

**REINTERPRETING CANADIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE EVOLUTION OF
NATIONAL IDENTITY IN LATE-NINETEENTH AND EARLY-TWENTIETH
CENTURY YOUNG ADULT HISTORICAL FICTION**

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REINTERPRETING CANADIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE EVOLUTION OF
NATIONAL IDENTITY IN LATE-NINETEENTH AND EARLY-TWENTIETH CENTURY
YOUNG ADULT HISTORICAL FICTION

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Abstract

This thesis presents a comparative analysis of two periods of Canadian young adult historical fiction novels. Its goal is to determine if and how presentations of Canadian national identity changed following a major international event—the First World War. As the War can be seen as a catalyst that accelerated changing interpretations of the Canadian nation the novels selected bookend this event. Through a comparison of young adult historical fiction novels involving Canadian national history, the subjective and narrative characteristics of history are explored to emphasize common features found in both narrative histories and fiction. By relying on young adult historical fiction, which for the purpose of this thesis are texts intended for post-adolescent and pre-adult readers, the fictive aspects of the narratives will function as contrastable variables for analysis. This thesis will evaluate how narratives vary to produce different interpretations and perspectives on the nation's past, and therefore conceptions of national identity. I contend that works of young adult historical fiction that feature Canada's past began to express the changes to national identity seen in Canada society that followed the War. These changes to expressions of national identity, I propose, became increasingly evident in fictional narratives depicting the nation's past and support a more autonomous vision of the nation.

How history is retold through fiction stresses how conceptions of national identity are susceptible to the contextual nature of narrative history. Canada's late-nineteenth century relationship with imperialism, as interpreted from within the English-Canadian dominant national narrative, operates as the major evaluative theme to contrast fictional accounts of the nation's past. The following study sets Canada's pre-War relationship with Britain against Canada's post-War waning colonial identification as baseline identities for inquiries into how historical fiction

narratives re-envisioned the past. This research summarizes how unique and autonomous national imaginings were extracted from Canada's colonial heritage to express an evolving vision of the nation. Focusing on the evolution of Canadian national identity, as it manifests in young adult historical fiction, the contextual nature of historical narratives becomes recognizable, thereby, prompting reflections on history and the relative nature of narrativity.

Lay Summary

This study compares two periods of young adult historical fiction novels to critically engage changes in expressions of national identity. Analyzing a range of novels written before the First World War and between the World Wars, this thesis investigates the evolution of fictional representations of Canadian identity. With the First World War situated as the most important event of the era, the project looks at how authors of young adult historical fiction reimagined history and the past. Enlisting characters and stories that present uniquely Canadian perspectives and avoiding British-centric narratives this research employs several research methods to illustrate how shifting ideas about nationhood and national identity in Canada informed the novels. Uncovering these changes in historical fiction novels the thesis provides compelling evidence of how authors of fiction utilize the past to comment on and help shape the present.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Lay Summary	v
Table of Contents	vi
Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction	1
CHAPTER I: Nationalism, Young Adult Literature, and Historical Fiction	8
Nationalism and Canada as a Nation.....	8
Young Adult Literature.....	14
Historical Fiction.....	17
CHAPTER II – Context for Pre-War Canada	22
CHAPTER III: Analysis of Pre-War Young Adult Canadian Historical Fiction	33
Imperialism in Canada.....	34
The Presentation of Canadian National Heroes.....	43
Images of the Idealized “Canadian”.....	46
The Unwillingness of Canadians to be Understood as Americans.....	52
CHAPTER IV: Context for Interwar Canada	55
CHAPTER V: Analysis of Interwar Young Adult Canadian Historical Fiction	62
Jean Newton McIlwraith’s <i>Kinsman at War</i> (1925).....	63
Muriel Denison’s <i>Susannah: A Little Girl With the Mounties</i> (1936) and <i>Susannah of the Yukon</i> (1937).....	71
Emily P. Weaver’s <i>The Only Girl</i> (1938).....	76
CONCLUSION	81
Bibliography	85

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Introduction

If much of what a man becomes reflects the influences of his youth, the impressions made by his reading as a boy can determine his particular path and contribute to the destiny of his nation as well.

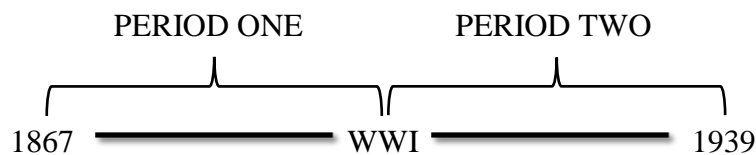
(Mark Howard Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*)

How does a nation come to be? In whose forge are the nation's records and its unwritten past welded together into a romantic image upon which its citizens can unite? Canadian authors in all genres continually produce works which contribute to the greater literary framework that supports expressions of the nation's identity. It is, however, the works of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century young adult historical fiction that this thesis will focus on, as they have unabashedly fused recorded history with fiction writing to produce singular texts with particular historical interpretations. These complex fusions of literary genres comprise an intriguing and lesser-known component of the greater framework of national identity. Examining a variety of texts that illustrate a progression in the construction of what it means to be Canadian, this study focuses on a small yet significant portion of the literary, cultural, and historical frameworks surrounding Canada's national identity.

The hybrid genre of historical fiction offers an example where the objective components of history (in its most rudimentary understanding) are amended and enhanced with literary expressiveness which have the potential to create narratives which can romanticize, glorify, and shape our perceptions of the nation's past. My exploration will begin with this relatively neglected body of literature, as it relates to the evolution of the Canadian national identity. Paring down from the larger genre of historical fiction into the sub-category of Canadian young adult historical fiction will aid in selecting the novels this thesis will examine for evidence of the

evolving nature of national identity. I argue that novels in this sub-category have the power to influence readers' comprehension of the nation, especially as it considers a less mature reading audience. This study's aim is to aid in our understanding of how fictional interpretations of the nation's history have developed and been presented to Canadian youth in the period from Confederation to the outbreak of the Second World War. Governing this thesis will be the premise that works of young adult historical fiction have evolved in concert with the evolution of Canada's own comprehension of its identity.

This thesis will venture into a diverse collection of Canadian young adult historical fiction. It will explore how these works have paralleled, complemented, and grown with the development of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century interpretations of the nation's past. Reflecting on the words of historian Mark Moss, who comments on how material a child reads has an effect not only on their "destiny," but also on the "destiny" of their nation (61), we can appreciate youth literature not as mere sources of entertainment, but for its influential nature. My objective is to complete a comparative analysis of two periods of English Canadian young adult historical fiction novels. The first period consists of selected works published before 1914, and the second addresses works published in the years preceding outbreak of the Second World War (1914-1939):



In essence, this thesis presents a historiography of young adult historical fiction novels and focuses on mapping a shift in the representation of Canadian identity following a significant event for the nation –the First World War.

Through this critique of several fictionalizations of English-Canadian history we may begin to recognize how portrayals of history have evolved and reflect Canada's ever-changing national identity. This analysis highlights instances of change regarding the management of identity to show how a correlation exists between fictional representations of the past and period conceptions of nationality. Situating the First World War as a critical national event and using imperialism as a dominant theme, this thesis shall reveal how depictions of the past were regenerated to reflect the nation's increased sense of self. I position the War as a critical moment in Canadian national development based on the fact that the War brought an increase in national awareness, both through the increase in Canada's international participation, resulting from the actions of the then-serving Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden, as well as the impact of a united home front. The War, would also foster statements like those of General A.E. Ross, who claimed to have "witnessed the birth of a nation" at Vimy Ridge in 1918. Ross's statement references his having witnessed Canadian soldiers at Vimy working together as a united Canadian force. Seen as a turning point for the nation, the First World War offers a compelling moment in Canadian history towards a more autonomous national image. On approaching this study, my early speculations favoured a conviction that a comparison of two historical periods of young adult historical fiction novels, which shouldered a defining national event, would identify a perceptible change in how stories about the past were being told. This did in fact turn out to be accurate, though not nearly as overtly and definitively as my early speculation had assumed.

The decision to rely on young adult historical fiction as a primary source is predicated on and in harmony with ideas espoused by critics such as Christopher Kelen and Björn Sunmark who argue, "children's literature makes and educates future citizens" (1). Kim Wilson, writing on the topic of historical fiction, argues that this genre "engages with dominant ideological

assumptions” (111) and notes the complexities which are peculiar to this genre. Noted Canadian scholar on early Canadian children’s writings, Elizabeth Galway, stresses that “by neglecting to study early Canadian children’s literature, critics have failed to fully acknowledge the degree to which writers intended to foster feelings of national identity, independence, pride, and unity following Confederation” (5). Galway’s use of the term “children’s literature” is applied to a rather large age category which covers nearly all non-adult literature. More broadly, as Northrop Frye observes, Canadian literature “is an indispensable aid to the knowledge of Canada” and “It records what the Canadian imagination has reacted to, and it tells us things about this environment that nothing else will tell us” (*Bush* 215). Young adult fiction authors such as George A. Henty (1832-1902), Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942), and Muriel Denison (1886-1954) attest to the variety of available novels set in Canadian locales which contain expressions of what it meant to be Canadian at the turn of the last century. Therefore, as denoted by the above cited scholars, the qualities found within Canadian young adult historical fiction points to a rich and complex source of literature in which to study the progression of Canadian identity.

To manage the wide array of material covered, this thesis utilizes a five-chapter format. Chapter One addresses nationalism, young adult literature, and historical fiction and their relationships to one another. Chapter Two provides context for the Canadian social atmosphere in the years preceding the outbreak of The First World War. Chapter Three consists of an analysis of a sampling of pre-WWI young adult historical fiction novels. Chapters Four and Five structurally mirror chapters Two and Three; however, they respectively address the war and interwar social context and novels. This structure withholds the main analysis of the novels until

Chapters Three and Five, thereby enabling me to provide a more comprehensive theoretical positioning and historical context before engaging with the primary texts.

The thesis enlists a range of novels from across two contiguous historical periods. The pre-War novels are: Agnes Maule Machar's *For King and Country: A Story of 1812* (1874); G.A. Henty's *With Wolfe in Canada or The Winning of a Continent* (1887); William Kirby's *The Golden Dog* (1877¹); and Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908). For the following period (1914-1939) the novels chosen for examination are: Jean Newton McIlwraith's *Kinsman at War* (1925); Muriel Denison's *Susannah: A Little Girl with the Mounties* (1936) and *Susannah of the Yukon* (1937); and Emily P. Weaver's *The Only Girl* (1938). This list merely cites the principal novels that form the backbone of this thesis. References to other novels will also appear throughout this study, thereby illustrating the depth and range of material available to readers of young adult historical fiction and the sources relied upon to draw my conclusions.

Discussions regarding the accuracy and verifiability of the historical record will not concern this thesis. I aim to operate within the understood commonalities of historical and fictional writings, rather than focus on the finer points of factuality. Historian Hayden White refers to the commonalities of historical and fictional writings as the "fictions of factual representation" or "the extent to which the discourse of the historian and that of the imaginative writer overlap, resemble, or correspond with each other" (*Fictions* 121). Further articulating his position, White refers to historical narratives as "verbal fictions" where "the contents of

¹ William Kirby's, *The Golden Dog*, or the *Le Chien d'Or*, was first published in 1877 then later published in French in 1884. This thesis relies on the 1967 New Canadian Library edition of the novel which is based on a 1896 edition. Henceforth the New Canadian Library edition will be the version cited hereafter.

which are as much *invented as found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences” (*Historical Text*” 82).

Historical fictions might then be regarded as merely a simulacrum of historical narratives.

Building off White’s theories about narrative histories, historical fictions can be seen as fictions built on a certain type of fiction. However, as the authors of categorical fictions are permitted greater liberties for their narratives, due to their works being defined as fictions, greater liberties for managing the past are allowed. Looking at how works of historical fiction present the past, in terms of interpretation and perspective, should reveal a great deal about the context in which they were created.

What is critical to this thesis is the recognition of how fiction mimics and expresses period sentiments towards national history and how this in turn manifests within young adult historical fiction. Early nineteenth-century historian Charles Colby writes, “all historical writing is provisional, since each age refuses to be content with the historiography left by its predecessors” and each “generation needs histories written for itself, however surely they may be doomed to eventual oblivion” (qtd. in Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* 17). Wedding Colby’s critique on the provisional nature of history with White’s theories regarding the commonalities between the historian and the imaginative writer opens a portal for exploring the epistemological aspects of historical fiction. Through this portal, we might then glimpse the parallels, deviations, and variations which occur in period interpretations of historic moments as they appear in historical fiction literature. Journeying beyond the shared stylistic and linguistic aspects and exploring historical fiction as products of a particular time, in unison with the common “aims” of literature and narrative history, unlocks their epistemological potential as exponents of national identity.

If, as Antonio proclaims in *The Tempest*, “what’s past is prologue” (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 2.1.247) and history is simply context for the present, then analysing late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Canadian young adult historical fiction novels will uncover their contributions to reshaping the dominant national narrative. Examining how historical fiction authors refocused narratives concerning the nation’s history, fueled by a strengthened belief in national autonomy following the First World War, will illuminate how fictional illustrations mimicked new interpretations, perceptions, and demands about the nation’s past. Galway stresses that Canadian youth literature, infused with nationalist conceptions, compounds with each passing generation and, “It was this early literature that sowed and helped mature many of the seeds of Canadian identity” (12). With hindsight, we can revisit certain young adult historical fiction novels for signposts of the evolving Canadian identity, and with respect to the didactic nature of children’s literature, historical fiction can be regarded as having the potential to refocus, reclaim, and reattribute our understanding of the past. For Canada, as for any nation, these creations contribute to the “cultural artifacts” which Benedict Anderson claims are elementary to nationhood (4). Drawing attention to these components of culture and their complementary and progressive nature concerning national imagining, historical fiction serves as an example of a literary genre that actively and unrestrictedly manages our perceptions of the past.

CHAPTER I: Nationalism, Young Adult Literature, and Historical Fiction

As Wilson proposes “Those who control the dissemination of a culture’s history (or mythologised history) are in a position of power – they shape how and what a culture remembers” (123). This “power” residing with those who dispense a form of cultural material must be met with a degree of accountability for what is made memorable. To better understand the didactic power held by those who disseminate a culture’s history it is useful to clarify the terms that make up the lengthy designation of Canadian young adult historical fiction. To assist in this clarification, the following chapter is broken down into three sub-headings: 1) Nationalism and Canada as a Nation; 2) Young Adult Literature; 3) Historical Fiction. Unpacking each component individually will aid in navigating this thesis through the terrain of Canadian young adult historical fiction novels. To further define the scope of this thesis it should be noted that it will concentrate on history recorded from the point of view of the dominant Anglo-Canadian national narrative and will focus on material that supports English-Canadian and Western concepts of history.

Nationalism and Canada as a Nation

Examining the concept of the nation, in relation to its relative modernity, clears a space to begin laying the theoretical groundwork. Benedict Anderson posits several key paradigms that complicate our conceptions about what is a nation. Drawing attention to a division in perspectives, Anderson writes on the appearance of “The objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of the nationalists” (5). An example of this objectivity can be seen in W. Stewart Wallace’s *A First Book of Canadian History* (1928).

Within his chapter entitled, “The ‘New Nationality’” Wallace writes on the British North America Act of 1867, stating “This Act was passed by the Imperial parliament, and became law on July 1, 1867—the birthday of the Dominion of Canada. The four chief provinces of British North America, at least, had joined hands in an effort to create a Canadian nation” (153). Here Wallace provides a definitive “birthday” for the Canadian nation. In an article published in 1920, “The Growth of Canadian National Feeling”, Wallace argues that “Canadian national feeling is a phenomenon of very recent growth”, arguing that Canadians only became conscious to Canada’s nationhood following the War. In Wallace’s writings on Canada as a nation and its national consciousness he places both the legal and public understanding of the nation within a relatively recent past. In contrast, a more subjective approach to history can locate traces of nationality much further into the past. Emily P. Weaver presents her characters as “experienced Canadians” (Weaver 147) in her work of fiction, *The Only Girl* (1938), which is centered around the 1837 rebellions in Upper Canada. The heritage Weaver submits to identify her characters details a longstanding connection to what becomes the Canadian nation. The term or idea of “Canadian” as appears in Weaver’s novel, and other novels examined for this thesis, has some fluidity in terms of its application. Its use in defining individuals or groups in various historical periods allows for an array of interpretations about citizenry that only gathers political weight as the term itself grows in significance. Allusions to an older and deeper national identity are ways in which more subjective interpretations about a nation’s ancestry can be presented to an audience increasing a sense of connection to the past.

These contrasting approaches in conceptualizing the nation become highly relevant when interpreting national history. For example, the opposing perceptions of a nation’s age, based on “objective modernity” or “subjective antiquity,” foregrounds the complications which arise when

addressing the origins or the “birthing” narrative of a nation-state. I see this paradox concerning the approaches to interpretation as applicable to works of fiction, especially to those that revolve around national ancestry. The particular leanings of an author towards a “historian’s” approach, as opposed to a “nationalist’s” approach, become critical when reflecting upon works of fiction. For if an author regards a nation as a modern construct their interpretation will likely favour a temporally limited objective conception of the nation. This limitation, potentially based on a static empirical historical event and date (e.g. Canadian Confederation, 1 July 1867), therefore can satisfy the need for an originary moment. In contrast, the author who selects a subjective approach is more apt to include and project proto-national elements into much earlier narratives about the origins of the nation. Agnes Machar’s *For King and Country* provides an example of the proto-national elements that can emerge in historical fictions. Concerning the American General Hull’s 1812 invasion of Upper Canada, and his offer of terms to Upper Canadians, Machar writes, “he [Hull] promised them [Canadians],—should they make no resistance,—to ‘emancipate them from tyranny and oppression, and restore them to the dignified station of freemen’” (165). In response, Machar writes that Canadians “did not waver” (166) from their loyalty to Britain and presented a hope that: “May the Canada of the future prove a worthy descendant of this young Canada of the past!” (166). Although Machar reiterates Canadians’ support for Britain or, the “old flag” (167), there is a reminder that a body of people who can be defined as Canadians existed in and before 1812. Machar continues that these “staunch Canadians rose as one man” ready “to fight to the death for king, country and home” (167). Machar’s united group, albeit predominantly Anglo-Saxon, are readily categorized as Canadian, and see “home” as a distinct world apart from the old world. Machar’s image is not that of a fully developed picture of the Canadian nationality, but refers to a body of people who have a history

of being seen as Canadian existing beneath the overarching banner of the British Empire. These contrary approaches to national history may, at first, appear obtuse when applied to fiction. However, when considered in relation to young adult texts and their didactic nature, any exposures to national history—whether seen with “objective modernity” or “subjective antiquity”—may have a profound impact on a reader’s comprehension regarding the origins of the nation.

Cultivating any patriotic feelings for a nation occurs through the careful management of a shared past supplemented with nostalgic sentiments. The non-presence of an ancient Anglo-Saxon history to act as a footing for Canadian nationalism combined with the relatively slow and small process of Canada’s colonization, and the diplomatic nature of the Confederation talks leaves a somewhat undramatic narrative to function as the origin story. Shackled with a classic Western ideological system, Canada operates within a Western “view of time and history that is linear and secular,” which is “especially prone to the syndrome of nostalgia” (Shaw and Chase 3). This “syndrome” as Shaw and Chase outline, functions within rose-coloured visions of the past which shape how identity is envisioned and support conceptions of the nation bordering on the mythical. Mark Moss writes that “New nations are particularly dependent on myths to establish their legitimacy” (53). For Canada, as a comparatively new nation with rustic beginnings, it is difficult to avoid the temptation to amplify, glorify, and mythologize the past into an image strong enough to be a cornerstone of nationalism. Investigating interpretations of Confederation, Paul Romney comments on myths and their role within nationalist writing, stating “Myths impart identity and values; they encourage us to think of ourselves in a certain way and act accordingly” (13). Imparting an identity in compliance and amiable to a certain group within the nation is fostered through national legends and myths, which are, to a degree,

repositories of the nation's values. Images and tales of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, or later the Royal Mounted Police, supply an example where national values have been imparted onto a physical group. Long serving as a symbol of Canada's civility and order, the image of the red jacketed Mountie has featured in a plethora of novels throughout the early twentieth-century and has also become an extremely popular souvenir image which is believed to epitomize the Canadian national spirit.

National myths, which come to function as the backbone of a nation's identity, permeate our collective memory and establish the dominant discourses and shape our perceptions of the nation. Within the process of fashioning national mythology, Anderson states that nations have "no clearly identifiable births" (205) which works against the notion of "objective modernity" (5) and prevents a nation's history to be written in "down time" (205) from a set point. As a result, the builders of nationalism are left with the "only alternative," which "is to fashion it "up time" (205). Anderson continues, noting this "fashioning" is, "marked by deaths, which, in a curious inversion of conventional genealogy, start from an originary present" (205). This retrospective approach to national history is indicative of how national history can favour particular social settings where certain figures have a relative value. Authors who grapple with the nation's past are also free to construct their narratives in this 'up-time' retrospective approach where narratives are allowed to travel through points of history which are best suited to explain the current situation. On myth-making within national history, Moss writes that by "substituting myth for history, the inconsistencies of the past can be ironed out" (53). The use of the mythic in building a national image allows a metaphorical narrative string to be threaded through the past, stitching together historical events and striating out "inconsistencies" demarking a certain course through the past to arrive at a predetermined ending. Selecting a course worthy of celebration,

which fosters patriotism and a false nostalgia (as young adult readers were often not yet born during the period the novels were set in), organizes the past for mythologizing. Jean Newton McIlwraith's *Kinsmen at War* provides an example, as her lead protagonist's tale is intimately connected with three important and much celebrated figures of the War of 1812 – Tecumseh, Laura Secord, and General Sir Isaac Brock. In plotting her novel McIlwraith intertwines her hero's life with the lives of three historic figures in a way that emphasizes their roles in the events of 1812. Summarizing myth making and national identity, Wilson notes, "The concept of national character is embedded within the historical discourse of the nation-state. It is often perceived as belonging to or existing within a collective cultural memory and is generally perpetuated through mythologised rhetoric" (114). Young adult historical fiction, when functioning as a form of "mythologised rhetoric," fills a special place within the framework on which the national identity is draped, as it may be a young adult's earliest exposure to a portion of the national narrative.

The relationship between the child and a nation is essential, for if a nation is to continue in perpetuity it is vital for it to inculcate the child with its fundamental values and stories. Kelen and Sundmark surmise that, "From a national perspective, it is necessary that the child be taught what it is to be a citizen—this is both for the sake of the child and for the sake of the adult" (263). Therefore, steeping the youth in national lore through a medium such as historical fiction can infuse into young citizens a degree of patriotism founded in a shared history. Having a child fluent in the lore of the nation will help sustain the idea of the nation throughout following generations, thereby aiding in keeping alive the nation's foundational values and ideology. Maintaining awareness to the perspectives and positioning of national narratives, in whatever

format they are presented, encourages a critical approach and critical thought about the epistemological aspects of a given text.

Young Adult Literature

When addressing the subject of young adult literature, it is necessary to define it as the body of literature that targets non-adult readers, but is intended to be slightly above the comprehension of the child reader. For brevity, this thesis will only provide a cursory overview of evolutionary theories regarding concepts of the child or childhood, and will consider young adult literature as a resource available to young adults as they transition into adulthood and an aid in developing perspectives and interpretations of their nation's history.

In the centuries preceding the Victorian age, understandings and conceptions of childhood took on various forms as Western societies' values and understandings of the pre-adult years developed. Harry Hendrick proposes the period of 1880-1914 as the beginning of "modern childhood" (14-15) wherein, he suggests, ideas surrounding childhood were "legally, legislatively, socially, medically, psychologically, and politically institutionalized" (15). In contextualizing this period, Hendrick examined the changes and progression of the conception of childhood as witnessed in England from 1880 up to 1990. Noteworthy, and relevant to the Canadian condition, are his findings which suggest that due to progressive social changes and developments in the idea of the welfare state, perspectives on the child underwent significant change in terms of a rise in their political identification. This change in identification for the child forms the basis for his vision of "modern childhood". Recognition of the value of the child to the furthering and betterment of the state, as well as new perspectives on the role of the state

in maintaining the health and education of its children, provides the basis for Hendrick's interpretation and definition of modern childhood as a state investment.

Within his framework of "modern childhood" Hendrick argues that the child should be "viewed from the perspective of *becoming* (growing to maturity), rather than *being* (children as their own persons)" (4). In this process of "becoming," a child's literacy enters into the conversation and is seen as key to opening the doorway to adulthood. Siding with Rousseau, Neil Postman associates the end of childhood and the child entering adulthood only when literacy is achieved, noting "Reading is the scourge of childhood because, in a sense, it creates adulthood" (13). Postman continues, "From print onward, adulthood had to be earned" (36). Contingent on reading was a space where the non-adult had to reside. Therefore, reading "made childhood a necessity" as it was the place where the non-literate was to remain. With the designation of childhood as a distinct period within an individual's life, the reaching of adulthood through the ability to read presents a problem when considering young adult readers, the problem being that although they may not be fully regarded as adults, they are no longer as closely monitored as the child reader.

In keeping with his theories on nationalism, Anderson argues for its contingency on the rise of "print capitalism" and vernacular texts. This points to an interesting perspective when considering the reading material made available to young readers during the early years of Canada's national development. Moss explores elements of Anderson's 'print capitalism' through the mass production and dissemination of printed material made accessible to Canada's youth population. The abundance of texts intended for young readers made available to Canadian children through their importation from the old-world suggests that, as a colony, Canada's main purpose was simply to ship out raw goods and absorb the cultural material disseminated from

Britain (Moss 62). The promotion of imperialist writings, such as those of G.A. Henty, W.H.G Kingston, and Lt Col. F.S. Brereton, illustrates how the late-nineteenth-century ideas of imperialism persisted in Canadian society. However, with the continued development of English-Canada's cultural material, made accessible to Canada's youth, did a more refined Anglo-Canadian national image begin to emerge.

Adding to the complexities of youth literature is the one-sided power dynamic often deemed inherent to literature written for the non-adult. As Jacqueline Rose comments on the nature of children's fiction, "There is, in one sense no body of literature which rests so openly on an acknowledged difference, a rupture almost, between writer and addressee. Children's fiction sets up the child as an outsider to its own process, and then aims, unashamedly to take the child *in*" (2). This argument about the characteristics of children's literature is suitable in regards to literature intended for young adults as their novels are just as predisposed to this "rupture" between author and reader and dependent upon a hierarchal/pedagogical position grounded within authorship. The inescapability of the adult voice and innate didactic potential of children's literature, as proposed by Rose, demands consideration when historical fictions are considered. Nationalistic overtones have the potential to compound with the difficulties and possibilities inherent within the lopsided relationship of the adult author and non-adult reader. The relative position of the author, as an unofficial authority on the material presented can support or challenge perceptions of the state and have a profound influence on a readers' conception of a historic moment.

Historical Fiction

As an epistemological tool, historical fiction provokes an interesting dilemma, for as a work of history it falls far short of presenting what might be deemed an “academic” or “objective” approach to the historical record. Yet, through literary devices and fictionalization, historical fiction offers a certain humanistic approach which is often inaccessible through a purely non-fiction approach. Historical fiction, therefore, warrants a balanced interdisciplinary approach which responds to each side of its literary identity.

White’s theories as expressed in *Metahistory*, which explore the interpretational characteristics of written history, serve as a useful launch point in discussing the historical component of historical fiction. Basing much of his theories on the understanding that no series of historical events ever has a particular plot structure, White argues that it is up to the author to provide the structure or storyline that guides their narration of history (“*Historical Text*” 84). Borrowing from archetypal literary criticism, White relies on a formalist’s approach to analyze aspects of the underlying literary structures often employed by authors of narrative prose histories to construct their particular interpretations (*Metahistory* 2-4). Choosing to consider a formalist and archetypal approach in the examination of historical fiction offers a particular tactic towards its criticism. With two plotlines often running simultaneously within a historical fiction novel, one being the purely fictional narrative and the second being the historical narrative upon which the fictional tale is woven into, criticism offered through an archetypal lens permits the shared aspects of both genres to be considered. Favoritism to one plotline or another varies depending on the author and the narrative. G.A. Henty for instance dedicates pages to military movements, names, and dates – the heart of a historical discourse - when he writes about the siege of Quebec. Muriel Denison, however, pecks at the historical record selecting snippets

of history which she weaves together to create her fictional tale of a young girl's adventures with the Mounties. In *Metahistory*, White argues that emplotment is a fixed component of narrative history and defines emplotment as "the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind" (7); he also proposes that the historian is "forced to emplot the whole set of stories making up his narrative" (8). The themes of composition, which White mainly draws support for, are from the work of Northrop Frye and supply a language and theory that become useful when engaging with the commonalities of historiographies and fictional literature.

Regarding the factual elements of history or the "dominant ideological assumptions" found in historical fiction, Wilson writes that historical fiction does engage with ideologies "embedded in fact" (111-112). From this positioning, novels can, she argues, "assume an authoritative relationship with readers" which is "particularly the case in children's and young adult literature" (112). This "authoritative relationship" and the pedagogical nature of the texts stress the need for the clarity and transparency of the historical facets explored within individual narratives. Making aware the deviations, plot devices, and fictionalizations within historical fictional narratives which, in turn, separate them from the dominant historical narratives challenges the authors' individual interpretations. Changes to the dominant narratives is where this "power" (123) arises in individual fictions, gaining greater significance when incorporated into literature intended for non-adult readers.

F.S. Brereton's, *How Canada Was Won - A Tale of Wolfe & Quebec*, and G. A. Henty's, *With Wolfe in Canada: The Winning of a Continent*, both supply good examples of deviations from the dominant narrative. When writing about the pivotal movement of the British troops ascending the steep slope of the St. Lawrence and onto the Plains of Abraham, each author

credits his own fictional character with the identification and reporting of the secluded pathway to General Wolfe. Brereton gives credit to Stephen Mainwaring an American colonist and Henty credits James Walsham, a British fugitive. Common historical accounts of this event cite Robert Stobo, a Scottish born military officer who had been imprisoned in Quebec (Alberty) for several years before the event, as the person who identified the pathway. This seemingly minor detail about a small footpath at first appears insignificant, yet, when taken in greater historical context, this small gap in the French defences played a significant role in the fall of Quebec and the subsequent rise of British rule in what would become Canada. Brereton's character choice celebrates individualism and the free state of the 'New World', whereas Henty uses a sojourning British character that supports the greater imperial narrative. Altering and reattributing decisive moments in the past challenge interpretations and perceptions of history. This has two repercussions. On one hand it offers alternative perspectives and challenges dominant narratives, and on the other hand, it disrupts and confuses what is known, interrupting history's attempts at explaining how we arrived at the present.

Wilson argues further that a "by-product" of historical fiction is the "dissemination of a culture's shared recollection of the past" (111) where its fiction can serve "as both a memory and a transmitter of culture" (111). The memories circulated and created by authors of young adult historical fiction are intriguing not only for their liberties with the past, but also with the power imbalance between the reader and adult author. The concerns that arise with fictional versions of the past are accentuated by the nature of the material and its effect on individual interpretations of the nation. In diverging from the dominant historical narrative, historical fiction authors take a measure of control over the past. Only through critically examining their context and content do

the individual nuances of the adapted versions become apparent, unveiling the possible motivations for their deviations.

Embedded within fictional history is the author's vision of what the past might have been. Within the text authors describe and construct a fictionalized past which is representative only of the author's idealized vision of what the past was like. Frye writes that "Historical fictions are not designed to give insight into a period of history, but are exemplary; they illustrate action, and are ideal in the sense of manifesting the universal form of human action" (*Anatomy* 84). Historical fictions can offer specific insight as the period brought to life may have "specific historical value" (*Anatomy* 84), and contain not only the author's artistic interpretation of history, but also the author's interpretation of history as a product derived from within a particular historic context. Frye extends his thoughts on creating fictional narratives and mythic versions of history, stating it "is conscious mythology: it creates an autonomous world that gives us an imaginative perspective on the actual one" (*Bush* 235). Recognizing this mythic element, as Wilson proposes, helps in understanding the idea of "historical mythology" in historical fiction, and if it is "presented as bona fide memory – [it] becomes a means of transmitting dominant culture, and hence it represents a site of power for those who mediate the telling" (115). The layering aspects of historical fiction where author, context, and content (both from the historical record and fictional) combine in a myth making relationship contain historical fiction's power and a capacity to influence perceptions about a previous time.

Moving forward from the unpacking of terminology related to the genre of Canadian young adult historical fiction it is important to provide some context for the periods featured in this thesis. The following chapter will briefly detail the state of pre-War Canada's written history, as well as Canada's relationship with Britain. This review will provide some context

regarding the environment in which the first period of novels were conceived and initially received.

CHAPTER II – Context for Pre-War Canada

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to grapple with the multiple streams of inquiry and criticism available for exploring the complex, diverse, and elusive concept that is Canadian national identity. As the main focus of this thesis will be on English-Canadian history, and thereby a Western concept of history, it will involve the history produced mainly for the Anglo-Canadian dominant national narrative. The reasoning for this narrowed approach is to concentrate on narratives that have fueled a dominant image of Canadian nationality. Anderson posits that “nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind” and it is vital we consider why “they command such profound emotional legitimacy” (4). The exclusive study of the anglophone material dealing with Canadian history, in both historical text and fictional adaptations, will aid in understanding how certain cultural materials fuel this “cultural artifact” and resonate so profoundly with a significant portion of Canadian society.

Carl Berger’s sagacious work on the shifting focuses of Canadian historians outlines several trends that appear in writings on the history of Canada. At the outset, Berger posits that history “is not an olympian record of past activities”; rather, “it reveals a great deal about the intellectual climate in which it was composed” (*Writing of Canadian History* Preface). The contextual and interpretative elements, inherent in the attempts to compose historical narratives, are some of the essential features of written history relevant to evaluating fictionalized representations of the historical record.

Establishing a minor chronology and providing some context for the writing of Canadian history, Berger notes many pre-Confederation histories were mere compilations of statistical information on the environmental conditions and the status of uncultivated land. Of these early

histories of Canada Berger remarks that they were more geological and natural histories “intended to promote settlement and investment and to correct misrepresentations about soil and climate” (*Writing of Canadian History* 1) than memoirs about early life in pre-Confederation Canada. Berger also notes that a major shift occurred in the writing of history following Confederation where a “substantial increase in the number of works published, [and] the growth of a romantic, retrospective attitude to the past” (2) was observed. Within these post-Confederation histories Berger reports, a rising “localist character” was “due as much to the persistent loyalties to local communities as to the technical difficulties in integrating the history of a country that had so recently been politically unified” (2). Berger’s reflections on mid-nineteenth-century writings of Canada’s history chronicles the conservative approach held by many early writers on Canada while they began to create new historiographies of the growing nation. Finding a past worthy of recording, separating it from old world narratives and traditions, and adding a unique Canadian perspective were several problems that faced early writers of history. Examining examples of early-nineteenth-century writings on the Canadian colonial experience provides brief insight into the marginal approach to history understood and approached through the Western tradition.

The influential American historian, Francis Parkman, exemplifies early-nineteenth-century approaches to the writing of history. Parkman’s romantic narrative histories on early North America and Canada provide a compelling example of the tropes utilized by nineteenth-century historians. In the introduction of *The Romance of Canadian History*, a collection of earlier essays by Parkman published in 1917, editor Edgar Pelham comments of Parkman, “Into the making of a historian there should enter something of the philosopher, something of the naturalist, something of the poet. In Parkman, this rare union of qualities was realized in a

greater degree than in any other American historian” (Pelham xviii-xix). Berger writes that Parkman “had a colourful pictorial style, a dramatic narrative, and a mythic theme”; Berger also noted, “Some English Canadians not only admired his literary artistry but found his interests and prejudices agreeable also” (*Writing of Canadian History* 4). The following excerpt of Parkman’s work, which deals with early French exploration and the colonization of Canada, displays his romantic, poetic, narrative format which had made his writing so appealing.

The French dominion is a memory of the past; and when we evoke its departed shades, they rise upon us from their graves in strange, romantic guise. Again their ghostly campfires seem to burn, and the fitful light is cast around on lord and vassal and black robed priest, mingled with wild forms of savage warriors, knit in close fellowship on the same stern errand. A boundless vision grows upon us; an untamed continent; vast wastes of forest verdure; mountains silent in primeval sleep; river, lake and glimmering pool; wilderness oceans mingling with the sky. Such was the domain which France conquered for Civilization. (3-4)

Parkman’s lyrical and flowing narrative is indicative of a highly subjective tactic employed in mid-nineteenth-century histories. His romanticism mixed with the vivid imagery of “ghostly campfires” and “wilderness oceans mingling with the sky” (Parkman 3-4) transport the reader to a fictional construct of time and place, which was imagined to have existed long before European “civilization” washed over the continent and the Indigenous cultures.

Following Parkman and broaching the twentieth-century, the American historian Francis Turner published his renowned Frontier Thesis that provides another period example of a traditional Western historiography. Turner’s highly influential essay on the American frontier is written from an undoubtedly Western positioning, as even in his defining of the frontier he

upholds a polarizing nineteenth-century European view of the peoples affected. Turner's frontier is defined as the "outer edge of the wave – the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (3). Like Parkman, the ideas of the "savage" and "civilization" infuse the studies and is telling about the "intellectual climate" (Berger *Writing of Canadian History* Preface) in which the two historiographies were composed. Turner's "social evolution" (11) is visible through his description of the development of America as occurring at the leading edge of his notion of a frontier—where civility is defeating savagery. Narratively, Turner composed a tragedy as, for him, "the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history" (38). His charting of the rise and fall of the frontier to its tragic end ceases all excitement, energy, and freedoms that were to have accompanied this "wave" of settlement. Turner's thesis, although written mainly of the American experience, provides an example of a turn-of-the-century historiography to which we can compare the themes used by a historian against that of authors of fiction. Kirby's romantic tragedy, *The Golden Dog*, for comparison, demonstrates the combined forms of Turner and Parkman in a single work of fiction emphasising both genres' dependence upon fundamental narrative structures.

The examples of Parkman's romantic and Turner's tragic emplotments illustrate White's theories regarding the metahistorical aspects of narrative histories. As White indicates historians are supposed to be grounded in "events which can be assigned to specific time-space locations, events which are (or were) in principle observable or perceivable" ("*Fictions*" 121). Differing from the historian White sees writers of fiction as dealing with both the same events as the historian, but the "imagined, hypothetical, or invented ones" as well ("*Fictions*" 121). In a later essay, White comments further on this divide noting "historical discourse wages everything on the true, while fictional discourse is interested in the real" ("*Historical Fiction*" 147). The

interest of the author, whether that of the “true” or the “real” is significant and, if focused on, produces an imposing, if not impossible, gap to bridge. Yet, both texts can be viewed as complementary. If we adopt, as White suggests, a more “modernist conception of literature as writing” as it “provide[s] ways of seeing how art can complement rather than undermine, science.” (“*The History Fiction Divide*” 18). History may have faltered in its quest to be a hard science, but through strengthening a complementary bond with art the “true” and the “real” can exist in symbiosis, creating a rich and complex vision of the past.

White’s controversial position regarding the historians’ approach is premised on the notion that histories are mainly written *interpretations* of the historical material tied together through summaries, conclusions, and the selection of specific facts. The relative nature of historical interpretations compounded with White’s theories on fundamental underlining plot structures (i.e. Romance, Comedy, Tragedy, and Satire) (“*Interpretations*” 70) stresses the provisional and subjective nature of the writing of narrative histories. In the following analyses of the novels, the tendencies of the authors of historical fiction towards romantic and tragic plotlines will be presented showcasing how interpretations of the past can be presented and mimic narrative histories.

It is extremely tempting to draw a correlation between narrative histories and their historical fiction counterparts, as they both appear to contain varying degrees of fictionalizations. However, a fissure remains. Whereas historians, regardless of their approach, will fall victim to unintended fictionalizations due to their dependence on narrative formatting, nuances within their own interpretation of data, and the provisional/temporal nature of their being, authors of openly fictional texts have the relative freedom to fictionalize at their discretion and are guided only by their consciousness and goals to complete a pre-determined narrative. Why draw

attention to this shared ground of historical narratives and historical fiction? Only through maintaining the shared methodologies of literary criticisms and historical discourse does a two-pronged interdisciplinary approach take form to examine the hybrid genre of historical fiction. Historical fiction has the potential to have a profound effect in terms of conceptions about the past and to bring the “real” into accounts of the past. Where nationalist underpinnings are present, the broad spectrum of critical analysis applied with an interdisciplinary approach will function well in heightening our awareness to the underlying discourses.

Returning to the progression of the writing of Canadian history, celebrated author and Canadian icon Catharine Parr Traill expresses her feelings towards the colonial experience in her 1836 book, *The Backwoods of Canada*. In her writings to friends and family in England about the state of rural nineteenth-century Canada, she expresses how “here there are no historical associations, no legendary tales of those that came before us” (Traill 117). Writing of the lack of romantic traditions in the colonies, Traill bemoans the minimal history and lore present in the budding colonial outpost upon which a new culture might find its mythic roots and stories. Following her complaints about the absence of history, Traill includes the objections of an unnamed poet who contrasts the un-inspiring Canadian physical landscape with the venerated landscapes of the old world: “it is the most unpoetical of all lands; there is no scope for imagination; here all is new—the very soil seems newly formed; there is no hoary ancient grandeur in these woods; no recollections of former deeds connected with the country” (117). Traill sympathises with the poet’s perception on the absence of history and the minimal literary traditions which greeted new settlers. The uncultivated landscape which greeted settlers such as Traill appeared to provoke distress and created the impression that that the uncultivated lands reflected an uncultivated culture, in terms of Anglo-Saxon conceptions of culture. This fear of

the wilderness, in both a physical and metaphorical sense, supports the settler's longings for, and relationships to, a cultivated natural world and a desire for refined culture. Furthering these grievances, she attributes the missing history, one which white settlers could associate with, to a shortage of romantic interpretations of Canada's past. Romantic writings, she believed, would have the potential to engage the pragmatic settlers:

the class of people to whom this country is so admirably adapted are formed of the unlettered and industrious labourers and artisans. They feel no regret that the land they labour on has not been celebrated by the pen of the historian or the lay of the poet. The earth yields her increase to them as freely as if it had been enriched by the blood of heroes. They would not spare the ancient oak from feelings of veneration, nor look upon it with regard for anything but its use as timber. They have no time, even if they possessed the taste, to gaze abroad on the beauties of Nature, but their ignorance is bliss. (Traill 117)

Traill's yearning for historiographies and the romantic ruminations of poets, compounds with her belief in the non-existent interests or "taste" of the "unlettered and industrious" (117) settlers, emphasizing colonial Canada's perceived minimal recorded past. Traill's writing captures an image of the meager state-of-affairs for literary traditions in early colonial Canada for works of either fiction or history. This supposed void of cultural material prefigures a long tradition of Canadians' ruminations on the limits of interpreting Canada's pre-colonial past.

Northrop Frye's theories on the development of Canada's cultural material echoes Traill's sentiments, stating "the Canadian literary mind, beginning as it did so late in the cultural history of the West, was established on a basis, not of myth, but of history" (*Bush* 231). Frye stresses that Canada's literary development is deeply indebted to Western traditions and

conceptions of history. Therefore, romanticising about the past and expressing forms of identity becomes ever more dependent on events that occur before any self-reflective or authentic interpretation of Canadian culture is identifiable. The opportunity for Canada to allow the purely mythological to seed its culture had long since passed, leaving Canadians with only their recorded past to refine into myths. The ancient myths which were foundational to an older culture's identity were regarded as absent, as the stories and traditions of the Indigenous peoples held only a limited place within early Canadian storytelling and literary traditions (Frye, *Bush* 233). Substituting for the absent ancient myths, Britishness, partnered with imperialism, created a temporary footing on which colonists could begin to construct a base for their cultural history.

Imperialism, as it appeared in late-nineteenth-century Canada, was a major ideological force and is regularly featured as a theme in both works of history and literature. Recognizing Canada's attachment to the ideas of imperialism supplies the necessary context for interpreting the political and social climate present in pre-War Canada. The Canadian version of imperialism has been poised as not the large scale, domineering, and oppressive imperialism which exuded from leading global powers, but can be understood as a more co-operative economic and social arrangement based on a reliance upon the British Empire. Albeit modest to the full ramifications of imperialism, this "Canadian" version of imperialism, writes Berger, refers to a "movement for the closer union of the British Empire through economic and military co-operation and through political changes which would give the dominions influence over imperial policy" (*Sense* 3). The preservation of an imperial union with Britain necessitated a heavy reliance upon old-world traditions and value placement in order to retain the deep rooted cultural connection needed for an ideological alignment. Berger further writes that supporters of the Canadian Imperial Federation League active in the late-nineteenth-century "believed imperial unity compatible with

Canadian nationality” as long as it “depended on the way they conceived of that nationality, and how they interpreted Canadian history, character, and destiny” (*Sense* 3). Preserving Britishness while simultaneously nurturing an emergent Canadian identity are critical facets concerning Canadian cultural identity as it relates to the late-nineteenth-century imperialist movement. In the face of Canada’s alternative of retaining British citizenship and remaining an underling of the Empire, dissecting how the dilemma of building a recognizable autonomous Canadian identity was exhibited and evolved in young adult historical fiction serves as the underlying question driving this thesis.

A prominent voice of late-nineteenth century Canadian imperialism was Lieutenant Colonel George Taylor Denison. A firm supporter of the Canada First movement, which arose in the decades following Confederation, and avid promoter of Loyalist history and tradition, Denison’s commitment to Canadian imperialism is rarely questioned. Presenting his position on Canada’s loyalty to Britain, Denison’s 1895 contribution to the *Westminster Review* revisits choice Loyalist activities that occurred in Canada’s history. Denison, stressing the importance of the Loyalists in the formation of Canada, writes that for Canada, “her history can only be said to fairly commence with the migration of the United Empire Loyalists at the close of the American Revolution in 1783” (3). Denison’s focus on Loyalists’ activities was in response to Goldwin Smith, a staunch proponent of American annexation. Denison argued for the necessity of maintaining the British-Canadian relationship in order to maintain separate North American identities. Fear of annexation, with its capacity to “deprive Canadians of their birthright as British subjects” (Denison 23), was a particular aspect of Canadian identity that buttressed the division between the two North American nations. Fearful of continentalism, supporters of imperialism such as Denison regarded imperialism as a means to preserve their British

citizenship and a link to their heritage. However, threats to the economy experienced during the closing decades of the nineteenth-century, mixed with the fears of continentalism, “galvanize[d] the defenders of Canada and the British connection into action, and bring out into the open the ideas and sentiments, tradition and hopes, that constituted their sense of nationality” (*Sense* 4). Imperialists’ voices such as Denison’s exemplify a stream of rhetoric active in the years preceding the War. This rhetoric proved crucial for gaining support for the war effort, as well as distilling the rudiments of Canadian national identity which were to surface in the post-War years.

Adding to period context, historian Mark Moss’s work on the socialization of Ontario’s male youth in the decades preceding the War illustrates its impact on instilling the fundamentals of Canadian citizenship. Moss, commenting on the Canadian government, notes that “Much of the apparatus put in place in the years after 1867 had been intended to gear the new nation towards the production of such upstanding citizens” (4). This movement towards creating “upstanding citizens” was, in part, a retaliation against rising urbanization and the products of modernization which were challenging the traditional Canadian rural lifestyle and established patriarchal systems. This, Moss argues, was approached through accentuating and stressing the need for masculine traits to be instilled within young Canadian males. Increased focus on outdoor activities, physicality, and military service were some of the approved means in which these masculine traits could be imparted. Both the schoolroom and organizations such as the Boy Scouts were institutions where this socialization routinely occurred. The glorification of war and its perception as a test of manhood became, by the late 1890s, intertwined with citizenry where Canada’s participation in the “War was seen and portrayed as the supreme test of manhood as well as the defining mark of a nation” (Moss 38). The years leading up to the Great War were

charged with romantic and mythic conceptions of war and empire-building, as witnessed in Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement. With its paramilitary structure and imperial message, Robert H. MacDonald argues, the Scouts movement "acted as all social myths act; it concealed and made veritable the ideology that lay behind it, justifying imperialism, masculine power, and racial superiority" (205). Although the Scouting movement's intent and actions towards full military support is questionable (Dedman 222-223), its endorsement of patriotic and imperialist ideology validated youth participation in the call-to-arms in 1914. The past chapter's reflections on Canada's written history, and its relationship with the British Empire, has provided some context for the period in which the novels examined in the following chapter were composed and the environment in which the authors were immersed.

CHAPTER III: Analysis of Pre-War Young Adult Canadian Historical Fiction

Following Confederation, the number of English-Canadian settlers witnessed a steady increase, bringing with it a growing appetite for fiction. Young adult fiction literature was not immune to this rising appetite and the genre of historical fiction witnessed a growth in material which contained various interpretations of Canada's past. Canadian literary critic W.H. New outlines the period of Canadian literature leading up to the Great War and beyond to 1922 as one where nationalist sentiments were founded in a "belief in cultural conformity" and was "anglocentric, male-dominated, and justified by appeals to God and National Law" (79). New's categorization of the dominant discourse active in this period of Canadian literature is generally confirmed in the texts analysed in this chapter. The examples used in this thesis to explore English-Canadian history, as told through young adult historical fiction, supports New's analysis regarding uniformities in cultural material. The principal positioning of the selected narratives being of a Christian, male-dominated, and Anglocentric perspective was reconfirmed in these fictionalized interpretations of Canada's early history.

To examine several authors' expressions of the nation's image as it appears in young adult literature, four categories will be used to appraise the textualization of Canadian national identity: imperialism in Canada; the presentation of Canadian national heroes; images of the idealized "Canadian"; and the unwillingness of Canadians to be understood as Americans. Each body of evidence will illuminate some of the nuances of national imagining as it appeared within the selected novels.

Imperialism in Canada

Despite the presence of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century concerns for preserving loyalty and imperial ties to the British Empire there was an image of an autonomous Canadian nation present in Canada—if only in an embryonic phase. Galway notes the literature available for Victorian Canadian youth produced in the country “between 1867 and 1914 clearly reflects the importance of the lingering ties to Britain, and is overtly imperialistic” (2).

Continuing her critique of nineteenth-century Canadian youth literature, Galway comments that “A major struggle within the Canadian psyche was between lingering loyalty to Britain, and a growing awareness of Canada’s need and desire for independence” (43). Recognizing the aim of Confederation to be that of creating a federal union between the provinces which supported “the yearning of French Canadians and Upper Canadians alike to be masters in their own house” (Romney 88) stresses a single component of Canada’s struggle to construct its own hegemonic national image. With dominant interpretations of Confederation often disregarding the British North America Act’s original goals to support provincial governments and preserve distinct identities, the idea of an autonomous national image stemming from Confederation is problematic. Therefore, the seeds of a singular nation may have been planted at Confederation, but a period of gestation would be needed before it could mature and be possibly unanimously recognized by the peoples of British North America. The persistent voices of late nineteenth-century imperialist promoters worked in a particular fashion to create a nationalistic image of Canada as a “cultural artifact” (Anderson 4). This particular Canadian “cultural artifact” was nurtured by the supporters of imperialism and was held together through specific historical interpretations, economic ties, and cultural identification used to preserve ties to the British

Empire. Galway comments on how the social complexities and the complicated atmosphere of the period began to appear within the literature, remarking that the:

tension manifests itself in several ways in the children's literature of the time. On one hand, there is literature that clearly promotes the country's imperial ties, while on the other there is literature that reflects a growing impatience with Britain and frustration with its continued meddling in Canadian affairs. (43-44)

Several of the selected period novels reaffirm the "tension" Galway refers to as well as questions surrounding imperialism and images of an autonomous Canada.

Agnes Maule Machar's romantic novel *For King and Country: A Story of 1812* (1874), presents what at first appears as an example of what Galway's notes as "overtly imperialistic" literature. Machar situates much of the novel amongst characters who are loyal to the Empire, yet offers hints of the frustrations Canadians held towards the crown. Machar expresses some of the complexities that plagued colonial Canadians through the voice of a local:

"Don't you ever say such a word again. Lose this province, indeed,—while there's many a brave yeoman in it will give his heart's blood sooner than see the Stars and Stripes waving over it! Yes, sir," he continued, turning to Percival, "its not idle brag with me. I left as fine a home and homestead as a man would want to see, behind me in the valley of the Connecticut, and came here, nigh thirty years ago now, to fell the trees with my own hands to build a log cabin to bring my wife into, sooner than to part company with the Union Jack! That was about as hard a thing to do as I'm like to have to do again; but I'm ready, and my sons are ready, too, sir, to turn out tomorrow and shoulder a musket for the old flag still. And

there's hundreds, aye, and thousands, 'll do the same throughout the province! But all the same, they might back us up better at home.'" (12)

Reaffirming and reminiscing about Loyalist traditions, Machar locates the passions of her character within a definitively Canadian position, one that is loyal to the crown and fiercely opposed to being understood as American. Expressing the colonist's willingness to "shoulder a musket for the old flag" and alluding to the "thousands" who would also rise to defend their Britishness is suggestive of Machar's imperialist centered interpretation of the colonists. Machar does offer a critique of the perceived position Britain held for its colonial outpost through references to the lacking support from those "at home" (12) and furthers her criticisms by alluding to American history and Britain's past failure to retain its once held Southern Colonies. Following their conversation concerning British intentions towards its colonial holdings, the opinions of a shopkeeper were added to address the state of affairs in early nineteenth-century Canada. The shopkeeper remarks, if only:

she'd [Britain] give a little more thought to her property over here. It's always been the way since she had any on this side the Atlantic. Folks at home wouldn't even take the trouble to see how the land lay, and what should be done. The Boston tea troubles were all of a piece with the rest, and a nice piece of work they made of that. (Machar 13)

He then surmised that "the Yankees were wide awake, and the folks at home were half asleep" (13) and attributes the rise of the American nation to a mix of colonial ambition and imperial complacency. Machar's reference to American history and the American struggle for independence exemplifies a past failure of British imperialism as well as fosters a degree of pathos for Canada's position within the larger imperial picture. Machar's novel provided

Canadian youth with an interpretation of the long-standing relationship Canadians held to the Empire and imparted latent concerns on imperial neglect, which could expose Canada to southern republicanism.

Upholding a celebratory expression of imperialism, Machar unites the memories the Loyalists summoned during the years of the War of 1812 with the political atmosphere present during the composition of the novel. In her chapter “Call to Arms”, she writes that “staunch Canadians rose as one man, determined, at all hazards, to stand by the old flag, and go forth, under that venerated ensign, to fight to the death for king, country and home” (Machar 167). Progressing towards the 1812 conflict, Machar borrows inspiration from renowned British naval hero Lord Nelson. Nelson’s rousing signal, “England expects that every man will do his duty” (qtd. in White, *The Nelson Encyclopedia*, 118), which preceded the engagement of the French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar in 1805, was held to have motivated legions of British subjects to fight for their nation. Machar’s rendition slightly modifies Nelson’s signal, with an inspired notion that preceded the battle at Queenston Heights on the 13th of October 1812, “Canada expected every man to do his duty” (181). This re-adaptation of old world patriotism to describe Canadian colonists serves not only to present the derivative nature of Canadian nationalism, it illustrates the complex trinity of “king, country, and home” (Machar 167), which plagued the nineteenth-century interpretations of imperialism and Canadian identity.

Of the aftermath of The Battle of Queenston Heights, Machar wrestles again with the idea of a Canadian national image separate from the old world. By celebrating the actions of “The Canadians who freely imperilled their lives there for King and Country”, and their fulfilling of duty “to protect the land which they claimed as their own” (Machar 252), Machar valorizes the Canadian colonials who served with the Empire to protect their own fledgling nation and

describes the fighting men as just as heroic and brave as the British troops who “won the field of Waterloo” (252). The duality in this example, that of citizens imperilling their lives for Empire and the nation, mirrors late-Victorian and Edwardian imperialist and nationalist debates, where loyalty to Britain was still valued, yet, was being challenged by a growing loyalty to a rudimentary idea – that of an autonomous Canadian nation built on “the land which they claimed as their own” (Machar 252).

Distinct from Machar’s critical, Canadianized version of imperialism, G.A. Henty’s novel *With Wolfe in Canada or the Winning of a Continent* (1887) offers a sampling of an imperialist text written from a predominantly British perspective. Henty’s novel explores a deeply entrenched event in the Canadian psyche—the siege and subsequent fall of Quebec in 1759. Henty, well known for his adolescent novels which champion British imperialism, had long recognized the power of youth literature to inspire and captivate young readers. Laura Jones writes of Henty’s approach to writing, noting that “Henty saw the need to reflect back and ensure his readers absorbed their past so they could develop an imperial identity in order to occupy the position of greatness their ancestors had fought for” (172). Drawing on a period interview with Henty himself, Jones highlights his awareness of his writings to foster imperial feelings and function as guides for proper “manly and straight living” (163). Henty’s novels were well received on both sides of the Atlantic and *With Wolfe in Canada* offered to Canadian youth a fictionalized version of a well-known, pivotal event in Canada’s past. Saturated with imperialist rhetoric, Henty’s novel supports the colonial narrative by treating Canada as merely an exotic playing field on which subjects of the great imperial powers could visit, earn prestige, and then return home. In summarizing the central character’s Canadian adventure, Henty wrote that he had left “in the beginning of 1755 a raw young fellow of eighteen; he returned in the last month

of 1759 a man of twenty-three, with the rank of major and no inconsiderable share of credit and honour” (218). Captain Fredrick Marryat’s *Settlers in Canada* (1844) offers another example of this vision of Canada. In Marryat’s novel, Canada is simply an exotic locale where a British family, who became disenfranchised and forced to retire from their land holdings, simply sojourned in Canada until their old-world land and wealth is returned. With a chance to return to society and civilization, the Campbell family all but abandoned their Canadian homestead leaving only a young son to maintain their land and the products of their several years worth of effort.

The lead protagonist in *With Wolfe in Canada*, James Walshman, originates from the town of Sidmouth located on England’s southern coast. Walshman was encouraged to flee Britain and sail to North America in order to avoid imprisonment for alerting his fellow townsmen, who were engaged in an illegal smuggling operation, of an impending raid by revenue officers. Once overseas Walshman volunteers for military service in the colonies to serve out his forced exile. First under the command of General Washington and then later, as his service took him northward, under the command of General Wolfe, he becomes immersed in the conflict surrounding mid-eighteenth-century Quebec. Henty’s romantic account of the military campaign against Quebec offers a single sided account of the events through a narration of British military actions. The unilaterally British countenance of the historical events offers its imperialist position not only through an aggrandizement of the imperial cause, but through its single-sided account. In the summary of the battle on the Plains of Abraham, Henty concluded, “In point of numbers engaged and in the total loss on both sides the fight on the Plains of Abraham does not deserve to rank as a great battle, but its results were of the most extreme importance, for the victory transferred Canada from France to England” (212). Henty’s novels,

as Jones posits, “function for the purpose of constructing a collective imperial identity” (162), thereby supporting Canadian imperial connections through nurturing and maintaining a strong affinity for how the old country contributed to the nation’s heritage. Beginning and ending in Britain, whilst all the while maintaining a European perspective, Henty’s narrative effectively upholds British ownership over the events. Reviewing the position from which a version of the past was launched and set within is an aspect authors of historical fiction have available to them to present their distinct interpretations of the past.

In contrast to Henty’s novel William Kirby’s, *The Golden Dog*, provides a complex, romantic, and less British-centric tale from Canada’s history told from a more French-Canadian perspective. Kirby’s fictional work correlates with sympathies for maintaining an imperial connection and has become a renowned work of Canadian historical fiction through its intricate storyline, its embellishment with ancient chivalric traditions, and its historical significance as an illustration of eighteenth-century colonial Quebec. Berger, in his study of Canadian imperialism, notes that the novels written by the Scottish historical fiction author Sir Walter Scott were “extremely popular in mid-nineteenth century English Canada, and they gave a strong stimulus to the development of the historical romance and the attempt to recapture the traditions and legends of Canadian regions” (*Sense* 94-95). He also relates how Kirby mimicked Scott’s approach writing, “Kirby found in Scott’s borderland tales the perfect technique with which to describe the loyalist tradition” and “the chivalric and hierarchical social order of the French society on the St. Lawrence” (95). Woven into this romantic tragedy, *The Golden Dog* offers an explanation for the deteriorating relationship felt between New France and France during the eighteenth-century, expressing it as a contributor to the eventual surrender of Quebec to the British. This perspective on the fall of Quebec, where a non-British narrative dominates,

reaffirms the complexities of writing on the past and is indicative of the variations that occur in differing interpretations. Kirby's final chapter expresses the reasons for shifting French colonial allegiances, from France to Britain, while simultaneously paying homage to both the French's General Montcalm and French-Canadian history. Kirby, in his conclusions of events, attributes the fall of New France not to the might of the English, but more to the corruption and misdeeds of the colonial elite:

Montcalm, after reaping successive harvests of victories, brilliant beyond all precedent in North America, died a sacrifice to the insatiable greed and extravagance of Bigot and his associates, who, while enriching themselves, starved the army and plundered the colony of all its resources. The fall of Quebec and the capitulation of Montreal were less owing to the power of the English than to the corrupt misgovernment of Bigot and Vaudreuil, and the neglect by the Court of France of her ancient and devoted colony. (313)

Presented as an explanation for the shifting loyalties of the French colonists, Kirby further alludes to a tentative reception concerning the outcome of the American War of Independence held by the French. With a mixture of revenge and redirected loyalty, members of the New France elite attuned their support towards the British, becoming supportive of British reactions to the rebelling southern colonies. Kirby writes, "The noblesse and people of New France, all that was best and of most esteem in the land, gave their allegiance loyally and unreservedly to England, upon their final abandonment by the Court of France. They knew they had been coldly, deliberately, cruelly deserted by their King, and the colony utterly ruined by the malversations of his Intendant" (314). Not shying from loyalist support, Kirby maintains his pro-British stance while introducing a shared facet of Canadian identity between the French-Canadian and English-

Canadian colonists—the tradition of anti-American feelings. Kirby writes, “Canadians had ever regarded the English colonists in America as their enemies, far more than the English themselves” and maintained that if they were ever to choose between loyalties, “they remained true to England” (315). Kirby claims this to be a “wise choice” (315) and one which continues to serve well for the people of Canada. Kirby’s fictionalized account of a French colonial past and his speculations on the reasons for shifting loyalties from France to Britain favoured the pro-imperial rhetoric which thrived in late-nineteenth-century Canada.

Although Kirby presents some favouritism towards the British and writes of New France’s concession to British rule as a lesser evil than falling under American rule, his use of the Golden Dog placard offers a warning to British imperialism. The bas-relief of the Golden Dog which adorns what is currently called the Louis St. Laurent Building is believed to have been carved in 1688 along with the enigmatic inscription for the surgeon Timothée Roussel (Caron). Kirby cites within his novel a copy of this inscription carved beneath the dog and an English translation:

Je suis un chien qui ronge l’os,
En le rongeant je prends mon repos,
Un temps viendra qui n’est past venu
Que je mordrai qui m’aura mordu.

1736

Or in English:-

I am a dog that gnaws his bone,

I couch and gnaw it all alone-

A time will come, which is not yet,

When I'll bite him by whom I'm bit. (67)

The use of this enigmatic inscription and carving as the title of Kirby's novel, and it being referenced within, might be interpreted as a warning to English-Canadians and their imperial ambitions. Although favouring Canadian imperialism Kirby did maintain a sympathy for French-Canada. If the Golden Dog is viewed as representative of the French-Canadian people, then Kirby might have been suggesting the French are laying-in-wait to someday revolt against their conquerors. The message and possible warning Kirby presents regarding Canada's relationship with the British awakens readers to the complex and complicated French-English relationship that comprises a large part of the greater Canadian identity.

The Presentation of Canadian National Heroes

Far from Traill's pessimistic outlook on the absence of heroic traditions within Canada's past, authors of fiction did manage to extract several champions from the historical record to adorn with romanticized nationalistic qualities. Drawing from past military campaigns on Canadian soil, and therefore authentic to national history, authors located inspirational figures for national celebration whose memory would support imperial feelings as well as provide footings for the development of an autonomous national image. To capture the young Canadian audience, authors revisited military campaigns for inspirational backdrops to plot their historical narratives. The use of military campaigns served a two-fold purpose: it offered compelling, action-packed reading as well as inspired youth to defend the nation through glorious tales of national service.

Moss emphasises that “A survey of boys’ literature of the time reveals that it was saturated with examples of heroic endeavour and military conquest” (61), noting the reliance on military tales to aid in the “proper” socialization of young male readers. British authors such as Henty, Kingston, and Brereton all fall within this category of boy’s literature which promote high-spirited male activities. Moss further writes that, “War was increasingly lauded not only as character-forming but as a way to purge the nation of many of its negative qualities, especially the trend towards effeminacy” (79). The conditioning and preparatory nature of young adult fiction that dealt with military adventures offered Canadian youth a particular vision of the nation, one which glorified its martial history. Revelling in military conquest allows for individual heroes, who through war are given the opportunity to rise above the rank of a modest, dutiful soldier, and achieve personal and, by proxy, nationalistic success. The concept of the hero resonated strongly with Canadian youth where, as Moss proclaims, “Young children respond to heroes with intense enthusiasm and almost addictive interest. The ‘cult of the hero’ was a virtual industry in the years leading up to the Great War” (54). This notion of the ‘cult of the hero’ has specific resonance when applied to individuals who at one time did exist and whose actions and identity began to merge into ideas of what the nation is to be representative. Revisiting military campaigns, which are seen as highly significant events in the nation’s past, was regularly relied upon in historical fiction to capture this idea and highlight past instances of heroic exploits.

Returning to a narrative that incorporates the conflicts and history of the War of 1812, Machar’s *For King and Country* edifies the life of General Isaac Brock. Moss proposes that the legacy of the War of 1812 contributed to British loyalty, Canadian patriotism, and rising militarism by identifying it as a “rallying point for images of loyal, patriotic militia men doing their duty for their nation” and it “demonstrated Upper Canada’s (Ontario’s) complete loyalty to

Britain” (35). Through the veneration of the War of 1812, “Loyalty and patriotism came to be linked with the heroic exploits of General Isaac Brock and the militia” (Moss 35). Harnessing the powerful nature of this legacy and celebrating a definitive moment in the nation’s past brings together identifiable, celebratory, and tangible components of history which goes into developing the nation’s identity.

Expressions of admiration for Brock appear within *For King and Country* through the declarations of the leading female protagonist, Miss Liliastrop, close friend, Marjorie McLeod. Through family connections Marjorie was in close contact with Brock and idolized him within a virtual pantheon of great military heroes of the age. Miss Liliastrop, in speaking to her friend Ernest remarks, “You should hear Marjorie McLeod talk about him; she almost worships him, I think! Your old Greek heroes are nothing to him, according to her” (Machar 28). Marjorie’s admiration for Brock is echoed in Ernest’s response, ““Well, very likely she’s right there,” said the young man, smiling. ‘I don’t see why in this advanced age of the world, and with Christianity to help we shouldn’t have better heroes than those old Pagan fellows’” (Machar 28). Despite Machar’s sanguine posturing of Brock’s memory, a degree of empathy for the fallen general is also incorporated into the novel, helping to solidify his memory. Machar writes of Brock’s death and of the aftermath of Queenston Heights, “The comparative obscurity of the campaign in which he fell has prevented his name from being widely known to fame, but it has long been enshrined as a precious memory by the grateful people amidst whom was sacrificed a life so noble” (245). Machar might have in fact slightly undersold Brock’s memory within Canada. In the decades following Brock’s death, a towering edifice to his memory was erected at the site of the Queenston Heights battle. In the 1860’s, the monument was commemorated by the Prince of Wales, forever marking the ground on which Brock died as sacred ground (“Remember Brock

Part 4”). This memory of Brock within the Canadian imagination serves not only as a reminder of Canada’s colonial past, but also connects to a moment where an autonomous image of Canada might be imagined due to the memory of the men who fought to preserve their “new world” land holdings.

Images of the Idealized “Canadian”

Alongside military history, which proved inspirational for many period authors, topics unique to the Canadian experience were also relied upon to help shape the nation’s greater image. Fundamental to any conversation addressing Canadian national identity and young adult literature is Lucy Maud Montgomery’s 1908 novel, *Anne of Green Gables*. The tale of the young red-headed, pig-tailed orphan girl who, when brought to Prince Edward Island, wins over the hearts of Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, has become infused into Canada’s national identity. Montgomery and her writings have, as Danielle Russell notes, “earned her an official place in Canada’s history” (13). Russell’s use of “official,” and its affiliation to national identity, “refers to the concept promoted by a nation’s government—through its educational mandates and endowments to the arts” (11). Therefore, in raising the prominence of Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* in terms of national identity, the government recognises its enormous influence on Canadian identity formation. In relation to other pre-War novels, *Anne of Green Gables* may be deemed a minor outlier as its enduring success, appeal, and adoption into the Canadian psyche is, in part, dependent on its overt “homegrown” elements. These elements set it apart from classic empire-centric novels, such as those by Henty, as the focus is no longer on old-world characters sojourning in Canada, but on characters whose roots are in the local soil. Despite being set within a very British/English-Canadian system, *Anne of Green Gables* celebrates qualities which

embrace a very distinct Canadian nature, one which unites it with a sense of being of the environment and of a distinct nation.

Montgomery promotes Anne's Canadian pedigree early and clearly. Her birthright separates her and, through allied ideological affiliation, the Cuthberts from the larger influential British identity which features throughout the novel. Through Marilla's repeated requirements and requests concerning the origins of the child she and Mathew were to adopt, she defines her position as one distinctly favourable to children born in Canada. When discussing the criterion for adoption Marilla states, "Give me a native born at least" (Montgomery 15), referring to someone who is "a born Canadian" (15). Claiming it will "feel easier in my mind and sleep sounder at night if we get a born Canadian" (15), Marilla stresses the need for their potential adoptee to be Canadian-born, which will ensure a cohesive relationship. Lastly, convinced that place of birth would secure ideological harmony, Marilla claims that if successful in adopting a Canadian-born child it would achieve a cohesion as, she concludes, it would not be "as if we were getting him from England or the States. He can't be much different from ourselves" (16). Marilla's fear of those not born in Canada derives from several prejudices. A French child, she claims, would abandon the farm once they were "broke into your ways" (15) and English 'Home' boys or "London street arabs" (15) were so unworthy they did not even warrant her consideration. However, failing to adopt the male child they desired, the Cuthberts did secure the crucial quality of the child of being "a born Canadian" (15). This critical detail about birth locale proves vital when considering national identity, for no other feature can or does prove so fundamental and providential when authors of fiction prescribe identities to characters within narratives associated with national history.

On Montgomery's main character Russell draws attention to how Anne's orphaned status can be interpreted as an allegorical representation of Canada as a nation state. Within certain contexts, Russell argues, Canada can be perceived to have been orphaned from Great Britain following Confederation, where, "The colonial status was deconstructed and, in a way, the inhabitants were 'orphaned'" (16). Sharyn Pearce writes, in reference to Anne, that she "represent[s] a distinctive movement away from the imperial centre to the development of an independent cultural identity" (230). Recollecting that *Anne of Green Gables* was published when Canada was still under the cultural shadow of Britain and much of the literature and history that dominated Canadian culture came from the old-world, Montgomery's novel offers a unique perspective on the Canadian condition from a Canadian position. Recognized by Pearce, Montgomery's novel was a product "of a specific time and place, and a recognizable discourse of national self-representation, together with contemporary politics concerning nation and race" (231). Anne's orphaned status, when re-interpreted as allegorical of the nation's status in relation to Britain, revisits the idea of national abandonment when questions of Canada's imperial ties were being challenged. Its situation within and confrontation with Canada's colonial status are attributes of Montgomery's novel that fix it amongst its contemporaries. However, the stressing of the "native born" element of identity is indicative of a divide that separates works which maintain and value colonial interpretations to ones that celebrate the homegrown character and a vision of a distinct Canada.

The character Anne, as Pearce continues, presents a counter figure to the over stylized, gender defined, characters often present in late-Victorian/Edwardian imperialist writing. The well-defined gendering of male and female characters regularly appeared in period literature, placing male characters into masculine/militarist roles where their calling was to dutifully serve

the Empire. As for the presentation of female characters, they were routinely affiliated with the domestic sphere and issues of the family (Pearce 235-6). Anne, in contrast, challenged these “normalizations” through deviations which permitted expressions of autonomy and individualism. Pearce provides evidence for this deviation from representational imperial tradition by highlighting Anne’s outdoor nature which provides a mild distancing for her from the domestic sphere. Throughout the novel Montgomery routinely situates Anne out-of-doors, presenting her in such a way that stresses “the healthy outdoor environments” where Anne felt “completely at home” and with this presented the image of a girl who was “vigorous, wholesome, happy, and close to nature, enjoying idyllic childhoods spent largely out of doors” (Pearce 238). Anne’s failed attempt at navigating the ridge-pole of Mrs. Barry’s kitchen (Montgomery 211) and her unfortunate incident while portraying the lily-maid (252) are two very popular moments within the novel that are illustrative of Anne’s affinity for outdoor adventures. Anne’s relationship with nature goes much beyond a simple love of adventure; it is where she finds solace and “scope for [her] imagination” (42). Her naming of the cherry tree outside her window the “Snow Queen” and her anthropomorphism of “Bonney” the “apple-scented geranium”, whose feeling might be hurt if it is “just to be called a geranium and nothing else” (47), are several examples of Anne’s deep personal connection and relationship with the natural world. Anne’s bond with nature continues throughout the novel as later, during the stress of her exams she finds reprieve in the natural world. To her friends and classmates, she confesses; “Girls, sometimes I feel as if those exams meant everything, but when I look at the big buds swelling on those chestnut-trees and the misty blue air at the end of the streets they don’t seem half so important” (325). Anne’s kinship and bond with nature complement conceptions of Canadian identity where the national image is intermeshed with the physical

environment. Through these non-domestic activities and an affinity for nature, Anne's character deviates from the nuances of Victorian imperial literature and offers a challenge to classic interpretations of femininity. This challenge to tradition arising from a colonial out-post assisted in questioning the cultural bonds that still persisted between Britain and Canada. Montgomery was, however, far from alone in her use of the natural environment as a source of Canadian identity, as other turn-of-the-century authors also found it a source for expressing Canadian character.

Embedded in the idea of the "Canadian" is a deep-rooted affiliation and affinity for the natural world, which is paired with a hesitancy of the wilderness. This relationship with the natural world often engages romantic images of the non-urban Canadian environment and has become an enduring source and defining characteristic of the national character. Nineteenth-century historical fiction authors were not immune to this trope when imparting a sense of the Canadian experience and often referenced the physical landscape along with the alleged benefits associated with a close relationship to the natural world. Machar's *King and Country* relies on the natural environment for creating descriptions of the character Ernest. Machar mythologizes the power of the Canadian environment by fusing his personal history within a particularly Canadian environmental context:

To Canada belong all his early memories and associations,—all the silent influences of solemn forest and changeful lake and quiet dewy country field, which had interwoven themselves with his impressionable nature, and had as much to do with developing his mind and character as his eagerly studied books. All his fair youthful dreams were linked with Canada. (52-53)

The illustration of Ernest's "mind and character" (53) being firmly woven into the national landscape addresses the period fears of spreading urbanization as well as preserves the belief that Canada's identity is inseparable from the physical landscape.

Much like Ernest, Miss Liliás' character in the same novel depends on the physical world and the supposed benefits derived from a hearty rural Canadian lifestyle. Contrasted against her deceased mother, Miss Liliás' youthful and healthy physical state presents a shifting ideal of feminine youth and vitality from the pale, delicate, and hyper-feminine image of her old-world mother to a more robust and physical colonial woman. The elder woman's image, captured in miniature portrait, is described as being of "excessive delicacy and fragility" and shows signs of "extreme fairness and faint bloom" (Machar 22). When returning to descriptions of the younger woman, the frail traits of her mother are contrasted with, "tints more suggestive of health and freshness" as the "dark shades beneath the eyes of the pictured face, symptomatic of ill health and sorrow, [were] absent from the girl's brighter countenance" (22-3). Unfortunately, Miss Liliás' mother, the symbol of old world femininity, fell victim to the "rough and incongenial atmosphere," experienced by the early European settlers, to which she had been cruelly "transplanted" (23). The younger, born in the New World, however, "blossom[ed] into a womanhood as vigorous in its apparent fragility as the graceful Canadian columbine that bloomed on her native rocks" (23). Machar's dueling character depictions that posit the benefits of the natural world against old world femininity are indicative of the much larger idea of national identity being bonded with the physical Canadian landscape. As with *Anne of Green Gables*, challenges to the old-world traditions help to foster ideas about an identity that was unique to Canada. Just as important as creating a vision of what the nation's citizens are to be like, it is critical to have a concept of what the citizenry is not to be. Being perceived as

American has long served as a necessary antithesis, aiding Canadians through defining what they are not.

The Unwillingness of Canadians to be Understood as Americans

A long-held component of Canadian identity is the opposition to being regarded as American. This facet of national identity routinely appears in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century historical fiction through fixating on the political boundaries of the nation. The establishment of what is and is not within the confines of the defined national borders is what Benedict Anderson refers to as the “limited” aspects of a nation. Anderson asserts that nations are inherently “*limited* because even the largest of them, . . . , has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations” (7). Clearly denoting and focusing on a nation’s physical boundaries works twofold, through both constructing and sustaining the othering of those deemed to be outside a boundary. The creation and sustainment of *others*, and in the case of Canada the maintaining of the belief of a cultural divide between itself and its southern neighbour, upholds the political and ideological boundaries necessary for division as well as justification for internal unity.

Evoking the memory of the War of 1812 serves as fertile ground for accentuating the contrasting features of Canadianism against Americanism. Machar’s *For King and Country* provides ready examples of support for Canadian nation building mixed with its imperialist sentiments through American vilification. Miss Liliias in an argument with her childhood friend and suitor, Ernest, who is Canadian yet whose past is laced with cross border relations, presents her “Canadian” perspective on what is seen as an un-justified war. Miss Liliias declares to Ernest,

“your friends, the Americans, have no right whatever to molest us, who are not molesting them. If there is fighting it will be their fault, not ours” (Machar 29). This is followed by Ernest’s apologetic response, “Even national grievances—and I think they have some to complain of—could not excuse their bringing the horrors of war on a peaceful, unoffending province” (29). Machar’s negative depictions of Americans generates some sympathy for the Canadian citizens caught in the crossfire of America’s retaliation against British indiscretions. What Machar interprets as a necessity, that of defending the nation against the “wanton and rapacious invasion of an unoffending country at a time when their natural protector was crippled in her power to aid them” (159-160) is grounded in the context of American Manifest Destiny and establishes Canada as a victim of American aggression. This image of the victim supports the divide between the two nations, as well as promotes the image of the “peaceful” Canadian, which later finds its way into the idealized image of the nation.

With the call to arms in 1914, the unstable framework of an autonomous national identity expressed by authors of historical fiction was put to the test. Referring to the socialization of the young towards a particular nationalist predisposition, Kelen and Sundmark notes how the early investments into a child’s vision of the nation can be later drawn upon for national goals. Kelen and Sundmark write, “the machinery of nation is mostly ‘just there,’ providing the citizen with a set of unconscious investments, . . . , able to be cranked up for a practical purpose, like a football match or a war” (2). These “unconscious investments” concerning the construction of national identity found within period literature include young adult historical fiction works which promoted, instilled, and presented dramatized versions of the nation’s past. Where “War was seen and portrayed as the supreme test of manhood as well as the defining mark of a nation” (Moss 38), the ardent enlistment of Canada’s youth is telling about the powerful and persuasive

nature these fictional expressions had towards instilling national and imperial loyalty. Recognizing historical fiction as a source of national image bolstering encourages a critical review of fictional texts that are to be representational of national history. The interpretations of the past found within historical fiction, regardless of its factuality, contributes to individuals' perception of the nation and their commitment to the nation. Before the War, expressions of Canadian identity within young adult historical fiction appeared to favour tales which celebrated colonial depictions of Canada where loyalties remained to the Empire. Henty's imperial perspective on the fall of Quebec, Machar's Pro-British narrative about the War of 1812, and Kirby's tale of Quebec that celebrated New France's reluctant loyalty to Britain highlights how some narratives maintained focus on the old power when writing fictions about the past. Montgomery's stress on the "native-born" does offer some contrast to the novels written before it. The changes in focus and perspective are several methods which authors, like Montgomery, began to employ to celebrate stronger and more defined interpretations of what was becoming understood as Canadian.

CHAPTER IV: Context for Interwar Canada

For four long years Canadians both at home and across the Atlantic, did their part to serve the war effort. Canadian troops, leaving behind their missing and fallen, returned to Canada ready to reacquaint themselves with their civilian lives and their nation. However, greeting them on their return was not the country they had left. Much like themselves, the nation was coming to terms with the effects of the War, reinventing itself in a radically altered international political world. Paul Romney's call to remember Confederation's aim to "federalize United Canada" while making concessions for Upper and Lower Canada to retain elements of self-government emphasizes the limited vision of a single nation created in 1867 (88). The ending of the War prompted new questions regarding the future course of Canada as a single nation. As Ottawa's political might continued to grow, alongside Canada's international presence, a new vision of the nation was beginning to take shape. The growing will to step out from behind the fraying curtain of the Empire and away from the tainted romanticism of imperialism was rising, accompanied by a desire for a more definitive understanding of what the Canadian nation was to be.

Canada's military success witnessed at Vimy Ridge in 1917 has become a mythical moment for the country in terms of national development. This moment in national history, in part, arrived in the popular imagination through the much-touted words of Canadian Brigadier-General A.E. Ross, as he accredited himself with having "witnessed the birth of a nation" (Macintyre, viii) during the legendary battle on April 9, 1917. This provocative statement, when considered within its historical context, loses much of its legendary and mythic power. Jean Martin's critical essay on the development of the legendary nation-making status of Vimy Ridge attributes much of Vimy's iconic status to the Vimy Ridge Monument and its commemoration,

and less to the 1917 battle itself (38). Erected in 1936, the Vimy monument and its unveiling ceremony, “became the focal point of Canadians’ memory of the First World War” (36), where it has since remained within the dominant national narrative. It was, however, not until after the memorial’s 1936 unveiling and during Canada’s 1967 centennial celebrations that Ross’s words, written for the preface of D.E. Macintyre’s *Canada at Vimy* (1967), entered popular interpretations and memory of the 1917 battle, promoting its status to mythic. Therefore, Vimy Ridge, as a surrogate for a moment where the nation was born is, as Martin writes, “a relatively recent invention” (38), thereby having little validity in reference to interwar visions of national identity. Despite its failings and its oversimplifications, Vimy, as a singular moment in national identity development, still maintains certain illustrative value in relation to Canada’s military actions in the European theater and Canada’s achievements towards international recognition (Martin 37). Earning a seat at the international table, as a result of military campaigns like Vimy, was a momentous and definitive achievement for Canada’s national development. This international recognition permitted and encouraged the reimagining of what it meant to be and what was understood to be Canadian, for it raised serious questions concerning Canada’s colonial status.

The greater narrative of Canada continued into this new chapter of post-war Canadian national development and allowed for a great shift in national self-awareness. The idea of a new chapter, coopting with Ross’ problematic vision of the nation being “born”, is more aptly understood if waning imperialism becomes the central theme. Promoting the notion that imperialism “was a casualty of the First World War,” as Carl Berger argues, where its death was in part due to a recognition of the “past and the future” (*Sense* 5, 9) regarding ties to ideas about imperialism and a new national vision. The failing of imperialism, Berger maintains, is grounded

in the idea that it finally “succumbed to Canadian nationalism” (9) due, in part, to the Empire’s post-war weakened state.

Metaphorically, if we consider Canada to have been conceived at Confederation and thereby having experienced its gestation period throughout the late-nineteenth-century, then it could hypothetically have been ‘birthed’ during the First World War. Thus, as a product of this ‘birth’, Canada would then have experienced a severing of the umbilical cord with the Motherland. Therefore, to continue this childbearing metaphor, despite increased ideas of national autonomy, Canada’s genetic ‘make-up’ would still, unavoidably, contain a hefty amount of British DNA. Having a nation’s past so indebted to a parental nation undoubtedly leaves behind a complex milieu from which any new, self-aware, and autonomous construct of Canadian-ness would have to be extracted. Envisioning the development of Canadian national identity through this interpretation has the potential to then see the interwar years as an adolescence or formative period of development where perceived elements of the nation’s character were refined and cultivated to create a more authentic autonomous image. This allegory for prefacing the post-War period foreshadows a certain predicament that is inherent to Canadian nationalism as it highlights an inconvenient and inescapable bond to the parent nation, which plagues any attempt to forge a uniquely Canadian identity. Authors of any genre dealing with the dominant English-Canada narrative are faced with the impossibility of ever completely separating Canada from its British parentage. As generations continue to pass and cultural diversification challenges our interpretations of national identity and our interpretations of the past, the British genetic stranglehold will deteriorate, tempered only through the ‘bloodlines’ a narrative emphasizes.

In the 1920s, Canadian historian William Stewart Wallace wrote of the changing shape of Canadian nationalism in the years immediately following the War. In his article “The Growth of Canadian National Feeling”, Wallace engages with conversations about Canadian nationalism with respect to Canadian identity. Noting a “neglect” concerning the development of a national image following Confederation, Wallace posits, “Canadian national feeling is a phenomenon of very recent growth” (136). The War serves as the crux to Wallace’s argument where Canada had now gained a “national consciousness” (139) as a result of the war effort. Wallace writes:

In the Great War the maple leaf badge came to be recognized as the symbol of a strong national spirit which never failed before any task with which it was confronted, and which contributed in a substantial measure to the breaking down of the German defences in the latter half of 1918. Canada’s war effort was distinctly a national effort, the extent and quality of which was determined by the national will; and the direct result of this effort has been that Canada has been assigned, not only a place in the Assembly of the League of Nations, but has been pronounced eligible for election to the Council of the League. This means, if it means anything, that Canada has now only achieved a national consciousness, but has won from the rest of the world—with the apparent exception of the United States—the recognition of this national consciousness. (138-139)

This “national consciousness” which Wallace suggests awakened with the War and provided a new face for Canadian nationalism, denotes the continuing evolution of the idea of a unified singular conception of the nation. Wallace’s simplified interpretation of Canada’s recognition of national self-awareness, which focuses solely on the War effort, omits the history of Canada’s struggles with political centralization. Whereas the War encouraged a unified national front, the

provincial, regional, and cultural division within Canada that complicates a solitary vision of the nation were still unresolved, made complex by their histories and in need of address.

Returning to imperialism and understanding it as a “casualty” (Berger *Sense* 5) of the war one begins to recognize the vacancy that emerged in post-War Canada. Canada was beginning to see itself more as an autonomous nation and needed to replace what was lost, reinterpret what it was, as well as determine what it was to be. However, as discussed, the existence of the inescapable British facet of Canada’s history infringed on any new interpretations of the imagining of the nation. Canada’s history being so encumbered by its British ‘genetic make-up’ encouraged authors to find alternative routes to circumvent facets of history which hampered new interpretations of the nation. Shallow mining of the past, or relying on recent history for inspiration, was one avenue open to authors where stories of Canada’s past, less saturated with imperial rhetoric, could be found. Locating moments from the recent past to accentuate, glorify, and thereby make mythic and legendary permitted authors to select narratives that more uniquely and definitively contained expressions of Canada. The decline experienced in literary investments of the imperial vision would, as Moss asserts, lead Canadians to “grasp at virtually anything that resembles conquest, war, or militarism to express their nationalism. One of the reasons why Canada’s involvement in both the Boer War and World War I was so important to the country’s collective psyche is that it finally gave Canadians the chance to demonstrate their political and military maturity” (51). Examples of militaristic narratives that expounded on the nation’s united efforts helped to reinforce and depict a new vision of the nation, as well as aid in deterring the country from returning to a reliance on its imperial identity.

The young adult novels published following the War and before the declaration of war on Germany in September 1939 included narratives drawn from the gestation period of Canada’s

national development, as those narratives were unsuitable for late-Victorian authors of historical fiction. Works of historical fiction that were published after the War embraced characters such as the Mounty and the Sourdough as they provided suitable characters for historical fictionalization and were open to being adorned with national virtues. Historical fiction authors of the interwar period still revisited Canada's early history; however, aspects of these characters and the focus of their loyalty witnessed a slow migration. This migration of loyalty from Britain homeward, paralleling the nation's emerging autonomous identity, required slightly modified historical interpretations and is where the format of the historical fiction novel provided a platform versatile enough to express these new interpretations.

Canadian society in general experienced a great deal of change in the years between the First and Second World Wars. The Spanish flu epidemic and the returning war wounded brought new questions about public health. The once dominant agrarian lifestyle lived by many Canadians was undergoing significant change as new products and equipment, made possible through increased industrialization and modernization, began appearing on farms altering the face of Canadian farming. Rural Canada also experienced a steady migration as many rural Canadians were making a choice to abandon rural life and relocate to the growing urban centers. Across the nation the labour front was also transforming as greater numbers of women entered the work force, unionization, and the fear of Communism all played a part in redefining the labour force. Changes on the social front were also underway as supporters of Temperance and the Social Gospel Movement worked to reform Canadian citizens by drawing attention to the vices that were believed to be plaguing Canadians. These changes affecting such a diverse spectrum of Canadian life was the background from which new ideas about the national image began to emerge.

In 1917, during the post-War Paris Peace Conference, a more autonomous national image for Canada began to enter a new phase of refinement. Earning greater recognition in international talks and a voice separate from British, then Canada's Prime Minister Robert Borden's more nationalistic vision of Canada started to become a reality. During the Imperial War Conference talks in 1917 and 1918 the Dominions were also to be granted status as autonomous nations earning a greater voice in Imperial matters through Resolution IX (Bowker 44-45). The Balfour Declaration of 1926, followed by the Statute of Westminster in 1931, both furthered the Dominion's request for autonomy providing Canada with greater independence and control over international and domestic affairs (Bowker 63-64). These developments in the status of Canada as a sovereign nation posed new questions for Canadians as their country entered the final stages of its maturation from a colony to a more refined and defined sovereign nation.

CHAPTER V: Analysis of Interwar Young Adult Canadian Historical Fiction

It is chimerical to imply the First World War washed Canada's connection to Britain cleanly away, but the War's effect on Canada's progression towards a stronger independent, autonomous national identity cannot be understated. With much of Canada's political, legal, and cultural systems entwined with and indebted to British society, the sense of disillusionment that accompanied the decline of the imperial vision served as a catalyst for the furtherment of the new national image. W.H. New observes within this period of Canadian literature a growing sense that "cultural identity" was being seen "in political terms" (131). With declining British influences, both culturally and politically, combined with Canada's rising political autonomy Canada's national status became a topic of great concern. How Canadian young adult historical fiction attended to this evolving image can be witnessed through the analysis of several novels published in the interwar years.

This chapter will examine a sampling of novels published before 1939. These works include Jean Newton McIlwraith's 1925 novel *Kinsman at War*, a selection from Muriel Denison's *Susannah* series published in the 1930s, and Emily P. Weaver's *The Only Girl*, first published in 1938. The novels were selected out of a large body of readings due to their shared qualities as well as particular characteristics, which exemplify an approach towards adapting national history for fiction. These archetypes express the various approaches used by authors to create narratives that uphold specific interpretations of the past. Common themes, such as the stressing of "native birth" and the veneration of national heroes will be examined throughout, followed by individual characteristics of the texts which illustrate the nurturing of an autonomous Canadian image. Critiquing each theme separately, I will emphasize the nuanced approaches applied by period authors to express new ideas of national identity. The reasoning

behind the following departure from the structure used in Chapter Three is predicated on the assumption that the above noted themes can best be addressed by examining the novels as a whole, rather than separating them as was done previously.

Jean Newton McIlwraith's *Kinsman at War* (1925)

In the decade following the First World War, Jean Newton McIlwraith (who wrote both as an author of fiction and as a historian) revisited the War of 1812 for the inspiration for her 1925 novel *Kinsman at War*. Situated amongst the families and farms which lined both banks of the Niagara River, McIlwraith's novel explores ideas of cultural pluralism through cross-border relations and family relations. Orbiting around the Ellisons, a Canadian family caught in the conflict, *Kinsman at War* illustrates the impact that the War of 1812 had on the social and political atmosphere that straddled the river. Published by Graphic Publishing, a firm "determined to create a Canadian publishing house with an exclusive commitment to Canadian authors and 'Well-Made Canadian Literature'" (Gnarowski "Graphic Publishing Limited"), McIlwraith's novel approaches the War of 1812 from a markedly Canadian perspective. Graphic Publishing's dedication to creating "Well-Made Canadian Literature" reflects an early-twentieth-century need to support narratives that promoted home-grown interpretations of the nation's past and unique interpretations of its identity.

Favouring the Canadian perspective, McIlwraith extols the 'native born', much like Montgomery's Marilla, as the unquestionable devoted and idolized national citizen. Her leading male protagonist, Stephen Ellison, a born Canadian, identifies as Canadian despite his family's origins in New England and routinely professes his loyalty to both Canada and Britain.

McIlwraith fortifies Stephen's Canadian ancestry by referring to him as simply "the Canadian" (7) and links Stephen's devotion to England through his family's ancient Loyalist roots and their fidelity to the Motherland. The senior Mr. Ellison had, in his youth, enlisted with the Loyalists to fight against the Sons of Liberty. However, due to his allegiance with Britain, he had been "driven out, at the point of a bayonet" from his home in Massachusetts (23-24), seeking asylum in Canada. Providence, fostered by their Protestantism, softened the wounds of the Ellisons' exile, permitting Mrs. Ellison to find comfort in the notion that "The Lord wanted Canada settled with English folk, instead of being left entirely to the French" (23). Ethnocentric connotations aside, the Ellisons', now ordained, migrated North and the subsequent birth of Stephen in Canada establishes the necessary pedigree needed for an image of a true and devout Canadian. Producing a strong character from outside a wholly British narrative, as was observed in Henty's writings, permits the development of a loyal Canadian - even if it remains in a fictional construct. A happy duality is present in McIlwraith's expressions of Stephen's citizenship. Even upon a single page the hero is portrayed as being both British and Canadian. Stephen states "I am British" and, concerning his growing relationship with a young American woman he had come to the aid of, he was concerned if she discovered that "I was a Canadian" (34). This fluidity to citizenship which McIlwraith incorporates into *Kinsman at War* addresses Canadian identity in light of American and British relationships and their respective loyalties. With the impossibility of never fully bleeding out British DNA, McIlwraith does manage to weaken its ideological hold through simultaneously retaining a loyalty to the old power, while offering a more refined and nuanced interpretation of the Canadian national image based on individual and situational perspectives.

Extracting heroes and celebrating their contributions to Canada, McIlwraith focuses on a trinity of heroic figures whose celebrity within Canadian history has become synonymous with the War of 1812. Tecumseh, Laura Secord, and Sir Isaac Brock, all prominent historic figures within classically held narratives of the nation, are illustrated in McIlwraith's novel. Each of these individuals are regularly featured in the novel and are championed as indispensable allies and compatriots to the British/Canadian cause.

To venerate and glorify the memory of Tecumseh, McIlwraith quickly identifies him as being "already a popular hero with the rising generation of Upper Canadian boys" (7), and in speaking to his sister Ann, Stephen remarks that Tecumseh "is more civilized than many of the white men you'll meet. Next to General Brock he is my ideal of a commander" (35). These illustrations of Tecumseh, set within the context of the early-nineteenth-century Upper Canada, establishes a positive image of the indigenous leader, one deserving of his place in the principal English-Canadian narrative². Tecumseh is also portrayed as having a strong attachment to the British as Captain Barclay relates to Stephen's widowed sister-in-law, Mrs. Aurelia Ellison, "There is not an officer in all our forces who has the British interest more at heart than Tecumseh. He seems to be always reminding me of our late Admiral Nelson's motto: England Expects Every Man To Do His Duty" (241). This reference to Nelson's patriotic motto does much to affirm Tecumseh's loyalty, creating a bond between the old world and the indigenous chief. As with Machar, this reference to such a patriotic zealot as Nelson harkens back to

² Tecumseh was Shawnee chief and leader of a First Nations confederacy. During the War of 1812 he, along with other indigenous warriors, sided with the British to assist in halting the American invasion.

Canada's British heritage, yet its appearance through a 'new world' character, enfolded Tecumseh to the colonial narrative by binding him to the old-world.

Laura Secord and her tale are also featured within *Kinsman at War* and is supportive of her status as a significant figure in Canada's history. Her story, as adapted into McIlwraith's fictional narrative, presents that of a picturesque colonial woman who works tirelessly and selflessly to care for her children, help the wounded, and generally be subservient to the menfolk. In the retelling of her legendary trek to warn the British of the impending American attack, Secord's heroic tale is presented as one where she braved the rattlesnakes of the Black Swamp and "spare[d] no thoughts for her sick husband and the little children left behind" (McIlwraith 200-01), thus undergoing great personal hardships and suffering to serve her nation. McIlwraith writes that Secord felt she had to get the message to the British officer James Fitzgibbon for, "once they capture the De Cew house, where our army stores are, the camp at Burlington Heights will have to be abandoned, and you know what that means—Amherstburg, York, Kingston—the whole province opened up to the Yankees" (199). As though the fate of the nation depended upon her relaying the message to the British, McIlwraith's characterization of Secord depicts an ideal colonial heroine whose selfless act saved the nation from impending American invasion.

Completing the trifecta of national heroes is General Isaac Brock. McIlwraith continues with the tradition of glorifying the actions of a man who can easily be interpreted as a martyr of Canadian national development. This imagery created for Brock presents a General and a gentleman, who was deeply loved and honoured by his troops and the public. He is depicted as a General who is for his men, serving as a source of inspiration through his actions and approach to leadership. With only the deepest affection, Stephen Ellison regards Brock as the epitome of a

man-of-action, describing his General as “a soldier and a gentleman, every inch of him” (McIlwraith 33). The death of General Brock is presented as an unquestionably tragic moment for McIlwraith, who describes Stephen as being, “not ashamed of the tears that ran out his eyes, unchecked”, while Brock’s men, “Hardened soldiers, regulars of the 49th, had tell-tale streaks through the powder smoke on their faces” (104-05). This outpouring of grief and devotion to Brock situates *Kinsman at War* amongst other nationalist literature offering young adult readers a celebratory, English-Canadian, and romantic interpretation of the War of 1812. Although Brock, as a living character, appeared only in the first half of the novel, Stephen repeatedly reflects on the deceased General, expressing his grief and stressing Brock’s memory.

Of the battle which proved fatal to Brock, McIlwraith reawakens the reader’s memory of the defeated French commander General Montcalm. Finding a commonality with a companion of the chivalric tradition, McIlwraith unites the two historical figures, writing that Brock “must have felt as did General Montcalm that other autumn morning below Quebec, when roused with the news that the red coats were on the Plains of Abraham” (McIlwraith 103). Coupling these two heroic figures, whose deaths are synonymous with and symbolic of English-Canada’s road to nationhood, encourages a storyline whose foundation is deeply buried in Canadian soil. Circling back to Canadian battles and reinforcing a solely Canadian storyline refines the nation’s history by supporting a narrative that is free to expand yet becomes filled with only Canadian based interpretations and perspectives. Individual narratives, presented through individual perspectives, offer young readers an English-Canadian interpretation where decidedly Canadian perspectives and origins strengthen a self-supportive national image through the lessening of external context and foreign perceptions.

Criticizing Canadian obstinacy with being viewed as American, McIlwraith memorializes the cross-border relationships caught in the cross-fire. Her depictions of the past humanize those directly impacted by the war through commenting on the dogmatic arbitrariness of political boundaries. Mrs. Mary Ellison, a patron of the Ellison family, questions the differences between those who settle on each side of the border;

“Well, what is the difference between farmers in northern New York and those in Upper Canada? I fail to find any.”

“Difference of Opinion.” The old man cleared his throat as if to begin an oration:

“That is a small matter compared with uniformity in race and religion. We are kinsman...” (McIlwraith 23)

Mrs. Ellison’s didactic interpretation of the cross-border situation undoubtedly simplifies historical reality. However, her interpretations do challenge excessively simplified and villainized visions of Canada’s southern neighbours—though it does support dangerous ideological bonds that are detrimental to any outside her two discerning virtues. *Kinsman at War* helps to debunk some anti-American posturing, which preserves Canadians’ belief in their identity being separate and unique from their southern neighbours. Through the novel’s presentation of the social climate which permeated the border towns, a humanization of the War of 1812 occurs as it focuses on the bonds of kinship. Approaching the cultures from a relativistic outlook, McIlwraith promotes the shared history and the relationships that had once existed between Canadians and Americans.

In comparison to Machar’s *For King and Country* McIlwraith’s novel presents a different perspective on the events of 1812, the most apparent difference being the social positioning of

the leading characters. Machar had followed the course of the War from the perspective of the gentry class, with Miss Liliias' father being a Major in the Canadian Militia and her invitation to dine with General Brock himself. In contrast, McIlwraith presents the War of 1812 from the perspective of the independent farming family. These alternate positions point to the changes taking place in the interwar years towards presenting storylines that celebrated a Canadian perspective and diverged from predominantly British narratives. McIlwraith's character Stephen, equipped with his Canadian heritage, satisfies an image of the "home-grown" Canadian much more than Machar's Miss Liliias and her British associates. Miss Liliias, although born in Canada, retains much of the old world through her family and associates. Therefore, her character never fully captures the essence of Canada as a separate independent nation with its own national character. The character Stephen, nevertheless, comes from the people and land, capturing the spirit of what might be considered Canadian.

Even with its censored violence, *Kinsman at War* still manages to express deep anti-war messages and functions as a compatriot to the anti-war narratives appearing in Canada following the First World War. In period before the War writers like Machar still celebrated rigorousness, heroism, and duty as worthy traits for young men and soldiers. About the Canadian volunteers who would fight at Queenston Heights Machar writes; "the privations they endured in necessary drilling, —the exposure and fatigue of military duty, —added an additional element of heroism to the cheerfully rendered services of the Canadian volunteers" (Machar 167). Maintaining the prestige of combat and persevering old ideas of honour and duty Machar stayed in line with many pre-War presentations military life. Notable anti-war literature of the interwar period included novels such as Canadian author Charles Yale Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed* (1930), British poet-novelist Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* (1929), and German novelist Erich

Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929). Although these referenced works were not entirely intended for the young adult audience, they do attest to the anti-war ethos of the 1920s and 1930s. Compared to Canadian author Harrison, McIlwraith's approach to the anti-war message is quite subtle. Harrison openly attacks those profiting from the war and challenges any allusions to the glories of war. McIlwraith, however, does preserve some elements of Victorian pre-War presentation of the glorification of war as an expression of patriotism. Notable similarities found in the two novels are in the authors' attacks on those outside the sphere of combat. Through a conversation with the prisoner Allston, from Upper Canada, Stephen is presented with the idea, "It's our governments that have disagreed, that's all, and we are the ones to suffer for it" (McIlwraith 266). Presented alongside Harrison's hostility towards the powers behind the fighting, "To them it's only a war but we have to fight it" (90) and in the infamous statement that "Generals die in bed" (61), McIlwraith's anti-war messages has some degree of resonance, matching social reactions to large scale conflict. In expressing the horrors of war and the human cost, Stephen says to his sister, "It is all wrong, Ann. You know that it is. It is simply murder, every shot fired, every life taken" (McIlwraith 109). Conflict, to Stephen, became simply "insane folly" (221) that contains a particular "wastefulness" (221) in terms of young lives spent on the battlefield. Harrison's unnamed soldier construes much the same message as McIlwraith's Stephen as he struggles to understand the war and its human cost. Reflecting on a comrade's death Harrison's soldier expressed, "It is better, I say to myself, not to seek for answers. It is better to live like an unreasoning animal" (Harrison 57), as he struggled to understand his place in an insane War. The anti-war message running through *Kinsman at War* questions celebrations of national ambition by positioning its interpretation of the conflict from that of a nation victimized by American aggression.

Muriel Denison's *Susannah: A Little Girl With the Mounties* (1936) and *Susannah of the Yukon* (1937)

For this exploration of the Mountie genre, as it appears in young adult historical fiction, I will rely upon a source of narratives that uses the recent past for its inspiration. The romantic images afforded by the Royal North-West Mounted Police (RNWMP) were easily adaptable narratives which involved Canadian history as well as granted access to the Canadian wilderness for sensational story settings. Writers of historical fiction found great versatility with the image of the Mountie, and with the founding of the RNWMP in 1873, the Mountie image became a prime source of inspiration for writers wishing to encapsulate the youthful vitality of adolescent Canada.

As a distinctive Canadian image, the Mountie has become an enduring symbol of Canadiana and an intrinsic feature of the nation's self-image. Candida Rifkind critiques the adoption of the Mountie character in fiction literature, stating that "The popular fictionalization of the Mountie thus had as little to do with the real experiences of RCMP officers as its antimodern representation of northern and Western Canada had to do with a modern Canadian society experiencing the transitions and upheavals of the first three decades of the twentieth century" (128). Using Laurie Erskine's Mountie based *Renfrew* series as an archetype, Rifkind continues to write that the Force "proved the ideal form to articulate an anti-modernist nostalgia for the residual imperial project of domination, discipline, and control central to the founding of the modern Canadian state" (130). Rifkind's anti-modernist take on Mountie fiction highlights the characteristic element of nostalgia which plays a role in historical fiction. The nostalgic element of historical fiction holds value when understood to represent a certain sense of uncertainty about the future. As Shaw and Chase outline, nostalgia "is experienced when some

elements of the present are felt to be defective and when there is no public sense of redeemability through a belief in progress” (15). Coupling Rifkind’s ideas on the anti-modernist content of Mountie fiction with Shaw and Chase’s ideas of a fear towards the future bespeaks of an author whose anxieties are in unison with a particular time. Their anxieties then become expressed through nostalgic ruminations that are imparted onto a romantic, iconic, and heroic image that can easily be granted legendary status. Fears of an uncertain future surfacing in the turbulence of the interwar social and political atmospheres, historical fiction opened an avenue where romantic visions of the nation’s past could fan smoldering embers of a distinctly Canadian identity.

Beginning in the 1930s, Muriel Denison published four works of historical fiction which revolved around the Royal Northwest Mounted Police to generate the “*Susannah*” series. The first two works; *Susannah: A Little Girl with the Mounties* (1936) and *Susannah of the Yukon* (1937), typify a shallow mining approach to creating historical fiction. For the purpose of this thesis the idea of shallow mining relates to an author’s reliance on more modern history for inspiration. Denison’s *Susannah* novels provide a fine illustration of this approach as her narratives are set at the turn-of-the-century, less than fifty years from when the events occurred. The other examples of historical fiction used in this thesis, with the exception of *Anne of Green Gables*, recall events that occurred much earlier in Canada’s history where the British presence was more difficult to avoid (i.e. The Fall of Quebec in 1759 and The War of 1812). Situated in the closing decade of the nineteenth-century, Denison plots her storyline in an unquestionably Canadian narrative.

In Denison’s first novel, the indefatigable Susannah Winston, a nine-year-old originating from Montreal, finds herself on a West bound train heading to Saskatchewan. Set in 1896, *Susannah and the Mounties* follows Sue’s adventures as she travels west to spend the summer

living with her Uncle Lyons, a constable with the RNWMP, at the barracks located near Regina. In Denison's second *Susannah* novel, *Susannah of the Yukon*, Sue, now ten, accompanies her parents to another unquestionably Canadian location and situation – Dawson City during the late 1890's gold rush. Driving this fanciful plotline, Sue's father Jimmy Winston, a painter, has agreed to travel north with his wife and daughter to work on completing various commissioned paintings of the Canadian Rockies. These paintings are for Donald Smith the Commissioner of the Canadian National Pacific Railway (Denison *Yukon* 12). During her year-long northern adventure Sue, of course, catches "gold fever" and successfully mines gold, while also managing to master dog-sledding, thereby participating in many of the clichés which have become associated with life in Northern Canada.

Although many of the events which transpire during the course of Denison's first two *Susannah* novels are set in Canada, the plotline and climax of both still revolve around celebrations of the British Empire. *Susannah and the Mounties* concludes with Sue's accompaniment of the Mounties to London for the Jubilee celebrations, and *Susannah of the Yukon* concludes with Sue posing as the Queen for a local charity event. Galway's impression of a "lingering loyalty" (43) remaining to the Crown hardly suffices to capture the saturation of Britishness which colours these novels, yet, Sue's "native born" heritage, the wholly Canadian historical context, and the exclusive Canadian locales still manage to furnish a definitive image of Canadiana.

Throughout the first two novels, Denison portrays the Royal Northwest Mounted Police as a band of unblemished national heroes. For Denison, the Mounties, taken as a whole, serve to replace the singular heroes with stock interchangeable members of the Force. The *Susannah* novels continuously glorify and celebrate Canada's national police, paying patronage to their

unblemished image and supporting their iconic status, thus placing the Force on an unrealistic, unobtainable, and pristine pedestal of perfection. Sue's briefing on the role the police force played in Canada's Northwest frontier provides her with the beginnings of a simplistic, explicitly colonial, understanding of the Mounties presence in the West:

We are police. We are here to keep the peace, to make the prairies safe for people to come and build new homes. And we are here to protect the Indians too, so that bad white men may not steal from them. We are here, Sue, to see that law and order rule. (Denison *Mounties* 60-61)

Additional fuel for Sue's romantic imagery of the RNWMP is added through Denison's account of the reasons that lay behind the Mounties iconic uniform and the historical significance of the red tunic:

So years ago when they were first forming the Force, the Indians asked that the men wear red coats, saying, 'We know that the soldiers of our Great White Mother wear red coats and are our friends.' So now, Sue, wherever the red coat is seen, and it can be seen a long way off, it is a warning to both strong and weak, honest and dishonest that the rule of law prevails. (*Mounties* 61)

These depictions of the Mounties and subsequent infantilization of the indigenous peoples are difficult aspects of Denison's writings to reconcile when read by a modern reader. With the Canadian government's commitment towards reconciliation, and the acknowledgment of institutional transgressions, novels such as those in Denison's *Susannah* series, where the indigenous population is portrayed as dependent on their colonial oppressors, has a particularly unsettling characteristic when read in the current atmosphere. As narratives about the nation's

past can be useful in understanding the present and creating an image for the future, returning to a history, although famous for its imperial/colonial nature, does portrays a certain strength and authoritative power to a nation's image. This powerful and assertive depiction of the Mounties as nation builders may be unappealing for modern readers; however, the colonial Mountie image does provide a strong-arm narrative which strengthens the image of a nation which, at the time, needed to enforce its autonomy and to become comfortable with the idea of being architects of their own future.

As an ideological force in the Canadian West and as shepherds of colonialization, the Royal North West Mounted Police can be interpreted as the representatives of Anglo-Saxon procurement and "success" in Western settlement. Recognizable as a sheriff image or surrogate missionaries of Western civilization working for the national betterment, this particular incarnation of a national hero has remained persistent within Canada's dominant socio-political self-image. Sue's return to the Mountie Barracks in Denison's second novel finds her in blissful peace with the Force as they appear to her, without irony, and masked in childish innocence as "All the same and all as perfect" (*Yukon 2*). Denison's simplification and mythification of the Mounties into a "perfect" image encourages the willful adoption of the Mountie character into the dominant national narrative.

The mythic and mythologized image of the scarlet clad RNWMP officer which Denison plots much of the *Susannah* novels around supports images of Canada where values such as civility, justice, and – to a degree – patriarchy are fundamental to Canada's ideological positioning. The Mountie genre's routine deliverance of images of the brave, civilized, civilizing, heroic individual has aided in synchronizing the value-laden Mountie image with a particular interpretation of the nation. Returning to the relatively recent past to find stories about these

iconic figures reinforces their place within the nation's history, which in turn supports an autonomous national image by extolling a uniquely Canadian past. Denison's setting choice in relation to time allowed her narratives to present events in Canada's past that could easily be identified as unequivocally Canadian.

Emily P. Weaver's *The Only Girl* (1938)

Published in 1938, Emily P. Weaver's *The Only Girl: A Tale of 1837* is a coming-of-age tale about a pioneer family in Upper Canada set during the tumultuous years abutting the 1837-38 Rebellions. Weaver sets this fictional narrative within the stereotypical image of a Canadian settler family. The Lydgates are a poor farming family living a near hand-to-mouth existence as they worked their homestead in the countryside outside Toronto. To secure a component of nationalistic integrity, much like Montgomery's Anne, the bulk of the Lydgate family are "native-born". Moving away from imperialist interpretations of the past, like those of Henty and Marryat, the "native-born" quality of the leading characters supports impressions of the narrative being presented from a wholly Canadian disposition. All the Lydgate children were born in Canada. As well, their Canadian lineage was further fortified by their mother's deep roots in Canada's past. The Lydgate children's maternal great-grandfather, a celebrated "Loyalist sea-captain" who "brought his family to Canada when all was lost in the old 'Thirteen Colonies'" (Weaver 5), increases the depth of their historical connection to the land. This quality of their heritage assumes their loyalty to Canada and then, by default, a loyalty to Britain. Mr. Lydgate is presented as the only member of the family who is not "native-born", yet his commitment to Canada is validated through his military service. Mr. Lydgate had enlisted "with those brave York Volunteers who followed General Brock so gallantly up the Heights of Queenston"

(Weaver 6-7), thereby exhibiting his allegiance to Britain and by conjunction Canada's path to nationhood. The deep entrenchment of the Lydgate family history within the nation's past, bolstered by their status as "experienced Canadians" (Weaver 147), affords them a distinguished place within the chronicles of colonial Canada and creates an idealized image of a loyal Canadian family. From this position Weaver's critique and interpretation of the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion has a firm basepoint to offer a juxtaposition on the state of Canadian affairs.

From the position of the loyal family, Weaver engages with the topic of the Rebellions through a restrained yet supportive justification against the acts perpetrated against the Empire. Alongside the story of the Rebellion, Weaver grants a favourable presentation to a key instigator of the Rebellion, William Lyon Mackenzie. Weaver introduces Mackenzie into the storyline through the accidental gifting of a book, Sir Walter Scott's 1825 novel, *The Talisman*, to the Lydgate family. The chance concession of the novel occurs during Mackenzie's robust ride in a horse-drawn coach and unleashes a chain of events which significantly alters the future of the Lydgate family. Scott's novel first ignites the family's imagination and then, through difficulties experienced during the reading, onto a path of education and self-betterment. Concurrently, Scott's novel also forges a relationship between the Lydgates and Mackenzie himself, that proves significant and later prevents Mackenzie's capture following the uprisings. Weaver's metatextual use of Scott's novel and an author whose writings are well known for their nationalistic underpinnings, alludes to Weaver's understanding of the abilities of historical fictional novels to carry certain nationalistic underpinnings.

Relating back to young adult novels published before the First World War, Weaver's *The Only Girl* reconfirms general concerns regarding Canada's ties to the Empire. Weaver's criticism of Canada's relationship with England flows much within the same vein as seen in the pre-War

novels and returns to the theme of mixed emotions concerning Canada's relationship to the Empire. Echoing Machar's literary expressions of the social climate present in the years preceding the War of 1812, Weaver works into her narrative the feeling of discontent still felt towards England by colonists in 1837. Heroine Peggy Lydgate's sibling Jim expresses the general feeling of dissatisfaction felt by some of the population of Upper Canada towards the Motherland, claiming, "Canadians can't put up with everything. If England doesn't want another Revolution on her hands, she'll have to mend her manners" (Weaver 91-92). Weaver sets as the basis for her interpretation of the 1837 Rebellions not as a confusion of loyalty, but as being rooted in general feelings of dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement to the Empire. Weaver's illustrations of Sir Francis Bond Head, the acting lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada and loyal servant of the Crown, fits into the greater themes that run through her narrative. Providing an interpretation of Sir Francis that depicts the Englishman as being unsympathetic to the concerns of the colony, she places much of the institutional side of the Empire under an unflattering light. Weaver's depictions are presented through Jim, who sees Sir Francis as one who does "not understand what the people need or think" (94), and he questions "if he cares either" (94). Despite the reoccurrence of the theme of disfranchisement with the current political structures, *The Only Girl* moves away from its pre-War predecessors by leaning towards an interpretation of the past that favoured a Canadian perspective.

In situating her novel within the tradition of the Canadian settler and amongst devotees' to a British system, Weaver creates a stable platform from which she criticizes pre-Rebellion Canada and engages with the negative perceptions of Mackenzie. Weaver handles the image of Mackenzie with a degree of hesitancy, one where his negative views of the Empire are seen as too extreme for the Loyalist Lydgate family. From the perspective of the Lydgates, Mackenzie

does provide some positive arguments against the Empire as the family claims “he has done fine work for Canada, and there are many of us that stood by him through thick and thin till he took up this mad notion of rebellion and independence” (Weaver 211). However, the crux of Weaver’s novel is not within the larger community’s hesitancy towards Mackenzie, but resides in the daughter, Peggy Lydgate’s treatment of Mackenzie. Her opposition to violence, on personal and moral grounds, prevented Mackenzie’s capture and ends profoundly with “the girl who did not believe in the rebellion, but twice saved a hard-pressed rebel” (Weaver 289). Peggy’s rescue of the “rebel” Mackenzie supports the interwar movement towards highlighting more nationalistic qualities and moments in Canada’s past. Playing with the subtleties of perception concerning figures of past, whether a villainous rebel, a misunderstood rebel, or a rebel acting for a brighter future are products of an author’s interpretation. Mixed with the author’s ability to fashion “up time” (Anderson 205), as is true for both the case for writing history and writing fiction, the subjective and problematic nature of interpretation and emplotment can produce an array of historical depictions with varying degrees of historical truth.

Through *The Only Girl*, Weaver does confront the conflicting interpretations of the rebel Mackenzie – that of a rebel or a hero found upon Canada’s route to nationhood. Weaver addresses these mixed interpretations which colour understandings of the 1837 Rebellion, as “many years later Mackenzie confessed that he was fully satisfied that ‘had the violent movements in which I and many others were engaged on both sides of the Niagara proved successful, success would have deeply injured the people of Canada, whom I then believed I was serving at great risks’” (Weaver 253). Condemning the violence of the Rebellion, yet, remaining supportive of Mackenzie ideals, Weaver remained consistent in her hesitancy to fully support Mackenzie and concludes her novel with the notion the rebel had “lived long enough to see the

dawn of a new era of liberty and fair government in the country which (whatever his mistakes) he had loved so much and had sincerely tried to serve” (272). Preserving the feeling of disenfranchisement and supporting feelings of discontent, Weaver’s novel shifts further towards more nationalistic interpretations of Canadian history, where the sentiments of the people and the stories of forefathers of nationhood take precedence.

The years bookended by the great conflicts of the twentieth-century may not have witnessed a large-scale shift in young adult historical fiction authors’ approach to the writing of Canada’s national history. However, I maintain, that the subtle differences noted above in the interwar texts and that were foreshadowed in pre-War novels, such as Montgomery’s *Anne*, were bent upon complementing the developing vision of a less British, post-colonial Canadian identity. What interwar authors like Denison, McIlwraith, and Weaver did to endorse the shifting trend in national understanding was to return to narratives rooted in the past and retell them from an undeniably and unequivocally Canadian perspective. These narratives then work to skirt the hindrances of the omnipresent British narrative, ones that preserved Canada’s British parentage and colonial status, and focused instead on narratives more akin to an autonomous national image.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to explore the shared aspects of history and literature and to underline how Canadian history was revisited, through historical fiction, to showcase a changing perception of national identity. The rationale for using young adult historical fiction as the dominant medium to explore changes in the interpretation of Canadian national identity is best illustrated by Moss when he states, “the impressions made by his reading as a boy can determine his particular path and contribute to the destiny of his nation as well” (61). Early exposure to and affinity for particular narratives, especially when they relate to the nation, have the potential to influence our perception of the nation and require special attention. This attention should be directed towards the interpretive elements inherent to historical fiction, for as Linda Hutcheon states, “To write history – or historical fiction – is equally to narrate, to reconstruct by means of selection and interpretation” (231). This thesis has found that the recognition of the compounded interpretational characteristics of a fictional narrative running within a particular historical narrative allows for a productive exploration of the complex nature of this hybrid genre. Unpacking the levels of interpretation through a critical, interdisciplinary approach has yielded a more well-rounded understanding of historical fiction novels through underlining the contextual nature of composition and reception.

Jack Granatstein comments on the devaluation of history when overly manipulated, underscoring the problematic nature of histories that manage the past. He writes, “Even though each generation always writes its own history, the past is not supposed to be twisted completely out of shape to serve present ends. To do so mocks the dead and makes fools of the living: it reduces the past to a simplistic perspective on the present; and it imprisons history in a cage of

consciously constructed quasi-fabrications” (Granatstein 4). Historical fictions, are, without question, poor simulacrum of the past and portray overly exaggerated and simplified versions of history, similar to the histories targeted by Granatstein. History will undoubtedly continue to be interpreted by each passing generation providing new perspectives and new interpretations, reflecting on our everchanging perception of the nation. However, explorations into the historical record, as seen in historical fiction, encourages critical review to help reveal its contents in light of the contextual and historical framework which influenced its composition. For if, as Wilson writes, “Historical fiction plays a part in deciding what history will be remembered and how that history might be critiqued” (119) then, as shown in this thesis, by maintaining a perspective on the content of the historical fiction and relating it to its period of composition will emphasize the narrative elements influencing its historical interpretation.

The First World War, combined with an interpretation of declining imperialism securing Canada’s national status, provided a particular period and viewpoint for reviewing national identity. The War and interwar years marked a particular period in Canadian political development and redefining, which prompted reinterpretations of the history that led to the creation of a new national understanding of Canada. This change in national perception becomes apparent in the historical fiction works that bookend the War, as a moderate shift was detected in how authors began to express new interpretations concerning national identity. This shift occurred mainly through a movement away from British-centric narratives and those that supported Canada’s identity as that of a mere colony. Following the War, historical fiction narratives began to focus more on individuals with a more established Canadian identity and heritage as well as situations more exclusive to the Canadian experience. These more distinctive

themes helped to foster new notions of national identity through retrospective interpretations of the historical record which favoured more subjective readings of the past.

Comparing the two periods of text illustrates that momentum was gathering in the later period towards narratives that supported interpretations of Canada's past which included notions of an autonomous national identity. With the offloading of imperial baggage and aspects of its colonial status, achieved through a rise in international recognition, Canada's self-understanding was undergoing a significant transformation following the War. Through the signing of political acts such as the Balfour Report (1926) and the Statute of Westminster (1931), Canada, as an autonomous nation, became a reality and in need of support within expressions of the nation. Revisiting the past, through fiction, became a means to locate elements of the nation that had only lately begun to fuse into a singular reality and present them to a young audience. Emphasizing the events and the associated historical figures that accentuated a uniquely Canadian position was a route some authors of historical fiction selected in order to support these new conceptions of the nation.

Anderson has alluded to the problem of "subjective antiquity" (5), which, when considered in terms of the nationalistic interpretations of the past presented through the authorial perspective of historical fiction author, provides an extreme example of subjective history. Romney remarks that individuals "who probe the past . . . rarely fail to find what they seek" (174) targeting again the predisposition history has to subjective interpretations. Consciousness of and insight into the subjective characteristics of history and the authorial traits of narratives may be all that can be asked as Canada's national identity will continue to change as will interpretations of the past. Each generation will turn again to history in search of something different and in hopes of finding some greater understanding of how they arrived at their

particular present. Young adult historical fiction provides a genre where the nuances comprising their fictional narratives encapsulate much about their context, content, and the historical discourses they present. Identifying the central themes of the novels and how they deviate from existing master narratives creates another window through which cultural material can help write a prologue to the present.

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