which required the invention of the part as he went along. Goffman considers the individual in a social interaction in two ways: the individual as the character performed and individual as performer (Presentation 253). Grey Owl combines and maintains both points of view. He became the person he acted, establishing himself as a half-breed as he adopted the life of one, confirming himself in writing.

His acceptance of the role could not always have been easy. Both Lovat Dickson (originally from Alberta) and Ken Conibear (from the Northwest Territories—-and of the family associated with the Conibear trap) who were with Grey Owl in England remarked on his attitude. They knew from their own experiences that those of mixed-blood were often rejected by both the white and Native communities. By giving the title Half-Breed to a book about Grey Owl, Dickson tends to legitimize the term. In The House of Words, however, Dickson notes that he became Grey Owl’s publisher despite his preconceptions about "half-breeds":

I knew their weaknesses, and I knew their extreme sensitivity. They could be as obstinate as mules, they could be maddeningly unreliable, they could be, and generally were, as untrustworthy as hell. But they had reason to be. Looked down upon both by the white man and by the pure-blood Indian, they spent their time getting drunk to forget it all. (163)

Dickson’s summation of the popular opinion makes it difficult to understand why Grey Owl would have claimed so vehemently that he was a half-breed. Such status was not an enviable one, or one that most people would have chosen. Whereas many mixed-blood individuals who could pass as white rejected relationship to their Indian family, Grey
Owl claimed proudly to have Native blood and to have been adopted by the Indians. Sometimes he could use this to his advantage. When a game warden challenged his right to hunt to obtain hide for his buckskin suit, Grey Owl must have claimed Indian status for he states that when he wrote to Quebec City, he received an apology from the head warden, and a hunting and fishing licence was awarded free of charge.\(^{17}\)

Although readers now might see Grey Owl's drinking as a symptom of the stress Grey Owl felt in his adopted life, during his lifetime it was seen as an indication of a characteristic weakness for alcohol attributed to Indians and half-breeds. Publication of this weakness had the effect of contributing to the created image.\(^ {18}\) Grey Owl took advantage of the general public's other assumptions about Indians by playing the role of the naive Native: often too friendly, too fierce, or too drunk to function in civil society. On the other hand, when Grey Owl writes of the degraded status of the Indian, and refers to one Native who spoke with a Cockney accent who was willing to live as a beggar and a thief, he may be describing what he might have become if,

\(^{17}\) Unlike Quebec, Ontario limited the hunting privileges of non-Indians after 1925 (Smith 255). If one were sceptical about Grey Owl's incentive to claim Indian blood, it might be suspected that he claimed recognition as an Indian to increase his hunting privileges.

\(^{18}\) A letter from J. B. Harkin, Commissioner, National Parks of Canada, to R. A. Gibson, Assistant Minister of the Interior, (20 March 1936) confirms that Grey Owl, as a half-breed, might be expected to present problems associated with liquor consumption: "As a matter of fact, with so much Indian blood in his veins I suppose it is inevitable that from time to time he will break out in this connection" (Smith 157)
as an Indian, he had not taken proper control of his life (Pilgrims 250).

The implications of his claims to Native status were given more careful consideration when Grey Owl wrote his books than they were in his private letters or in his conversations as they have been quoted. His statements are guarded in his books, which contain fewer forthright declarations. In W. A. Deacon: A Canadian Literary Life, Clara Thomas and John Lennox include excerpts from two letters Grey Owl sent Deacon after Pilgrims of the Wild was published. In one he tries "to stress his own intuitive and untutored state":

I was born in the United States . . . but I have been in Canada since 1905, and am intensely loyal to this country. Aside from the fact that I have been made a Canadian citizen, my status as a native-born has been conceded by the Native Sons of Canada, who very courteously invited me to become a member. (152)

He goes on to indicate a pride in Canada that includes a criticism of those who would be subservient to the British crown: "Our . . . 'Maple Leaf,' or 'Oh! Canada' is submerged beneath the funereal strains of that servilely sycophantic Imperial Anthem" (152). To those who subsequently learn Grey Owl's original identity and land of birth, comments like this hint at Archie Belaney's attitude to the country in which he grew up and to its policies. His need to react to and to reject his English roots may be either part of his front or may have been the impetus for his change in name and life style.

19 According to Lovat Dickson, for people of the backwoods "cockney [meant] the genuine thing, not the lah-de-dah-English so offensive to the Canadian ear" (Wilderness Man 51).

20 As has been indicated, Belaney left England in 1906.
Grey Owl later replied to a letter in which Deacon says that he has met someone who knows that Grey Owl is a Scot "without a drop of Indian blood" and is using the Indian connection for "artistic effect":

No one living in this country knows anything of my antecedents except what I have chosen to tell them. If I have not analyzed my blood-mixture quite as minutely as some would wish, let me say here and now that here are the component parts. Mother--1/2 Scotch (American), 1/2 Indian. Father--Full White, American, reputed Scotch descent. Therefore I am a quarter Indian, a quarter Scotch and the rest reputed Scotch, though unproven. 21 (153-154)

The answers to questions about why Grey Owl consistently called himself a half-breed or about his activities at all stages of his development in his role are not known. Reading his letters, people might be convinced that Grey Owl either believed that his background would never be discovered or had convinced himself of his Indian heritage, as Dickson suggests is true. Just as friends of F. P. Grove were dismayed to learn that, despite their friendship, he had misled them, supporters of Grey Owl had difficulty accepting that he never admitted that he was not as he presented himself to them.

Anahareo, Lovat Dickson, and Bill Guppy wrote subjectively of Grey Owl's life, based on their experiences with him. To some extent, Grey Owl's biography is contained within their autobiographies. In private, with Anahareo, Grey Owl appears to have been fairly forthright about some aspects of his past. In Devil in Deerskins, she gives her version of the years that they shared. She justifies some of Grey Owl's fabrications, stating that it was because he felt under pressure when

21 Because of his defence in this letter of what we now know is his chosen kinship, it is worth considering parts of Grey Owl's lengthy reply to Deacon. See Appendix C.
talking to her father that Belaney claimed that his parents were dead, that he came from Mexico, and that his mother was an Apache. He never corrected this version of his story; however, he did tell her of the difficulties of being raised by the two maiden aunts, especially Ada. Anahareo also states that Archie told her of the women in his past. Although there are discrepancies between her autobiography and his, for the most part her book is supportive of his version of their life together from 1925 until they drifted apart as he devoted himself to writing, to the beaver, and to recording his activities with them.

It is in Anahareo's autobiography that his adoption in 1931 of the name Grey Owl is mentioned; she also describes his reaction in Montreal to a headline describing him as a full-blooded Indian. When asked what he was going to do about it, he is said to have answered: "Why nothing, why spoil their little old story?" (Devil 138). In retrospect, she suggests that,

[H]ad Archie known how seriously people were going to take his ancestry, this would have been the time to have clamped down on that 'full-blooded Indian' stuff. But how was he to know that the more he wrote, the more Indian he became in the eyes of the public? (138)

Grey Owl wanted to have a justifiable reason for living as he did; what he lacked was control over how his story was to expand. Initially he was not sensitive to the extension of audience that media coverage afforded, nor did he recognize the immediacy--and the possibility of

22 This is only one of several places of birth that Archie claimed. The record of his Digby enlistment indicates that he was born in Montreal (Smith 52). A census of government employees dated 1937 indicates that he was born in the United States (Raddall Papers: MS2.202.F11.I6.17).
unreliability—of newspaper coverage. He could not predict that he
would become a folk-hero to a generation, particularly in Britain
because of the publicity involved with the book tours organized by Lovat Dickson.

Dickson came to know Grey Owl through their correspondence
concerning the publication of Pilgrims of the Wild. He believed what
Grey Owl told him and used the biographical information which he was
given to promote the tours and Grey Owl's books. He knew nothing of the
Hastings aspect of his life and protested when the news that Grey Owl
was an Englishman was first announced. Once convinced of the truth,
however, he continued to support Grey Owl in principle. In his books on
Grey Owl, notably Half-Breed and Wilderness Man, but also The Green Leaf
and House of Words, Dickson presents Grey Owl as he knew him and as he
had been led to accept him. In The Green Leaf, Dickson anticipates
dissent and puts forward arguments that can be made for an individual
who plays a part in order to achieve a lifestyle that appears to be more
ture than the one into which he was born:

Of every man life and work exact some adjustment to
circumstance; every man, consciously or unconsciously, must
see himself as on a stage, acting the part which it has been
decreed he must play. And if in the pursuit of his strange
and lonely path, Grey Owl thought it well to adopt a race
and a tradition that were not in fact his own—not in order
to deceive his fellow-men or to amuse the children who so
loved him, but in order to feel himself in body and spirit
the being he desired to be—he did it that the truth of him
might be more true. (38)

Dickson quite naturally falls into the use of stage imagery here,
illustrating what Goffman later points out about the presentation of
self. Recognizing Grey Owl's Indian spirit, if not his Indian blood, in
The Green Leaf he presents several excerpts from Grey Owl's
conversations or writings: "Do not bill me as a full-blooded Indian; let it be known that I am of mixed parentage. I favour the Indian in build, action, mentality etc." (69); "I am not consciously Scotch or Apache." (71); "Be true to yourself, and you will be true to every one. Shakespeare said a mouthful with that one" (85); "Don’t let the circumstances make you—you make the circumstances. Be the captain of our own destiny" (85). Grey Owl’s words are quoted by Dickson, apparently to support his belief that Grey Owl consciously played the role that he chose to play and that his self-conscious but unselfish acts justified any fraud of which he might be accused.

Shortly after Grey Owl died, Lovat Dickson received a manuscript, purportedly written by Archibald Belaney and given to Ivy Holmes in 1917, that told the story of a young man moving to Canada from England. Since Dickson rejected this aspect of Grey Owl’s life, he also rejected the manuscript. It included references to department store employment, but it also told of the inexperienced young hero’s adventures in the Canadian woods. After Dickson became more familiar with the people who had known Archie Belaney during his first few years in Canada, he was able to recognize that characters in the unfinished novel were based on real people, including Bill Guppy and Indians from the Bear Island Band. In retrospect, Dickson realized that the story probably could have been investigated further to learn more of the transition period (Wilderness Man 46-47). If it had been preserved, this manuscript might have contributed to Grey Owl’s life-story as Grove's A Search For America contributed to current understanding of his. Confirmation of the Toronto experiences may be suggested by Grey Owl’s attitude when he took
Betty Somervell shopping at Eaton's in Toronto in March of 1936. He was familiar with the store and she commented that he demonstrated that he could point out plainclothes store detectives (Smith 237, endnote 6). There are indications in Grey Owl's work that he was familiar with other aspects of Toronto, including the Toronto Zoo and the Normal School Museum; in Sajo and the Beaver People he describes the zoo and the police uniforms accurately and refers to a canoe that hangs in the museum (Smith 46). In this children's book he appears to adapt his personal experiences to emerge through the adventures of the characters in the story. Looking at the stories, one can speculate on the anecdotes that were their sources, experiences which appear to have been gained during a period of time spent in Toronto. In both his back area and in his front stage performances, Grey Owl had, but hid, the resources he needed for playing his part.

The most complete biography of Grey Owl is that of Donald Smith, From the Land of Shadows: The Making of Grey Owl. Despite an objective and factual approach that results in a volume that has one third of its pages devoted to endnotes and bibliography, Smith presents a sympathetic history of Grey Owl whom he thinks, both as boy and man, is misunderstood because of his individual and idiosyncratic pursuit of a life dream. Smith's empathetic concern with Grey Owl is similar to Dickson's, but Smith stresses Grey Owl's lack of self-confidence when he considers the relationships Grey Owl had with women. He notes that Angele, Anahareo, and Yvonne were each supportive enough that Grey Owl could have revealed to any of them his undisclosed past and thus been able "to escape from himself, from his self-pity, his shame, his
insecurity" (215). Smith notes that Grey Owl approved of Emerson’s maxim: "The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity and trust" (93), but that he never became the friend of anyone in Emerson’s sense for he never revealed all his sides to anyone, not even his wives.

Nevertheless, to a certain extent, Grey Owl was a product of the interaction with the women who shared his life, especially Angele and Anahareo, and they became part of his performance. From Angele he learned much about how to live as an Indian; in his relationship with Anahareo he put many of these skills to work. Anahareo gave him the incentive to become involved with the beavers, and for several years she supported the work he did. She also provided stability as he made the transition from Archie Belaney to Grey Owl. Finally, Yvonne provided support for him in his last years, taking on tasks of wife and chaperon. Anahareo is the only woman included in the autobiography because the period upon which he focuses is that of his years with her, and even in this portrayal he does not write about the deteriorating relationship between them. Grey Owl, known to be temperamental and often drunk, is usually blamed for their marital difficulties, particularly by Thomas H. Raddall, but in one 1934 letter to Anahareo, Grey Owl good-naturedly asks where she spends her nights away from home, demonstrating a trust that he hopes she is not abusing (Grey Owl Papers: MG30 D147 Vol 2 Folder 2). In another to Mrs. Winters in 1935, he mentions the difficulties he has had with Anahareo being irresponsible and drinking too much. This side of Grey Owl is not known. Nor is his concern

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23 A handwritten notation has been added to this letter by an unidentified writer: "Use with discretion."
and affection for his daughter, Dawn, but this is very apparent in his letters to Mrs. Winters and in his notebooks. In his writing, Grey Owl presents a one-sided picture of himself as a loner who is a self-reliant man; he appears, however, to have had difficulty coping with the role that he demanded of himself. Smith senses that this attitude in his role-playing was Grey Owl's downfall: he could "work to save the world, but couldn't save himself" (155). When discussing why Grey Owl took steps to contact his aunts in England, Smith comments:

> He had lost Ivy Holmes [the English woman he married during the war], Angele [the woman he married first] and his first family, Marie Girard and their son Johnny, and now he separated himself from Anahareo. His two aunts remained the only individuals in the world with whom this troubled, tormented man felt he could communicate. Grey Owl was crying out for help, a grown man, nearly forty-eight years old. . . . (Smith 159)

Smith never met Grey Owl, but neither his training as an historian nor his role as a biographer interfere with him expressing a sympathetic, albeit often frustrated, portrayal of his subject.

Grey Owl's life illustrates the teamwork that Goffman discusses as being necessary in some presentations. One senses that Smith cannot understand why Grey Owl, who must have been aware that many people could make a connection between him and Archie Belaney, kept up the ruse. Smith implies that most of those who accepted Grey Owl would have accepted him whatever he called himself, as the Indian or as the white Englishman. In Grey Owl's case, the teamwork was more extensive than is apparent initially: some people contributed naively to the image he developed, acting unknowingly as part of his team; other people supported Grey Owl without admitting that they knew the truth, acting as part of his team, but keeping their contribution unknown to him.
Although Pilgrims of the Wild is considered to be his autobiography, Grey Owl's written references in it to the past are not specific, and supplemental information is included in the pages of other books he wrote. Moreover, much of the lore of Grey Owl in fact is derived from what others have written, based on what he either said or led them to believe. Hugh Eayrs, in the Foreword written in 1934, gives the received biographical information:

Grey Owl was born in 1888 of Scotch and Indian parentage. He went to England for a little, and returned quickly thereafter, taking part in the Cobalt silver rush of 1905. He was then as he has been ever since (but for the space of his War service), a canoe man and packer. He never forgets great debt to the Ojibway Indians. He was still a youth when he was adopted into their tribe.

In Pilgrims Grey Owl supports this version of his life by not contradicting it. He chooses to begin his story about 1920, "fifteen years since [he] had drifted down from the North" (Pilgrims 9); in fact, it had been about fifteen years since he had come from England. Like James, he uses the actual date of leaving home as a pivotal point in his new life as he describes it. He focuses on the early years with Anahareo but mentions events from 1927 to 1934, telescoping and condensing some aspects of the life, as he does when he describes making one trip to an unnamed national park rather than his moves to two specific parks. The purpose of the autobiography clearly is not to present factual chronological data but to offer a sampling of specifics in his past which he chooses to discuss. His references to his childhood are general enough to allow misinterpretation:

In my young days I had received some pretty intensive home tuition from an ever-blessed aunt but had shown little aptitude save in geography, history and English. In the latter subject the groundwork had been solid, and as I now
see, very skillfully laid. Most of my time from middle youth on had been spent in solitude and largely among people whose language was not English. . . . Only a retentive memory and a passion for reading had kept alive this early training and my precise and somewhat stilted English was like a stiff and ceremonious suit of Sunday best, something to be taken out of the closet and worn on occasion. (Pilgrims 14-15).

Reminiscent of the letter to Deacom, nothing in these lines contradicts the background that Grey Owl presented or allowed other people to present of him; nor is there anything that actually contradicts the truth about Archie Belaney as it is now known, although much that is true--and that would alter the context of these facts--is omitted.

There is a selectivity that demonstrates the ambiguity that the reporting on history can achieve.

Smith and the other biographers grapple with the fact and fiction in Grey Owl's history, but the concepts of anecdotal hole, historeme, and presentation of self are illustrated in their discussions of his life and of his life-story. In some aspects of Grey Owl's writing, an alert observer may recognize a shadow of Archie Belaney's experiences. Grey Owl's literary allusions--such as the chapter title, "How We Crossed the Slough of Despond"--are typical of those that would be familiar to a middle-class Englishman of the Belaney's social position and reflect his background. Donald Smith feels that the Latin that Archie studied in school predisposed him to use Latin-based words and that the novels that he read in and out of class affected his own writing style (102-103). Smith particularly appreciates the language clues found in The Men of the Last Frontier. Only a very critical--or suspicious--reader would note word origins, but, despite Grey Owl's attempts to write as a self-educated man might, some constructions do
raise suspicions: one critic assumed that Grey Owl had a ghost writer (Smith 106).

A few references within Pilgrims support the fictions of the adopted past rather than the truths of Archie Belaney's life. Grey Owl speaks of his experience with train travel: "Beneath the sheltering wing of irascible but benevolent old Bill Cody . . . I have seen plenty [sic] territory through the windows of a day coach" (65). Although at one point he describes himself as a "most appreciative husband, not at all indifferent or unattentive as the real [stress added] Indians often were" (20), he later states: "For we are Indian, and have perhaps some queer ideas; yet who among you having a faith of any kind, will deny us our own strange fancies. . . "(163). This is one of the few times in the autobiography itself that Grey Owl emphatically claims Indian status.

More frequent are statements that allow ambiguous interpretation. Grey Owl expresses his nostalgia when he spends a Christmas alone:

And ever in my heart there was an acheing [sic] loneliness for the simple kindly people, companions and mentors of my younger days, whose ways had become my ways, and their gods my gods; a people now starving patiently . . . . (210)

The biblical allusion to Ruth betrays a familiarity with the Bible as much as it indicates a nostalgia for a period of young adulthood spent learning Indian ways. Readers, however, could mistakenly also apply these lines in reference to a young half-breed from Mexico or the United States. Grey Owl writes of one New Year's Eve when he joined the French Canadians in their celebrations, and comments that "I clean forgot that I was a gloomy half-breed. . . "(212). Now that his identity has been revealed, readers might ironically modify this statement to read, "I
forgot that I wasn't a gloomy half-breed." Other instances of ambiguous phrasing allow two meanings to be taken. He notes that the French Canadians are polite to "a buckskin clad sauvage, and . . . a woman of a conquered race" (171), but he uses the word "sauvage" advisedly for he is well aware that it is not a direct translation of "savage"; the English connotation suggests "Indian," but the French word means "wild."

When English call him "savage" he rebels by eating meat raw without cutting it, demonstrating that he can be savage if called "savage" (Dickson, Wilderness Man 210). Ambiguity arises again when, comparing Anahareo's boots and breeches to the "apparel of our own women [which] ran heavily to voluminous plaid skirts and gay tartan head shawls," Grey Owl avoids clarifying whether "our" refers to Indian women, white frontierswomen--or villagers in the British Isles (Pilgrims 17).

Similar ambiguity is found when Grey Owl and Anahareo on one occasion miss a train, and, "with the freakish irresponsibility common to our kind when not seriously employed," decide to miss more and to stay overnight (Pilgrims 43). Grey Owl notes also that "People of our kind were not common" in the tourist area of Métis Beach, but "our kind" is not defined in either case (Pilgrims 174). One can assume that he means Indians, but other readings are possible, some as simple as "woodsmen" or "the rural poor." A worker from the Canadian Bible Society visiting Métis Beach had known Grey Owl in the far North, and Grey Owl notes that "he established without doubt our identity," but what that identity is is not declared (Pilgrims 177). On another occasion, moved to revenge the suspected invasion of one of the beaver lodges by a hunter, Grey Owl states: "In five seconds I reverted to the savagery of forgotten
ancestors and turned my faculties loose on that hunt supreme, the man-hunt" (Pilgrims 246). There is nothing in these words to indicate that Indian, not European ancestors, are considered, and yet the connotation and the context of the words would suggest that an Indian reference is to be assumed.

The care with which Grey Owl phrases most of his statements in Pilgrims of the Wild allows him to support, with a conscience relatively free of blatant lying, the legend that he has allowed to be built around him that he is the epitome of the environmentally-conscious man. Yet he wonders if he has the "the unsubstantial vision of a dreamer, off-spring of the folk-yarns of an imaginative and half-savage people"—but note that here he claims that his vision is the off-spring of the folk-yarns, not that he is the off-spring of the people (99). By looking back only as far as his post-adolescent years, Grey Owl can write truthfully in his books (if somewhat ambiguously), appearing simultaneously to both respect truth and maintain illusion. This contrasts with the public charade of his tours where he accepts all the trappings of his position in the spotlight. It is probably unfortunate that it is the Grey Owl of the tours who is most often remembered for, once his true identity was revealed, it was assumed by many that he was an on-stage fraud. He had another means of public presentations; several wilderness movies were filmed as naturally as possible, and they captured and conveyed what appeared to be the unstaged essence of his life. Moreover, the many people who visited him at his cabin bore witness that the activities in the wilderness were genuine, not contrived, and that, in essence, Grey Owl was genuine and not a fraud.
It is not only the autobiography and the movies, but all of Grey Owl's work and writing that provides additional, if sometimes ambiguous, clues to his past. In his case, it is ambiguous allusions, rather than detailed anecdotes, which serve as anecdotal holes; they allow transfer of actual experiences into a position within a fantasized framework. It is possible to explore, through his writings, the sources of some of the relationships he claims and the positions he takes in his life. The dedication of *The Men of The Last Frontier* is open to a variety of readings which include acknowledgment of the contribution of an aunt who might be seen to know the wilds as much as she knew words: "Dedicated as a tribute to my Aunt, whom I must thank for such education that enables me to interpret into words the spirit of the forest, beautiful for all its underlying wildness." The publisher's note introduces the author as the son of a Scot and an Apache Indian, "born somewhere near the Rio Grande forty odd years ago" (vii). In *The Men of the Last Frontier* Grey Owl does write of experiences before he became a woodsman, but only as if he were considering the differences between being a plainsman and a woodsman: "Being accustomed to hunting on the plains, . . . I found the still-hunt as practiced [sic] by the Northern Indians an entirely different proposition" (101); "I remember well my initial trial trip with an Indian friend who had volunteered for the difficult task of transforming an indifferent plainsman into some kind of a woodsman" (118). Grey Owl gives no definition of "plainsman," and one wonders if the reader is to stretch the rationalization of this term to include the activities of a boy in Hastings. Here, and throughout the book,
references to Indians are so general that they could be made by either an Indian or a non-Indian.

Just as Belaney may have thought his ideas could be more easily accepted if they came from an aboriginal than if they came from an immigrant, so some of the things he said have a different impact if they are known to come from a Native rather than a person raised outside of North America. Comments are made in The Men of the Last Frontier that indicate some familiarity on Grey Owl's part with a world beyond North America, knowledge of which would not have been available easily to anyone raised on the frontiers of civilization. Possibly his English audience especially was anxious to see Grey Owl as the Noble Savage, sage beyond what might be expected. Grey Owl refers to the Indian as having "a disposition as emotional as that of a Latin" but does not explain how he would be able to make this comparison (218). One can wonder if Grey Owl was aware that he sets himself up as separate from the Indian when, as narrator, he indicates that "as one gets to know this strange people, with their simplicity, their silence, their almost Oriental mysticism" they are appreciated more (220). Moreover, this would indicate to many readers that Grey Owl knows Indians but is familiar with the characteristics of other racial groups as well. Some comments, however, seem to reflect a Western European or an English point of view; a desire to establish quotas to allow only British immigration in order to keep out the undesirables, "the Bohunks" or "Bolshie," might be voiced as easily by a half-breed as by an Englishman or by a Scot but the likelihood is slim (175). Similarly, a half-breed could judge people of mixed-blood who live near the railroad lines as
"sly and lazy" "rascals," lacking "the dignity, the honesty, and the mental stability of the genuine forest dwellers, whose reputation as a race has suffered much at the hand of this type," but, again, these seem to be sentiments associated stereotypically with European critics (Men 233). Although an Indian or half-breed might express these ideas, certainly such comments would have a different impact if they were known to come from someone from the Old Country--an Archibald Belaney--than they would from a native North American--a Grey Owl--who could be thought (by an idealistic European readership) to make judgements based on experience rather than on preconceptions. People reading Grey Owl’s opinions are likely to be influenced differently by his ideas if they know about his English past. Comments that can be connected with Old World principles and concepts can intrude into Grey Owl’s writing and detract from the front which he usually maintains.

The dedication of Tales of An Empty Cabin also has a different impact when it is known that it is written by a white man who has made his dreams come true than if it is believed to be written by a man raised in the wilderness:

Dedicated to All Frontiersmen, both White and Indian, and to everyone who may read these Tales of the Dwellers in the Wildlands with sympathy and understanding.

And especially this is written for those whose souls are longing for the freedom of the open Road, but who are prevented by the invincible decrees of Fate from ever seeing the wonders of the Wilderness save in the pages of a book.

Although, like Trilling's "villain," Grey Owl overcame the decrees of fate by moving to Canada, in Tales Grey Owl again makes ambiguous references that hide his English heritage. He indicates, for instance, that while "white intruders, or intruders of any kind are not welcomed"
at hidden Indian villages, he is usually welcome (35). Later he writes of the wilderness, "its creatures and its people, among whom [his] life has been passed and to whom [he] so irrevocably belong[s]," setting up an ambiguous statement of his relationship to it (147-148). Once, after describing an old half-breed, Grey Owl wonders what the old man, as a surviving pioneer, thinks of him, "descendant of a fighting race, living in ease," but the narrator does not demand that the fighting race has to be an Indian tribe (Tales 70). Grey Owl would have seen more fighting between Europeans during his war service than he would have between Indians, generally considered by Europeans of his time to be less civilised. He consistently aligns himself with half-breeds. He discusses the rejection of Indian bloodlines by those whose appearance allows them to pass as whites, but in the discussion he indicates that he has noted "with regret regarding not a few of my own kind, who are part Indian and part White . . . [who] will deny their blood and call themselves . . . anything but what they are--Indian" (152) When a tourist "passes some thoughtless remark" about Grey Owl's nationality, Grey Owl reports that the man's wife responds, "But my dear, he didn't ask to be made a half-breed--its not his fault" (153). The irony is obvious here because Archibald Belaney/Grey Owl did what few people do; he sought association with a fringe element of society that usually suffers from rejection.

It is almost defensively that Grey Owl comments about frontier society: "White man, red-skin and half-breed, they belonged to that fraternity of freemen whose creed it is that all men are born equal, and that it is up to a man to stay that way. For in this society the manner
of a man's speech, where he comes from, his religion, or even his name are matters of small moment and are nobody's business but his own" (Tales 172). Archie Belaney may truly have believed this, and it was, thus, not for his associates in the wilderness but for the less tolerant, wider, world that Grey Owl was created. Grey Owl, like Grove and James, tried to turn his back on established society, with its traditions and petty demands, to seek freedom. He kept his past hidden, and he adapted experiences from his childhood and his transition years to support the front of his adult charade that evolved into a lifestyle, a means of livelihood, and a unique life. With the invention of a new name and identity, he could negotiate his past in order to claim the life he had as a child chosen for himself, and he could write that life into his life-story.
Chapter Five

Untattled Tales: Frederick Philip Grove

'I've looked through your Autobiography. . . . I thought you were born somewhere in the far north of Sweden.'
'That was Magnus Eisengrim; my earlier self was born in Deptford. . . .' (Davies 258)

Frederick Philip Grove (1879-1948) provides an extreme example of the way a person can manipulate and misrepresent personal history in order to achieve a goal in life. When he went a step further and wrote his autobiography, he gained the confirmation that publication affords his life-story. Discussing his childhood, Grove states in In Search of Myself: "... like the face of Europe my memory is a palimpsest on which writing has overlaid writing" (147). The irony of this statement lies in the fact that through his autobiography he attempts to obliterate his past and overwrite it with another. Part apologia, part fact, part fiction, In Search of Myself challenges autobiographical tradition and rules. Grove, an author conscious of critical evaluation of intellectual and literary endeavours, had high standards of writing, a broad scope to his work, and an awareness of the autobiographical process. He furnishes scholars with ample material through which to explore the attitude and philosophy of one autobiographer, and he presents the opportunity to use a third Canadian illustration in the discussion of autobiography. A study of his work complements the review of the way in which Will James, Grey Owl, and, by extension, any autobiographers present themselves, particularly if written works, published and unpublished, other than the autobiography are available.
In order to present himself in Canada as he wanted to be seen, Grove went beyond keeping separate the audiences from disconnected periods in his life; he attempted to sever entirely all links with his past. Grove came from a society where records were carefully kept, yet no record of him could be found by those who looked for documented support of his claims. In order to baffle anyone who might attempt to trace him, he had falsified his birth and emigration dates, claimed to have been born in transit between two points, and altered the names of areas where he said he was raised. Although the major thrust of his story remained fairly consistent, with each telling some anomalies and breaches in the accounts of his life prior to settling in Canada could be found. Desmond Pacey, who published the first biography of Grove in 1945, tried unsuccessfully to confirm references to places and dates found in the manuscript of In Search of Myself and elsewhere. In response to a concern voiced by Pacey about a discrepancy in dates that made the year of his birth debatable, Grove replied on February 8, 1944:

I have given my age as if I were born anywhere between 1871 and 1873... before [my marriage in 1914] everything is guesswork.

And so, if you will kindly try to bring some order into the sequences, I promise to accept it [and] to govern myself accordingly. (Letters 437)

Thus Grove dismissed the dating difficulty and went on to indicate that other errors were the result of lapses of memory due to his twenty years spent as a vagabond.

Grove’s story, however, goes beyond the boundaries of what could be blamed legitimately on gaps in recollection. When Douglas Spettigue began the research for his 1969 biography of Grove, Frederick Philip Grove, he tried to discern what was real in Grove’s claims but he
discovered inconsistencies and a lack of verification. As Spettigue made Grove a major focus of his research career, he methodically discovered and presented examples of contradictions in the different versions Grove gave of his life. Current researchers depend heavily on Spettigue. His writings are used as a basis for work on Grove because the material in them is the result of years of investigation, an insightful investigation that continues; to avoid Spettigue is impossible and impractical. His findings are now pivotal in any discussion of Grove; however, the analysis of Spettigue's discoveries varies with application and must be reconsidered with each new element that is added to the developing Greve/Grove picture. To a certain extent, the detective work of people like Spettigue, Pacey, and Hjartarson becomes a dance with Grove, with each researcher acting as his partner, following his lead through the life he has choreographed; although for years he out-maneuvered those who questioned his life, investigators have been increasingly able to follow his steps recently.

Until 1971 Spettigue could provide little new information about Grove's past because early research into the Grove family history gave him, like Pacey, only negative results. He looked for, but could not find, confirmation of information that Grove presented in his autobiography. Spettigue discovered no record of a Castle Thurow or of a Grove family in Sweden and, despite Grove's claim that he was born in Russia (according to his naturalization papers, in Moscow; according to his autobiography, in a rural manor-house), no Russian record of

1 Spettigue's Frederick Philip Grove (1969) will be referred to as Grove in parenthesis in the text.
Frederick Philip Grove (Spettigue, Grove 8-9). The romantic and exotic quality in his autobiography that had never rung true for many readers could be seen to stem from fictionalization as Spettigue proposed that the name, the date, and the place of birth that Grove gave were likely all incorrect.

In itself, the inability to verify Grove's statements made one positive contribution: lack of verification meant that the truth about him and his background was to be found elsewhere than where he said it was and in directions other than those in which he pointed. The contradictions and the absence of supporting documentation, in conjunction with elements of the Grove story that were suspected to be fantasy, led Spettigue to check sources more imaginatively and to look for similarities or possible variations in comparisons between Grove's data and that found in records. Although Spettigue does not indicate the key that gave him access, in the spring of 1972, he announced in the Queen's Quarterly that he had discovered Grove's German identity. In FPG: The European Years and in his introductory statements to the 1974 New Canadian Library edition of In Search of Myself, Spettigue writes of Grove's past as Felix Paul Greve, supporting or altering his claims and early speculations about Greve's personal and family history with information collected from official documents, records, and correspondence. He contrasts, clarifies, and corrects, for instance, the conflicting points made in four different versions of Grove's activities and location in 1894 with material and records that indicate

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2 There are unconfirmed rumours that Catherine Grove may have given some indication to Spettigue where he might begin to look.
that Grove was not in Canada when he claimed to have been; instead, 
"throughout the 1890's Grove was a schoolboy in Germany" (Grove, In 
Search of Myself x). Despite Grove's (and Greve's) claim to have had a 
varying number of sisters, Spettigue discovered that he probably only 
had one and that she either died or disappeared (FPG 177-178). 3 From 
all the data he has gathered, Spettigue could not accept that Grove was 
ever in Russia with an Uncle Rutherford; none of the accounts allow time 
for the trip as Grove describes it and aspects of it are not 
historically valid. Initially, Grove indicated that his mother was a 
Scot and that his father was of Swedish extraction, but he shifted his 
genealogy to make both parents Swedish; Spettigue traced the family tree 
and found that Grove was born in Poland (Pomerania) of German parents 
(In Search of Myself xi; FPG 177; Grove 8). Both the questions and the 
answers about Grove's past affect the reading of the autobiography. 

From the time when readers were presented with Spettigue's 
revelations, they have been faced with challenges to the status of 
In Search of Myself, either as some semblance of autobiography or as a 
type of fiction, and they have been forced to fumble to try and make 
some intelligent recovery of credibility of earlier judgments and 
criticism of Grove's work based on the background and experience that he 
claimed. The fact that F. P. Grove won the Governor-General's Award for 
creative nonfiction in 1947 for In Search of Myself in itself raises

3 When Greve discussed his family with André Gide he claimed that 
he had three sisters, all of whom had died (Gide, The Journals of André 
Gide 1889-1949 238). In the published autobiography, Grove discusses 
his seven sisters (19). In the notes to the 1974 NCL edition, Spettigue 
points out that in the earlier, unpublished version of the 
autobiography, "My Life," Grove claimed to have had eight sisters 
(n. pag. [459]).
questions, yet the implications that affect the reading of the autobiography and the criticism of Grove's fiction are greater than those implied by the category of the prize he won. Current rejection of the account of the contact with the Kirghiz herdsmen, and the epiphany that Grove claimed to have gained through it, affects commentary on his writing, particularly on the prairie novels, but it also affects interpretation of Grove's philosophy of life and writing as questions are asked about the validity of his material. As one gains new insights into Grove's past through exposure to external sources, however, a beneficial comparison of versions of the past is possible. The anecdotes related in the autobiography continue to have significance as readers recognize and accept their grounding in reality and their value as creative variations of real experiences.

One of the scholars most affected by Spettigue's revelations was Desmond Pacey, who wrote the first and a subsequent biography of Grove and who edited a collection of Grove's letters. Concerning his first biography of Grove, Pacey writes with some regret:

"It is embarrassing for me to find, in the light of Professor Spettigue's diligent researches, that the names and dates in those [biographical] chapters were dubious at best, completely false at worst. That I accepted Grove's version of his life at face value was probably proof of my naïveté—but I think I am still naïve enough to assume that if a man volunteers to tell his own life story, and

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4 Pacey was in his early twenties when he wrote the biography, and he based it on the manuscript of the autobiography that Grove published in 1946. Pacey did not know of an earlier manuscript, "My Life," written in the late 1930s. Had he had access to both manuscripts, his suspicions would have been aroused because of the numerals and dates that were crossed out in "My Life" and because of the many discrepancies in details between the two, discrepancies that are not easily blamed on bad memory."
especially if he proves willing to answer questions put to him about that story, the story is basically true. . . . I am still prepared to argue that Grove's account of his life is substantially true, . . . but that Grove fictionalized the names of persons and places I must reluctantly concede. (Pacey, Frederick Philip Grove [1970] 4)

Pacey wrote the first biography during World War II when verification of European material was difficult. Now it can be said that he lacked historemes—the basic facts of the case—that provided material for the anecdotes as they evolved and for the deeper understanding of the man's story and of his life. Thirty years after publication of the first biography, Pacey, still hesitant to accept the degree to which Grove had misled people, suggested that there is in Grove's work a basis of truth even where there is fictionalization. Spettigue's findings, to some extent, support this idea, and both men's opinions add to the argument that anecdotes in autobiography often have parallels in history.

An investigation of Spettigue's findings, as they have been published over the years, reveals consecutive distinct layers of information, each one adding to the overall picture of Grove. But more than that, they provide an anatomy of anecdotal investigation while at the same time indicating how the anecdote affects the presentation of the self and, ultimately, the presentation of the autobiography. Although gaps remain in the overall picture, Spettigue has ferreted out much information. He has traced, in effect, the historemes that link Greve's life with Grove's autobiographical fiction—A Search for America and other writings—and with his autobiography, In Search of Myself. As he notes, "Sooner or later FPG manages to work into this book [In Search of Myself] the places and events of his early life, all disembodied, atomized and let float free before being cemented into
their fictional places" (Spettigue, FPG 187). Spettigue's progress is so well documented that readers of his work on Grove can see the image of Grove changing as Spettigue inserts pieces. Recognizing the process of Grove's creation, Spettigue calls the first two parts of *In Search of Myself* ("Childhood" and "Youth"), "a mosaic of fact, fiction and interpretation" (FPG 218). The mosaic imagery is particularly valid if one sees the histoeomes and anecdotes as the elements used in reconstruction. In order to understand the autobiography in light of his findings, Spettigue attempts to discover how Grove's life was "fragmented by the artist, restored in an arbitrary sequence, cemented by fiction and shaped according to his later vision of mankind" (FPG 218). Metaphorically, Spettigue restates what autobiographical critics have said about fashioning the past to agree with one's present.

It is Olney who stressed the view of autobiography acting as metaphor, but when Spettigue categorizes Grove's time references as "narrative chronology," "appearance chronology," and "metaphorical displacement," he reaffirms this concept through the discussion of Grove, again providing a link between Canadian critic's m and general autobiographical theory (FPG 185). The narrative chronology is the story and the ordering of the events in it, but, beside and beyond this, Spettigue considers Grove's history as he has come to understand it, making a comparison (and noting the metaphorical displacement) between what Greve is known to have done and what Grove himself said that he did. The account of the Siberian trip in the autobiography, for instance, may have developed from a trip to Sweden in 1908; there are similarities between it and an article that Greve wrote, "Reise in
Swedden" (FPG 155). It might also have come out of some Canadian prairies experience; later in In Search of Myself, Grove compares the terrain near Morden as being like the steppes of Siberia, but one can wonder if he takes a Canadian experience, and pushing it through an anecdotal hole, comes up with a way of reinforcing the image he gives of the description of Russia (253). In the chapter "Framing an Autobiography," Spettigue proposes explanations for other claims made in the autobiography, including a reconsideration of many of the ages and dates that Grove assigns to people and events. Spettigue places these in the context of statements of altered and adapted family relationships: when Grove states, for instance, that his father died in 1892, this is the year of the breakup of the Greve family. Spettigue notes that Grove also borrows information for his autobiography from other contexts: "FPG altered the relative ages in the autobiography to fit his and Catherine's case as he was making it out to be"; he also borrows the seventeen-year period between his mother's marriage and his own birth from the seventeen years between the time that he and Catherine married until their son, Leonard, was born. There are many other coincidental aspects that Spettigue finds in Grove's life and those of friends and family. He notes, for instance, that although Grove never had the seven sisters he claimed in his autobiography, there were seven sisters and one son in his mother's family. His mother may never have played the piano or ridden horses, but Catherine could do both (FPG 178, 183). There is clearly a transfer of elements into Grove's life-story.

Once Spettigue had ascertained the bases of some of Grove's
experiences in the lives of Greve and others, he remarked: "It is fascinating to watch Grove working up a tiny node of truth into a legend" (FPG 23). This can be related to Fineman's comment that the anecdotal hole becomes the whole. Increased insight into the family backgrounds allows Spettigue to conjecture how Grove could fashion and borrow "nodes of truth" to present his story in the light which he chose. He and other readers were able to discover aspects of Greve's history that found their way into Grove's autobiography but in altered form. Elsa may have lent some elements of her personality to Grove's mother or to Mrs. Broegler. Extratextual information contributes to the interpretation of the autobiography because it presents material that draws attention to details in the autobiography, either by verifying them or by contradicting them. Through his explanations of how he thinks Grove has altered or introduced particular aspects from his past into his writing, and through his explanations of why he thinks Grove has used past events as he has, Spettigue demonstrates the use of background concealment and the use of centre stage as a means of foregrounding the presentation of the desired self. For this reason, Spettigue's approach, and Grove's situation, presents to students of autobiography a classic example of investigation of autobiography that indicates how factors beyond historical correctness contribute to autobiography and affect criticism. Once Spettigue had documented items from Greve's records, he and others began to fill in many of the gaps in Grove's life and could correct some of the suppositions.

Grove succeeded in adding to confusion, however, by inserting into his narrative an "appearance" chronology, referring frequently in
In Search of Myself to the age that he and others appeared to be: at age thirty-three (i.e. 1912) he claims to be forty but looks "twenty-eight or thirty"; he suggests that when he is fifty (that is, forty-three) he will "be able to pass [himself] off as thirty-five or six" (233). At the time of Greve's mother's death (when she was actually forty-three but Grove says that she was over fifty), his father is said to "have been seventy-four or five but he looked fifty" (113): he actually would have been fifty. The woman he met in Rome was able to appear, through "the arts of the dressing table," "ten years younger than she was" (199). Grove used disparities between age and appearance to manipulate reaction of readers to the people included in his autobiography.

Spettigue's research, as recorded in FPG, contributes much to the knowledge of Grove, but Paul Hjartarson's "Of Greve, Grove, and Other Strangers" reveals another lode of information. In it he writes about the findings of Lynn DeVore who, while investigating the sources of Djuna Barnes Nightwood, discovered among Barnes's papers an autobiography of the Baroness Elsa [Ploetz] von Freytag-Loringhoven, who wrote about her life with Felix Paul Greve. Hjartarson's and DeVore's articles have opened new windows on Grove's past because this is the Elsa with whom Greve had a relationship. Elsa's life-story gives a

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5 The divorced woman he met in Rome who had the impression that Grove had been a planter in America may have been based on Elsa, and as he thought she might be if they were to meet again.

6 The Baroness's autobiography appears to have been written in response to two requests. One was from Djuna Barnes who wished Elsa to tell her story; the other was from a doctor who may have seen it as good psychotherapy.
first-hand description of Greve, new insight into his personality, and a fresh perspective on his activity between 1902 and his first year in America, assumed to be 1909. It throws new light on both Grove and on his claims, as well as on Spettigue's discoveries and speculations, reminding readers again that any history is only a version of events.

Elsa gives a new image of Greve, capturing his looks and his attitudes. For many years no photographs of Greve had been found, and comparisons of him to Grove could only be based on descriptions, most notably that of Gide. Elsa's autobiography discusses Greve's appearance, confirming Gide's description and many of the impressions that Grove gives in his autobiography, but Elsa also presents new aspects. When she met Greve, Elsa was immediately attracted to him: he had a "stunning manner and appearance" and was "far too fashionable..."

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7 The link between Elsa and Grove has led to the inclusion of a copy of her autobiography in the Grove papers at the University of Manitoba (Else von Freytag-Loringhoven Collection: MSS81). (The original is held in the University of Maryland Archives.) I would like to acknowledge the co-operation of Richard Bennett and University of Manitoba archive staff in making the material on Grove and Elsa available. References to the diary (designated Elsa in parentheses within the text of this chapter) are to the three divisions which Elsa indicated by Roman numerals, the pages of each section being numbered separately and by Arabic numerals. Hjartarson and Spettigue have edited and published the diary under the title Baroess Elsa; their book does not retain the original sectioning, but the divisions are indicated in the notes.

8 In his record in his journals of his conversation with Greve, Gide comments:

Right away I saw that smooth face, looking as if it had been bleached with chlorine [Greve had been in prison for a year], that body too tall, for which all seats are too low. I wished ardently that it might be he. It was. Von M. had not exaggerated his elegance. B. R.[Greve] was perfectly dressed, looked English rather than German, and I was not astonished when he told me a little later that his mother was English. (236)
Dressed inoffensively highly expensive—in English fashion—with an immovable stony suave expression on his very fair face with slightly bulging large misty blue eyes a severe saucy nose—hair as spun yellow glass... over 6 feet tall and elegantly narrow—with a whippiness to his movements and at the same time precision and determination—that was charm and force in one and announced splendidly the wellbred gentleman. (Elsa II, 9)

As he was when he took on the role of Grove, Greve was very conscious of the impressions that others had of him. He had always appeared to be rich: "He looked--behaved rich.... He possessed 15 different suits—each with 2 pairs of trousers" (Elsa III, 9). Until the German photographs described by Spettigue ("Felix, Elsa, André Gide, and Others" 10, 18-19) are published, this word picture by Elsa allows comparison with Grove as he appeared in Canada several years after she last saw him.

Elsa writes also of Greve's attitudes and actions. A woman who enjoyed the company of many men, Elsa makes it very clear that throughout her life Greve was the man she remembered with the greatest pleasure. He certainly dominates the story of her experiences as she writes of them to Djuna Barnes, and her evaluation of Greve can affect the opinion that readers have of Grove decades later. She calls Greve, "Mr. Felix," and she is impressed with his "intelligence, excellent college education and high amount of executive ability" (Elsa II, 1). She credits him with having "started the first [Oscar] Wilde craze in Germany" (Elsa II, 7). He is described as a distinguished translator who had studied archaeology and philology, and who might have been a genius if he had not thought himself one. His appearance of
self-confidence is great, and when she asks him if he knows everything, he claims he does; she cannot contradict him because his bearing indicates that what he says is true. She also indicates that he "was surrounded by a gleamour [sic] of mysterious wealth--so that well intentioned people [sic] believed him to be a millionair [sic]--and the others--who knew as little as the first--declared him to be a cardsharp" (Elsa II, 7). These impressions of Greve are valuable, yet so also is the confession that for Elsa, part of Greve's fascination is his air of mystery. She describes him sitting "with that mysterious expression of vacancy in his big misty orbs--immovable--that was a mask and pretense [sic] to hide himself under. What was he--Who was he--What was the mystery--What was his knowledge?--What gave him assurance?" (Elsa II, 12). Her questions are echoed by readers five decades after his death, but new questions come out of her own story as it relates to Greve.

Any insight into Elsa's life, therefore, helps readers to understand Greve's responses to her and to understand how his relationships with others were affected by her. Because Elsa is both witness and participant, information she gives is valuable, but her credibility and character should be explored when considering her story, for her autobiography must be read as sceptically as any autobiography. Elsa tells of her past, confessing that her life had been the basis for *Fanny Essler* and *The Master Mason's House*. Elsa indicates that she dictated the material but Greve "did the executing part of the business--giving the thing a conventional shape and dress" (Elsa II, 2). This shaping and dressing allows him to construct a narrative of the anecdotes of her life. She explains that Greve was emulating Flaubert,
and that she does not like the abrupt, artificial style that he used.\textsuperscript{9}

Insight into Greve is achieved through her discussion of Greve's German novels; Elsa indicates that his attitude to his work seemed to fluctuate between his desire to achieve monetary success and his need for personal satisfaction, just as Grove's did in Canada.

Elsa's autobiography is not meant to be the story of her life with Greve. I expected the reader searching for missing connections in Grove's story is frustrated when Elsa shifts her focus away from Greve. Elsa's life, her story of Greve, and her own autobiography are in themselves fascinating, but also worth noting are her comments on the writing process which are in line with that which theorists have said about autobiography being a story of the past that focuses on the person who writes it at the time of writing: "But--I forget--that I write a biography--yet my present self belongs in it too--it writes it--and it becomes rebellious of the other and jealous!" (Elsa II, 15). Elsa's stress on the division of a past self from a present self, and her reaction to her previous self, underline again the concept of the autobiography being the story of the person holding the pen at the time of writing.

Readers of Greve's novels, of Barnes's \textit{Nightwood} (which DeVore claims has characters based on both Greve and Elsa), and of Elsa's autobiography gain a fairly full picture of the woman. She is seen as passionate, impetuous, self-centred but generous, and frustrated in her inability to take the steps necessary to improve her lot and her

\textsuperscript{9} Others must have shared her opinions because the German novels were not a success when first published. Translated into English, they are ploddingly precise in their realism.
station. She also appears to have considered herself patient and true to her principles (although the principles and standards by which she lived may not have been those that traditional society condoned or promoted). If she is to be believed (and there appears to be no reason to suspect extraordinary deception on her part), readers might gain, through her, a new picture of Greve, one that both supports and conflicts with the Spettigue version. Faced with these accounts, and with Grove's autobiography, readers are reminded that history is not fact, only a version of events in the past.

According to Elsa, Greve was one of several lovers from the art world that she had had before, during, and after her marriages. Her relationship with Greve was the longest lasting in her life "until the terrible disgraceful end—not counting my American unresponsive love emotions—those to Marcel [Proust] and the 'Cast-Iron Lover' and the last to W.C.W [William Carlos Williams]" (Elsa II, 26). Elsa's first marriage was to August Endell, an architect she claims was impotent. Greve met Elsa through Endell's circle. Elsa's description of their courtship is an example of how Greve is revealed by Elsa's narrative. She indicates that Greve waited for her to initiate their affair; once she took the first steps he maintained a "selfpossessed ironic manner" in his dealings with her (Elsa II, 13). When she first made an overture to him by inviting him to join her and her husband on a social occasion, Greve replied by sending a verse from Schiller on a postcard: "Zwischen Sinnenlust und Seelenfrieden—Bleist Dem Menschen Nur Die Barge Wahl" which she unidiomatically translates as "Between sense lust and mind
peace men has but anxious choice [sic]" (Elsa II, 7). There is an ambiguity in this that might make it appear appropriate to have been selected by the man who became Grove, but Elsa found that it did not fit the Greve she knew, with his "irreproachable--almost rigid--appearance." His intellectual and her sensual approaches to life led to an unlikely bond.

When Elsa indicated to Greve that she had never experienced a sexual climax, he promised that, if she would trust him, "he would turn the trick" (Elsa II, 17). After many attempts they finally achieved their goal, but Elsa's description of their project shows the difference in attitude between the two. It took "all his qualities of energy--determination and executive ability" and "the most intense application to this and nothing else day and night" (Elsa II, 17). "It was highly necessary to be at it methodically and unflinchingly--quite aside from our desire that was existing in greater amount in me than in Felix--for the still missing orgasm--but--for Felix it was a task and obligation and he took it conscientiously and thoroughly--" (Elsa II, 31). Once the goal was achieved "Felix was pleased and satisfied--like any fine workman" but he "behaved rather businesslike--cooly collected," never sharing her ecstasy but exhibiting "a sort of slight contempt for this thing--that after all--was necessary and he could do so excellently [sic] well--He did it--yes--like doing a sport" (Elsa II, 32). Reading Elsa's autobiography, one recognizes that the apparently staid Canadian Grove had experienced in his youth the sexual activity that found a place in

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10 Interestingly, she corrects "peace of mind" to "mind peace" in her translation, apparently purposefully capturing a slightly different nuance.
his autobiography. If, then, Greve was a man who appealed to women, there may be bases to the stories that Grove told about his past, about Mrs. Broegler, Kirsten, and even the semi-clad woman on the stair. Considered from an entirely different point of view, Elsa's discussion of her relationship with Greve also shows traces of the dogged perseverance that Grove demonstrated in any area of interest to him.

Important in Elsa's story is a version of her trip to Italy with Felix Greve that differs in detail from what Spettigue suggests. Elsa claims that her husband, August Endell, travelled with the couple, although she registered as Mrs. Felix. Greve bought him an expensive English-style wardrobe in response to the claim that because Elsa was leaving him, August had nothing: "You must take care of me." Elsa did not agree but "Felix was generous enough--and was later badly enough paid for it" (Elsa II, 28). The Spettigue version of this incident is that Greve borrowed two hundred marks from Elsa's husband and that this was repaid by Greve's friend Kilian, who later charged Greve with fraud, the bad payment to which Elsa refers. Whatever the bizarre circumstances of this trip, Elsa notes that Felix took time to work "a little in his literary pursuit" and to make love (Elsa II, 31).

Elsa's autobiography includes her version of other aspects of Greve's financial difficulties. According to her, Greve claimed that some time before he met Elsa, he had travelled with and supported a young woman who debated accepting him as her lover. Elsa has contempt for this "travelling virgin" and contempt for Greve for allowing himself to be manipulated by her:

This girl had come to him--begging for money for her brothers [sic] embezzlement--I knew--It was talked about
such affair at that time. . . It was quite a sum--10,000 marks--and Mr. Felix had given it her . . . for the pleasure of some virgins [sic] criminal brother! (Elsa II, 22)

It is in the context of her disappointment over Greve's involvement with "the travelling virgin" that Elsa makes one of her oblique references to their period in America:

He deserved what he got--nothing--and blame--with minus 10,000 m. But I didn't deserve it! For later in America--after we each had taken the other as the right kind of medicine--this sentimentality came out again--He began to be impressed by virginity . . . All men . . . will take any dope given them that way however rank with improbability and clumsiness. It made me utterly despise him as a-after all his splendor--internally unorganic person--a poor nut. (Elsa II, 23).

Whether this is an indication that Greve left Elsa for another woman in the United States is difficult to tell. Elsa's autobiography is erratically spontaneous and not particularly sequential. Moreover, although she makes references that link financial support and sexual favours, she does not appear to connect the two in her personal activities for she proudly indicates that she makes no monetary gain from her relationships with men. Her sexual liberty may colour her opinions of other people's relationships and the impetus for them.

Disagreement over sexual activity may have had an impact on Elsa and Greve's separation. In America, Greve "ceased to have intercourse with [her]--for he had lost interest [sic] in it--being in an absorbing primitive struggle for life--in America--and in a year's time--he left [her] helpless in this strange country" (Elsa II, 34). Originally he had her join him in America because he could not live without her, but her desire for physical attention conflicted apparently with his need for spiritual or moral support. It may be that he left her when he
perceived that she could not help him as he required in "the hardest struggle of [his] life"; she claimed that he needed "an American farm woman" and he countered by saying, "I do not need any woman," an observation that, as she notes dryly, "his sex desertion long had confirmed" (Elsa II, 34). Eventually Elsa sees Greve as asexual, a man who turned to "that virgin ideal" after he felt his "time was up" with her. She indicates the trauma of their parting. Although it was

his life's ideal--under all circumstances to behave as 'gentleman' with his will power--self-management--the way he left [her] was a deliberate action of plainest common sense--that was loftily absent in the days of his flourishing youth. . . . the way he deserted [her] was never the way of a gentleman--hate or no hate--but that of a desperado--and that he was at the time--and will forever now. This he will never live down within himself--hence he must murder his soul or perish on it. (Elsa III, 19)

Elsa's comments raise questions about the degree to which Greve changed his outlook on life when he pretended to take his life in 1909. The idea of dying, indeed of murdering the self to save the self, has echoes of Trilling's comments on authentic. One can wonder how desperate Greve was for change during his last months in Europe and how he adapted to the changes that were the result of the "post-suicidal" move to the United States.

Elsa indicates that even before they left Europe, Greve had unreal expectations of her; the translation workload he accepted indicates that he also had high expectations of himself. As he worked to become more successful, he attempted to make her more conventional, to put a "tight-fitting corset" on her, body and soul (Elsa III, 23). In his vision of what he expected of her, Elsa comments that he held up the example of his "supposedly faultless ladylike dead mother," who became
"a nightmare of stiff dullness or vile hypocrisy in [Elsa'] eyes," an uninteresting lemonade blooded" person (Elsa III, 25). She wondered why he had not "selected a wife in her style" (Elsa III, 24). Here can be seen a trace of the Grove to be, and possibly the first hint of the Mrs. Grove to be chosen.  

Despite their differences, Elsa felt that Greve respected her honesty and confidence, qualities he seemed to feel he lacked no matter what bluff he adopted. Moreover, even when Greve's misrepresentations of his finances led to his arrest, she remained loyal to him. She continued to dislike Kilian, whom she felt had had Greve arrested because of his jealousy of Greve's attentions to Elsa, although she eventually realized that it was Kilian's money, not payment for work as correspondent for "Berliner Tageblatt" (as Greve led her to believe), that financed the trip to Italy. Elsa recognized that Greve had misled her and others, but she waited for him to be released from prison, as Gide confirms in the record of his conversation with Grove, "Conversation with a German Several Years Before the War." Their relationship, however, could not survive the many social and financial

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11 There is another link between Greve/Grove and the women in his life. One of the more interesting comments that Elsa makes concerning August Endell is that he called her "Ti" which he explained meant "yellow," a royal colour in China, and she called him "Tse," or "master" (Elsa II, 1). It is probably more than a coincidence that in Canada Grove referred to what he thought were Chinese endearments when he gave Catherine the pet name "Tee" and indicated to her that it meant "mistress" in Chinese (Pacey Letters, Catherine Grove to D. Pacey, 18 April 1968. MG30 D339 Vol 38). I am indebted to Wenqui Liang for the information that the words for yellow and mistress in Chinese are not at all similar to those that Greve and Grove present. In a letter to Djuna Barnes, Elsa discusses a Chinese gentleman with whom, as a child of eight or nine, she felt her first sexual attraction (Hjartarson and Spettigue 208). Possibly it was Elsa--rather than Greve, Grove, or Endell--who initiated the idea of Chinese endearments.
pressures on it. In retrospect, Elsa felt that "the artificial
construction of lies and pretensions" that Greve built and that she
accepted began to "crumble slowly," "chattering into its last shame be-
spattered [sic]--distorted pieces in America!" (Elsa III, 27). Thinking
back on their life together, Elsa feels that Greve could have been a
success if he had not

unmade himself through impatient ambition--dissatisfaction
with his progress. . . . He was strictly conventional--as
also he was anxious to appear before the world--supposedly
to hold a mask before his true face--for discretions [sic]
sake--to repulse public comment--but--that mask was his face
and what it should hide was only his adolescent desire for
adventure--that he was strong to aquire [sic] as property.
(Elsa III, 16)

This description, which could be applied to Grove as well as to Greve,
is important because it indicates the confusion that results from role
playing, as people question where the role-playing ends and what the
reality is.

Elsa's references to Greve's deceptions and lies are reminiscent of
his own admission to Gide:

"I must let you know, Monsieur Gide, that I lie
constantly."
"Von M. informed me of that, too," [Gide] said to him.
"Yes, but he never understood the import of my lies. I
should like to make you understand; it's not what you think.
I feel the same need for lying and the same satisfaction in
lying that others feel in telling the truth. . . ."
. . . A silence.
"Lying is what binds me to my wife; my extraordinary
ability to lie. When she sensed it, she left her husband,
her child, for me; she left everything to follow me." At
first I wanted to abandon her; then I understood that I
could not do without her; it's to her that I lie most
readily. Sometimes that leads to horrible scenes

12 This is the only reference to Elsa being a mother. Possibly
Greve thought that assigning a child to her would increase perception of
the degree of her sacrifice on his behalf.
between us. But lying always ends up by being the stronger. This evening I am going back to her; we are to be married in two months. Until then we are going to live in Switzerland; when I go back I am selling all that I have and we shall both live on one hundred francs a month.

(Pretexts: Reflections on Literature and Morality 239-240)

Gide's preservation of his recollected conversation with Greve is fortunate, for it provides confirmation of impressions that Grove and Elsa give of Greve at this stage in his life. It also confirms that Greve admitted that the use of lies allowed him to function better in life.

In her autobiography, Elsa sees lying as "the governing trait in his nature" which, with ambition and industry, "gave a dangerous combination. . . . This lie urge he used for spiritual [sic] satisfaction not always unmixed with practical benefits on the side. When conditions became tipsy--he developed swindler qualities . . . used only as a last resort, but brilliantly" (Elsa III, 1). Early in their relationship Elsa believed stories Greve told, but in her autobiography she reveals a growing distrust of them. She never investigated her suspicions, however, because she knew that he could "lie about lies" as easily as not, and also because she was afraid of hearing the truth that might make him tumble or might allow her "to see the earthen feet" (Elsa III, 3). To some extent, Elsa captures the essence of an idea that affects how the liar's autobiography is accepted; the members of the audience initially believe what is presented. When they learn the truth, they often have access to the back area to learn how they have been deceived, and, instead of feeling betrayed, they frequently admire the skill of the perpetrator of the deception.

Elsa writes of her relationship with Greve during the years from
their first meeting in 1902 until they separated in America where, as she puts it, he went to be a "business genius" or "potato king" (Elsa II, 2). She indicates, however, that she has no knowledge of what he did after he left her:

He might be very successfull [sic] now in America--if he is not dead--I do not know. I became separated from him--by his suddenly leaving me (it might not have been so suddenly but appeared [sic] so) alone and helpless without even knowing much English than [sic]--in the midst of the county of Kentucky in the small farm country. That is how I came to America in the first place--. (Elsa II, 3)

This comment, made independent of Grove's influence, would appear to confirm Grove's claim that he was in Kentucky for some of the time before he settled in Canada. It certainly indicates a change from the type of life that Greve had enjoyed in Europe, and from the type of life that Elsa might have expected to lead.

Even though she had no idea of what happened to him after their separation, her reading of the man allowed her guesses to be fairly accurate. She felt that he could have been a success as an American magazine writer if he had been able to forget his "literary European snobbishness," but she ventures that he also might have "succeeded brilliantly in business--using his beguiling person with the glib tongue from the start for dishonesty--instead always merely--from the most rigid integrity--twisting into it" becoming a "gentleman crook" (Elsa III, 6). Considering that almost two decades passed between Elsa's separation from Greve and the writing of her autobiography, it is interesting to notice how accurately she is able to measure the man, not only as he was, but as he was to become years later as Grove:

He was a man who liked to love only himself--who is . . . too unbendingly rigid--too conceitedly intelligent--too much
wanting in imagination--too immodest--in short--too limited masculine--to feel himself in need of a medium for emotional expression. He becomes a mere outward driving force of restless neurasthenic ambition--infertile within himself. With that--he must succeed in America--materially [sic]. Whether [sic] he will keep sensitive to his dwindling soul in the end--or become absolutely oblivious to the existence of such an appendix is vain speculation. . . . He will succeed managing himself at last--if not caught in one of his snare's at cheating--not skilfully enough laid--or weary out even his energy by frequent collapses--though America keeps young. Yet since he possesses the possibility of deep feeling he may face a fearful downbreak. (Elsa III, 17)

Knowing now what Elsa could not know, the reader is impressed by her insight and her clairvoyance. Readers of Elsa's autobiography can find further clues about Greve in which Elsa writes: discussing their lovemaking, she adds a comment on Greve's attitude that also may have had a bearing on how the man achieved his aims. When they were finished, Greve "at once in his manner obliterated memory of it--as though it had'nt been" (Elsa II, 33). This was also the manner of Grove when he was in a position to consider his past. In his autobiography he records his indecision about whether to tell Catherine that he is an artist, with an artist's priorities (279), and he states that "of my former life I said little" (275). What must be recognized is that Greve's adoption of a new identity and his adaptation of his history were only superficial changes. His attitude towards the past, although affected by a new environment and social context, remained in many ways the same even when he became Grove. Setting goals that were not particularly realistic was part of his Canadian weakness, as it had been of his German life. Concerning his teaching career, he comments, "Consciously I was still determined to strike straight for my financial goal," a goal which the autobiography reveals is unachievable (263).
Elsa's story of her life with Greve records some of the efforts Greve made to succeed and some of his reactions to the disappointments in his life, both of which affect the man who was to become Grove. Her story does not include any of the details of events of 1909, does not discuss the faked suicide, and does not mention if she had a role in organizing it. Her references to the time spent in America are frustratingly few and sketchy. She does not discuss specifics about the move to America or about their separation there. Elsa does indicate that Greve went to "the county of Kentucky" and suggests that she joined him there on a farm. She had no contact with him after they separated (or he abandoned her) a year later. Elsa's story does not fill in all the gaps, but it does offer new information about the German years. Discussing Elsa's autobiography, Hjartarson concludes that questions about Grove will continue to tease many of Grove's critics for years to come—and to infuriate those who want attention focused solely on the texts. Our attention, however, keeps being diverted by new discoveries--discoveries that change the context in which we read Grove's texts. For Felix Paul Greve life was a text he kept revising and we, his readers, keep encountering new versions of the stories he lived and wrote. (Baroness 283)

Indeed, it is now difficult, if not impossible, to focus solely on the text, especially if one suspects that the subtext of both autobiography and fiction is a type of creative autobiography. Each discovery provides new historemes and new insights into how Greve/Grove stage-managed his life, both as he lived it and as he presented it in autobiographical form. The autobiography of Elsa and the record of Spettigue's research supplement our knowledge of the material that passes through anecdotal holes to find new form in the autobiography.
Because Elsa's story and Spettigue's biography provide limited information, researchers continue to look for clues to the 1909 to 1912 period, both in Grove's writing and in records. The ultimate revision of Felix Paul Greve's life was his disappearance and his reported suicide en route to Sweden. According to Pacey, German sources indicate that by 1910 Greve's peers considered him to be dead (Pacey Papers: letter to Watson Kirkconnell, 29 May 1972). Spettigue notes unconfirmed rumours that one of his publishers received word that Greve was alive, in New York, and very ill (FPG 162). Grove states that the pneumonia attack he describes in his autobiography is his second; the first may have been the New York illness (In Search of Myself 289). Among Grove's books deposited in the University of Manitoba Archives is a copy of a guide to New York City (Baedeker's), leading one to believe that Grove had at one time an interest in the city. In In Search of Myself Grove indicates that in 1909 he made a "return trip north" to America, and proceeds to "relate [what] took place during one of the years shortly after the turn of the century" (205). He tells of his adventures on his return to America, mentioning the states of Kansas, North Dakota, and Minnesota in his narrative. He calls this period "the foreground through which I was moving up to the fall of 1912" (214). When seen in the light of confirmed details of his life, these statements appear to be accurate. If one accepts that A Search For

13 Spettigue points out that Friedrich Michael, investigating Felix Paul Greve, notes that an assumption of death was based on the fact that Greve's letters were returned undelivered (FPG 161).
America has an autobiographical basis, Grove, in the period after he left Elsa and during the two years prior to his appearance in Manitoba, may have explored roles similar to those presented both in that novel and in the autobiography, but despite new disclosures every few years, much of what happened in the period from 1909 to 1912 remains an enigma.

Wilfred Eggleston remembers that when he asked whether A Search For America was autobiography or fiction, Grove responded that it was largely fiction (Grove Papers: CBC transcript, 1962: 9), t when Grove addresses the problem of fact and fiction in his introduction to novel, A Search For America, he claims that every event has been lived through, although not necessarily in the context presented. If one is hesitant normally in accepting an author's statement about his writing, one is particularly so in the case of Grove. Through these two comments, however, he implies a principle not unlike that of the anecdotal hole: in the process of presentation, the events from the past have been altered; once the sources have been found, the link between the original anecdote and the autobiographical version of it can be recognized, but there is no similarity that would easily betray a relationship between the two. An individual who attempts to conceal an identity can employ an anecdote from the past to be the basis for a misleading discussion: a twisted fact points away from the truth. The twenty years (from 1892-1912) that Grove claims in the autobiography to have spent in North America prior to settling in Manitoba are an extension of the more believable two years discussed in A Search For America which he claims
in *In Search of Myself* covered 1892 and 1893 (181).

Even though F. P. Greve made the transition to F. P. Grove while in his early thirties, there is no period of time unaccounted for that would have allowed him to do all that he wrote that he had done, including making the trans-Atlantic trips he said he made in the 1890s. Only by inserting almost a decade into his lifespan could Grove account for the time necessary to live the life that he claimed he lived, and only by borrowing events from other people's lives, or by inflating those in his own, could he have enough material to write into that life. Grove casually dismisses some of the details missing from the nonexistent years which he uses to boost his age: "In spite of our frequent change of scene, I have, for all these years between 1880 and 1888, nothing whatever to tell of exciting episodes. . . . my memory refuses to tell me when we were where" (*In Search of Myself* 87-88). His comment that "there is little to say about [his travel] except that it took up time" (*In Search of Myself* 165) is typical of non-specific remarks and descriptions that allow transitions in the story without divulging that with which the author cannot deal.

Grove had to add—or dismiss—activities in order to fill in the years he added to his age, but he also had to rid himself of the aspects of his past that he did not want to claim: the period of his relationship with Elsa, the time he spent in a Bonn jail for fraud (June 1903-May 1904), and the years he spent writing and translating. At the time of his wedding to Catherine he claimed to be a widower, a marital

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14 During this time he was in his early teens and going to school in Germany.
status that discouraged curious questioning of a solitary immigrant who was single. He rejected any connections that might be made between him and a published author: "Up to 1912, I had as a writer, been utterly unsuccessful; I had not even managed to secure the publication of a single volume" (In Search of Myself 222). While this was true of Frederick Philip Grove, it was not true of Felix Paul Greve. In "Rebels All," which was not published during his lifetime, Grove contradicted this statement and elaborated on his writing history: "I have written books and published a few—under names assumed for that purpose—and I have lived to disown their authorship" (69). Readers of these comments can wonder what Grove's plan was at the time that he wrote them. The possibility arises that, at the time of writing, Grove had not yet decided what he was going to do with the hidden information from his past. Surely, if he had thought of publishing "Rebels All," he would have known that he would be called upon to explain himself. The decision to divorce himself from his former life may not have been made at the time that "Rebels All" was drafted.

Grove also rejected the dilettante aspect of his European life, but it is now recognized that his writing drew on some facets of the hidden life. Characters in the novels may be based on some of his acquaintances, and some of his experiences may be reflected in his philosophical essays. The characteristics of his father, "a fast liver and a furious spender," may be based on his own shortcomings in his European years (In Search of Myself 96). Research has revealed nothing beyond what Grove volunteers about the years immediately prior to his transition into Canada, and, consequently, the degree to which the truth
is included in that which he wrote about the period cannot be
ascertained, but it can be conjectured.

Grove is not likely to have had romantic fantasies of life in
Canada, as his acceptance of the job of a rural teacher would indicate.
If he had ever had an unrealistic view of North America, it would have
been exploded by his experiences in the United States. His original
impetus to destroy Felix Paul Greve and to emigrate likely had been his
need to escape the financial problems that he had in Germany, to break
the cycle of living beyond his means, and to rid himself of a criminal
record. He could not clear his name, but he could change it. It is not
known at what point Greve became Grove, but it was Grove who came to
Manitoba in 1912, shortly after he claims he had to begin life anew.
Unfortunately, the name change and the new persona he adopted required
him to forsake that part of his record that would have been an
asset--his reputation as a translator and as a published author.

Grove treats names as he treats biographical anecdotes, in that he
presents variations of the originals in both. Although writing under an
assumed name was fairly common, Grove's name changes were not for
reasons of frivolity or fashion. In the German years, most of them had
been necessitated by his attempts to protect his reputation as a writer
when he was in jail, when he was doing work he felt was beneath him, or
when he was taking on extra translating assignments. Even when he used
pseudonyms, however, Felix Paul Greve was careful to choose names which,
although they allowed anonymity and avoided immediate detection, might
also allow eventual connection. That is, the name was not that of
Greve, but if he wanted to claim responsibility for a work, he left a
link between his own name and the pseudonym that could logically be explained or was obvious, as is true of the Frederick Philip Grove adaptation. There are traces of the original in the false names just as there are in many of the biographical anecdotes.¹⁵

The desire to remain anonymous in some contexts, but to retain links in order to have the option of claiming ownership of what was pseudonymously written, persevered when Greve wrote and lived as Frederick Philip Grove. In correspondence with Grove about the publication of A Search For America, a representative of McClelland and Stewart wrote on January 9, 1920: "We note you request that your name should not appear on the book, and in this connection we are wondering if you would send us some suggestions for a pen-name, or possibly you have decided on one that you would like to use" (Grove Papers: MSS2 Box 2 Folder 11).

In response to Grove's reply (which is not available), a letter is sent by the publisher: "The pen-name Andrew Rutherford would be quite a good one." Why Grove decided against using this pen-name—which anticipates the uncle with whom he claims in In Search of Myself to travel to Russia—is not known. When Grove wrote The Adventures of Leonard Broadus, he also resisted having his name associated with its serial publication. Grove complained to Lorne Pierce: "I see to my disgust that Dr. Wallace has attached my full name to that juvenile of mine, of a year ago. That was not what I bargained for" (Letters 386). Mary

¹⁵ While in prison he translated foreign authors' works into German, but requested that they be published under the pseudonym Friedrich Carl Gerden, one of several transparent pseudonyms Greve adopted (Spettigue 94). Others are Conrad Thorer and Eduard Thorn (both of which can be related to Thurow and include family first names), and Felix Grafe (Spettigue 217).
Rubio notes that "The novel had been submitted under the name Frederick Wentworth (the same name, incredibly, as the hero of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*)" (159). Here the link is made through the name Frederick. There is also a hint of Greve whose choice of an English name, decision to live in an English-speaking country, early affectation of English dress styles, and apparent preference for English literature all contributed to his presentation of self. The Grove self has many similarities to the Greve self that has been abandoned. The man could hide much in his back region, but through his idiosyncrasies his identity can be confirmed when traced. Once he established the direction his new life was to go, however, Grove accepted the role he had to play, and, except for the comments related to the publication of *The Adventures of Leonard Broadus*, accepted the name under which he would play that role.

The change of name and of role divorced Grove from some the negative elements of Greve's life, but these changes also isolated him from people in his past. One of these is a writer (presumably Gide) he had known when he lived in Europe. In the prologue to *In Search of Myself*, Grove claims a greater familiarity and closeness than is seen in the Gide journal reference to Greve. The general impression, held since Grove was identified as the German to whom Gide refers, has been that

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16 Grove was proud of the contacts that his earlier self had had with internationally prominent writers like Gide. Even if he could not risk making a direct reference to Gide for fear of destroying his own mask, the fact that Grove could allude to connections with prominent literary people allows him to suggest to readers that he should be seen in a favourable light. In "Rebels All," Grove emphasises this: "Poets, dramatists, writers of fictions and of Utopias were not below taking ideas of mine and shaping them into the masterpieces of the age" (69).
Grove exaggerated the degree of friendship. In 1992, however, Spettigue discovered in Gide's papers fifty-five letters from Greve to Gide, written between 1903 and 1907, most pertaining to translations. (Spettigue, "Felix, Elsa, André Gide, and Others" 9). There is no indication in them of the intimacy that Grove claims, but the existence of this portion of their correspondence does support Grove's assertion of an established relationship. Gide's dismissive comments concerning "Conversation" may have been for self-protection: in an editorial comment introducing his translation to "Conversation," Justin O'Brien notes that a controversy arose over a statement Gide recorded having made to Greve in it: "I would rather cause action than act myself" (234). By belittling Greve, Gide could reduce the significance of anything said in the conversation. Even if the men had had only a working relationship, their lives had gone in directions so different that Grove was left to imagine a relative closeness at one time. As he considered his autobiography and Gide's record, however, he could verbalize what he had known for years: there could be no return to his past or reunion with his former associates.

There is another important aspect in the prologue to note. The physical situation which Grove describes being in while he is doing his philosophical pondering is an unlikely one; he is en route by car to pick up household help but has to stop because the road is washed out. He writes about his choices of immediate action in a way that they can also be applied to the choices he has in life:

There were three possibilities. I might abandon my task and try to retrace my way by backing out. I might alight and, leaving the car where it was, leap the washout, to cover the remaining distance afoot. I might try to attract the
attention of the people on the farm or in the house—they were expecting me—by blowing my horn. (5)

Grove's comments help to underline the degree to which he and others who assume new lives learn to adapt. They indicate also why these people cannot simply confess to their deceptions. For them there is no turning back because confession might destroy not only their current lives but also their futures. Better to confirm a simulated past through autobiographical horn-blowing than risk losing all by having someone else reveal the truth. Possibly the reason Grove gave a draft of his autobiography to Pacey when he was preparing Grove's biography was to increase the chances of there being only one version of his life—his own—in both biography and autobiography.

As is true of Grey Owl and Will James, Grove's decisions to work, marry, settle, and write in his adopted land may be based as much on convenience and on fate as on careful preplanning to attain a desired goal. To some extent, opportunism and adaptability are the keys to the success which he achieved. Whatever happened in the years after the "death" of Greve and before Grove applied to be a teacher in Manitoba, the lifestyle and the attitude of the man had changed to a degree that it would be difficult to equate Greve and Grove unless the links were pointed out. Adapting to changing and unforeseen circumstances, he became less like the man he had once been.

The discoveries of Grove's past by Spettigue and the disclosures by DeVore of Grove's connection with Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven begin to enlighten readers, but the more of F. P. Grove's German background as F. P. Greve is revealed, the more people are challenged to equate the immigrant who presented himself as a
self-demanding Canadian of sobriety and high ethical standards with the
debt-ridden German who admitted to being a compulsive liar, who had run
off with another man’s wife, and who had spent time in prison. Possibly
only in Greve’s industry in his latter years in Germany might one see
foreshadowing of the commitment that was to be shown by Grove in most of
his undertakings. Although current curiosity is being satisfied without
scandal, one can only speculate as to what reaction there might have
been had the Greve in his past been revealed while Grove was still
alive. In order for him to survive as Frederick Philip Grove, it was
imperative that the back area remain inaccessible to the curious, even
if the process of hiding it required Grove to give misleading
information to those who thought that they were trusted friends.

Elsa and Catherine both appear to have been accomplices in
Greve/Grove’s deception, although the extent to which they were informed
has not been ascertained. Catherine Grove herself was either told
little of her husband’s past, or she knew more than she wanted others to
know: "The question of his early life must be accepted as he himself
described it" (Pacey Papers: Catherine Grove to D. Pacey, 19 May 1968.
MC30 D339 Vol 38).17 The diary of Elsa indicates that, in her own
fashion, Elsa stood by Greve despite his lies; Catherine may have done
the same. In their correspondence, Desmond Pacey and Leonard Grove
discuss the signature-sized holes cut from some of Grove’s books,

17 Henry Makow notes that Catherine told her daughter-in-law that
Grove confided to her in 1915 that "something might come up" that would
require him to leave her suddenly, but nothing more (Hjartarson, A
Stranger 116). When he started to write Over Prairie Trails, he
commented that he had written in the past.
possibly by Catherine Grove. As Pacey comments to Leonard, "It certainly appears that she knew more about the mystery of his identity than she was prepared to divulge, even to you" (Pacey Papers: 14 Dec. 1972. MG30 D339 Vol 31). By keeping an earlier identity secret, possibly with the co-operation of Catherine, Grove could be what he claimed to be, a well-educated German-speaking immigrant who could teach. His front was consistent; that there was a back region might only have been evident to those who wondered at the source of his frustration and discontent, or who found nothing in the background, such as emigration dates, to support his story. If Catherine was part of his team, both on and back-stage, she would have helped to explain discrepancies and to maintain the illusion that Grove presented.

There is another side to Grove's presentation, for he also saw himself as a martyr, a natural part for a man who actually had suffered a great deal of bad luck and ill health. Even when he achieved success, however, Grove saw himself in a tragic role, for he never felt that he gained the recognition that he deserved for his contribution to writing in Canada. If "Of Nishivara, the Saint" is tapped for its autobiographical basis, the sense of martyrdom attains Christ-like proportion. There is much that is ambiguous and confusing in this essay which is fashioned after Biblical scripture. The claim is made that it has been written by a disciple of Nishivara, a person who is seen to play the role of saint. "Of Nishivara" is important because the first  

18 Although he had won the Governor-General's award for non-fiction writing, had been awarded the Lorne Pierce Medal, and had been presented with an honourary degree by the University of Manitoba, Grove felt that Canada did not appreciate his literary contribution. He received limited monetary remuneration for his writing.
half of the sixty verses can be correlated with known versions of Greve's and Grove's lives, thus providing autobiographical insight while not being blatantly autobiographical. In summary, these verses deal with the experiences of a person who comes from the East, keeps his origins hidden, becomes involved several times with affairs from which he wishes to distance himself, seeks new beginnings, travels, teaches, lives in the wilderness for two years, becomes depressed by the frustrations of his life, and then embarks on a new aspect of life, "no longer stepping at random but with a purpose" (verse 36). The second half of "Of Nishivara" appears to present and repeat variations of the first, adding dramatic elements and possibly metaphorical detail, but also indicating a new, more purposeful aspect of life. In verses 36 to 43 Grove describes what might be seen as a parallel to his story of travelling north to Manitoba in In Search of Myself, despite the fact that he claims that at this point Nishivara is "more than sixty years old." Further parallels to settling and teaching in Manitoba, to establishing his farm in Ontario, to visiting with intellectuals, and to considering his isolation can all be found in the subsequent verses. So also can references that cannot be seen as having actual parallels in the lives of either Greve or Grove: the last few verses deal with Nishivara's martyrdom as he is "cast into prison for stirring up the people" (verse 37); "put before a tribunal made up of the slaves of the world, and sentenced to die" (verse 38); and "shot by a band of soldiers who had not yet seen the light" (verse 39). As in the autobiography, it

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19 Readers of the autobiography come to see the ages that Grove imposes on people as having some idiosyncratic meaning to him; dating people is a Grove signature.
may be that anecdotes from Grove's own life on which he bases his account can be combined with and extended by anecdotes adapted from the lives of others. Because the manuscript is followed by the heading "Chapter Two," one assumes that Grove had intended to write more. He makes no references to this work that would clarify what his aim in writing was or why the work was left unfinished, but "Of Nishivara" underlines again Grove's need to write about his past and to present his story (or what may be assumed to be his story) from his chosen point of view. Like "Rebels All," if it had been published, however, it would have required Grove to defend and to explain comments made in it, jeopardizing his front.

Grove was always very conscious of both the autobiographical form and the presentation of the self which he wanted to be seen and to be remembered. This consciousness might be one reason why Grove discusses explicitly in some of his writings the presentation of self and how aspects of it can be hidden. In "Rebels All," which probably predates his autobiography, is established the tendency to use generalities that

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20 Ideas from "Of Nishivara" are similar to those in "Rebels All:"

I became an agitator and saw the insides of prisons. In that I persisted longer than in anything else, because the mere fact that the authorities thought it worth their while to fight and to oppose me seemed to proclaim the value of my work." ("Rebels All" 69)

This repeats the concepts presented in "Of Nishivara," but Grove's only known prison term was for fraud, not for political activity. It may be that he is expanding on the German jail experience here or he may be expanding on those incidents when he tried to disrupt the status quo in the Manitoba schools in which he worked, or he may be referring to anecdotes from his past of which readers have yet to learn. On the other hand, the examples given could be associated with Oscar Wilde's trial and imprisonment, aspects of which could have been co-opted by Grove who admired Wilde.
is continued in the autobiography.\textsuperscript{21} Of especial interest to anyone looking for clues in Grove's writing that he had a consciousness of his past self are the comments he makes in "Rebels All." He considers that there are individuals who recognize his sophistication and, as he states it, "look beyond my mask" and who query what there was in his past that arrested the development of his obvious potential (68). In this essay Grove admits that he "disappeared and began a new life in the New World" and that he had been an author of published books. He goes on to boast: "Nobody ever has traced, nobody ever will trace them to me" (69). The discovery of Grove's earlier identity as Greve deflates his claim somewhat, and the [now] transparent qualities of the pseudonyms make one wonder if this was a boast or a challenge to investigative readers. On the other hand, there still are years and book titles for which no one has been able to account.\textsuperscript{22}

Grove, a writer whose truth is debated, contributes to a discussion of autobiography because he has given his opinions on questions that arise about the interpretation of historic truths. These are especially of value if his conclusions, and the principles he seems to establish, are applied to his own version of his life. In "Rebels All," he presents an interesting example of the shifting nature of truth: "The Ptolemaic system was 'true' as long as no facts were known to

\textsuperscript{21} Hjartarson makes the editorial comment that the Henry Makow dating of "Rebels All" as about 1919 is conjectural (A Stranger 67). The essay begins with "I have lived through half a century," but at the time of writing Grove was claiming that he was born in 1872.

\textsuperscript{22} Spettigue includes in the bibliography of FPG the titles of works that Greve wrote or planned to have published which have not yet been traced (237).
contradict it" (71). If this approach is accepted, then Grove feels that any current story, theory, or system is open to challenge:

The moment facts are discovered—as no doubt they will be discovered—which contradict it—or, as popular misconception says, 'do not obey it'—it will become error though now it is truth. ... Is history true? History is an interpretation and nothing else. But interpretations are useful nevertheless. ... In studying the facts of our own lives or the facts of history who will say that he has really gone far enough to call a halt. ... No matter at what point we arrive at a judgment, the facts upon which it is based are necessarily incomplete; ... But with regard to the facts of our lives we must arrive at a judgment in order to free ourselves from the slavery which they impose upon us. ("Rebels All" 71-72)

Grove implies that there is an inherent ambiguity in the concept of the presence of "facts" in autobiography as he goes on to consider them and the interpretation of history:

Judgment, or interpretation, if we prefer to call it that, is a process of integration. We put a thing behind ourselves, below ourselves, we put it away, we bury it in the past; but we stand on it, nevertheless. It holds us in the place which we occupy although we do not notice it any longer. It, being a necessary condition of our being, has become part of ourselves. ...

The world of facts is unknown to us. The world of our interpretations is known. ... But what we call our past does not so much consist of facts as our interpretations of them: what lives on in us of any one fact is our judgment of that fact, the same as what lives on in our histories is not a mere record of fact but an interpretation of facts. Our past ... does not consist in facts at all but in such fictions as have become necessary through that which followed. ... Thus we arrive at the paradox that, as the past influences the future, so also does the future influence the past. ("Rebels All" 74)

The implications that this conclusion has for autobiography should be kept in mind when readers consider both Grove’s own autobiography and other autobiographies where the narration of events from the past are affected by the present that was its future. Grove goes on to note that
"a man's interpretation of his own life will be such as to justify, not his past, but his present. Such a view may involve a condemnation of an historical past, illogical as it is" ("Rebels All" 75). One of Grove's little known essays, "Retroaction: Of the Interpretation of History," presents insights into his view of history. In it he comments: "This is my fundamental contention--The past is the outcome of all that has followed it" (Makow, "An Edition" 143). He considers historical interpretation as it affects life: "The past, as fact, lives in us and determines what we are and through it what we do. But is modified in its influence by the past, as fiction, which we construct in our interpretation" (145). In light of these comments, one has to consider Grove as both an autobiographer and as an autobiography theorist.

Removed as he was from the academic mainstream of criticism, and writing here prior to many autobiographical theorists, Grove focuses in his essays on concepts that the theorists did not develop until the later part of the twentieth century.

For those who see this intellectualization as mere rationalization and who would fault Grove for misrepresenting himself in Canada, he discusses the practicality— or the impracticality— of ethics, which he calls a "dream set up by those who fondle the thought of a definite aim" ("Rebels All" 81). For him, life is based too much on interpretation and on arbitrary contingency for people to criticize him for wanting to restructure his life: "All things that ever were had to be that I might be. Let one single, small detail in the chain of things, maybe thousands of years ago have been different, and I should have been different" ("Rebels All" 80). Grove likely was particularly aware of
how incidents can have great repercussions. He knew how his own life—like any person’s life—had been affected by chance, the chance of birth, social climate, and social contacts. He also recognized how people try to impress society by putting themselves in a good light. Part of that process requires a presentation of one’s past: "Because we are we, we build [interpretations of our own lives and the historian’s interpretations of life] about us like a cardhouse to shelter us from the blast of reality. And they, in turn, determine reality, as far as the thoughts and inner lives of men are themselves reality" ("Rebels All" 81). Grove’s essay seems to anticipate and to address the questions that were to arise after his German past was revealed, and to some extent justify his actions in life. He demonstrates the ideas of Goffman and of Fineman as they apply to autobiography.

The written record of Grove’s thought is more extensive than that of either Grey Owl or James, and through it readers can gain his opinion on particular philosophical or literary matters. One must harbour some scepticism, however. Readers should be prepared to question how much of what Grove writes is the result of a personal philosophy of life, and how much is based on the desire to shape the reactions of others to him and his work. Since Grove, like James and Grey Owl, dealt with the

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23 Comparisons may be made to the situation of Paul de Man, who left a wife and a Nazi connection behind when he came to North America. The two men can be seen to have reasons to adopt philosophies that could provide support for their actions. (See David Lehman’s Signs of the Times for his opinion of the way de Man’s theories were affected by the hidden aspects of his past.) It may be because he sees the danger of the self-serving aspects of both criticism and autobiography that Olney foregrounds the words of Paul Valéry by presenting them as the epigraph to his collection of essays on autobiography: "There is no theory that is not a fragment, carefully prepared, of some autobiography."
reality of convincing others of his identity, the reality of the
problems inherent to the reading of his deceptive autobiography must be
taken into consideration. Thus readers are left in a situation of
reading all versions of the stories of his, or any autobiographer's
life, and of using any sources available in an attempt to ascertain why
the author chose the course he did (both in life and in writing about
that life), how he rationalized his behaviour, and how readers can
justify or explain that rationalization. As the readers—or in
Goffman's terms, the audiences—go through this process, they may be
tempted to join the author's presentation team. This is particularly
possible where an audience respects or sympathizes with the author's
presentation.

Because his "convictions and opinions have embraced the whole
range of convictions and opinions which have been prevalent" in his
time, Grove considers himself the "typical man of a period of
transition" ("Rebels All" 69). Malcolm Ross, in his 1957 introduction
to Over Prairie Trails, called Grove "the typical, perhaps even the
archetypal, Canadian" (v). Ross's focus was not on what Grove had been
—indeed, his comment was made long before the disclosure of details of
Grove's German past—but on what he became, or more precisely, what he
came to symbolize as he presented himself as a struggling immigrant who
attained some success in a new land, despite the adjustments and the
misfortunes. Grove had succeeded in presenting himself as he wished to
be seen.

Yet, because "Of Nishivara" and "Rebels All," complete with their
confessional aspects and allusions to the hidden past, were saved rather
than destroyed, it may be suggested that Grove wished them to be
discovered eventually, and that through them he was making another
aspect of his confession. In "Rebels All," he admits, "Then a disgust
took hold of me, and I 'denied' whatever I had been" (69). He goes on
to give his own perspective of his new life:

Now I look back on my life as a man who has climbed a
mountain looks back on the road which he followed. What I
see is not a straight path from the depths to the heights.
It is a succession of devious trails, of a thousand starts
soon abandoned, of manifold departures and retracings of
steps. And yet I stand high—in my own estimation—
surveying life from a point of vantage. (69)

Grove knew what was at the end of the trails and why some were
abandoned. His readers are more informed than they were prior to the
1970s, but there remain devious trails that have not been fully
explored, such as those of the Kentucky years. Still, even with the
gaps in information about Grove, much of his past has been reconstructed
through the tracings of the paths which he left in his writing.
Nevertheless, In Search of Myself supports the premise that
autobiography as the presentation of the self is a version of remembered
anecdotes rather than a record of them, and that autobiography is
confirmation of a story that is constructed to hide as much as it is
written to reveal a recollection.

It is known that Grove's earlier self was born in Germany. It is
also known that he began his Canadian life, not with his birth name but
with the name he chose to present and represent himself during his daily
life, in his writing, and on his death. His previous self gave him the
resources upon which his chosen or discovered self could draw as he told
his life-story, but that story is meant to confuse as much as it is
meant to explain, and to reveal the mask, not the face, of Frederick Philip Grove.
Conclusion

Autobiography Zone: Derive Carefully

A boy is a man in miniature, and though he may sometimes exhibit notable virtue, as well as characteristics that seem to be charming because they are childlike, he is also schemer, self-seeker, traitor, Judas, crook, and villain—in short, a man. Oh, these autobiographies in which the writer postures and simpers as a David Copperfield or a Huck Finn! False, false as harlots' oaths! (Davies 15)

Autobiography can be read with scepticism tempered by sociological insight and with historical consciousness based on perception and knowledge that come both from reading and from experience beyond the autobiographical text. What may then be accepted and valued is a subjective interpretation of a life rather than a restricted but objective approach to autobiography, because in this genre subjective justification appears to have value equal to the usual objective requirements of biography for fact. For the practical purpose of gaining a fuller knowledge of a personal history, autobiographical versions of a life can be compared with information presented by any relevant biographical writings, whether certified documents, unverified news reports, second-to-third party letters, or academically annotated biographies. Indeed, it is only through comparison with other versions of a life that differences between them and the author's version can become apparent. The inquisitive reader of autobiography considers all available evidence, allowing discrepancies to be mined for further information and implications. Whereas in reading fiction one suspends one's sense of disbelief, in reading autobiography the reader must rely
on it--to be both credulous and incredulous--if the multiple levels of life that can be exposed in autobiography are to be appreciated. Although some critics believe that falsification will be evident and easily discerned, in fact, falsification is only clear where there is contradiction external to the text, where it stands out in bas-relief. It is reader curiosity and a questioning of discrepancies that lead to an investigation of the reasons why that which elsewhere is accepted as fact has been altered and shaped within the autobiography.

Traditional autobiography criticism, although valuable, does not respect the idiosyncrasies of autobiographers. It tends to treat autobiographical presentation that differs substantially from biographical presentations of the same subject as an anomaly rather than as a reflection of a general human tendency to seek the best possible life for the self, and to present the desired version of that life. The few exceptions that are discussed in criticism are remote from the situations presented by those individuals who adopt new identities and create new pasts, both of which are then incorporated into the time period presented in the autobiography. Few flagrantly renegade autobiographies have been given serious consideration in criticism, possibly because the fictional elements of such autobiographies compromise the principles of conservative theoreticians. It is important to introduce into the literature of autobiographical discussion representatives of the group of autobiographers who have recognized neither rules such as those of Bruss nor the provisions of any autobiographical pact. The stories of Will James, Grey Owl, and Frederick Philip Grove provide examples of a type of autobiography that
has not been given adequate consideration. Their life-stories provide good material for examination because of characteristics that the authors shared. All three had the ability to express themselves creatively, were of the same era, lived part of their lives in Canada, and lived their assumed roles as if they were playing the parts that would have been theirs had they been born into the setting each man claimed. Each wrote an autobiography that does not conform to the demands of traditional autobiography.

What is generally not appreciated is the fact that, in speaking or writing about their pasts, James, Grey Owl, and Grove were inhibited by greater restrictions than are most autobiographers. To write any autobiography is to try and follow in the footsteps of a self who has mapped a route of a previous expedition. The memory of the terrain is affected by the passage of years. The mountains and high points are easily identified and are stable, but the marshlands and low points change in character or disappear altogether. Autobiographers who, like the three Canadians, hide their pasts even as they claim they are revealing them, face a greater challenge than that faced by more naive and unsophisticated autobiographers. While telling their life-stories, they have to follow paths they have never walked and have to submerge or alter memories of events and situations actually experienced, replacing them with memories of what they have earlier claimed to be true. These memories of imagined events in turn must occasionally be supplemented with verifying or modifying information which must then be added to the memory bank. People who have created their own pasts must assiduously tend them to avoid discovery. A false (or rather, a true) comment
carelessly made could destroy the entire illusion, and—since it is often the illusion of a past which autobiography captures—would destroy the autobiographer. Although critics have come to recognize the variety of intentions and approaches of autobiographers, and although some theorists comment on the way in which one's present affects the discussion of the past, none acknowledges situations of the extremity presented by people who live in the future of a borrowed past, as is the case of Will James, Grey Owl, and F. P. Grove. If only one of the three Canadians had succeeded in writing a life history based on a shifting past, it might be considered only as an aberration on the Canadian scene or as an example of isolated eccentricity. The autobiographies of three men who almost simultaneously chose unusual but similar approaches to life and the recording of their stories rates attention, especially since each of the autobiographies received popular acceptance.

Despite this acceptance, the three autobiographies are not of the same literary standard. Grove's is the most consciously literary, and, at least on the surface, is the most orthodox in content and expression. *In Search of Myself* is the story of a life that might easily be included in a traditional discussion of autobiographies. For this reason it merits being singled out because it illustrates the degree to which appearances can be deceiving and indicates the danger of allowing form to mislead the reader. Literary style is important, but content must be read with scepticism. Like Grove, James presents a traditional, chronological, birth-to-maturity story of his life. The role that James played required him to express himself as a cowboy might and in his presentation of himself he may have made no attempt to perfect his
written English. For this reason, his autobiography has been criticized, especially by those who, realizing that it would appeal to young people, regret its deviation from standard English. In *Pilgrims of the Wild*, Grey Owl claims he writes an autobiography, but he also warns of his own inadequacies as a writer. His comments guide readers down the path Grey Owl wants them to take. His story is not a chronological treatment of his whole life but only of a short period of it. Cautioned that the author is not educated to be a writer, the reader may be led to appreciate the skill he has with language. Seduced by Grey Owl's claims, the unquestioning reader accepts the autobiography, but more critical examination reveals the contrived narrowness of focus and a style of writing overly sophisticated for the man portrayed. Grey Owl's subterfuge was the most easily detected and most quickly revealed after his death. Once his past was exposed, people who turned to the autobiography in an attempt to contradict the news that Grey Owl was an Englishman would have found little in it that was concrete that would have supported the claim that he had been raised in North America; instead they would have found traces of the Englishman who had written it. These three autobiographies present examples of the variation of content and style that can be found in life-stories that deviate from actual histories.

The process of reading and of information transfer creates a shifting and balancing of material both in and external to an autobiography, the result of readers having information about and familiarity with different stages of the life of the subject. Nevertheless, although the central and public portion of most
individuals' lives may be fairly common knowledge, some events and some incentives behind actions taken and subsequently discussed (or disguised) are apparent to the author alone. Conversely, some aspects of society and history that affect the life take place off-stage and are unknown to the autobiographer. These may be known, however, by later readers and biographers who can place the autobiographer in a broad historical and social context beyond that of which he was aware.

Biographers can provide new information, but even it has to be viewed with some scepticism because biographers too can be ignorant of some details, or they can be as liable as the autobiographer to minimize or accentuate some events, or they can highlight or ignore the consequences of others. Comparison of aspects of Greve's life as they are described by Spettigue and Elsa, or of James' life as it is revealed by Amaral and Bell, or of Grey Owl's as recounted by Smith and Dickson illustrate how perspective and narrator can affect biography. Nonetheless, readers of autobiography depend on biographers to supply information that either supports or challenges the autobiographer's assertions. Contradictions, when found, result in the creation of tension and counter-tension that stimulate interest and may lead to the discovery of a more balanced version of a story. Looking to both autobiography and biographies to gain a full picture is an obvious but not always recognized compromise, for it is in combination of sources that histories gain greater equilibrium between subjectivity and objectivity than could otherwise be achieved.

The broad context in which history views autobiography provides ironic comment on the genre because a personal life-story resists
absolute closure. A biography written by the self does not deal with that stage of the life through which the author has not yet passed nor with the autobiographer's own demise. To this open-ended element should be added the concept that all autobiographies are unfinished biographies. Others will know at least two things that the author can never include in autobiography—how death occurred and what reactions were to the death. Information on these two subjects allows readers to be in a position to provide the conclusion to a life-story. This concept introduces an ultimate in reader-response because to some extent each reader provides a postscript to the autobiographical volume.

What is made clear as one discusses the reactions to a presentation of self is that an autobiographer's reflections do not create a simple mirror image of the self. Instead an image of the author over which neither autobiographer nor reader has complete control is presented. This image can exhibit the shifting qualities of an optical illusion, which, depending on the angle from which it is viewed, includes (or excludes) the person as known by the self, the person as he or she wants to be seen, or the person as seen by informed readers. One aspect of the created image is in shadow because the autobiographer can write in such a way as to stand between the reading public and the true self. Overwhelming it is a second aspect which focuses the reader's attention on the self that the writer wants to be seen. In the conjuring up of the third aspect of the image, however, readers can have the greatest input for they may add information by accessing everything in the full range both of their own experiences and of the writer's revelations that gives greater depth and dimension to the image
projected by the autobiographer. A biography that focuses on the latter aspect of the image—which includes limited access to the first and complete access to the second—might be considered to give the most accurate reflection of the life.

When an autobiographer dies, after the curtain drops and the principal actor has left the stage, new dimensions of the presentation of the self become apparent as the public can more freely explore the backstage area. At this juncture, the autobiographer who has successfully misled the public may be exposed for what he was, beyond his claims and behind the subterfuge. There are many ways that disguises and masks can be discovered. After the death, private papers or forgotten documents may be found that give new information. Occasionally the reading of obituary triggers memories and discussion which lead to disclosures that facilitate establishment of connections of aspects of information. Often information that was not revealed for a variety of reasons during an autobiographer's lifetime may be divulged after death. In some cases public access to materials is allowed after a specific moratorium period has elapsed. As a result of these factors, at least some of the props that have supported the performance eventually are disclosed. In the process of exposure, the anecdotal devices whereby reality has been reshaped into a fanciful guise are discovered. Each revelation allows an opportunity to confirm or modify the story that the autobiographer told.
Phyllis Greenacre compares memory to a cloak that is being constantly retailed.¹ Biographers and readers of autobiography require the curiosity necessary to look inside the cloak which serves as the autobiographer’s disguise, the hidden other-side of the life and of the story. They must check the seams to discover alterations: gussets and tucks, additions and deletions. Autobiographies, like clothes, can "make the man" for they contribute to initial impressions, emphasize strong points, and draw attention away from weak points. If the apparel analogy is extended, both figuratively and literally, to a discussion of autobiography and is considered as one more prop in the staged presentation of self, we can better understand the problematic differences and discrepancies in their histories as told by Will James, Grey Owl, and Frederick Philip Grove.

The very fact that the autobiographers chose to hide some aspects of their lives indicates a tailoring of the story. All three men hid behind a mask of false identity, adopting the clothing and life style necessary. For James and Grey Owl, the clothing was more than a

¹ Albert E. Stone records Phyllis Greenacre’s analogy:

[T]he individual memory is a great remaker of events, modeling and remodeling them throughout life with an extraordinary plasticity to make the cloak of remembrance do duty for one occasion after another, to meet both need and fashions with all the skill and less noise than a good tailor. . . . If all memory, as we ordinarily use the term, would seem to be but a cloak constantly in process of renovation, sometimes with gross additions of raw material--in other words, if all memory had a screening function, how else can we understand the man within it? [sic] Certainly we must examine the cloak and know that it reveals much of the man within and is genuinely a part of him, but neither mistake it for the man within, nor discard it as of no value because it is not he. (Autobiographical Occasions 95-96)
costume, although it did reinforce the image created. Goffman would see this as a contribution to presentation. These two men did not merely go through the motions of being cowboy and Indian; their daily work routines required them to dress their parts. Grove also dressed appropriately for each of his roles, whether of teacher, farmer, writer, or lecturer. Like players on a stage dressed for their parts, all three men fit into their surrounding environments well, probably because their lives were tailor-made.

Grey Owl wanted to be a woodsman, and the life-garment he created was meant to serve the purpose of allowing him to live as an Indian would. Initially he retained his English clothing and identity, but he replaced these as they became an encumbrance. Although he could not expect that people would forget their early memories of him, he depended on his new clothing and on new and evasive versions of his beginnings to prevent people who knew him as a youth, either in Canada or in England, from recognizing him and identifying him. For him the Indian garb and stern expression he adopted were important props to promote his front and to act as a barrier to discourage recognition of the English man behind them. Once his new suit and attitude were tailored, he felt little need for further adjustments and alterations. Except when he was travelling into areas where he was known in his pre-Grey Owl days, he may have felt little vulnerability. The style of his life-story and of his clothes remained constant. He depended on both of these, along with his mobility, to present the self he chose.

Like Grey Owl, James fashioned his presentation story only once, but unlike Grey Owl, there is no evidence of witnesses to his
metamorphosis. He donned both the role and the garb of a cowboy as he travelled away from Quebec and as he matured. His autobiography emphasizes the clothes that the young Will James wore, particularly his first pair of boots and spurs; the first outfit he bought as a teenager; and the boots and hat worn by the mature man who seldom appeared without them. The clothing was a physical reminder to all who met him of who and what the man claimed to be. The clothing that James wore was not unique but was typical of a cowboy. In his clothing, as in his life-story, he could never risk developing any new image because people, noting changes, might look more closely at his "before" as well as at his "after." Although James had all the abilities of author, illustrator, and cowboy that he claimed he had, he also had another name that was associated with his hidden past. He feared that anyone learning of this name could accuse him of dressing up as someone he was not and of being an impostor.

Grove was a master of deceptive cloaks. He was conscious of his craft and could manipulate his material deftly. His self-confidence overwhelmed those who questioned some of the changes and additions discovered in his story. Just as he explored the limits of controlling the design of his life, he was conscious that a person's physical appearance left impressions on people. Both Gide and Elsa indicate that Groe was aware of the impact that clothing had on people. He dressed to impress. Although a dandy in Europe, Groe wore clothing that was conservative in Canada, matching his chosen conservative demeanour and leading people away from suspicions of guile. His references to clothes in his autobiography--the clothes that he brought from Europe and later
sold, the workman's overalls that he wore when he applied to be a teacher in Manitoba, the clothes he selected for his speaking tours—contribute to the impression given that he knew that the world judges by appearances. Those reading his work now can consider the clothing analogy and, both in and beyond the autobiography, find traces of the philosophy that allowed Grove to fashion himself as he wished to be known.

People do gain initial impressions from external appearance, but they also are influenced by what people say about themselves. It is around campfires that Grey Owl, like Will James and the wandering Grove, heard people tell stories, "biographical anecdotes" (as Grey Owl called them) of their origins (Tales of an Empty Cabin 197). Grey Owl, recalling one yarn, notes: "The tale seems to be not so far-fetched; after all everything in it was possible. . . . It might even be true (Tales 194). If one can succeed by appearing to tell the truth, the temptation to rely on mere appearances is great. During the period that Grey Owl and the other men were drifting, each established and began to tell his own story of his origins—one that was exotic but possible, and one which for some years was believed to be true. The men's lives and stories were adapted for the standards of the society that they chose—initially, in each case, a loosely and idiosyncratically constructed frontier society—which were different from those of the society from which each of the three men had fled. It was upon resettlement into a fairly stable social community that each story, acceptable among drifters, would have been seen as unacceptable if its basis in anecdotes from a hidden past were discovered. Thus, the
created story of the life—the autobiography—had to be set down in writing as confirmation of the chosen past. The men counted on the popular misconception that a written statement is a true statement. Their autobiographies also served as a verification of the current self to ensure that a neat transition was made into the chosen society.

The period of transition, found both in the person beginning a life in a new country and in the society of a country settled by immigrants, often allows absorption of those who might elsewhere be detected as they metamorphosed. Grey Owl, James, and Grove were not anonymously absorbed, but, because of their unique qualities, they were seen to be—and were accepted as—representatives of the class of people to which they said they belonged. Whereas Malcolm Ross called Grove "the typical . . . Canadian," Grove considered himself the "typical man of a period of transition" ("Rebels All" 69). Historical perspective and the shift from a subjective to an objective point of view may explain the differences, but the categorization attached to typical remains. Although they did not directly state that they considered themselves typical, Grey Owl and Will James assumed roles that led them to became spokesmen for the company which they had joined. All three men recognized that they lived at the end of an era, at a time of vanishing frontiers. One of their aims can be seen to have been the maintenance of the earlier values or traditions that might not survive the passing of generations or the transition into the modern age. A different impetus is apparent in each case: James wanted to maintain a style of life and of work that had little chance of large-scale economic survival in the twentieth century; Grey Owl wanted to conserve wild life
in its natural habitat, undisturbed by the surrounding and advancing civilization; Grove wanted to preserve an intellectual standard that would be in place and could contribute to the transition from frontier to industrial nation. They were not typical men but, in a period when the ways of the past could be seen to be disappearing, they can be seen as representatives of specific types of people: The Cowboy, The Indian, and The Immigrant. Their parts were played well, for their names arise when people write now of this period of our past.

The three men had more in common than their role-playing, their contemporary lifespans, and their initial decisions to live in unsettled areas. They were affected also by common factors that had an impact on their autobiographical stances. James and Grey Owl were similar in that they left home as teenagers with the aim of fulfilling childhood aspirations. Neither Grey Owl nor James was as well-educated as Grove, but all three shared a love of nature and a desire to write about the self. James and Grove were alike in that they were under less pressure than Grey Owl to constantly cultivate and protect their roles; they were more isolated from their pasts. This was because of the difference in language and because, once they established themselves in their new lives, they had few--or no--contacts with people from their transition periods or from their rejected pasts.

Possibly because of his fears of encouraging connections between Belaney and himself, the autobiography of Grey Owl is unlike that of Grove and James. Although Pilgrims of the Wild was declared to be an autobiography by Grey Owl, it does not deal explicitly with his childhood and it covers only a few years of adulthood, condensing them
into a shorter period for presentation. Many readers carry into the text information from their own experiences, from other biographical information and reports on Grey Owl, or from the preface by Hugh Eayrs. Current readers of Pilgrims of the Wild, however, can see the irony in the comment that Eayrs makes: few books "are more revealing of their writers than this" (viii). Like most of those acquainted with Grey Owl, he believed all that the man said about himself, but Eayrs was ignorant of what the autobiography and the writing of it revealed about how Grey Owl positioned himself in his chosen world.

To some extent, the recognition that it is less comprehensive than most people think it is and the realization that, for many people, it is supplemented by information not actually included in the text, puts Grey Owl's autobiography into a category of writing currently being accepted by those who do not require the comprehensive life-stories that have been traditionally associated with autobiography. New standards of acceptance allow the voices and the stories of members of minority or disadvantaged groups, whose processes and approaches do not meet traditional criteria, to be heard. Grey Owl wrote as a member of a minority group; his choice of a non-traditional, non-mainstream, non-conventional autobiographical presentation may now be seen as one more way in which he took on the role of a half-breed. Now, too, it can be seen as ironic that the autobiography of Grey Owl—and Grey Owl himself, a person who had rejected his membership in a dominant society thus exiling and marginalizing himself, a person who spoke in the style and voice of the minority—found acceptance in that very society that he had rejected.
For James and Grove, new names and new language served as baffles between the stages of their lives, stages lived in distinctly different settings, but Grey Owl risked exposure because he travelled between the two societies in which he had lived under different names, and he maintained his native English language. Language is not one of the aspects of front that is considered by Goffman, although diction is. Language is an element worth considering, however, because it can serve to cue other responses; thus, while speaking the adopted language one might function and react differently than if one returned to one’s mother tongue. If this is true, then Grey Owl might be expected to have had more difficulty maintaining his front than would have James or Grove. Although he claimed to be more at ease speaking Ojibwa than English, it was in his native English that Grey Owl communicated with the larger world. As a consequence, there was no verbal mask of language difference that corresponded with his change in name. It would be worthy of further study to compare the ease with which one can play a part if one speaks a different language while playing that part.

For all three men, locations, as well as clothing and language, contributed to the ability to assume new identities, identities that could both support and be supported by the autobiography. Grove and James were less likely to be confronted by people who could expose them than was Grey Owl. Grove was protected by the relative isolation of the towns in which he lived, and even on speaking tours he was not likely to be called on to defend or explain his own being. The environments in which he functioned changed, but the contexts of his life remained consistent as he acted out his part as a rural teacher and writer.
Although there were few local role models, Greve had been familiar with a number of travelling European intellectual ex-patriots who had experienced situations and emotions similar to those that affected Grove and with whom he could identify. James blended into the society he chose by moving into and totally identifying with the cowboy world, a world that for him had three elements: the real one of Montana and Nevada, the fantastic one of Hollywood, and the rustic one he perpetuated on his ranch. Through his art, James also created a landscape peopled by cowboys. In his illustrations, the cowboys were not portrayed as individuals; the men who rode the range of his pictures were all basically the same—and all of them bore a resemblance to Will James as he supplemented the written version of his autobiography with a drawn one. James, even as he became famous, wanted some of the anonymity that being a typical member of a group allows. Grey Owl, on the other hand, both as a conservationist who lived off the land and as an educated half-breed, was atypical both of white man and of Native. His tours took him out of the wilderness, directly onto a speaker’s platform, and then precipitously back into the wilds. Frequently seen removed from the context of the environment which supported his role, he was in a position where he had to creatively convince those with whom he interacted that he was the man he said he was. His presence in person in the public eye required him to be in the spotlight for more prolonged periods than were Grove and James, but all three men performed publicly their lives, lives that were based on the autobiographical presences which they chose to present.
Beyond these similarities and differences, there remain two common factors that link the three men: their deceptions and their use of autobiography to both confirm and hide their past identities. These factors might be assumed to isolate them from traditional concepts of autobiographers, but a review of the literature reveals that this is not always the case. Considering the emphasis that is put on truth-telling and honesty in autobiographical criticism, it is worth noting how frequently words associated with acting and deception appear. Bruss, discussing De Quincey, states: "However his is not a performance which will provide the basis for discovery, since it carefully reveals nothing which he and his public are not already acquainted" (172). Spacks comments: "The reliance on the metaphor of stage performance is revealing, I think, of the kind of artifice involved in considering life as a series of definable stages. To understand experience thus is to watch the self in the process of enacting its change; to write an autobiography commits one to performing one's self in public" (Stone, American Autobiography 56). Spacks goes on to note: "When one climbs upon a literary stage to perform the self, one chooses the costume, assumes the poses, that the audience of one's own time--and oneself as audience--will recognize" (60). Lejeune calls autobiographers actors who express "their problems of identity and at the same time captivate their readers" (31). As Ruth Hoberman notes, André Maurois explains that the prominent person especially "aims at making his life a work of art" (Aspects of Biography 55). Evelyn J. Hinz, in "Mimesis," points to the role of deception and acting in autobiography. She is one of the
few critics who discusses it extensively, stressing the dramatic
element. There is some irony in the fact that it is she, a Canadian,
who commenting on autobiography and identity formation, indicates that

if we want to argue that storytelling is a universal tendency, we
might note that its most basic form is the 'tall tale' or dramatic
exaggeration. (209)

The tall tale aspect of autobiography has direct links with Grey Owl and
James, and reinforces the claim that Canadian examples should be
included in autobiographical criticism.

Reference to acting and drama in autobiographical criticism gives
validity to the discussion of autobiography in the terms used by
Goffman, but not even Goffman discusses the situation where the disguise
that is assumed leads to adopting a role for life, where detection is
avoided by wearing masks seldom removed. Goffman, however, in a
quotation from Robert Ezra Park, presents support for a theory of role-
playing in everyday life:

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word
person, in its first meaning [Latin: persona], is a mask.
It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is
always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a
role. . . . It is in these roles that we know each other; it
is in these roles that we know ourselves.

Although Park's etymology overlooks the fact that this meaning did not
pass into English, the relationship of the three Canadians' chosen
situations is clarified by Park's views, especially as he continues:

In a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the
conception we have formed of ourselves--the role we are
striving to live up to--this mask is our truer self, the
self we would like to be. In the end, our conception of our
role becomes second nature and an integral part of our
personality. We come into the world as individuals, achieve
character, and become persons." (Goffman, Presentation
19-20)
Once it is recognized that the adoption of roles is a human tendency observed in the literature of sociology, the extension of role-playing by James, Grey Owl, and Grove into their autobiographies can be seen as a not unnatural progression. The comments of Goffman and Park support the theory that a discrepancy between the documented life and the autobiographical life does not decrease the validity of either version; truth can be found in both.

It is logical to consider masks while discussing the Canadian men's autobiographies. Will James disguised himself because a Quebec cowboy did not meet the standards of the role he wanted to play. Grey Owl wore the mask of the stoic Indian, the noble savage, or the fire-water-affected half-breed, but only as each suited his purpose. Similarly, Grove's attitude, indicating that he felt himself superior to other immigrants both in birth and education, allowed him to see himself as great writer out of his element, a man wearing the mask of an immigrant school teacher.\(^2\) He presents an interesting contrast to Grey Owl who claimed to be less educated than he was and to Will James who tried to undervalue his bilingualism. In Goffman's words, each of the three men found "that a particular front had already been established" for his social role; each took steps to adapt it to his special case and to adapt himself to what might be expected (Presentation 27). The roles and the mask become a basis for the writing.

Because Grove wrote more, and possibly because he was prone to be academically philosophical, his writing provides a wider base for

\(^2\) As Felix Paul Greve, Grove had read, admired and translated Oscar Wilde. In "The Idea of the Mask," Wilde introduced to him the concept of the masked individual in society.
exploration of the facts and fictions that can be included in a life-
story. It is apparent that not only does Grove's declared autobiography
_in Search of Myself_ tell of his life, but so also do _A Search For
_America_, "The Life of St. Nishivara," some of his essays and some of his
short stories, such as "The Boat." Once Grove's secret was public,
these works came to be read more closely for additional clues that might
contribute to the understanding of Grove's past. That which research
has revealed about Grove supports the claim that the more that is
learned about an author, the more factual bases may be found for his or
her fiction and fantasy, especially where some themes or events are
emphasized or reworked through repetition. Additional information makes
it easier to explain that which is false and makes it easier to find
verifiable bases (Fineman's historemes) for even the suspect elements in
the autobiography. Grove's writings provide an example of work where
there can be intratextual verification.

Grey Owl appears to have sensed that in writing one reveals the
self, even when attempting to focus on other materials. About the time
that _Pilgrims_ was being published, he made a comment that indicates that
he was conscious of readers' interpretations of what he wrote: "Writing
is a curious business. A person writes into his work, if he is sincere,
a most revealing résumé of his own character, all unknown to himself"
(Smith 261, Note 8). Because of the implications to theory and the
principles involved, it is important to hear these words from a person
whose autobiography we now read to see what he reveals about himself
beyond what he writes about himself. This remark, like some of those
that Grove makes, anticipates the writings of critics and theorists such as Lejeune and Olney.

Autobiography is a version of the self and of history, but readers seldom have the insight, the skill, or the time necessary to make comparisons or to put what is said in the autobiography into historical perspective, perspective that might reveal discrepancies between autobiography and other texts. As Marlene Kadar points out, while "all cultural documents do represent real-life actions and experiences," it is necessary "to probe the assumption that autobiographical documents are 'true'" (Reading Life Writing ix). If all autobiography were subject to scrutiny and comparison, all might ultimately reveal material that is presently accepted but which is based on backgrounds that could raise questions.

It was questions about contradictory elements in the work of James, Grey Owl, and Grove that led biographers of the men to counter material in the autobiographies with historical and documentary versions of the lives and to speculate which actual events become the foundations for aspects of the fabricated past. The biographers have suggested why the authors found their original existences to be unsatisfactory and why they chose to play the roles that they did. Comparison of the biographical and the autobiographical versions of the lives allow readers to speculate that Dufault, Belaney, and Greve adopted their fronts in order to perform the tasks they felt were expected of them in their new roles. The degree to which they succeeded in convincing people is evident in the revelations about their pasts that have been disclosed by biographical researchers. Because of such research,
readers can appreciate the drastic step that Grove took, one that did not allow him to return to his old life if he failed in North America. Archie Belaney and Ernest Dufault were in their midteens when they took their lonely cultural leaps but, due to social and legal entanglements because they had matured in their new roles, neither felt able to return openly to the land of his birth under his real name. In their new identities, as the new self in a new role, none of the three was satisfied with projecting a mere image. Eventually all attained success of a type that they could not have anticipated, success which could have been compromised if their pasts had became known during their lifetimes.

The responses made by both critics and the general public to the detection of the secrets of these three men was to some extent a function of the timing of the exposures. The discovery of James's subterfuge has had less effect on the reading public than have the disclosures about Grove and Grey Owl. Although James's work once had tremendous popular appeal, it has attracted little ongoing critical attention and his adult readership is not large. His popularity arose in the American anglophone culture, remote from his French-Canadian roots, and this affected the impact of disclosures of his origins. Similarly, the physical remoteness of Canada from Germany, the language difference that allows a communication gap, and a healing passage of time have allowed a geographical and chronological distancing between most of those who shared Grove's life and the revelation of his original identity. Some who had supported Grove and his work (including Desmond Pacey) continued to want to believe in the Grove they had come to know even after it was clear that something was amiss in his history. In
Grey Owl's case, the disclosure, immediately after his death, of his British birth led to instant public reaction on both sides of the Atlantic. The responses of those who knew him either personally or as a public figure varied from a demonstration of a sense of betrayal to an attitude of amused or respectful amazement. The speed of the announcement that Grey Owl was Archibald Belaney did not mean, however, that all questions about his past were answered. Although many of his Canadian contemporaries could tell anecdotes of the famous "half-breed" and had letters and pictures from him, and although many in England could remember him as a child, there remain mysterious gaps in the record which leave unaccounted periods in Grey Owl's life, as there are in the histories of Grove and James.

Conjecture about motivation and cause can bridge some of the gaps in the men's histories. When James was in his late teens, according to his autobiography, he was accused of a fatal shooting. It may be supposed that this was the motivation for him to adopt new names and for his decision to cross the border to the United States. The desire to avoid marital commitments and assault charges may have influenced Grey Owl to live near the edge of the frontier. If material in A Search For America is considered to be basically autobiographical, Grove may have been disillusioned by aspects of the new world that he found in the United States. There is also the possibility that he crossed the border to escape problems, but while James left Canada to seek shelter in the American West, Grove crossed to Canada, possibly to avoid a marital commitment in the United States. In both countries Grove would have needed to avoid being associated with the record and reputation of Felix
Paul Greve. Despite the evidence that each had reasons for subterfuge, and despite their conscious efforts to effect changes, the direction in which life took each of the men was dictated to some extent by chance. Ernest Dufault had aimed to be a cowboy, not an author. Archie Belaney wanted to be a woodsman and his first twenty years in Canada were spent achieving that goal; he had not planned to be a conservationist or a writer. If Elsa is to be believed, Greve, in a back-to-the-land mood, did not expect that he would resume his writing career in North America.

Establishing the role of chance in their lives is important because all three men face accusations of being confidence men, impostors, and frauds. They did lie about their pasts; they are guilty of trying to make their wishes come true by themselves being false. They did clothe particular aspects of their pasts in disguises, but they also lived according to the expectations and demands of their new roles. They were not impostors who preyed on the world's confidence; they earned the confidence that others had in them.

The revelations that have been made since their deaths affect how these men's autobiographies are currently received. The material that contradicts the autobiographies may be seen as proof of fraud, but it also may be viewed as a source of enlightenment and explanation when verifiable statistical information is found to dovetail with aspects of autobiography. A review of how and when the discrepancies between the autobiographical and documented material were revealed, as well as an overview of reactions to the revelations, indicates how critical evaluations of the authors' other works have had to be reassessed, and how opinions have changed about the men and their writing. With the
perspective that the passage of time allows, the autobiographies can be
read with greater insight, and the versions of the life-stories can act
as the basis for a consideration of autobiography which takes anecdotal,
historical, and sociological influences into account.

While autobiography is a form of personal writing, once published
it becomes literature, and as such, makes a contribution to culture,
communication, and society. Literature reflects or reacts against
culture, but autobiography is a special kind of literature that links
people and events, thus giving insight into history of a period as well
as of an individual. For James, Grey Owl, and Grove there is, however,
some inversion of the relationship between culture and literature as
they refute their pasts and transcend their cultures. In their own
ways, all three men demonstrate that a person's history can be changed
if the geographical space, the social environment, and, to some extent,
the language allow isolation that separates events and individuals, past
and present. From the relative seclusion that they found in rural life
or in the wilderness, the men reached for fame and recognition, but they
did so on their own terms. One aspect of their terms seems to be an
ambivalence about disclosing the past that had been hidden. Information
in the autobiographies, or material in the autobiography that takes on
new meaning when read in the light of the biographies, allows
speculation that the authors left clues that could lead to their
discoveries or would allow confirmation if the discovery of the original
identity were to become known. Although they rebelled against the
society into which they were born, and against its expectations, they
appear to have required the affirmation of acceptance by the rejected or
by the adopted society, or by both. They left a record that allowed the world in which they had functioned to know that they had achieved a measure of success. Belaney returned to England where, as Grey Owl, he could accept the praise of the society he had left. Grove suggests that he wrote *In Search of Myself* while imagining that a famous but unnamed European author whom he had known earlier in his life might be his assumed reader. The similarity between the German and Canadian names provides the link necessary to verify the connection of man and name once his early German identity is suspected. This leads one to suppose that he meant to be recognized eventually for the man he had once been. James, on the other hand, destroyed material connections between himself and his past. The only clue he left was the name of Ernest Dufault, listed as his heir in his will. The men may have turned their backs on the societies which they left behind, but they glanced over their shoulders to see if anyone was watching.

The years of their birth (Grove, 1879; Grey Owl, 1888; James, 1892) placed the men within one generation and era. Because they made their moves from one country to another prior to World War I and did their writing in the years between the two world wars, one might assume there was some significance in the time, location, and attitude of the cultures—both in which they were born and those in which they chose to live—that influenced their decisions and which allowed them to write of their lives in the way that they did. Each moved away from an old-world community of constraints imposed by tradition, by family, by peers, or by religion. The settings, both of time and place, allowed the men, under their new names, to live and write as they did. Two of them
sought satisfaction of their needs in rural Canada; the third was a Canadian who looked south of the border but not to a settled area. Pre-war escape to less structured social groupings may have allowed the men a freedom of presentation; post-war attitudes and economic pressures may have provided an environment of opportunity. In the climate of the times in which they lived, each of the three men sought some degree of solitude, each demonstrated a naivety in the search for peace and protection, and each wrote of conflict and co-operation between people and nature. What all three men sought was a place to be the men they wanted to be and to live in peace undisturbed by the demands of the families and cultures into which they were born.

Recognition of the work, the lives, and the autobiographies of James, Grey Owl, and Grove permits a series of assumptions to be made, assumptions that affect the conventions of reading autobiography. The first is that no autobiography is objective and absolutely factual: each has a potential to be fictionalized and should be read with some scepticism. Readers must be prepared to accept authors' versions of their lives but also to make use of all information bearing on the life-story that is available and to adjust to new information that is revealed. The second is that autobiographers may present themselves through the life that they claim to have lived. In cases where some subterfuge is involved, authors can and have lived as if the subterfuge were fact. Substitutions, adaptations, and versions of events may of necessity compound the difficulties of the situation that readers must accept and with which they must interact. Moreover, to some degree, most autobiographers are influenced not only by aspects of life that
they claim; they are also influenced by the aspects of life that they want to reject or hide. To greater or lesser extents, autobiographers have values based on two worlds that are initially inaccessible to the reader: one that never actually existed and one of which the reader may be unaware. The third assumption is that individual autobiographies should be critically evaluated in the context of the history of autobiography as well as in the context of current criticism that questions boundaries between genres and which rejects the traditional and conservative separation of fact and fabrication in the acts of creative writing and reading. These three assumptions might allow readers to overcome most ethical difficulties that they have with the principles underlying unconventional autobiographical approaches.

Although their appearance in the Canadian context adds a bizarre dimension to the literature of autobiography, any area of the world that provides the right social and cultural climate might encourage the development of individuals like James, Grey Owl, and Grove, men who made choices which were affected by pragmatism, lived lives that were shaped by imagination, and wrote work that was influenced by idealism. Current criticism and commentary on autobiography recognizes that no autobiography can be absolutely truthful, but most critics imply or state that, within the limits of memory and despite subjective perspective, autobiographers should be sincere. How and when this sincerity enters into an autobiography where the life-story is based on fiction or fictionalized fact, or how one distinguishes fact from fiction, is not usually considered. James, Grey Owl, and Grove, who each claimed and wrote about a life that he had created for himself,
provide material that should be included in the considerations of autobiographical theorists. Conventions of reading and of criticism must make allowances for avowedly autobiographical work to include fictive entries, restaged events, and stories that have undergone a metamorphosis. By publishing autobiographies that re-present their pasts, James, Grey Owl, and Grove have placed their versions of their lives on centre stage to be examined. The examination can reveal much about them and much about autobiography, not to discredit either, but to gain greater appreciation and understanding of both.

James, Grey Owl, and Grove each had to struggle to attain a place in a society that offered activities and values that were unknown to him. As each of the three wrote his autobiography, he must have considered his current position in life, the past he claimed, and the past that he had consciously avoided revealing. To some extent, each of the three were merely "the normal man" as described by Robertson Davies: "schemer," "self-seeker," "villain." Each had an "earlier self" that was overthrown in order that he could "fit into the character" chosen, the character by which he would be known by the world. All three dragged their pasts "into the middle of the stage themselves" by writing autobiographies that were not "historically correct." Will James, Grey Owl, and Frederick Philip Grove are Canadians whose lives put them in the "company of the twice-born" and whose autobiographies should be considered in the company of others whose stories of the self include falsification, but also include more truth than can be imagined.
Appendix A

Excerpt from copy of letter written by James (18 September 1934)

DON'T READ THIS LETTER TO MOTHER, FOR AUGUSTE ONLY

... In this mess I'm in now there's plenty you can do to help me so I won't [sic] get in any worst one and which would cripple my whole future. It will be easy enough for you to do and I guess you already know what it is. It's that I wish you'd make everybody realize how important it is that they don't [sic] tell anyone or have it spread that they know me and I am a relation. I know it's hard to do and it's only natural for them to be proud of me and tell about [sic], and now I often wish that I hadn't misrepresented myself as I did, but I couldn't dream of the success I've had and now it's too late to change. And if what you all know ever got in the right hands I'm so well known now that it would be in all the papers overnight and I'll be classed as an imposter which would ruin me for good. Of course I'm not an imposter but I'd be classed as one, and after that I'd just as well go and bury myself.

That movie of mine [He may be referring to either Smoky released in 1933, or Lone Cowboy released in January, 1934] that came there makes it bad for me, everybody will be talking about it and I wish they'd be careful. I wish they would all remember to forget all about me, and that I am nobody but just Ernest Dufault who has a farm somewhere in Dakota or Minnesota, anywhere but here.

The consolation they all would have is that I am making good and if

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1 A portion of this letter is read in Godbout's Alias Will James.
they all want to keep me out of trouble and see me make good and help me
the less anything is said about me the more they'd be helping. The
youngsters who naturally tell all they know are the ones I'm most afraid
of, and a few grown ups too. I wish you could be careful about that
picture I gave Mother too. I'm taking a lot of chances with that but I
done it for her sake.

You can't possibly realize how important this all is that I'm
telling you and I don't want to have to repeat it on account
my letters might get in the wrong hands, so please remember and keep
watching and reminding others so that nothing will go wrong. . . .

You had better burn this letter up soon as you get thru reading it
because I sure wouldn't want nobody else to read it.

But be sure and remember what I told you and for all to keep quiet
about and that I'm nobody but Ernest who has a farm somewhere and that's
about all. The less you say about me or my letters or news of me the
better. That makes it hard for me to go and see you too because I'm so
well known, a lot more than you can guess, and I hardly make a move
unless it's in the papers. But be sure that I'll be over to see you and
Mother and all as soon as I possibly can. I'll do that somehow. In the
meantime help me by keeping quiet about me.

Write me as soon as you get this letter and have destroyed it,
because I'll be anxious to know if it reached you all right. . . .

(Excerpt from photocopy of original given by Robert Dufault to
J. Dudar.)
Appendix B

Excerpt from lecture read by Madame [Auguste] Dufault to her women's club.

Ainsi Ernest revenait à la maison ou à plat ventre sur le plancher peint en jaune, il se hâtait de dessiner sur du grossier papier d'emballage le résultat de ses observations. Ses coups de crayon étaient déjà d'une justesse remarquable et c'est réellement dommage qu'aucun de ses petits chefs-d'œuvre n'ait été conservé ailleurs que dans sa mémoire d'artiste, qui, à trente ans de là par la plume, le crayon et le pinceau, reproduisit pour le bénéfice de ses lecteurs ces charmantes pages de son enfance et de son adolescence (voir Lone Cowboy et Uncle Bill's series)(2). [Ernest began to read the] ancêtres des comics d'aujourd'hui. . . . Or, notre Ernest arriva un jour avec une ou deux de ces revues ou Buffalo Bill . . . venait pour la millième fois de mettre à la raison, d'une seule main, des milliers et des milliers de Comanches et de Sioux. On ne le vit plus pour deux jours en dehors des épis et de la classe. Il devint songeur, taciturne et dessina avec une ardeur nouvelle, des sujets enflablés ou blancs et rouges se massa-craient gaiement à coups de fusils et de pistolets. Il venait de trouver sa voie, et sourdement mais, surement, commença à fermenter en lui ce désir, cette passion pour tout ce qui est grand, immense, sans limite. . . .(3)
Appendix C

Excerpt from letter from Grey Owl to William Arthur Deacon (1934)

You may know that all person of 1/2 breed 'nationality,' also all persons having less divisions of Indian blood are known [sic] as half-breeds. I never even stopped to figure the thing out. My friend whom you met, has only my word for it that I have a drop of Scotch blood. Some people, you must know, object to having a 'native' accomplish anything. As my whole life-training, my mentality, methods, and whole attitude is undeniably Indian, I have given credit for anything I may have accomplished to the people whom I look on as my own. Unfortunately most men of my type, in whom the Indian, at first glance, is not so strikingly apparent, spend much time denying their Indian blood, and claiming to be French or smoked Irish or something. This I refuse to do. Give all credit for my small success to the white people. (no offense intended) & leave the Indians, who taught me what I know, holding the bag? No sir. It is the admixture of Indian blood that I carry, with some pride, that has enabled me to penetrate so deeply into the heart of Nature; yet undoubtedly the white part has enabled me to express it adequately.

There are thousands of mixed blood like myself kicking around the North; some favour the Indian, some the White; those that favour the White deny their Indian which makes me mad as a wet hen. It is a strange anomaly that my wife who is nearly full-blood Indian could not, when she married me, speak 10 words in any Indian language, even her own, & knew no more about bush life than a young miss from the sidewalk.
of Yonge street. I, who was 3 parts white, was the better Indian. Civilization plays strange tricks on us. Right now, so quickly she picked things up, Anahareo can shade many a practised woodsman, both in skill and courage. This last attribute is her most outstanding characteristic.

When I first commenced to write a few articles, the Editor asked who & what I was and I said I was a bushwhacker, a man of Indian blood. What I meant was, I was tarred with the brush, & felt I was admitting something. I expected he would at once turn me down. This has happened, socially, before, & often since. The artistic effect I never even thought of. I figured I would write a few articles till I got enough money to move the beaver to Ontario, & then quit, & follow my natural way. That the writing business would assume the proportions it since has, never even occurred to me. When the Government took me up, they used the word Indian in describing me, as they said 'breed' was derogatory, God knows why. I did not figure I should call myself a white man, because when it was found out, ar ic eventually might be that I had Indian blood, down I go with a wailop. I feel as an Indian, think as an Indian, all my ways are Indian, my heart is Indian. They, more than the whites, are to me, my people.

So my good friend was astray even in his knowledge of my Scotch ancestry. I can only claim of a certainty 1/4 Scotch. His evidence is unreliable.

I do not intend to deny the 'charge' publicly. The Government is very strict on me avoiding any debate whatsoever. It is a queer paradoxical situation: the one thing that I was so particular to tell
about, for fear it would be found out and so destroy me (apart from my sense of justice to these people), that same thing is now denied in the form of an accusation! Perhaps the gentleman is Scotch and would like to have me so also. I have never seen Scotland, cannot understand them when they are talking, & never thought very much about all these things one way or another until all this damnable publicity started ramming stuff down my throat. The wonderful reviews about my books, recognition for my work with the beaver, I welcome gladly. I never figured on all this racial stuff. . . .

A man can call himself a China-man so long as he keeps on buying the drinks, but let him try to step out of the rut & do something, and see all the hands reaching to pull him back again. It would take very little, just a touch or two of discord and I will fold up my foolish pieces of paper and my piles of crazy notes & notions, and go back into the obscurity to which I belong, where I can at least be happy. Somehow all this public stuff has me buffaled. Perhaps a fellow will get used to it. But the temptation comes very strongly at times to drop everything & hit the North, where I don't have to wonder if some Smart-Alec hasn't twisted some of my statements to suit his fancy, & got me in wrong with somebody. It is only the beaver that hold me. I will be faithful to them as long as either they or I shall live. . . .

(Thomas and Lennox 154-56)
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