NO PLACE ELSE: ATTACHMENT TO LAND AND REGION
IN CANADIAN REALISTIC FICTION FOR YOUNG ADULTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Landscape is a fact of Canadian life. Regardless of where one lives in Canada, the presence and images of countless trees, mountains, farms, snow drifts, or wildlife is never far from thought. In human geography, which studies the relationship between people and their surroundings, landscape is considered a cultural construct. How landscape is used and how it is perceived is culturally representative of the culture in which it exists. In much Canadian literature, the vast Canadian landscape defines Canada as a nation.

Canadian realistic fiction for young adults often uses the Canadian landscape as a backdrop to plot. The young adult protagonists living in remote regions of the country who interact with the wilderness often develop specific attachments to it as a result of their isolation from the city and their experience with the landscape. When these protagonists escape into, or out of, nature, their attachments may change with their shifting perceptions of space and place. How these attachments form, how they change, and how they are regionally and nationally connected are the concerns of this thesis.
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Carol and Edward Harrison, for their countless hours of support. The concept for this study would never have come to fruition had they not taught me to have an understanding and appreciation of the landscape around me. Thank you.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

To ask what it means to be “Canadian” is a tricky question. One might answer in many ways: that it means to come from a country thick with snow, ice, trees, and an abundance of wildlife, or that it means multiculturalism, hockey, politeness, poutine, or maple syrup. Canada is of such a size and diversity that the question of what it means to be “Canadian” is challenging to answer. But divide Canada into distinctive regions, and the question becomes easier. I would reply to the question: “what does it mean to be British Columbian?” with much more confidence than if asked “what does it mean to be Canadian?” To me, being British Columbian means landscape, an active outdoor lifestyle, and life—my life. I have lived here for twenty-four out of my twenty-six years. Ask me what it means to be northwestern British Columbian, and I will have even more confidence—it means summers at the lake, giant waterfalls, rocks, hills, more trees than you can count, closed sawmills, and glaciers and eskers. Ask me what it means to be from Terrace, and I will reply without even thinking: it means home.

Although I have not lived in Terrace for almost ten years, Terrace will forever be "home." Terrace does have a movie theater and a McDonald’s, but the landscape closes in at the edges of the community. Every summer there is a bear trap placed at the end of the dead end street on which my childhood home stands, and every winter there are school closures due to heavy snowfall. In stereotypical “Canadian” fashion, there is something about a glassy lake that is surrounded by tall firs and cedars, framed by high, rocky mountains, a family of mergansers paddling from shore to shore that is familiar.

1 I am using a personal voice in Chapters 1 and 5 only.
comfortable, and comforting. These images are part of me, and part of my regional identity. Although I have lived in large(r) cities around the world for nearly ten years now—and find the look of skyscrapers as intoxicating as a tall Douglas Fir—when I think of what makes me, I will forever be a girl from Terrace, whose fondest memories are any that include a trip to our A-frame cabin on Lakelse Lake, the scent of sunscreen and mildew in every towel left from summers before. I will forever be a girl who remembers not necessarily being surprised by a bear or a moose crossing through her yard: a now comical stereotype of Canada that most Canadians—except those who actually live it—prefer to avoid.

Feeling connected to my small corner of British Columbia came about in part through being aware of what loomed beyond the Skeena and Bulkley Valleys, toward the fringe of the Coastal Mountain range. By being aware of Vancouver—and in many ways being intimidated by it—I found Terrace (and northwestern British Columbia in general) more alluring. Although I enjoyed trips to the city, and as I grew older longed to move to it, whenever that desire struck me I did not venture to downtown Terrace (small as it was); I escaped, rather, to the hydro field across the street from our house and sat amidst the moss and alders, or, at the cabin, into the expansive “backyard” of old-growth forest. I carried with me the knowledge that within the landscape was a place I could go where no one would see me, where I was safely hidden; a place where I could escape.

Books by the dozens have drawn on that longing to move from “home” and into the landscape; I notice this in particular now that I live in the city. In my child reading, Pearson’s *A Handful of Time* (1978) emulated precisely what it was that I loved about the stillness of nature, and the peace of lakes. Wilson’s murder mysteries toured me not only
around Canada, but also my own backyard, geographically speaking, with *The Unmasking of ‘Ksan* (1986). Wynne-Jones' *The Maestro* (1995), with its perfectly orchestrated setting, captured the Ontario landscape for me with vigour.

When I travelled to live abroad in the organized landscape of Germany, with every tree carefully planted in its selected place, Robinson’s *Monkey Beach* (2000) (written for adults) carried me straight to the Kitimat Valley, a short thirty minute drive from the Skeena Valley. Smithers has never looked better than it did in Juby’s *Alice trilogy* (*Alice, I Think* (2000); *Miss Smithers* (2004); *Alice McLeod; Realist at Last* (2005)) when I sat on my bed in Jinju, South Korea. Somehow the miles of concrete and apartment blocks morphed into a regional, mountainous landscape thousands of kilometers away.

After beginning the Master of Arts in Children’s Literature Program at the University of British Columbia in 2005, I found numerous other Canadian realistic novels for young adults that were regional and incorporated landscape into the storyline in an integral way. The one thing I was surprised by was the number of times characters took advantage of the natural surroundings and escaped into them—or out of them. Taking notice of protagonists escaping into—or out of—nature is what initially interested me in the topic of this thesis.

**Research Objective**

The objective of this study is to examine authors’ presentations of attachment to region and landscape within the passages of the text in Canadian young adult realistic fiction. It will add to the dialogue of landscape and regionalism in Canadian literature.
among scholars, and also stimulate dialogue about attachment to landscape in realistic fiction for young adults.

Research Questions

Canadian young adult literature often focusses on identity and identity formation (Egoff and Saltman 1990, 86). Although the landscape is generally visible, and sometimes commented on tangentially, analysis of character development of the protagonists and their attachment to landscape in Canadian realistic fiction for young adults has not been undertaken. This study is concerned, therefore, with the following questions in the context of Canadian young adult realistic fiction:

I. What is the significance for the young adult protagonist of the human geographical concept of attachment to an isolated landscape?

II. How does the young adult protagonist’s experience of escaping to nature or from nature change the attachment to an isolated landscape?

III. Do young adult protagonists’ attachments to an isolated landscape differ from region to region?

IV. What is the significance of the Canadian literary concept of “here”\(^2\) for adolescent protagonists in Canadian realistic fiction for young adults?

Rationale and Significance

Questions of Canadian national and cultural identity have been assessed by some critics of Canadian literature as being important, but, to some degree, irrelevant. Frye,

\(^2\) The question of “where is ‘here’?” in Canadian literature was first discussed by Frye (O’Grady and Staines 2003, 346).
Canada's most prominent critic, wrote in “Conclusions” to the first edition of *Literary History of Canada*: “It seems to me that Canadian sensibility has been profoundly disturbed, not so much by our famous problem of identity, important as that is, as by a series of paradoxes in what confronts that identity. It is less perplexed by the question ‘Who am I?’ than by some such riddle as, ‘Where is here?’” (O'Grady and Staines 2003, 346). Frye’s long-debated remark has not yet lost its value to discussions on the Canadian canon, and should not be ignored in the analysis of Canadian young adult realistic fiction. While the protagonists in Canadian young adult fiction do face psychological crises and questions of identity, their relationship with “here” is just as critical to their sense of self. Canadian critic Atwood suggests that “we need to know about here, because here is where we live” (1972, 19). Young people need to see themselves reflected in text in order to feel part of, and identify with, their community, as well as to learn about their own culture, history, and other cultures (Black 2005, 10; Jobe 2003, 80). There is no better reflection of self and community than that of Frye’s and Atwood’s “here”—the “here” with which the reader is familiar.

For the young adults who live in rural landscapes that are distanced from major urban centers, there may come a feeling of disconnection from the rest of the country. For teen protagonists in Canadian realistic fiction for young adult in these disconnected areas, a common desire to escape from daily life is not unusual. Nature is often the only place into which these teens from isolated regions can escape—but it is sometimes a place the same teens want to escape from. Between the act of escape to nature and escape from nature lies a place of attachment—consciously experienced by the adolescent or not. It
might be an attachment to the region or landscape, or to "home" as part of the region or landscape.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Realistic Canadian literature is rich with imagery of a huge, isolated, sometimes unfathomable northern country, where trees and rocks vastly outnumber people. As Atwood points out in *Survival*: "Not surprisingly in a country with such a high ratio of trees, lakes and rocks to people, images from Nature are almost everywhere" (1972, 49). Repeatedly, critics and theorists of Canadian literature draw on human, social and cultural geographers (and vice versa) to create discourses that consider how and why Canadian literature is so often represented through the landscape, and whether it is reliant on the ice, hills, prairies, oceans, and trees to help tell our stories. As human geographers Salter and Lloyd suggest in their work *Landscape in Literature*, “landscape is what lies between our mind’s eye and our horizon as we explore the spaces of our real world and of the artificial worlds we encounter in art” (1977, 2). How landscape is used in literature, how it is interpreted by characters in the story, and how it affects the plot is a frequently discussed theme in Canadian literature and Canadian children’s literature.

Previous studies on the connection of landscape to Canadian literature through geography are numerous. The works of Canadian writers like MacLennan, Roy, O’Brien (Simpson-Housley and Norcliffe 1992), Pickthall, White, and Connor (Osborne 1988), Grove, Ross, and Ortenso (Avery 1988) have all been addressed from a geographer’s perspective in regards to their literary landscapes. Montgomery has been discussed by geographer Squire (1992) for the nostalgia for Prince Edward Island that Montgomery as a person and writer placed in her journals, letters, and in her children’s books, such as
Anne of Green Gables (1943). In-depth discussions on landscape and character development in Canadian realistic fiction for young adults through human geography have not yet been undertaken.

Landscape in much Canadian realistic fiction for young adults is often vital not only in establishing the setting, but also in forwarding the plot or creating atmosphere. Saltman notes in Modern Canadian Children’s Books that: “Before the late 1970s most Canadian writing for youth that featured young adult protagonists was firmly wedded to historical fiction and the outdoor adventure and survival story” (1987, 65). Adventure and outdoor survival stories portray teen protagonists pitted against the elements of an unfamiliar landscape, meanwhile gaining knowledge of the land. Even Canadian young adult novels written after the late 1970s that are not intentionally adventure or outdoor survival stories are often flavoured with a strong sense of landscape, and often subtly express, through the young protagonists, a sense of attachment or bond to the landscape.

Canadian realistic fiction for young adults, as Egoff and Saltman note, is often about “who am I?” and “what will I become?” (1990, 86). Despite the quest for self being at the forefront of a majority of Canadian realistic fiction for young adults, the essence of Canadian literature as being connected to landscape is ever-present in these works for young adults, with Frye’s famous question of “where is here?” (O’Grady and Staines 2003, 346) shadowed in the mention of every tree or stone. This literature review intends to examine scholarly works written in the fields of human geography, Canadian literature, and Canadian children’s literature, focusing on the following themes: Space, Place, and Identity, Regionalism, Landscape, and Attachment.
I. Space, Place, and Identity

This section discusses two sub-themes of Space, Place, and Identity: Reflections of Space and Place, and Identity in Young Adult Realistic Fiction.

a. Reflections of Space and Place

In his work *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, human geographer Tuan asks how it is that someone organizes the space and place in which they live, and how they come to attach meaning to it (Tuan 1977, 5). The idea of organizing and attaching meaning to something suggests that space and place are not passively existent, and that people are constantly growing in spatial perception. The question of how people organize and attach meaning to space and place takes Tuan through an exploration of three contributing factors: biological facts; the relations of space and place; and a range of experience and knowledge (Tuan 1977, 6). All three are connected, and are dependent upon each other. Through biological factors, human beings come to physically understand their environments over time (beginning with infancy and continuing through their life). Physically understanding one's environment is spatial perception, and spatial perception connects to the familiarity of a place; familiarity is, essentially, experience or knowledge of a place. Tuan notes that knowledge is gradual, and that experience is unique, and that through knowledge and experience, one creates attachments to the place and space in which he or she lives. Space, Tuan says, can be considered "as that which allows movement" and "place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (1977, 6). While we move through space as it surrounds us, place is formed through experience and recognition from seeing the same area or location again and again. Place is created by pausing in space, and becoming familiar with a particular location. Geographers Simpson-Housley and Norcliffe observe
that “place is contrasted with space or situation: place is an entity unto itself, but space/situation relates to other places” (Simpson-Housley and Norcliffe 1992, 5). In order to fully connect with the places they live, children also must learn their relation to the spaces around and beyond them.

For children, images are the gateway to spatial understanding. They “learn to read spatial and environmental cues even when they are presented to [them] in the transcribed form of a picture book” (Tuan 1977, 22). This connection between images and spatial understanding may contribute to a sense of self and identity, in relation to spatial recognition. In the essay “The Englishness of English Children’s Books” in *Children’s Literature and National Identity* (2001), Meek examines the importance of spatial understanding with the concept of “self” by asking: “when do British children know that they are British?” (2001, vii). This question relates to the idea of region, national and cultural identity—and spatial understanding. Meek points out that as children grow and are able to identify the spaces and places around them, “at some point in childhood, children discover the name of the location, country, city, town or village where they are ‘at home’” (2001, viii). This discovery is part of the on-going exploration of spatial perception, as well as cultural and regional recognition. It is with this discovery of space and place that reading books and viewing images reflecting the child’s own culture become significant.

A specialist in Canadian children’s literature, Jobe, in his article “Establishing Cultural Identity through Picturebooks” (2003), discusses both the importance for children of seeing their culture reflected in the books they read as well as whether or not Canadian children are having the opportunity to see this reflection (2003, 80). Jobe
quickly establishes Canada’s geographical landscape, noting that “Canada is a vast country, some 4.5 time zones wide….Because of its vastness, Canada is a nation of regions” (2003, 79). Jobe surveys the selected picturebooks for indications of Canadian culture. His conclusions show that, from his sample, the majority of realistic picture books being published in Canada do not provide any exclusively Canadian settings, place names, or markers. He argues that for Canadian children, seeing such national “imaging is crucial for developing a positive self-concept of being a Canadian in the world” (2003, 85).

Another important work by Jobe, Canadian Connections: Experiencing Literature with Children (1991), written in collaboration with Hart, offers teachers strategies and bibliographies of recommended titles to engage students in the on-going process of uncovering Canadian imaging in literature. In chapter four, “Experiencing the Themes of Our Literature,” Jobe and Hart touch on the theme of survival, indirectly agreeing with Atwood in noting that “it is the very essence of the Canadian ethos” (1991, 75). Jobe and Hart do not discuss only physical survival of the wilderness. They observe that survival can be present when one escapes from his or her daily life and faces struggles, when one attempts to find and fit into his or her place in life, or when one faces fears (1991, 75). Jobe and Hart acknowledge that a sense of place is important to Canadians. They point out that “as Canadians we are always aware of our distinctive regions. We think in terms of our own area of the country, protecting our interests and looking at other regions with interest, intrigue, or even disdain” (1991, 101). In order to grow in spatial understanding and examine one’s identity or other areas of the country, it is important to see one’s self reflected in the literature that one reads.
In her Master’s thesis on Canadian picture books, one of the questions Black asks is: “To what extent does the depiction of landscape in Canadian historical picture books contribute to a distinctive Canadian national sense of place?” (2005, 9). Landscape, Black observes, is a key image in the minds of Canadians. In order for Canadian children to “identify with their community, region, and country,” they must be exposed to images and names of the various regions, places, and natural landmarks of Canada (2005, 10). While Black’s study “found that the Canadian landscape was portrayed by a strong sense of regionalism...there was, however, a lack of specific place and geographic names” (2005, 46) in the picturebooks analysed. Her conclusions were that while the majority of historical Canadian pictures books depicted this strong sense of regional imagery, images of landscape in Canadian historical picture books are declining. Black urges that images, place names, and cultural markers, and a sense of the Canadian geography need to be present in Canadian picture books in order for children to feel a part of their surroundings (2005, 103). Meek agrees that a sense of one’s place in the world can be expressed through picture books. She notes that the intent of the essays in *Children’s Literature and National Identity* is “to see how adults who tell children stories may also reveal to them something about themselves and a particular way of seeing the world, so that young readers may widen their view of both their individuality and their social sense of belonging” (2001, viii). This social sense of belonging may be experienced by children through a reflection of their culture in the books they read, as Jobe and Black suggest.

### b. Identity in Young Adult Realistic Fiction

In her article “Constellations of Identity in Canadian Young Adult Novels” (1997), Hoogland examines how characters are represented and what their identities reveal. She suggests that Canadian young adult fiction mirrors Canadian realities and that
“place and other identifying features may also be incorporated into readers’ interior landscapes, often through confirming or challenging old formulations” (1997, 28).

Similarly to Jobe and Black, Hoogland asserts that reflections of culture found within the books available to young adults are important for learning about identity and self. Hoogland believes that this reflection “is especially important within young adult literature, for it is here that our Canadianness emerges in powerful ways around the themes of identity, choice and belonging” (1997, 29). As teens are dealing with the physical changes in their bodies, they also examine their changing identities; national and regional identity is a part of this process.

Making the cultural landscape a prominent feature of a story is a continuing aspect of Canadian realistic fiction for children and young adults. When The New Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Canadian Children’s Books in English was published in 1990, Egoff and co-author Saltman note that, although the themes of Canadian young adult fiction are similar to those found in American young adult fiction in that they involve the struggles of growing up, Canadian young adult fiction is strongly connected to region and place. Unlike in American young adult fiction, the Canadian young adult protagonists, who are rooted in their place, are more individualized than their American counterparts (Egoff and Saltman 1990, 86). The growth in Canadian young adult fiction at the time of publication offered the young adult readers a chance to learn about their culture, and to see themselves reflected in the characterization of the Canadian young adult protagonists in the stories.

In the section on young adult fiction in her work Modern Canadian Children’s Books (1987), Saltman discusses the rise of the genre in Canada during the decade of
1975 to 1985. She notes that while there is still a limited amount of young adult fiction available, unlike American young adult fiction, “the Canadian approach is perhaps more conservative, less given to full-blown cynicism and despair, more emotionally honest, measured, and responsible” (1987, 65). The reason for this, perhaps, lies in the Canadian landscape. While, as Saltman points out, American young adult novels for the period were often set in large urban centers that could be any major city, Canadian writing for young adults makes setting a priority.

Summary

The previous sections focused on spatial understanding, place, and their connection to identity, and in particular how identity is shaped by space and place. Place draws the world and the individual together and attaches itself to the experience of the individual. Place creates and expands “horizons” for people; these horizons are representative of what lies ahead as experience and connect to what is in the past. Place allows one to make sense of the world. Landscape, as a place, becomes a part of the experiences that the individual has had or will have in his or her life. Whether the individual conforms or escapes, space, place, and landscape are integral to experience.

Waterston, in *Children’s Literature in Canada* (1992), considers the degree to which the physical space of Canada affects the literature written for children as well as for young adults. She notes that “Canadian stories, poetry, and drama for children over the past 200 years have reflected both the richness and the rigor of this physical environment” (1992, 1). Waterston recognizes that literature itself occupies a space in the readers’ minds, and although literature from previous eras is read and enjoyed, literature itself is a product of
time and space (1992, 5). It reflects the particular issues and experiences of those living at any particular time or place, drawing on spatial understanding and a sense of self.

Because the landscape from one region in Canada to the next changes drastically, it is vital that children and teenagers see not only of the rest of the country, but also their own landscape and lifestyles reflected in literature. Canadian realistic fiction for young adults often reflects the landscape closely connected with the young adult protagonist’s changing life experiences. It is the goal of this thesis to explore this connection.

II. Regionalism

Examining Canada as a series of regions, Canadian children’s literature critic Egoff published *The Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Canadian Children’s Literature in English*. This guide is—and the subsequent editions are also—concerned with identifying quality and defining genres and themes in children’s literature, more specifically, Canadian children’s literature. It was the first of its kind in Canada. As with Jobe, Black, and other Canadian literature critics regarding the Canadian literary canon, Egoff is aware that “a study of Canadian children’s books...can throw some light on the nation itself....They show what Canada and Canadians are like, what values we respect, how we look at ourselves today and in the past” (1967, 3-4). The reflection of the Canadian culture in children’s books is perhaps more clear than in those for adults, as it can be used as a tool—consciously or not—to teach children about their lives.

In the second edition, published in 1975, Egoff’s suggestion that children’s books show “what Canada and Canadians are like” is repeated. In a new chapter on “realistic fiction,” Egoff notes that these books that are neither historical fiction nor fantasy
represent the Canadian landscape, saying: “as for their setting, the stories are aimed for the most part at the Canadian market. Written by people who are themselves residents of Canada, they are almost invariably set in Canada and make much of their locale” (1975, 154). Saltman agrees, noting in *Modern Canadian Children's Books* (1987) that while Canadian young adult fiction includes major urban centers, “from the outport life of Newfoundland to the rolling Gatineaus, from the Alberta Rocky Mountain foothills to the islands of British Columbia, the best novelists are regional writers....[T]hey create a localized reality, deeply rooted in both physical and emotional topography” (1987, 66). Content may differ from novel to novel, but the regional settings anchor and assist both the protagonists and the plots.

Like Egoff and Saltman, Frye examines Canadian identity and culture through his own observations and experiences with literature, and supports his theories with evidence from the Canadian canon. Frye discusses Canada as a whole, but in his essay “Sharing the Continent” in *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture* (1982c), he acknowledges that “contemporary Canadian culture, being a culture, is not a national development but a series of regional ones, what is happening in British Columbia being very different from what is happening in New Brunswick or Ontario” (1982c, 63). As he discusses in the essay “Criticism and the Environment” the reason for this series of regional developments is simply that Canada is too large a space, for a unified national identity to be possible (O'Grady and Staines 2003, 576). Without a unified national identity but with a geographically large nation, Frye’s question of “where is here?” encourages consideration.
In *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), Atwood suggests that, perhaps, this question is a link toward cultural—regional and national—identity. She suggests that, “for the members of a country or a culture, shared knowledge of their place, their here, is not a luxury but a necessity. Without that knowledge we will not survive” (1972, 19). While Atwood affirms the importance of Frye’s question, in *Beyond the Provinces: Literary Canada at Century’s End* (1995), Staines examines what critics of Canadian literature have said in the past, citing Frye most often. He places Frye’s arguments and conclusions against the changing times, observing that while what Frye said in the past rang true, earlier concepts of Canadian identity are changing and evolving, so much so that they have become, to some degree, irrelevant. One reason for a lack of a single Canadian identity is that various regions are often isolated from the rest of Canada. A problem of Canadian identity for British Columbians for example, Staines suggests, is that “the province, remote from whatever may seem to be the centre of Canada also share[s] Canada’s own remoteness from the imperial centre” (1995, 16-17). The feeling that one’s place is always removed from the centre of the action perhaps explains why regional areas often do have a strong sense of attachment and pride; the inhabitants of those areas are attempting to make their place the place of central importance, and the centre of the action.

Regarding ideas of “here” and “there,” Staines challenges Frye’s old question of “where is here?” not because he disagrees with it or does not believe it was an important and critical question to ask, but because he feels that times have evolved. He says:

‘Where is here?’ Northrop Frye might well ask, but with a different and perhaps ironic tone. For the late twentieth-century Canada writer, *here* is now an indefinable area, encompassing Canada and the world, an area with no center and therefore no periphery, with neither the possibility nor
even the need of definition. ...Canadian fiction moved at mid-century to embrace a self-sufficiency in place; a here defined without reference to there. (1995, 27)

This understanding of "here" as being whatever place one is in cements the importance of the region to Canada, but affirms the notion of a lack of a single identity for Canadians. Although, as Atwood points out in Survival, there may be a commonality among us regarding the landscape and the desire and ability to survive, there is no one place that is "truly Canadian," except, perhaps, for each separate region.

Critic Besner was asked to examine three picture books about two regions in Canada for his article, "Canadian Children's Regional Literature: Fictions First" (1997). Parallel to Staines's observation, Besner observes that "'region' in a postcolonial culture...can be thought of without reference to the centre" (Besner 1997, 19). While considering Frye's question of "where is here?" Besner affirms that this fascination with "here" in Canadian literature is a more prominent question than that of identity. This raises the possibility, however, that literature in Canada is "a literature that imagines location as identity" (Besner 1997, 19). The degree to which region and landscape in Canadian literature is discussed and debated suggests there is truth to this statement; it is possible that the landscape is more than simply a setting.

Summary

The previous section provided an examination of critical approaches to Canadian literature as it is tied to Canadian history and Canadian landscape, including region. It focused primarily on what Canadian identity is—and how it is connected to landscape and/or region. The scholars' discussed aim is not to solve the question of Canadian identity, but, rather, to explore concepts of Canadian identity as they arise and as they
have changed throughout modern history. The theories and concepts of space, place, and experience introduced in this literature review are relevant to studies in literature, and are particularly valuable for Canadian literature. Canada’s expansive and varied topography invites interpretation both as a physical and metaphorical landscape.

III. Landscape

This section examines two sub-themes of Landscape: Culture and Power, and Exploration of the Land.

a. Culture and Power

Human geographers Winchester, Kong, and Dunn describe “culture” in their book *Landscapes: Ways of Imagining the World* as “‘a way of life’. [The authors] imagine culture to be individually lived, dynamic and unique. At the same time, [they] recognize that culture is shared: it is a group phenomenon” (2003, 3). They suggest that all landscapes represent culture to some degree, and that whatever a particular landscape is used for reflects culture and cultural usage (e.g. even looking at landscape and using it for “looking” represents cultural usage). Landscapes and power are also discussed in *Landscapes*. They note: “One of the key ways in which power can be expressed, maintained and indeed, enhanced, is through the control and manipulation of landscapes and the practices of everyday life. In both urban and rural landscapes, the powerful social groups will seek to impose their own versions of reality and practice” (Winchester, Kong and Dunn 2003, 67). The writers consider groups that may be imposing their versions of reality and practice to be: governmental, male, heterosexual, or even of one race (Winchester, Kong and Dunn 2003, 67). It is possible that for children or teenagers living in a family home, parents are also sources of power affecting the child or teen’s
landscape, regulating and monitoring use and behavior within or near the landscape in which they live. This power could be considered using Cresswell’s term of “in place.” In order to escape (or attempt to escape) power, the teen moves “out of place.” Escaping the landscape, the culture, and the home might be considered as providing a personal sense of power for the teen.

In his work *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing* (1997), New concentrates on the Canadian connection to land and landscape. Like Tuan, New explores concepts of space and place. His focus on landscape and power is similar to Winchester, Kong and Dunn’s work. Rather than focussing on how space and place are created, New focusses on what they mean to a country or region. New suggests that at the root of space and place is power. He observes that:

"place...designat[es] a particular use of space, and space designat[es] the set of (epistemological, political, sensory, and imaginative) assumptions governing a people’s attitudes towards social production, social distance, and hence social power" (1997, 7).

The social power that space designates may even exist within the home.

**b. Exploration of the land**

Frye’s contemplations of the Canadian landscape through representation in writing and art are similar to those of the aforementioned human geographers. Frye’s observation of Canadian writing, from the era of the pioneers and settlers to the period when he wrote his essays, is that the wilderness is often perceived by many authors or the protagonists within their works as terrifying and unfamiliar, and something to be tamed. Frye observes that in order to make the Canadian wilderness a place, space was cleared and trees cut, houses erected and civilization created. Exploration of the land continued after settlements were made, however, and movement from place to place was common.
In his essay "National Consciousness in Canadian Culture," in *Divisions on a Ground*, Frye suggests that Canadian cultural history is recognizable by "the obsession with movement and transportation, the eye that passes over the foreground object, the restlessness that solves all social difficulties by moving somewhere else" (1982b, 50). Escaping, as suggested by Tuan and Cresswell, can mean escaping culture. It is possible, therefore, that there is a link between the desire to escape and the fact that Canada is composed of a series of regions, and not a single national identity.

Atwood’s *Survival* (1972) examines Canadian landscape and identity from the metaphor of survival; referring, as it does, to the early history of Canada, when pioneers and settlers often struggled to survive in unfamiliar settings. *Survival* refers to Canadian literature, in which, as both Frye and Atwood discuss, the wilderness was—and is—often regarded as a terrifying “Other.” *Survival* refers also to the future. She postulates that the symbol that binds Canada together as a whole, both English and French, east to west and north to south, is, indeed, that of survival (1972, 32). It is one commonality that is shared amongst Canadian people, and it is a result of the land: the land being hard, difficult, sometimes desolate and formidable. Atwood also notes that one reason for the strong presence of landscape in Canadian literature is the fact that Canada is composed of an abundance of nature, wilderness, and landscape—and that as such, it would be impossible for the edges of the reality of the landscape not to inch into the art, poetry, and fiction of the country.

Woodcock discusses the emergence of the region in his short work, *The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature* (1981). Rather than asking why regional consciousness emerged, Woodcock discusses how it formed, noting that it
moved historically from east to west, along what is known as the Laurentian axis (1981, 22). Woodcock, like Frye and Atwood, observes a sense of fear in the writing of poets from the time of the pioneers, as well as a desire to escape from the unfamiliar spaces that confronted them. Woodcock notes that "the writing of the pioneer generation in all parts of Canada shows a similar tendency to escape from experience in a new and untamed country by rendering it in familiar and artificial forms rather than developing the kind of perception which sees it as it is, and, finally, the language which fits that perception" (1981, 19-20). This tendency to escape from nature and make it culture (or to attempt to recreate the memory of a culture that the pioneers and settlers had left behind) is a part of Canadian history.

While many Canadian critics agree that the landscape was often altered in order to create a sense of familiarity, Glickman's book of essays *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* (1998) examines and disputes what Frye and earlier critics have said about the landscape as a terrifying image in poetry. In the essay "'After the Beauty of Terror the Beauty of Peace': Notes on the Canadian Sublime," Glickman suggests that previous scholars simply misinterpreted what was written, noting that "Frye and his followers are aggrieved at nature's indifference to humanity; they too translate indifference into hostility, and experience nature's otherness as an insult" (1998, 51). Glickman argues that these critics brought their own agendas to the works they interpreted, and re-examines the same arguments from her own perspective. Glickman suggests that it is possible that those people who travelled to Canada for a new life and new experience knew that they were heading into the sublime, and relished that fact.
Glickman dismisses Atwood’s *Survival*, calling it “deliberately provocative” (1998, 54), and argues that “phrases like ‘survival’ and ‘fear of nature’ serve as mnemonics to help teachers and students organize the canon” (1998, 55). Rather than using the terms and themes that have been used in discussions of Canadian literature over the past forty years or more, Glickman aims to update them. She suggests in the preface that “picturesque” and “sublime,” though not necessarily different from the themes of “garrison mentality” and “survival,” should replace the latter (1998, x). Concentrating on the idea of misinterpretation, Glickman attempts to transpose old images of fear into new images of unfamiliarity or awe.

**Summary**

Landscape and region are contingent on space and place. The human activities that are studied in human geography occur within these landscapes and regions, and become metaphorically represented in the literature of each nation and culture. The attitudes toward landscape and the ways in which the landscape is used are cultural, and also display an exertion of power of humans over nature. In Canada, the landscape is often accepted as a major aspect of Canadian culture and identity. According to human geographer Curry: “to refer to something as being in its natural place is not simply to make a factual statement, it is also to make an evaluative claim. In contemporary society, to say that something is where it belongs is to say that it ought to be there” (Curry 1996, 20). To discuss those who live in regions and particular landscapes in Canada suggests that they belong where they live; it suggests, perhaps, attachment.
IV. Attachment

This section examines three sub-themes of attachment: Topophilia, Familiarity and Escape, and In Place and Out of Place.

a. Topophilia

The idea of attachment is not new to *Space and Place*. Three years prior to the publication of *Space and Place*, Tuan wrote *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*, a work that quickly grew in importance in the human geography community. Tuan notes that “the word ‘topophilia’ is a neologism, useful in that it can be defined broadly to include all of the human being’s affective ties with the material environment” (1974, 93). The key to topophilia, however, is examining the process that one undergoes to create the affective ties. Similar to concepts in *Space and Place*, topophilia is connected to space and place, and Tuan notes that there are varying attitudes to space and place depending on whether one resides in the city, the country, or the wilderness. He observes that while “loyalty to home, city, and nation is a powerful sentiment...the country, by contrast, evokes a more diffuse sentimental feeling” (Tuan 1974, 102). Although the country, as he goes on to explain, often evokes a sense of calm (he illustrates this with examples of pastoral poetry over thousands of years), “it is clear that raw nature or wilderness, and not the countryside, stands at the opposite pole of the totally man-made city. The countryside is the ‘middle landscape’” (Tuan 1974, 109). Wilderness may evoke feelings of fear or terror, or exultation at its sublimity. In his article “The City: Its Distance from Nature” (Tuan 1978a), Tuan outlines a scale where the city is the furthest from nature and the agricultural farmer the closest. The farmer who

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depends on seasonal change and the land to provide food may be the closest to nature, but Tuan notes, for the city dweller, “the need for contact with nature has not altogether vanished” (Tuan 1978a, 5). For those living in the middle of the scale, it is possible that while they are not entirely dependent on the land, they experience a special attachment to it.

Human geographers and editors of *A Few Acres of Snow: Literary and Artistic Images of Canada* (1992) Simpson-Housley and Norcliffe discuss the significance of landscape in Canadian literature in their essay “No Vacant Eden.” They immediately acknowledge that “landscapes are...more than an ensemble of physical and human components. They have a deeper significance, closely bound up with attitudes and values” (Simpson-Housley and Norcliffe 1992, 3). The discussion of attitudes surrounding landscapes aligns them with Tuan’s concept of “topophilia” (Tuan 1977), observing that a love of place can mean an attachment to a city or country, even to a region or space as small as a garden. Region in Canada might not be considered an important area of study if it were not for the relation of space to place referred to by Simpson-Housley and Norcliffe.

b. Familiarity and Escape

Spatial understanding and a sense of self eventually lead to a feeling of “home.” Tuan notes that “place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other. There is no place like home. What is home? It is the old homestead, the old neighborhood, hometown, or motherland” (Tuan 1977, 3). Depending on one’s experience and spatial understanding, home and “region” may be connected. New notes that “the word ‘region’...is not the same thing as the concept ‘region’....[and that] the word ‘home,’ repeatedly, obviously means different things not only to different people
but also to different generations” (New 1997, 117). Region and home can be connected depending on one’s attachment to the place they occupy. Home, New notes, has a unique place in Canadian fiction. He writes, “Canadian writing advises that you must return [home], in order to place the past apart, to read its other-centred rules in a fresh way, and to make the present and future home, whatever its relationship with a distant childhood, your own” (New 1997, 159-160). Home is a place of change, of growth, and of experience.

Although home offers a sense of security and familiarity, Tuan points out in *Topophilia*, “familiarity breeds affection when it does not breed contempt” (1974, 99). Although familiarity is often comfortable, it may also lead to boredom or annoyance, which in turn may lead to a desire to escape. Tuan’s work *Escapism* (1998) deals with these ideas. In *Escapism*, Tuan puts forth a new definition of “human.” He suggests that “a human being is an animal who is congenitally indisposed to accept reality as it is” (Tuan 1998, 6). Therefore, when individuals escape from “reality” (“reality” being their familiar world, their culture, their place), they live in a type of fantasy world—until the fantasy world becomes a place rather than a location (through familiarity), and they escape back to their reality. The same pattern exists with nature. Movement from a city or “middle landscape” to nature is a way of escaping to nature and from reality. When humans take control of the wilderness and tame it or use it for human purposes, it becomes cultured, and we have therefore, once again, escaped from nature (Tuan 1998, 19-20). It is through this continual culturing of nature that “natural” place is created.

In his book *Landscapes of the Mind: Worlds of Sense and Metaphor* (1990), human geographer and scholar Porteous examines the aspects of life that help create
emotion and attachment to the places in which we live. Porteous argues how people’s
daily lives are affected by their experiences with the various “scapes”: “landscapes;”
“smellscape:soundscape;” “bodyscape:inscape;” “homescape: escape;”
“childscape:deathscape;” and “otherscapes.” In his chapter on “homescape:escape,”
Poretous observes, like Tuan, that: “Home is not wholly positive, however. It can, in its
security, its routine, its well-knownness, become a prison. Hence, geographers have
pointed out that a fundamental dialectic in human life is home:journey, what traditional
geographers referred to as man moving and man at rest” (Porteous 1990, 107). Unlike
traditional geographers, however, Porteous feels that the true dialectic is between home
and away, as one does not necessarily return “home”—or, it may be possible to believe
one does not return to home the way it was. “Homescape,” to some degree, requires
escape.

Honeyman considers the spaces children take possession of in children’s fiction in
her essay “Childhood Bound: In Gardens, Maps, and Pictures” (2001). The journey that is
often undertaken by children in stories functions as a means of escape. Honeyman notes,
however, that the areas to which the child in the stories escapes are often likely an adult’s
idea of a place to go: “surely the civilized world is safer for children than true wilderness,
but this idealized (and enclosed) wilderness is more likely the adult’s refuge—an escape
from the ‘artifice of civilization’” (Honeyman 2001, 118). For teenage protagonists
whose identities are poised between that of a child and that of an adult, the escapes that in
children’s books seem to be from an adult perspective may indeed reflect the refuge that a
teen would desire in young adult fiction.

4 The “artifice of civilization” is a direct quotation from: Wilkie, Christine. “Digging Up The Secret
c. In Place and Out of Place

Cresswell argues that "space and place are used to structure a normative landscape—the ways in which ideas about what is right, just, and appropriate are transmitted through space and place" (Cresswell 1996, 8). Appropriate actions, self-discipline and self-control are asserted by various physical structures in society; structures like schools, homes, or roads all demand particular and culturally defined actions. Schools in North America, for example, require that students put up their hands to ask or answer questions. Cresswell suggests that following these guidelines puts one "in place." To rebel against the accepted actions in a "normative landscape" places one "out of place" (Cresswell 1996, 15). Creswell suggests that culture is place, and place culture. As mentioned earlier, place exists as a result of a pause in space—in the case of a city, place has existed over a long pause (Tuan 1977, 6). Culture, then, is, in some ways, a result of place, and to escape from your culture puts you out of place. Cresswell's terms "in place" and "out of place" are reliant on one another; like Tuan’s discussion of escaping to and from nature and/or culture and Porteous’ ideas of homescape:escape, “in place” cannot exist without “out of place” and vice versa. As Keahey notes in Making it Home: Place in Canadian Prairie Literature (1998): “To know ‘your place’ can mean to know who you are, or how you are defined by others, and your relationship to the world around you.” (Keahey 1998, 11). It is possible that escaping the familiar (the familiar place, the proper place, the cultural place, or the home) is necessary also in order to understand that one eventually must escape back from “out of place.”

Summary

The previous sections discussed the concepts of home, familiarity, attachment, escape, and being in or out of one’s place. Children’s literature frequently follows a
home-away-from-home plot construction, with the characters journeying away from their homes either by choice or circumstance. The journey forces characters to detach themselves from their reality and comfort, and face the unfamiliar. This act of moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar is not only an act of escape, but also of shifting perspectives on one’s place. At home, all—including the character—are in their place. Once moved to the unfamiliar, the character is left “out of place.” Eventually, as the new space becomes a familiar place, there is yet another shift back to “in place.” The concepts of home, place, attachment, and escape that are discussed by the human geographers and critics in this section are present in much Canadian writing, and are, like almost every other aspect of “Canadian” life in realistic fiction, connected to the landscape.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study examines the experience of young adult protagonists in the literature selected, by means of discourse analysis and through the lens of the theoretical framework of the geographical concepts of landscape, space, and place. According to Tuan, “human beings require both space and place. Human lives are a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom. In open space one can become intensely aware of place; and in the solitude of a sheltered place the vastness of space beyond acquires a haunting presence” (Tuan 1977, 54). In order to overcome the haunting presence of “space” that Tuan suggests should be considered as “that which allows movement,” place is required (1977, 6). Place, as defined by Tuan, “is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place” (1977, 6). The transformation of a space to a place may occur when nature is transformed into a cultural location by cutting down trees and physically building place. Pioneers and settlers in Canada took on this act of transforming space to place upon their arrival.

With its unexplored and wide-open spaces, Canada’s wilderness, suggests Frye, is fearsome, if not terrifying (O’Grady and Staines 2003, 225). As Canada’s first pioneers and settlers became increasingly familiar with the wilderness (and wilderness was transformed into ‘landscape’ and ‘nature’), those living in the various regions of Canada were able to escape from nature into what Tuan refers to as a “middle landscape” (Tuan 1974, 109). This is a landscape that is not fully wilderness, and not fully urban. It is the location, according to Frye, where “most of our imagination is focussed […] not on
nature but on the geometrical shapes that we have imposed on nature” (Frye 1982a, 169). However, no matter how much wilderness becomes ‘landscape,’ most writers of realistic fiction cannot escape the landscape entirely. Nature lies just beyond the concrete buildings of the Canadian urban reality. As geographer Bordessa notes: “to be Canadian is to be landscape” (1992, 69). Canadians—of every region—are attached to the landscape, physically and psychologically. The research methodology used in this thesis is a dual application of Tuan’s concepts of landscape, space and place and Frye’s explorations of the Canadian landscape and literature to the selected young adult novels under examination. Also, discourse analysis will be used to determine whether there is a link between the protagonists’ attachment to landscape and their escape from it, and whether attachment remains intact despite the escape to or from the landscape.

A discourse analysis, as linguist Gee notes, “is concerned with a theory and a method for studying how language gets recruited ‘on site’ to enact specific social activities and social identities” (Gee 2005, 1). Gee articulates that the discourse analysis process involves choosing “key words and phrases in the data selected, or related families of them, and ask[ing] what situated meanings [‘local, grounded in actual experience’] (Gee 2005, 40)] these words and phrases seem to have in [the] data, given what [is] know[n] about the overall context in which the data occurred” (Gee 1999, 97). This thesis will examine key words and families of related words in the selected novels that are commonly discussed within the fields of human geography and Canadian literary criticism.

Although the words and phrases are the clues or cues that reflect the cultural and social perspectives (in this case, Canadian cultural and social perspectives), the meanings
of these words do not stand alone. Tuan observes that words “such as ‘countryside,’ ‘landscape,’ and ‘wilderness’” are culturally derived (Tuan 1998, 81). When examined within the context of Canadian identity and a geographical perspective, words like “landscape” and “wilderness” hold particularly important meanings. They relate to colonial history, to Canada’s vital natural resources, and to the vast landmass itself. When they are examined within the context of each novel, they will relate both to the greater Canadian experience, as well as to the experience of the protagonists. Gee notes that the:

meaning [of a word], even literal meaning, is wedded to local, ‘on-site,’ social, and cultural practices. To put the matter another way: meaning is not general and abstract, not something that resides inside dictionaries, or even in general symbolic representations inside people’s heads. Rather, it is situated in specific social and cultural practices, and is continually transformed in those practices. (Gee 1999, 63)

As with human geographers and Frye’s question of “where is here?” discourse analysis is concerned with spatio-temporal co-ordinates. Linguists Brown and Yule point out that “some of the most obvious linguistic elements which require contextual information for their interpretation are the deictic forms such as here, now, I, you, this, and that” (1983, 27). The words “here” and “I” are critical to the connection between space, place and self.

**Methodology Step-by-Step**

The first step taken in this study was to select the research sample. The novels for this study were selected for meeting the following criteria:

1. award winners or finalists for an award;
2. published in the past thirty years and set in contemporaneous times;
3. A table (Table 3.1) outlining the steps taken, and codes used, for this study can be found on page 34.
4. Criterion for the novel selection, including a list of the novels selected, is explained in-depth on page 37.
protagonists between the ages of 14 and 17 years of age; and, (4) the protagonist had to live in more isolated regions of Canada, with any major urban centres more than a short car ride away.

The discourse analysis began with reading and annotating each book. While reading the books, every word and sentence related to landscape, attachment, escape, and region, was highlighted and noted. Within the context of each respective novel the recorded data was individually colour-coded based on the themes of landscape, attachment, escape, and region. Gee suggests that the researcher must “look closely at [the] data, ask...what linguistic details appear to be important for how situated meanings...social activities, socially situated identities, social languages, and Discourses are being ‘designed,’ enacted, or recognized in [the] data” (Gee 2005, 116).

The selected entries had to focus particularly on the relationship of the protagonist with a landscape, with characters who help (or plot developments that help) to develop the protagonist’s relationship with a landscape. The following questions helped shape the selection process:

- How does the selected data affect the protagonist?
- Is the selected data in relation to the landscape or not?

Each quotation (divided by region) that dealt specifically with the protagonist and landscape, the protagonist and attachment, and the protagonist and escape, or any quotation that developed the protagonist within these themes was examined and considered in regard to the themes and contexts of the plot of that particular novel.

The entries were then recorded in a master file without being categorized by their respective novel. The coded entries were examined a final time for any emerging themes
that related to the themes of landscape, attachment, or escape or region. Depending on the emerging patterns within the context of each novel and across the research sample, it was then possible to discover whether or not the protagonists of the selected novels are connected to their landscape in any significant way, and how this link is created.

A second reader, experienced in qualitative research, read all the texts and examined the coded responses in order to provide consistency of categorization. A high degree of agreement was observed between the reader and the researcher regarding the results of the data analysis.
Table 3.1: Steps of the Discourse Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Analysis</th>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading 1</td>
<td>• Read and annotated research sample. Highlighted any words and sentences that referred to landscape, attachment, escape, and region.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Reading 2         | • Re-examined each quotation and colour-coded by theme. Selected only those entries for analysis that focus in particular on the relationship of the protagonist with the landscape, or characters that developed the understanding of the protagonist's relationship with landscape. The following questions shaped the selection:  
  • How does the selected data affect the protagonist?  
  • Is the selected data in relation to the landscape or not? | Green=landscape Purple=attachment Red=escape Yellow=regional identity |
| Analysis 1        | • Concentrated on each novel individually. Worked through each quotation that dealt specifically with the protagonist and landscape, the protagonist and attachment, and the protagonist and escape, or any quotation that developed the protagonist within these themes and attempted to determine meaning within the context of each novel. | See above |
| Reading 3         | • Entered quotations into a master file without separating them by novel. Examined quotations a final time for any themes within the context of human geography and Canadian literary criticism. | Green=landscape Purple=attachment Red=escape Yellow=regional identity |
| Analysis 2        | • Revisited quotations not separated by novel. Examined the highlighted overlapping words and themes. Attempted to determine meaning in relation to the four major themes (landscape, attachment, escape, and region) found. | See above |
Definition of Terms

The following are terms used in the research questions and this study:

- **Region**: A smaller area of a larger nation, separated by geographical features and cultural/social identity.  

- **Attachment**: An “affectionate regard...to nature...[and] the physical connection by which one thing is attached to another.” The constant acknowledgement of a specific land, landscape, nature, and place that suggests a strong familiarity.

- **Home**: An area or place with which a protagonist is most familiar.

- **Escape**: The act of leaving a familiar place (such as “home”) for a less familiar one, through a conscious attempt on the behalf of the young adult protagonist.

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7 Region is a term that can have multiple meanings. In *The Betweeness of Place: Toward a Geography of Modernity*, Entrikin notes that “place and region are components of individual and group identity” (Entrikin 1991, 54). He also notes that “the existence of a ‘regional group’ may defy clear definition” (54). A physical-geographical definition of “region” may include distinctive geographical features (including climate) or political boundaries such as cities, city districts, provinces or states, countries, or continents. For the purpose of this study, “region” will refer to widely accepted regional divisions (as a result of their geography) of Canada: Atlantic Canada, Central Canada, French Canada, the Prairies, Pacific Canada, and Northern Canada. “Region” will also refer to the smaller, more isolated and less recognizable areas of these larger regions. The *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada* (s.v “Region”) suggests “that regional writing seeks to bring to wider attention a place and a culture that have been invisible.” This study will focus on both the isolated communities that would be “invisible” were it not for the literature that gives them a voice, as well as the “components of individual and group identity” (Entrikin 1991, 54) that exist intellectually and emotionally within a person or persons.

8 *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v “Attachment.”
• **Space:** A “boundless three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction.”⁹ In human geography, space is defined as the area through which movement occurs (Tuan 1977, 6).

• **Place:** A “physical surrounding....”¹⁰ Tuan defines place as a “pause” in the movement through space, when spatial recognition over time occurs through familiarity with a particular location (Tuan 1977, 6).

• **Landscape:** A cultural modification of wilderness. It may be in the form of background view, or “middle landscape,” where, as suggested by Tuan (1998) there are moderate alterations to the “wilderness,” or any sign of human presence. (Interchangeable with “land” and “nature.”)

• **Isolated:** An area of landscape that is distant from any major urban centre and often surrounded by wilderness. (Interchangeable with “remote.”)

• **Wilderness:** Nature where human presence is rarely observed.

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⁹ *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.*, s.v “Space.”
¹⁰ *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.*, s.v “Place.”
• **Young Adult**: A protagonist who is between the ages of 14 to 17 years of age.

  (Interchangeable with “teen,” “teenager,” or “adolescent.”)

### Research Sample

The research sample was selected based on the following criteria:

i. Critics Egoff and Saltman emphasize the importance of upholding the quality in children’s literature in *The New Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Children’s Literature in English* (Egoff and Saltman, 1990). According to Jobe, “fine-quality writing for young adults has never been more evident” (Jobe 1999, 51). Responding to this criteria of quality, all books selected had to be either award winners or a finalists for an award. Awards include the Canada Council Award for Children’s Literature, the Governor General’s Award for Children’s Literature in English, the Canadian Library Association’s Young Adult Canadian Book Award, the American Library Association Top Ten Best Books of the Year Award, or any provincial book prizes.

ii. The selected novels had to have been published within the past thirty years, and must be set in contemporary times. As Waterston observes, “children’s books can be regarded as products of time and place” (Waterston 1992, 5). Canadian young adult literature has changed rapidly since the 1970s (Egoff and Saltman 1990). It is important to examine the literature that has been published since these changes have occurred; it is equally important to examine settings within contemporary time in order to have reflections of the era shared by the authors and readers of these books.
iii. The selected novels had to have protagonists between the ages of 14 to 17 in order to fit the definition of “young adult” as outlined in “Definitions” in this chapter.

iv. The protagonists had to live in a location that is more “middle landscape” or rural, and a good distance—further than a brief car ride—from any major urban centers. The decision to examine settings that are removed from major urban centers relates to Staines’s discussion on Canada as regional, where each region must consider itself the “imperial center” in order to appease the sense of self (Staines 1995, 16-17). Although a majority of Canadians live along the border, many others make their homes in smaller, more isolated regions. For those who live in a more isolated region, seeing a reflection of that region is valuable for them to feel part of the Canadian community as a whole.

In accordance with the criteria outlined, the following Canadian young adult novels, one chosen from each major region in Canada, have been selected for this study:

- Atlantic Canada: Major’s *Hold Fast* (1978)
- French Canada: Hebert’s *This Side of the Sky* (2006)
- The Prairies: Brooks’s *Bone Dance* (1997)
- Pacific Canada: Lawrence’s *The Lightkeeper’s Daughter* (2002)

A table (Table 3.2) outlining how each novel meets the criteria outlined can be found on the following page.
Table 3.2: Meeting the Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Novels</th>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Setting (Place and Date)</th>
<th>Age of Protagonist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold Fast (1978)</td>
<td>• Canada Council Award for Children’s Literature</td>
<td>• Coastal Newfoundland • Late 1970s</td>
<td>• Mike, 14 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Canadian Library Association Book of the Year</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ruth Schwartz Award</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Maestro (1995)</td>
<td>• Governor General’s Award for Children’s Literature in English</td>
<td>• Northern Ontario wilderness • Late 1990s</td>
<td>• Burl, 14 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Side of the Sky (2006 translation)</td>
<td>• Prix du Livre M. Christie (before translation) • Nominated for Governor General’s Award for Children’s Literature in French</td>
<td>• Rural Quebec • Late 1990s—early 2000s</td>
<td>• Mona, early teens (age not identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone Dance (1997)</td>
<td>• Ruth Schwartz Award (Young Adult)</td>
<td>• Rural Manitoba • Late 1990s</td>
<td>• Lonny, 17 years old and Alex, 17 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Young Adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lightkeeper’s Daughter (2002)</td>
<td>• American Library Association Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults Award Winner • A Children’s Book Sense 76 Selection</td>
<td>• Lizzie Island, Northwestern British Columbia • Late 1990s</td>
<td>• Elizabeth (Squid), 17 years old and Alistair, 14 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteout (1988)</td>
<td>• Max and Greta Ebel Memorial Award for Children’s Writing</td>
<td>• Nanuvik, Baffin Island, Northwest Territories • Late 1980s</td>
<td>• Jon, 17 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

To examine the link between the young adult protagonists in the research sample and their attachment to an isolated landscape, the discourse analysis provided an in-depth exploration of the texts. This exploration, framed by the themes of landscape, attachment, and escape, provided insights into the protagonists' sense of place, sense of self, and sense of social identity.

This chapter presents a selection of the discourse analysis of the novels examined, divided by the following regions: Atlantic Canada, Central Canada, French Canada, the Prairies, Pacific Canada, and the North. Examining the novels through standard regions from east to west to north allows the analysis to follow the geographical space of Canada, and to create a sense of the distinct topographic locations of the country as the analysis, like the novels, moves from one side of the country to the other.

On the following page are two tables outlining the major themes of landscape, attachment, and escape from each novel: (1) through the number of quotations used and (2) through selected quotations representative of those used throughout the discourse analysis.
Table 4.1: Number of Quotations by Novel and Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novels</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Attachment</th>
<th>Escape</th>
<th>Total Per Novel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Hold Fast</em> (Major 1978)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Maestro</em> (Wynne-Jones 1995)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>This Side of the Sky</em> (Hébert 2006)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bone Dance</em> (Brooks 1997)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Lightkeeper’s Daughter</em> (Lawrence 2002)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Whiteout</em> (Houston 1989)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Quotations for Theme</strong></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2: Selected Examples of Quotations by Novel and Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novel</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Attachment</th>
<th>Escape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Hold Fast</em> (Major 1978)</td>
<td>Go all day, then and not see a single soul (26-27).</td>
<td>I didn’t come to like school near as good as I liked it in Marten, even though the school in St. Albert was bigger and had a lot more. I guess it was because in Marten I knew everybody (68).</td>
<td>Just to get away from all the signs of having to depend on someone for a place to live (175).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Maestro</em> (Wynne-Jones 1995)</td>
<td>Rain beat down on the cabin. It moved in with him but was not content to share the space (28).</td>
<td>He had been bathing in the lake and had changed into one of the shirts the Maestro had left behind, a white dress shirt (87).</td>
<td>Burl….kept his ears open for bigger hiding places: Winnipeg, Toronto, Dryden” (26).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>This Side of the Sky</em> (Hébert 2006)</td>
<td>A sky without light. Like the three houses. Ours are off most of the time to save electricity (82).</td>
<td>It’s our lake, our rock. We found them first. There’s no room for anyone else. Especially not him (50).</td>
<td>At the hidden lake, I hide out behind the rock….The hidden lake’s so clear, I don’t want anyone seeing me (18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bone Dance</em> (Brooks 1997)</td>
<td>(I)it was the land itself. Telling him that he was not welcome (125).</td>
<td>His heart was still on the land, and Lonny knew it probably always would be (10).</td>
<td>She wanted to escape. She wanted to leave. To hide (82).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Lightkeeper’s Daughter</em> (Lawrence 2002)</td>
<td>The island rises from the sea like a surfacing whale (2).</td>
<td>They were only gone a week; they couldn’t wait to get back, and so they went on the chopper. Alistair on one side, Squid on the other, they watched like explorers for the first sight of their land (123).</td>
<td>“It’s private,” he said again. “Let me have something on this island that’s just my own” (64).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Whiteout</em> (Houston 1989)</td>
<td>[The plane] winged over a small village with houses scattered to match the contours of the land (9).</td>
<td>“What the hell’s eating you?” snapped Harry. “You’ve only been up here for half an hour and already you’re starting to bitch” (12).</td>
<td>“Big rocks are somewhere near here. Places for us to hide” (182).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The quotations on Table 4.2 were valuable to the overall analysis of the novels and supported the findings of the study, but were not incorporated into the body of the thesis. From the quotations selected under each theme, representative examples are analysed in-depth. Further quotations can be found in Appendix A.

I. Atlantic Canada: *Hold Fast* (Major 1978)

a. Theme 1: Landscape

*Hold Fast* opens with a funeral in a graveyard, and quickly establishes Mike, the first-person narrator and fourteen year-old protagonist, as having grown up in and around nature, where he is settled in the tiny coastal community of Marten, Newfoundland, until his parents are killed in a car crash. After his parents' death, Mike has to move to the small city of Saint Albert to live with his Uncle Ted, Aunt Ellen, and cousins Marie and Curtis. Following the move, Mike describes Marten with increasing nostalgia and loyalty. Mike frequently, though somewhat subtly, internally criticizes the people who live in Saint Albert for what he believes to be their inexperience with land and nature. His criticism suggests his perception that the closer one lives to nature, the better they are, and Uncle Ted, with his urban car salesman job, is, to Mike, definitely distant from nature. When Mike and Curtis decide to run away for a few days, they take Uncle Ted's camping knapsacks. Mike notes, “red nylon knapsacks with aluminum frames. They might a been used once....It wasn’t the kind I was used to. Too big. Too expensive” (Major 1978, 134). Mike’s suggestion that “it [isn’t] the kind [he] was used to” followed by the short, staccato sentences “too big” and “too expensive” suggest his distaste for inexperience, but also his sense of superiority.
This sense of criticism extends to Curtis. Although Mike is pleased to have his cousin along for their adventure, he continues to describe Curtis in ways that make Curtis’s inexperience clear next to Mike’s. Mike expresses pity for Curtis and his lack of “wilderness” experience. He says of his cousin, “he didn’t grow up spending time in the woods. He wasn’t that lucky” (81). Mike also makes assumptions about Curtis’s character, and the things he is able to do. When Mike is wrong, and Curtis shows him he is competent in areas that Mike would not have expected, Mike suggests that Curtis needed his help. Mike says, “I was on rope swings lots of time before, but as for Curt, I believe it must a been his first time….I didn’t think he’d try it a second time, but in five minutes he was up at it again. This time I gave him a shove and made sure he got away right” (177). The words “believe” and “think” show Mike does not necessarily know what Curtis’s experiences of rope swings (or anything to do with wilderness) are, while his use of “I” and “made sure” suggest Mike needs to feel that his experience of the wilderness is superior to Curtis’s, due to his lifelong proximity to nature.

Mike’s knowledge of “real” wilderness, however, is questionable. Although he comments that he liked to “go all day, then and not see a single soul” (27) behind his house when his parents were alive, most memories of his life in Marten involve being with someone else, like his father, grandfather, or friends. When Mike suggests that he and Curtis stay in the janitor’s storeroom at the national campsite because it is more convenient than camping outside, he insists: “it wasn’t that I couldn’t a done it if I had to” (175). Although he knows that the wet and snowy conditions are not good for camping, Mike’s insistence that “it wasn’t that I couldn’t a done it” sounds boastful, but also defensive. The addition of “if I had to” is a reminder of Mike and Curtis’s location:
in a national park that Mike selected because he happened to have camped there with his family two summers earlier. If Mike and Curtis had not reached the campsite, and had been dropped off in any other location, or had not stolen Mrs. McKay’s car, they would have “had to.” But the boys did all they could not to have to. They purposefully choose comfort and convenience over “roughing it.”

Mike’s connection to the landscape is vital to his identity. His memories surround the outdoors, wide-open spaces, and he is loyal to Marten. The isolated, empty location of his town and his interaction with the wilderness is critical to his sense of place and self. Mike does have regional knowledge, and is familiar with the outdoor places where he has grown up, but his identity, in part, is connected to proving this familiarity.

b. Theme 2: Attachment

Mike’s experiences in life are limited to his experiences of Marten until his parents’ death. On occasion, Mike makes note of his limited experience. As he laments his move to Saint Albert, Mike says, “it was just that Marten was the best darn place I knew to live. God, what was I talking about, it was the only place I ever did live” (26). Although he initially sets up Marten as the ideal place to be, Mike admits that the major reason it is the “best darn place” is that it is all he is familiar with in his life. His use of “God, what was I talking about” sounds panicked. Mike’s attachment to his locality and place is evident in the fear that creeps into his expressions when considering what the move to Saint Albert means. Mike’s grief over his parents is intensified by the move as it means leaving his brother and grandfather. He is left feeling “nowheres close to squidding, or to Grandfather or Brent. Nowheres close to anything connected to either one of them” (35). Although Mike refers to squidding first, it is clear by the end of his
sentence that he is upset about leaving what remains of his close family more than his locality.

Mike’s memories are as attached to place as they are to the comfort of his parents’ memory. When he and Curtis are in the empty national campground that Mike has chosen because he had spent part of a summer there a few years back, Mike attempts to recreate the activities that he and his father used to do. Mike sets the rabbit snares not because he needs the food, but, rather, because he and his father had been planning a hunting trip for the fall, and he has fond memories surrounding the experience of rabbit hunting in his past. When it comes time to skin the rabbits, Mike’s father also appears in Mike’s knowledge of how to skin them. He says that the way he and Curtis skin them is “the way [he] learned it from Dad. It took two people the way [they] used to do it” (173). This is likely the only way Mike knows how to skin rabbits—he needs a second person with him for survival, and had depended on his father for this companionship before the accident. He finally admits: “I was thinking too much about Dad. What I wouldn’t a give for him to a been there” (163). Cooking the rabbits, as well, reminds Mike of his mother, and how she made a better stew. Through the acts of trapping, skinning, and cooking the rabbits in the campground where Mike has memories of his parents, he is as close to nature and his parents as he knows how to be.

c. Theme 3: Escape

While his parents were still alive, Mike spent time in the empty hills behind his house, either on foot, or on his father’s skidoo. He spent a great deal of time alone, but remembers always enjoying it. Through his memories, he recaptures his contentment with the familiarity of his surroundings. When the novel opens at the funeral, however, Mike begins to escape his environment whenever he does not know what to do. He
repeats similar phrases, like “I had to tear outa there” (Major 1978, 10), “I wished to hell I could get out of it” (93), and “I had to get away from them” (110). He says this to the reader at the funeral, after Uncle Ted tells him he is not allowed to go to Simon’s Bay to stay with his friend Gerard, and after his fight with Kentson, the bully at school. Mike escapes into places where no one will find him, where he can be alone and be himself. Around Marten, he escaped to nature, to places that were familiar, like the ocean and the hills behind his house. In Saint Albert, Mike hides behind tennis courts, “between two maple trees” (110). It is the only place where he can “get out of it.”

Mike’s habit of escaping to nature begins after his parent’s death, perhaps as a part of the grieving process. His habit of wanting to “tear outa there,” “get out of it,” and “get away from them” is, possibly, a recreation of an incident that Mike remembers from when his father was alive. His father had cut himself with a chainsaw, and he said to Mike, “Now get the skidoo started and let’s get home outa this” (11). In this instance, the two are escaping from nature, and moving “home.” Despite the unpleasantness of the situation, the sentence is comforting. For Mike, however, there is no longer a home to escape to. He is left on his own, with no place to go but into the landscape.

After his time in Saint Albert and his experience with Curtis in the national park, Mike returns to Marten only to learn his grandfather is dying. At his grandfather’s funeral, the second to last scene in the book, Mike watches the casket enter the earth: “and never once did I move from the spot where I stood” (194). His choice to “hold fast” and not escape reflects his growing maturity, and the acceptance of all that has happened to him.
II. Central Canada: *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995)

a. Theme 1: Landscape

*The Maestro* begins with Burl trailing his father, Cal, to his secret fishing hole. Burl has no real possessions of his own, as Cal takes whatever Burl has, so Burl hides knowledge and memories. He keeps these things hidden, so that Cal will not be able to take them away from him. Burl sneaks to Cal’s fishing spot in part to take possession—without Cal’s knowledge of it or not—of something private from his father, just the way his father has to him over the years.

Burl is caught while he is hiding in the brush. The first time Burl is caught at the fishing hole, Cal and Burl see a grand piano being hoisted through the air by a helicopter. The second time, Burl catches Cal with the waitress, Tanya, from town, the one Burl thinks is pretty. Cal and Burl have a horrible fight, leaving Burl unwilling to tolerate his father’s constant abuse and determined to run away. He makes use of his surroundings by running into the woods, with “no intention of being found” (Wynne-Jones 1995, 24).

Vanishing in the northern Ontario wilderness is not difficult to accomplish. The surroundings in which Burl has grown up, near Pharaoh, are punctuated with only “a few houses along the rail line, a diner and a garage with one pump...[and were] not within walking distance of the Crow place” (18). There are private logging roads crisscrossing the forest (26), but there is the suggestion of little human presence beyond rail line, and the few houses that dot it.

To many, the vastness would be daunting. Burl, however, “had a sense of this part of the wilderness” (27). He has learned something about the bush from Cal over the years, and now takes advantage of this knowledge. His senses guide him along the overgrown logging paths, where he discovers a trapper’s cabin and escapes the rain.
Although the cabin is a sign of a middle landscape, time is altering the signs of human presence. Burl notes that “weeds grew through the floorboards....The forest was reclaiming this place as its own” (27). The overgrown logging roads and the decay of the cabin indicate a triumph of nature over human presence, but also an atmosphere of forlornness, that seems to affect Burl emotionally. When he trudges on through the forest the next day, everything in nature is decaying. He sees a “dead stream” (30); “blueberries past their prime” (30); an egg with “a hideous rotten smell and a glimpse of wet feathers” (31); and a mushroom “eaten away by maggots” (32). Burl’s empty stomach and uncertainty about how long he can survive cause him to view nature in a defeatist fashion.

In comparison, when Burl goes to Toronto in search of “Reggie” (Regina Corngold) to claim the pyramid as his own after the Maestro has died, the city is not much friendlier: “Smells pressed in on him. Exhaust and cooking fat and...fresh tar and last night’s vomit frozen, now melting....His feet ached with the unrelenting hardness of the concrete” (138). While the natural world had provided images of death and decay, the urban landscape, described as a moonscape (136) and by the Maestro as “the Shadow” (137), is an excess of man-made human impressions. Burl finds odd similarities between the city and the wilderness from which he has come. The houses along the roadways are described as animals, fenced in “to protect them from lumbering out into the traffic” (139). The houses protect the humans within them from harm; the city shields its occupants from nature. Nature, as it relates again to Frye and Atwood, is foreign and fearsome.
The day Burl stumbles across the Maestro’s pyramid in the forest, he is heading “north by northwest...across the base of a triangle joining [Mile 10 and the CPR track]” (70). The idea of “north” plays an important role to the Maestro. The pyramid, located at north by northwest, in a triangle whose tip possibly—and probably—points north, is a strange object to find in the woods. Whereas the trapper’s cabin that Burl comes across his first night in the woods is clearly becoming a part of nature again, the pyramid is decidedly “unnatural.” Its shape—a perfect triangle—is unlike the shapes of the woods. The Maestro admits that he knows nothing about the wilderness and living in the wild. He has not winterized the cabin from the impending winter, but tells Burl, “‘I like the idea of winter’” (57), and tells him about his experiences of the north. He says, “‘I’ve been farther north than this....Right up to James Bay....No trees to get in the way. Vast. Scary as sin’” (59). The concept of north is a symbol of Canada, and the Canadian wilderness. It represents isolation, a definite haunting presence, and a vastness that Gow describes as “scary.” The idea of winter is similar to the idea of north. Both blanket and consume.

b. Theme 2: Attachment

Despite the anger that Burl feels toward his father for his unstable home life, the lessons—about nature and surviving in the woods—become invaluable. Burl still has the Brazen Wiggler, a new fishing lure Burl steals from Cai, and this he uses to “cut up the bass the way his father had shown him” (84) in the first morning after staying at the cabin. Like a boy who wants to impress his father, the fish he catches is for Gow, to show him how vital he could be, but Gow dismisses the fish as he is vegetarian.

Despite Burl only briefly meeting the Maestro, he feels connected to the pyramid and the idea of “what could have been.” Once the Maestro has left, Burl “change[s] into
one of the shirts the Maestro had left behind, a white dress shirt” (87). Burl’s actions feel a little like dress-up, as does his decision, after the Maestro has died, to “be” Gow’s son. He is so desperate to be transformed or transported from the life he has known that his lie becomes all-encompassing, and he almost believes it himself. Burl, in the end, is brought in by Natalie Agnew and offered a place to live, out of the woods, in good care. Living with the Agnews is possibly better than living alone in the pyramid. He also has a room to call his own, and a new pair of shoes that “fit him well” (223). Burl’s life is changed.

c. Theme 3: Escape

Burl escapes into the wilderness out of necessity. His disappearance goes virtually unnoticed by everyone. If Cal is looking for him before Burl sees Gord, Cal’s friend, who happens to be staying at the campsite leased by Skookum airlines, Burl sees and hears no sign of it. Bea, one of the Skookum airline operators, tells him, “‘You’re a missing kid no one is claiming. You’re a nobody’” (126). Burl is not the only thing that is unnoticed. Although Bea and Gow had both been to the pyramid, and there is a prospector’s cabin just a ways up the hill from the pyramid, everything suggests that the pyramid does not exist. Burl has escaped to Ghost Lake, a name that suggests simply the essence of something left behind. Even before the fire, Burl notices that on a map in the Skookum airline office there is only “a square dot representing the tiny cabin on the cliff. Nothing for the Maestro’s pyramid” (114). After the pyramid burns, all that remains is the essence of what had once stood in its place. Burl is devastated by the loss of the only place he had been able to call his own. Japheth Starlight, the prospector and owner of the claim at Ghost Lake, where the Maestro’s pyramid once stood, tells Burl, “‘So, what was lost was something that had been taken in there. Nothing of the place itself was destroyed’” (219). This is difficult for Burl to understand. His concept of place is one that is created, and
man-made. Starlight, however, believes that place continues, and exists without anyone’s knowledge of it. Burl’s escape to nature has made him unrealistic. Even if the cabin had not burned, he would need food flown in, and for that, he would need money. Burl, however, would not have such resources living alone in the woods to afford such purchases.

III. French Canada: *This Side of the Sky* (Hébert 2006)

a. Theme 1: Landscape

Mona and her little sister, Angélique,—Bird—live in rural Quebec. Mona’s sister lost oxygen at birth, and her mental growth is stunted; she has the mental capacity of a five-year old. Bird grows emotionally, however, in the woods around the house, and climbs trees whenever she can. Told in first person from Mona’s perspective, it is clear that to protect Bird, Mona has to follow after her. Bird is described often as though her physical self is linked with the natural world, but it is Mona doing the describing, and Mona who makes the connections between her sister and the earth. Bird is described as a bird; a “little animal” (Hébert 2006, 38); “like a caterpillar...her thumb, the only branch around” (77), with “her body leafy” (38). Mona too, however, has absorbed the nature that surrounds her and allows it to be a part of her learning process. She “learned to swim by imitating the frogs in the lake before it started to go rotten” (57), and finds solace and protection on the large rocks at the lake’s edge. While Mona has the option of doing things with other girls her own age, she is disinterested. Suson, Mona’s classmate, does not fit into Mona’s hidden landscape. Mona has “old runners that go everywhere....jumping from rock to rock down by the hidden lake” (28) while Suson has “new shoes that never go anywhere” (29). Mona further compares herself with Suson
and Suson's life when she rejects an invitation to her classmate Suson's birthday, thinking, "her city friends would show up with great gifts; I'd feel out of place" (43). Mona would rather be tucked away by the hidden lake, and the others would be out of place there.

The interaction with nature—Mona learning to swim like a frog, and Bird climbing trees—also represents the division between the girls and their relationship both to their parents and to the adult world. Mona and Bird’s parents do not know how to swim. No one can climb the trees in order to bring Bird down except for Mona and Jon, their neighbour, a black boy whom their parents forbid them from seeing. These talents offer them protection and power. As Mona says, “I’ve got nothing to be afraid of since I’m safe on the biggest rock of all under the shade of the spruce tree” (42). She feels as though nothing can touch her when she is tucked away in nature.

Climbing the trees offers the sisters—Bird in particular—an advantage. From their perches in trees, they become somewhat omniscient. Mona says, “from up high in the endless sky, I see the little house where life passed me by” (39). Their omniscience is, in the end, what stops the sexual abuse that Suson has been suffering at the hands of her father. It also rescues Jon from a life in prison after being wrongly accused of the crime. Nature is not simply a place to go for Mona and Bird: it is a valuable tool.

b. Theme 2: Attachment

In the safety they experience at the hidden lake in the woods, Bird and Mona become friends with their “forbidden” neighbour, Jon. They observe how he interacts with his family, and admire how close he is to his mother. They watch with interest as his mother reacts to Jon being arrested, how “Jon’s mother envelops her son with her gaze the whole time he’s climbing! How can I put it: a gaze so gentle and firm at once, knit
tightly together. There’s no way Jon could fail” (Hébert 2006, 103). Mona and Bird, who have frequently lacked a connection with their mother, note that they seldom hear her laugh. Mona and Bird’s budding friendship with Jon and Jon’s family might not have occurred were it not for the private place they shared beyond their ethnocultural identities.

c. **Theme 3: Escape**

The hidden lake by the girls’ house provides a convenient place to which they escape, and acts as a shelter. It was originally abandoned by residents in the neighbourhood as it was rotting, and now is inhabited only by a family of beavers and other wildlife. Mona says, “me and Angélique are the only ones who know it exists. No one else will ever know….No one else understands what my sister says. And nobody listens to me” (12). This lack of understanding from everyone in their lives highlights the understanding between the sisters as critical. As their lives are about to change with the addition of a new sibling to their family, the hidden lake becomes even more important. The nature at the lake parallels the girls’ situations in real life. Mona asks Bird what she would do if she saw a fox or wolf, and Bird replies, “I’ll climb a tree so high, I won’t come down ’til it goes” (69). Bird escapes Suson’s father by climbing high in the tree and not coming down until he is safely in jail.

Bird’s understanding of the woods and its connection to escape extends beyond the childhood world. When the teacher who was so mean to Mona abandons her father (there is implied abuse in her disappearance, similar to Suson’s), Bird hopes that “there’s another hidden lake somewhere” (117) for her to hide. Bird and Mona clearly connect safety and protection with the lake and hiding places.
IV. The Prairies: *Bone Dance* (Brooks 1997)

a. Theme 1: Landscape

Lonny LaFrenière has spent most of his life in rural Manitoba. Following his mother’s death, Lonny has been raised by his stepfather, Pop. He is aware that the land around him is special. Lonny has been told by both his mother and stepfather that “it’s a sacred place” (Brooks 1997, 19). In the hills beyond the LaFrenière homestead lies Medicine Bluff, an ancient burial ground. The burial ground “was [t]here before the earliest people. And most certainly it was [t]here before the French and the English. And the Métis” (14). The land on which Lonny has grown up is slowly disappearing: “Pop had sold everything but the homestead and another small piece of land” (10). After Earl McKay dies, leaving the property he purchased from Pop to his granddaughter, a city girl named Alexandra, Lonny feels that a piece of himself is disappearing along with the land that had been in his family’s name for so many generations. He is bitter that Alexandra, someone who lives in the city and likely has no appreciation of nature, can take away the heart of his family: the land.

Alexandra Sinclair, however, is not a typical city girl. Alex had never met her father, Earl McKay. After her grandfather’s death, Alex begins to have visions and dreams about a place she has never seen, deep with snow, a cabin, and a frozen landscape (56). In her room in the city, Alex tries to get as close to nature as she can despite living in Winnipeg. She “pulled at the loose threads on her sky blue quilt with the giant tree that always seemed to grow as you drew it over you....She loved to lie in the center of her bed, her hands reaching over the covers to stroke the gold-and-green branches” (87). She burns sage and meditates past her ceiling to the stars beyond (62). By the time she goes to
see the cabin Earl has left her, Alex already knows the space to which she is going as a place in her mind. Although she is initially disappointed at the simple, sparse cabin, the landscape has become familiar through her dreams. She says to Lonny, "I've never been here before, but I know this place. I know it" (139). She is confident that there is a pre-existing connection between her dreams and the landscape in which she is now immersed.

Both Lonny and Alex are spiritually linked to the land—they feel the spirits of the ancestors that rest below the dry, dusty surface in the hills, and see the landscape and life as intertwined.

b. Theme 2: Attachment

Alex’s understanding of the land comes from her experiences with her grandfather. He was a mentor, friend, and father figure to her. Alex and her grandfather shared city activities such as enjoying movies and plays, but they also retreated into nature, hiking, or on “camping trips to Spirit Lake, a lake so deep no one had ever found the bottom” (38). The idea of a spiritual eternity is implied in the description of Grandpa’s rock. He tells Alex that a rock keeps time, but that it is irrelevant if it is two hundred years or two hours (46). When he gives it to Alex to keep, she notes that it is “a rock. A simple rock” (46). She has learned, from her grandfather, that the rock is so much more than that. It also reminds her of her grandfather. They are so connected, that while Alex is in the park, the closest place to nature in the city (5), she senses that her grandfather has just died.

Along with the loss of her grandfather, the person she loved most, comes the loss of her father, the person she knew least. She had kept her father’s letters over the years, all of them about moving. When he leaves the cabin to her in his will, it offers her a
chance to try to learn about him through the place where he lived. In this, Alex is assisted by her knowledge of the landscape and through visions her grandfather reveals to her in her dreams.

Alex’s dreams tell her that she must go to see the cabin to find out who she is in relation to who her father was. The simple cabin has “a door that opened onto nothing. No landing. No steps. Straight down, three feet, onto wild prairie grass” (108). It offers her a glimpse of the man who has played a silent, but immense role in her life. She discovers that “this land…had somehow become saturated with her father’s life” (169).

Before he meets Alex, Lonny feels resentment toward her, resentment that she is an outsider—a *city* girl—infringing on the land that holds so many happy memories of his family. He tries “to get used to the idea of the LaFrenière land now belonging to some spoiled-rotten city girl who didn’t deserve it” (78), and assumes that she just won’t show up. Pop, however, knows about the pull of land. He tells Lonny she will show up, and then, one day, “the spirits rushed up from the mound….They knew, like Pop, that she was coming” (87). Alexandra is different from Lonny’s preconceived notions of a city girl, and, although he is gruff with her at first, he watches over her. As he watches the way she interacts with her surroundings, he begins to understand that she belongs here. Alex, too, can sense this, and her feelings toward Lonny are cemented with an image of approval from her grandfather. Alex thinks, “some people…don’t ever get to know how wonderful it is to do something as *simple* as this. Just sitting side by side, together, on a big sunny *rock*” (177, emphasis my own). They are brought together, spiritually and physically, by a “simple rock” (46). As a result of the losses in both their lives, the two teens are brought together by natural forces stronger than even they can understand.
c. **Theme 3: Escape**

Lonny has wanted to escape the spirits that whisper to him since the day he and Robert disturbed the bones at Medicine Bluff. When he shows Earl the LaFrenière property, “he couldn’t wait to get back into the truck and take the hell off….Away to the safety of the prairie farm road” (9). The sense that the “other,” spirit world is pressing in on him is distressing, despite his loyalty to the property, and his knowledge that Pop’s heart is still on the land (10). Lonny does not want the land for himself, but he does not want to lose the property “that he could hardly remember not knowing” (153). The confusion makes him angry, and he struggles to escape his emotions while being confined to the prairie landscape. He feels “trapped under the prairie sky” (153), and no matter how much he wants to be unnoticed that day, he knows that someone will always see him, know him, and talk to him. He has no place to go.

Alexandra, the city girl with the country heart, is surrounded by people who know how to escape: her father was “always moving” (30); her auntie Francine is “always leaving” (33); Alex herself is noted by her mother as “run[ning] away” (60) from discussions about the property or the money. Through her meditations and tree quilt, Alex escapes to an imaginary wilderness in her bedroom. Yet Alex, unlike Lonny, does have a place to go to. When she finally does visit the cabin Earl has left her, she no longer wants to hide from the world. She wants to experience it as her father did. Lonny, as well, after meeting Alex and discovering the spiritual connection between them, no longer wants to escape the whispers and the property. They have escaped to each other, and found familiarity and comfort in their unlikely companionship.
V. Pacific Canada: *The Lightkeeper's Daughter* (Lawrence 2002)

a. Theme 1: Landscape

*The Lightkeeper's Daughter* is narrated in the third person, and alternatives between the points-of-view of Squid (Elizabeth) McCrae, the seventeen-year old protagonist, and her mother, Hannah. The novel describes the isolated life of living on remote Lizzie island (based on the real Lucy Island) off the coast Prince Rupert in Northwestern British Columbia. Squid, four years earlier, had lived on Lizzie Island with her mother, father, and older brother, Alistair. The only other occupants were the auklets, other occasional wildlife, barnacles, and trees. After Squid becomes pregnant by a passing kayaker and after Alistair dies, Squid flees, and does not return for four years.

Upon Squid’s return, at the beginning of the novel, Tatiana, Squid’s four-year old daughter, is dressed entirely in red. While the natural areas of the island are coloured with tones of greens, blues, and greys, many objects in the novel stand out as unnatural by being red. Tatiana was conceived while Squid was still a child, and with “‘an Outsider’” to the island (Lawrence 2002, 107). Tatiana’s red clothing, therefore, marks her as somewhat awkward, a symbol of unnatural circumstance and illegitimacy, like Hawthorne’s scarlet letter. Yet Murray, the lighthouse keeper and patriarch, despite his numerous years on the island, also has an unnatural aspect to him. When the boat pulls up, Squid thinks that with his “flame red hair he looks oddly out of place” (11). Despite his knowledge of the ocean, lightkeeping, and island life, Murray is not completely in touch with his surroundings.

There are other instances where the characters with their vivid red imagery contrast with their environment: Hannah, on the day Squid arrives, wears a red scarf (10); Alistair bobs on the waves in his red kayak, trying to communicate with the whales (151);
Alistair finding Squid in red shoes after she tries to abort her baby (196); and the day the whole family dresses in bright clothing of red, yellow, pink and ochre and plays outside (83) all draw attention to their location in, and location to, nature.

Murray never considered that Squid and Alistair would leave the island. He believed they would stay forever, that Alistair would take over his job, and that Squid would find a husband from the Coast Guard, and they would all live happily ever after on Lizzie Island. Murray, using red ribbons, even stakes out the location of the house in which Squid and her future husband are to live. When Squid returns to Lizzie and comes upon the place where she was supposed to live, she notes that the “tattered bits of plastic ribbon have turned from red to pink” (131). The fading of the red to pink suggests the decay of an impossible life, as well as, possibly, the disintegration from middle landscape to nature once again.

b. Theme 2: Attachment

Squid’s anticipation of returning home is reflected in the language depicting her arrival. The island “rising” from the sea increases the anticipation, and despite the “seagulls and auklets [that] skitter away...the girl stares only ahead” (1). She is fixed on a specific point in the distance: the island where she grew up.

Squid’s return brings up issues about the concept of “home.” Lizzie Island was her home for thirteen years, and the only place she knew. As the boat comes closer to the island, the memories and knowledge of who Squid is are acknowledged through her previous relationship with the landform and its nature: “Each little piece [of the island] fills the girl with a particular feeling, with a picture in her mind, or a smell or sound. She was born on that island; she’s the lightkeeper’s daughter” (2). Squid cannot avoid who
she is; and she is the lightkeeper’s daughter. She returns because she has to, and faces the memories of her pre-teen years with a new outlook.

Alistair’s death lingers in all their minds, and as Squid learns more and more about her brother’s feelings of imprisonment, isolation, and depression, the question of a possible suicide becomes clearer. Her feelings of regret and sadness, however, are not resolved until Alistair’s journals have been buried along with Squid’s feelings of regret. After the long over-due memorial service they finally hold for Alistair is complete, “Lizzie Island seems somehow fresh. Somehow new” (230). The island feels like home again.

Squid, in the beginning of the novel, is resistant to the idea of the island as “home,” and, in particular, resistant to the idea that Tatiana might feel a sense of “home” on Lizzie as well. Murray, on the other hand, is convinced that Tat has “‘come home’” (44). Squid is angry with her father for saying this, afraid of the island (137), and refuses to accept that any part of Tatiana’s sense of self and home—as Tat was born in Prince Rupert, and not on Lizzie—resides on the island.

Regardless of Squid’s fear of the island and of the sad memories that it holds, and her refusal to accept that Lizzie Island may be a part of her daughter’s identity, Squid’s attachment to her original home is strong. When the boat travels toward the island at her return, “she squints, then puts her hands to her face and peers through the tunnel made by her fingers, the shape of a heart on the sea” (4). It is just as strong when she leaves. After Alistair’s memorial burial, she realizes that “now that she knows she’s leaving, she wishes she could stay. For a tiny fraction of a moment, she wishes that with all her heart” (230). In the end, she allows Tatiana to remain on Lizzie for an extra month, and
although part of Squid wants to stay, she accepts that she must leave. As the boat pulls away, she sees “the only beacon...there, flashing across the water, flashing again. Squid can feel her heart beating with it, keeping time to the Lizzie light” (246). Her heart resides in the place she knows best, on the island with her memories and her brother. She is emotionally attached to the island; her heart is attached in a way that is described as physical and vital. Squid’s return reminds her of who she is, and who she will always be: the lightkeeper’s daughter, just as she is introduced in the first pages of the book.

c. Theme 3: Escape

When they were young, Squid and Alistair were, in some sense, nurtured by nature. Murray and Hannah believed that it was for their own good to be made nearly fully independent at a young age. They were free—and encouraged—to roam the island and water as they pleased. Murray does not worry about them—just as he does not worry about Squid’s daughter, Tatiana—because they are “safe” on the island, with no burglars or crime in their isolated corner of land as compared to the city, “though ‘the city’ was only little Prince Rupert, with fewer than twelve thousand people” (93-94). Squid does not share her father’s fear of the city and the wider world. She is unimpressed by Prince Rupert when she first sees it (121-122), and after she returns, she announces to her mother that she has met a man and will be moving with Tatiana to Australia, saying, “‘we’re not going to be in the outback, Mom. We’ll be right in the city, the hugest city there’” (182). There is distain in the emphasized “outback.” The repetition of the word “city,” accompanied with “right in” and “hugest,” carry an element of shock, as well as a sense that Squid has left behind the girl that once would only have been able to dream about living on an island.
As Squid and Alistair, in their childhood, have no contact with anyone from the outside world until their early teens, including other children, and have no concept of any place else, they are left to envision and explore the world as it suits them. One afternoon, when they are in the lighthouse tower, they choose to draw a map of their world. What they create is “a world with the tower right at the center” (61). At their isolated centre, they are safe from not only crime, but also the wars and issues affecting the rest of the world. While their father believes that it is good for them not to have to worry about such matters (111), it does not stop them from wanting to learn about the world, from wanting to venture out, (Alistair suggests that he and Squid explore every island around them, and name them (61)), and eventually of dreaming of leaving the island entirely.

VI. Northern Canada: Whiteout (Houston 1989)

a. Theme 1: Landscape

When seventeen year-old Jon Aird (in conflict with the law, and his mother, for drug possession and expulsion from three schools), moves to Baffin Island to spend a year with his uncle, he has set ideas of what “north” should be. He has lived his whole life in an unnamed city in the south, and has defined his concepts of north according to the stereotypes and tourist-style images that are generally provided to those Canadians who live south of “north.”

When he first arrives in the frontier town of Frobisher Bay, the stark contrast to Jon’s mental image of what north is “supposed to be” is surprising: “The Arctic’s not supposed to look like this,” Jon protested. “Clean, white and open—that’s how it was meant to be. Just look at this mess!” (Houston 1989, 12). He sees “junk” like snowmobiles and used electronics everywhere, animal carcasses on the tops of roofs, and
a lack of pristine snow on the ground. Harry, the pilot who meets Jon on his arrival, explains the plight of the Inuit and the difficulties faced by the Inuit due to the federal government historically attempting to control them with government run schools and unfamiliar regulations. He tells Jon that "city people come in here searching for some kind of storybook Arctic" (12). Jon, who has been reading a book on "Eskimos" (11), has been in search of this very thing.

As Jon quickly discovers, parts of Baffin Island, "the fifth-largest island in the world and one of the least occupied" (21), are indeed images of the stereotypical "Arctic." The morning after his arrival in Frobisher Bay, Jon leaves the frontier town to fly to Nanuvik, his final stop. Despite feeling miserable in his new surroundings, Jon observes that "now that [he] was free of the frontier town, everything did look clean and sharp as it should" (21). Although the landscape has changed to a more untouched state, Jon's assumptions about the north are still strong. His observation that the landscape looks "as it should" suggests that, despite what Harry had said about the city people searching for a "storybook Arctic" (12), Jon still expects things to be the way he wants them to be. Once he lands in Nanuvik, he discovers that "somehow the place looked like a snowy alpine village" (56). Jon struggles to make sense of the unfamiliar landscape before him by relating it to a more familiar—and post-card picturesque—one.

While Jon searches for his idea of the picturesque north, his Uncle Calvin attempts to give Jon a lesson in difficult living. Calvin capitalizes on the conflicting stereotypes of the north and its reality, and, as Noddy (the clerk who works for Calvin) suggests he might, wants to "impress [Jon] that [they] live rough" (45). Power is limited, the house is freezing, and food is often powdered potatoes with dried walrus or
seal meat. Calvin is not the only one to try and impress Jon with northern living. When Jon, his girlfriend Panee and her brother Pudlo go on a fishing expedition in the spring and find themselves separated and stranded, with Pudlo snow blind, Pudlo says to Jon, “I was too busy showing off to you how real Inuit live on the land” (186). These statements suggest that the concepts of “true” north and “real” Inuit are ideas even “true” northerners and “real” Inuit feel the need to live up to or, even, invent and re-invent.

The idea of north, in the north, in its “true,” “real,” or natural state, is very important to a sense of self for the people living there. As Calvin suggests, the Inuit that Jon meets have “come from a different place, a different age” (102). They value north as a place, and as an idea. In the classroom where Jon is meant to teach, the importance of the north to the people living there is clearly marked, with “the crests of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon flanked by two small Canadian flags. There was a large map of North America on the partition wall and a glossy blue globe perched on a clear plastic stand between the windows” (53). The order in which these maps and geographical tools are introduced in the story suggests a similar order of importance in content to the people who live there.

b. Theme 2: Attachment

When Jon first arrives in the Arctic, he has no attachment to the landscape. The only connection he has is through books that offer him the “story book” Arctic as Harry observes. Jon is, in fact, so disconnected from the Arctic upon arrival, that he is lonely and depressed; everything is unfamiliar. His initial reaction, that nothing is the way it “should” be, is displaced by the image of Nanuvik as looking like an alpine village. Only a little over a day after arriving in the north, Jon wonders if the scenery looks better now because “he was becoming in tune with the Arctic, going out of tune with his earlier life”
This immediate self-questioning suggests that Jon is prepared to become attached to the landscape, or, perhaps, that he, too, wants to experience being a “true” northerner. As Jon continues to feel as though he is becoming more “in tune” with the Arctic, he begins to recognize that his initial reactions were “so southern” (92). With this recognition comes a change in Jon’s attitudes. No longer is he ambivalent about being in the Arctic: he knows he wants to be there. This change begins with Jon falling in love with Panee. Even after he discovers that Panee has been promised to Edlout, the love and friendship that grows between Jon and Panee in the abandoned whaling house changes his attitudes toward the north. He wants to make his life with Panee work. Part of this involves Jon connecting with other Inuit. In his classroom, Jon begins to sing an old Inuit song from a songbook, where the Inuit words are written down so he can sing them easily. When he does this, the class stops and stares at him, “scarcely believing that he could know the magic fishing song their grandmothers had sung to them when they were small” (106). Jon’s choice of song allows his students to look at him in a new way. In some sense, it binds Jon with the rich, historical knowledge of place, and offers him to feel as though he is a part of that place, rather than an outsider. It gives him the opportunity to belong.

c. Theme 3: Escape

For all Jon’s learned knowledge of Nanuvik and the Arctic, he does not belong in the north. The theme of belonging—or not belonging—is frequently explored in Whiteout. Along with Harry’s comment on city folk who go looking for the “storybook Arctic” (12), a person’s place in regard to whether they are from the north or south appears to be a role that is non-reversible. Noddy tells Jon:
Characters like Walski [the principal] don't make much difference to a place like Nunavik. Usually they just hang on until relief arrives in the form of a replacement. Then they rush back south where they belong. A year or two later, we can't even remember their names. It's as though they'd never been here, never existed. (97)

Jon, like those southerners who make their way north, eventually chooses to return to the south. Although he loves Panee, he had assumed that she would follow him south. The romanticized and idealized north that Jon first came in search for has not completely evaporated from his mind, and, as he writes in his journal, he wants to “use this whaler's house as a kind of summer Place. Not forever. I'd really like to show Panee the big city” (114). Panee, however, has no desire to escape the north for the south. She is so close to her family and lifestyle that she is “very scared of going south” (223). She has heard of other people moving south from their place in the north and becoming so miserable that they attempt suicide. Panee wants only to remain in her familiar environment, and needs this stability to be happy. Jon, as well, needs a familiar environment, despite the time he has spent in the Arctic. His experience away has shown him that he does belong south, and that Panee belongs in the north. It is his experience in the north that aids Jon in his decision to leave and “probably never see Nanuvik again” (236). Nanuvik is a wonderful place to Jon—but it is not his place.

Findings

The texts examined were similar in quantity of quotations in relation to the theme of landscape, with a minimum of 20 quotations (This Side of the Sky) to a maximum of 36 (Hold Fast) being recorded. The theme of attachment was also high in numbers of quotations, with the minimum number of quotations at 17 (This Side of the Sky) and the
maximum at 37 (The Maestro). The theme of escape had the lowest number of quotations, with a minimum of 10 quotations (This Side of the Sky) and a maximum of 38 (The Maestro). French Canada’s This Side of the Sky, the most recent publication (first published in French in 2003 and translated to English in 2006), is also the shortest novel of the research sample, and contains the lowest number of quotations reflecting each theme. Central Canada’s The Maestro, whose plot is strongly related around the theme of escape within the plot itself, had, not surprisingly, the highest number of quotations for escape. It also offered the highest number of quotations under the theme of attachment. Many of these quotations were selected due to their presentation of a desire to be attached to a place or person. Atlantic Canada’s Hold Fast has the highest number of quotations under the theme of landscape, which is not surprising as the plot moves around Mike longing to engage in his own survival story in the wilderness of Newfoundland.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The following analysis relates the discourse analysis of the findings to the Research Questions posed in Chapter 1.

I. What is the significance for the young adult protagonist of the human geographical concept of attachment to an isolated landscape?

For the young adult protagonists in the novels examined, attachment to landscape is created as a result of their remote location from the rest of the country. The narratives of all the analysed novels describe distinct attitudes toward the city depending on the young adult protagonists' location with respect to the landscape. The home spaces with which the young adult protagonists are familiar are distant from the large urban centres of Canada and are encompassed by wilderness. The protagonists' sense of self stems from the confluence of distance from the city and their experience with the wilderness. Often, the young adult protagonists judge themselves based on their distance from the city and their experiences with landscape. This judgment usually results in an initial sense of superiority. Jones suggests in Butterfly on a Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature that "the more nature one succeeds in excluding, the more formidable the enemy grows" (Jones 1973, 68). This suggests that nature, when it is excluded, becomes an enemy to those who are unfamiliar with it.
The young adult protagonists in the examined novels are often located in or around nature for a major portion of their lives. For them, Jones’s statement is more accurate when reversed: the more “city” the characters succeed in excluding, the more formidable the enemy—the unfamiliar, urban space—grows. As Whitaker suggests in “Child in the Wilderness: The Romantic View” (1976), “The ‘tone of deep terror in regard to nature...a terror of the soul’ which Frye finds in Canadian poetry does not seem to have inhabited these children in the wilderness.” (Whitaker 1976, 27-28). In these novels the young adult protagonists pit themselves against the city rather than the wilderness, as is the frequent occurrence in Canadian adult wilderness literature in which nature is the enemy or antagonist. The more they view the city as enemy or antagonist, the more of a sense of pride they begin to feel regarding their knowledge of landscape.

The pride that the young adult protagonists may experience is a result of their supposed experience, knowledge, or understanding of their place in the landscape. This spatial and geographical knowledge of the landscape often results in the young adult protagonist either “showing off” this knowledge, or comparing their knowledge with others who are less familiar with the landscape. In Hold Fast, for example, Mike often uses the word “prove,” while the idea of “proving something” is repeated multiple times (Major 1978, 159; 175; 179). The young adult protagonists who “show off” or compare themselves with those who are less familiar with the wilderness or nature do so in order to prove how they live and interact with the landscape. In the article “Wilderness and Territoriality: Different Ways of Viewing the Land,” Manore suggests that it is through national identification with dichotomies such as a wilderness/civilization dichotomy that pride in wilderness has become a part of the Canadian identity (Manore 1998, 78). For
the young adult protagonists who identify themselves through their pride in the landscape, and their experience of interacting with the landscape, there is a strong desire to stand apart from people who live in more populated, urban areas. Yet, simultaneously, there is a desire to find a place where they belong. Although landscape provides temporary shelter for many of the protagonists, it cannot provide a sense of belonging that comes from family or friends.

For Mike, in *Hold Fast* (1978), the dichotomy between the urban landscape and the wilderness is extreme, even when the urban landscape is only a small city. Mike cannot accept that people who have not spent as much time as he has in the wilderness are as special as he is. His impression of his cousin Curtis as not being as “lucky” as he is suggests this immediately (Major 1978, 81). Mike believes his experience—and his sense of life as a result of his knowledge and experience in nature—make him unique. Tuan notes that “to stand out is ego boosting, but it is also tiring and stressful” (Tuan 1998, 93). Mike measures an individual’s worth almost completely through experience with the wilderness, and this is how he evaluates himself as belonging or as not belonging with the people he meets. His need to judge the inhabitants of the small city of Saint Albert according to their proximity to the wilderness, and their daily interactions (or lack thereof) with the landscape, offers him an unstable sense of pride that may make him unique, but leaves him isolated. Tuan articulates that “human beings are interested in other people and objects of importance to their livelihood. They want to know whether the significant others are far or near with respect to themselves and to each other” (Tuan 1977, 46). Mike wants to close the distance between him and the landscape he knows so
well, and he deeply wants to belong to a social group, or anyone who can make him feel “at home.”

Mike is not the only young adult protagonist in the research sample to react this way to his knowledge of, and his interactions with, the landscape. Lonny, in Bone Dance (Brooks 1997), assumes a divide in understanding between himself and a “city girl.” He views Alexandra as not belonging to the landscape he knows so well, while he does belong there due to his years of knowledge and interactions with it. Lonny does not want Alexandra to invade his rural world, as Lonny considers himself to be different from those who live in the city, and is threatened by her invasion. Ricou suggests in Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction, that “the basic image of a single figure amidst the vast flatness of the landscape serves to unify and describe Canadian prairie fiction” (Ricou 1973, ix). When Lonny and Alex are united to make two figures in nature, the prairie landscape is no longer perceived as terrifying or solitary, and Lonny’s experience of the spirituality of place is also no longer unique to him alone. Together, Lonny and Alex create a firm sense of belonging between them (in regard to each other and to the place they both understand) that had been lacking in their lives.

In This Side of the Sky (Hébert 2006), Mona recognizes a division between herself, as a girl who lives in the natural environment of the country and the lake, and Suson, a girl recently moved from the city and her urban friends. She resents Suson and her “perfect” possessions: Suson’s house, her father’s car, and Suson’s clothing. She notes that she would feel “out of place” (Hébert 2006, 43) next to the city girls. Mona’s resentment toward Suson reflects both envy and egotism. Tuan notes that such
differentiations may be a result of the egotism that stems from the sense of uniqueness that all humans crave (Tuan 1998, 102). The uniqueness that Mona experiences combined with her physical location in a natural landscape results in her sense of isolation, and desire to be a part of something larger. This need to at once stand out uniquely and belong to a place and a social group is at the heart of the pride many of the young adult protagonists experience while defining themselves with respect to their distance from the city and their interactions and experience with landscape.

This desire to be a part of something brings Squid back to Lizzie Island in The Lightkeeper's Daughter (Lawrence 2002); paradoxically, it is also what drives her away from the island. Squid cannot escape her family, but, unlike the way in which her parents attempt to keep their children isolated from the rest of the world, she does not want to escape the world. Murray's decision to impress on his children the stark distinctions between the family's idyllic life on the island and the horrors of the city represents his attempt to create a sense of union between the family and the island. Tuan suggests that "an awareness of the Other—an indifferent or hostile reality out there—further intensifies group solidarity and weakens the feeling of individual separateness" (Tuan 1998, 93). Yet Murray's plan to create his own world fails for his family as the children grow and become curious about the outside world and mature as sexual beings. Lizzie Island as a place separate from the world is impossible to maintain as the children mature.

Pudlo and Uncle Calvin in Whiteout (Houston 1989) attempt to show Jon their connection to the stark northern landscape. Upon his arrival, Jon judges the landscape in relation to its distance from, and his experience with, the city. Jon, unlike the young adult protagonists in Hold Fast (Major 1978), The Maestro (Wynne-Jones 1995), This Side of
the Sky (Hébert 2006), Bone Dance (Brooks 1997), and The Lightkeeper's Daughter (Lawrence 2002), has not grown up in and around nature. He is from a city firmly set in the “south,” and has trouble understanding the northern landscape. This limited vision is countered by Pudlo and Uncle Calvin as they demonstrate their experience with the north. Their actions separate and define Jon as an “Outsider” and a southerner.

The solidarity against the concept of the “Other” and “Otherness”\(^{11}\) are central themes in Whiteout. The north is the “Other,” and the people who inhabit the north must work together to defend themselves against it. This creates a sense of belonging in a world “where animals and humans never quite belong” (Houston 1989, 167). In Canada and the Idea of North, Sherill Grace notes that “people are seen either as absent from or quickly rejected by—or, if they stay, absorbed into—this critical construction of the Great White North” (Grace 2001, 33). Jon, although wishing to be absorbed into the storybook north he searches for at the outset of the narrative, is isolated from the north and hidden from it by the whiteout that covers the landscape while he and Panee are on their journey. Despite his best efforts to become close to the Inuit people, and to “belong” to the north, Jon realizes he belongs to the south, just like the majority of travelers to the Arctic. Frye notes that “in Canada the wilderness, symbolized by the north, creates a kind of doppelganger figure who is oneself and yet the opposite of oneself” (Frye 1982b, 49).

The frozen landscape that Jon encounters represents the adventurous, “new” Jon he wishes to become, while his true self is the urban dweller. The young adult protagonists’ place appears to be firmly set, and while brief sojourns out of place offer a

\(^{11}\) “Othering” involves a group of people who view a distinct “us” versus “them” dichotomy between themselves and something with which they are unfamiliar. The “Other” refers to “those perceived as different from self” (Canales 2000, 16). “Othering” in Canada has historically involved “othering” landscapes (in particular the Canadian wilderness), as well as groups of “minority” peoples such as the First Nations or Inuit.
chance for exploration and personal growth, as occurs in Jon’s case, the protagonists can only remain out of place for a period before needing to return to their original place in either nature or the urban environment.

While Burl in *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995) is not boastful, or even necessarily proud, of his knowledge of the wilderness, he recognizes a division between his life in rural Ontario and that of the life in the “big city.” Yet, unlike the young adult protagonists of the other novels, Burl does not immediately fit into either location: the wilderness or the city.

When Burl first encounters Toronto, the scene is so unfamiliar that he experiences it as a “moonscape” (Wynne-Jones 1995, 136). The city is distant from the life that Burl knows. Pharaoh, the town where Burl has grown up, is almost a ghost town, with only a diner and a gas station on a railway track. Frye notes that “a Canadian village…sprawls awkwardly along a highway or railway line, less an inhabited centre than an episode of communication. Its buildings express an arrogant defiance of the landscape; its roads and telephone wires and machinery twist and strangle and loop” (Frye 1971, 164-5). In Tuan’s scale of “The City: Its Distance from Nature” (1978a), Tuan suggests that “the city, as a shelter, protects human beings against nature’s vagaries” (Tuan 1978a, 6). Pharaoh, a sorry middle landscape, offers little protection for Burl. When he first enters the forest and finds the old trapper’s cabin, he finds that “the forest was reclaiming this place as its own” (Wynne-Jones 1995, 27). Everything he encounters is decaying and rotting until he finds the pyramid. When Burl first arrives in the city, he has a parallel experience. After some time in the city, he realizes that “he didn’t stand out so much”
(Wynne-Jones 1995, 142). Burl is trapped between nature and the city, neither fitting in with either environment, nor standing out. He has no place to call his own.

II. How does the young adult protagonist’s experience of escaping to nature or from nature change the attachment to an isolated landscape?

Tuan notes that “orientation in a new environment is among the more difficult cognitive tasks, yet once the environment has become familiar and we have established a habitual route it is possible to move in it with only minimal focal attention, and without the conscious recourse to imagery” (Tuan 1975a, 212). The escape from a familiar place offers a new perspective for the protagonist. While many of the young adult protagonists do become familiar with the environments they choose, or are forced to escape into, the familiarity with this new location is never complete. There is a certain resistance to become truly familiar with the new place. What familiarity they do gain in the new place gives them the opportunity to re-evaluate their original situation.

In *Hold Fast* (Major 1978), Mike, whose fierce pride in Marten only grows stronger when he moves to Saint Albert, spends his escape searching for his earlier life. As Hoogland notes, “place and other identifying features may also be incorporated into readers’ interior landscapes, often through confirming or challenging old formulations” (Hoogland 1997, 28). When he does return to Marten, Mike discovers that things are not better just because he is there. His parents are still dead, his grandfather is dying, and “home,” as it existed in his memories, will never be the same. Mike must challenge the old formulations of place with which he was familiar. He realizes, through his time in
Saint Albert, and his escape into nature, that his attachments are not simply to a familiar landscape, but, rather, to his family. His decision to “hold fast” and not run from his grandfather’s funeral represents Mike’s growth and acceptance, finally, to grieve.

*The Lightkeeper’s Daughter* (Lawrence 2002) explores concepts of emotional attachment to landscape. Despite the father’s attempt to create a place that no one would want to leave, by the narrative’s end, every McCrae has left, or will soon leave, Lizzie Island. Squid’s escape to Prince Rupert sours her feelings toward Lizzie Island before she returns. Atwood notes that “in Canada [family is] a trap in which you’re caught” (Atwood 1972, 131). Squid, despite her desperation to be free of Lizzie Island, is “unable to break away” (Atwood 1972, 131). She does not want her daughter, Tatiana, to be connected in any way to the island, and she feels ready to sever all ties with her home. Upon her return, however, Squid is presented with a myriad of memories, each one leaving a deeper impression than the last, until her heart is full. She examines her life, and, like Mike in *Hold Fast* (Major 1978), her deepest transformation is to accept her past, her attachment to place and people, and herself.

At the beginning of *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995), Burl’s attachment to the landscape exists due to practicality. He does not spend time thinking affectionately about his surroundings as he needs to concentrate on survival. He uses the wilderness only as a means to escape his father and rough home life. When Burl stumbles upon the pyramid in the woods, he becomes emotionally attached to the cabin and landscape, as a symbol of security, privacy, and possession: all of which Burl has never experienced. He clings to the idea of the cabin, and becomes attached to the idea of being Gow’s son, and the inheritor of the land. When Japheth Starlight, the owner of the Ghost Lake claim,
explains that, despite the cabin’s destruction, nothing of the place has truly been
destroyed, Burl struggles to understand and accept this. The place that he knew and
wanted was the one that had been created, for shelter and for protection, against the
landscape. It is too much of a challenge to his formulation of place (Hoogland 1997, 28)
for Burl to comprehend. He is able, however, to find a safe place with the Agnews, and
no longer is desperate for the pyramid as shelter to hide from Cal. He finally belongs to a
people that want him, and a place that is secure.

In Whiteout (Houston 1989), Jon is determined to escape his troubled past. He
arrives on Baffin Island in search of the “storybook Arctic” (Houston 1989, 12). He does
discover this aspect of the north, but he also discovers that, no matter how much he wants
to be attached to the landscape and a part of it, he remains a southerner. He does not
belong in or to the Arctic. Jon must accept that although he and Panee love each other,
neither of them would be happy out of their places of identity in the north and south.
Tuan notes that people “share a common store of hazy knowledge (myths) concerning a
far larger field—the region or nation—in which their own local areas are embedded”
(Tuan 1977, 88). Although Jon has learned a more concrete and authentic truth of the
north, it is still somewhat mythical to him. Panee also has the “common store of hazy
knowledge” of the south, and does not wish to exchange this sense of the south for a
more authentic experience. Jon escapes his southern city uncertain of what he is heading
toward, and returns to it with a deeper understanding of who he is and where he belongs
in the world.

Lonny and Alex in Bone Dance (Brooks 1997) have always sensed a spiritual
world found within the landscape. Neither of them truly “escapes” their present living
situation: there is no other place for Lonny to go, and Alex avoids facing her father’s cabin. Nevertheless, their attachment to the landscape profoundly alters and becomes more intense once they meet. Alex is overwhelmed by a sense of her father in every aspect of the land she has inherited, and Lonny, connected to the same land through generations past, is still haunted by the bones of his ancestors on Medicine Bluff. Tuan notes that “when people work together for a common cause, one man does not deprive the other of space; rather he increases it for his colleague by giving him support” (Tuan 1977, 64). Once Alex and Lonny establish a shared understanding and awareness of the landscape, Lonny no longer grieves the loss of the land that has been in his family for years. Alex accepts her father’s legacy, and they find love. Lonny’s guilt and ghosts leave him. Their new love within the shared space deepens and opens the world for a spiritual connection between the two.

Mona and Bird in This Side of the Sky (Hébert 2006) escape daily to the hidden lake for privacy. While their attachment to the landscape does not change during the course of the novel, they begin to understand the importance of landscape for people in peril. Honeyman notes that “most friendly childhood spaces draw from and continue the pastoral tradition of modernity, which idealizes and romanticizes the wild (ironically) as a safe retreat for those weary of civilized constraints” (Honeyman 2001, 118). The hidden lake, despite its stagnation, is not necessarily the safe retreat that Mona and Bird imagine it is. Their experience of the lake shifts from romanticized to emotionally turbulent after they witness the abuse that Suson has been enduring.

While Mona and Bird have great attachment to the woods and the hidden lake for its seclusion from the adult world, it also forces them (by being witness to, and helping
solve, the abuse) to grow up. The omniscience the girls acquire in the tall trees within the landscape allows Mona to look at Suson in a new way. She finally understands that Suson is not perfect. The omniscience allows Bird to be heard for the first time by someone other than Mona, and allows Bird to save Jon from jail. It is not the escape that changes the girls, but knowledge of the power of the place itself and what it offers those in need of protection.

III. Do young adult protagonists’ attachments to an isolated landscape differ from region to region?

A majority of the novels are clearly regional, with the exception of *This Side of the Sky* (which, however, does mention Canada's national animal, the beaver, twice and uses the word “province” once). All other titles contain place names and references to regional activities (such as squidding, logging, farming, lighthouse keeping, and ice fishing). Table 5.2, shown on the page 83, shows the number of quotations, combined with examples of quotations, compiled from each novel under the heading of region. Compared with the themes of landscape, attachment, and escape, the theme of region had the fewest quotations available for examination. *This Side of the Sky*, the shortest novel, had strikingly fewer regional quotations than any novel while *Whiteout* had the most with 20.

Despite the lower number of regional quotations, the parallel, recurrent themes of pride in isolated landscape and the use of landscape as a tool suggest regional unity within the sample. The geographical features of all the settings influence the young adult
protagonists’ attachment to a landscape. The characters virtually have no place else to go: the combined distance from the city and wilderness in which they live confines them to their location. Despite Mike’s familiarity and love of the region in *Hold Fast* (Major 1978), he cannot escape for long in a region where half the population knows or is related to him (Major 1978, 154). The vast woods of Ontario give Burl in *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995) no real option other than to go further into the woods. Mona and Bird in *This Side of the Sky* (Hébert 2006) imagine nothing but the trees and hills of their country life. The wide expanses of sky in *Bone Dance* (Brooks 1997) offer no privacy from prying eyes. In *The Lightkeeper’s Daughter* (Lawrence 2002), boat, helicopter, or death is required in order to escape Lizzie Island. In *Whiteout* (Houston 1989), Jon and his friends are at risk of being swallowed by the landscape. Until his year is completed, Jon has no other place to go. While emotional or practical attachment differs among the novels due to experience and situations, all the protagonists are united by their remote regional locations, where they are, in fact, forcibly attached to the landscape by its geographical construction.
### Table 5.2: Regional Theme and Quotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novel</th>
<th>Hold Fast</th>
<th>The Maestro</th>
<th>This Side of the Sky</th>
<th>Bone Dance</th>
<th>The Lightkeeper’s Daughter</th>
<th>Whiteout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 4</strong></td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Quotes</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
<td>A good evening of squid jigging is one of the best bits of fun you can have out on the salt water (30).</td>
<td>At White River you could hop off and hitch a ride up the Trans-Canada (25).</td>
<td>He'll travel from one end of the province to the other, steal one [scaffolding] if he has to (93).</td>
<td>First letter from Earl filled with place names, like Calgary, Indian Head Saskatchewan, Lethbridge (29—31).</td>
<td>She was kayaking along the coast, from Vancouver to Alaska, in the days when very few would even think of doing that (44).</td>
<td>The Hudson’s Bay usually takes all their supplies in by sea lift in mid-August when the winter ice is gone. Most government types consider Nanuvik a hardship posting (18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of Themes</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total of Themes</strong></td>
<td>103</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. What is the significance of the Canadian literary concept of “here” for adolescent protagonists in Canadian realistic fiction for young adults?

As noted in the review of the literature, Egoff observes that Canadian stories “make much of the landscape” (Egoff 1975, 154), while Saltman suggests that realistic fiction for young adults in Canada is “deeply rooted in both physical and emotional topography” (Saltman 1987, 66). The extent to which the landscape is used, and how deeply the physical and emotional topography affects the young adult protagonists, becomes clear in this thesis. Landscape for these teens is not simply a setting. It is an active element of plot, and something with which the young adult protagonist interacts. A familiar landscape is a place of belonging, memory, history, protection, and pride. It is the place in which relationships begin and end, and the place in which the protagonists mature. Landscape, as it exists in Canadian literature, “imagines location as identity” (Besner 1997, 19). The young adult protagonists and their identities are united in the remote wilderness that surrounds them.

It is critical to consider Staines’s observation that those areas of Canada which are “remote from whatever may seem to be the centre also share Canada’s own remoteness from the imperial centre” (Staines 1995, 16-17). Nationally, Canada is isolated from the rest of North America simply by its northern locale. With a sense of isolation at a national level, each province carries within it a sense of isolation from the country as a whole. For the young adult protagonists who live in rural communities that are distant from any large city, the isolation is palpable. In this context, Frye’s question of “where is here?” (O’Grady and Staines 2003) becomes, rather, a statement of “here is where I am.” As the adolescents are still at an age where they legally must live under adult supervision,
the lack of control over their lives synthesized with the remoteness of their homes creates a sense of “no place else to go.” They are attached to the landscape through lack of an alternative.

Staines notes that a more contemporary answer to Frye’s question of “where is here?” involves “a here defined without reference to there” (Staines 1995, 27). For the young adult protagonists in the novels examined, however, here is impossible to define without there. Having often not experienced there, they can only try to define themselves against it. There is an “Other”; its lack of definition makes it all the more necessary to define. In their attempts to define there, the young adult protagonists have no choice but to compare their ideas of there with their knowledge of here, the places with which they are so familiar.

Atwood affirms this need to understand here, noting that “here is where we live” (1972, 19). Atwood, however, discusses here in a national context—the “here” where “we” live. The isolation and remoteness of the places in which the young adult protagonists live is the link among the protagonists. This link, in a national context, is critical to their identity, as well. The maturity that they gain as a result of defining their here against there helps to shape their identity as much as their intimate knowledge of place.

With every novel presenting place names (like Toronto, Baffin Island, or Prince Rupert), regional activities (like logging, squidding, or sledding), or national iconography (like beavers, the RCMP, or the Canadian flag), Canadian cultural identity is not ignored within this sample. The very struggle of the wilderness/urban dichotomy is representative of Canadian identity (Manore 1998). As Hoogland, Jobe, and Black suggest, seeing
images of Canada in literature is necessary for young readers to develop an understanding of self. Hoogland notes that this is particularly crucial in young adult fiction, as this is where an understanding of what it means to be Canadian becomes visible “around the themes of identity, choice and belonging” (Hoogland 1997, 29). The desire to both choose place and to belong to a larger picture is evident in every novel examined. Seeing these images is critical, as Jobe notes, “for developing a positive self-concept of being a Canadian in the world” (Jobe 2003, 95). For the young adult protagonists, their understanding of place across a spectrum moves from the smallest, most invisible region, to a national self-concept, to their place in the world. Cultural identity, therefore, begins with the region before it stretches nationally or world-wide. Cultural identity begins with an understanding of here, and with maturity and experience, it grows to understand there.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study was to examine a selection of authors' representations of attachment to region and landscape within textual passages of Canadian young adult realistic fiction. Using a discourse analysis combined with concepts from Canadian literary theory and human geographical theory, this research discussed, divided by region, the significance for the young adult protagonists of their attachments to isolated landscapes, how these attachments to isolated landscapes change through escape, and how these isolated landscapes represent *here* for the young adult protagonists in the novels examined.

I. What is the significance for the young adult protagonist of the human geographical concept of attachment to an isolated landscape?

Based on the analysis of findings, the narratives exhibited parallels in the ways that the attachment to the landscape is formed. All the protagonists are connected by their isolation, their distance from the city, and their pride in this isolation and distance. The protagonists in *Hold Fast* and *The Lightkeeper's Daughter* form attachments based on memories, while those in *The Maestro* and *This Side of the Sky* form attachments out of necessity and practicality. Attachment to the landscape, for the young adult protagonists, determines how they define themselves in terms of geographical location, and in relation
to their interactions and experiences with landscape. It also determines operates with their memory-making and memory-remembering, and how they appropriate nature.

As Cresswell suggests, places “are combinations of the material and mental and cannot be reduced to either” (1996, 13). Each place that the young adult protagonist comes to have a spatial knowledge of is encased with meaning. When the protagonist uses a space for his or her own purpose, the use is not passive. The space always appears to have something the adolescent wants or needs, including memories, privacy, and protection from a seemingly difficult adult world.

Although it is not surprising that landscape plays a role in the novels examined, I was surprised by the finding about the importance of the young adult protagonist’s connection with the landscape as a result of the isolation. The significance that young adult protagonists place on their experience of isolation and wilderness in dichotomous terms against the city was a reoccurring pattern within and across the novels. The finding that the protagonists are all connected by their definitions of self as dependent on their distance from the city, their experiences and interactions with landscape, and their physical attachment—due to the geographical topography—shows that landscape in Canadian realistic fiction for young adults plays an active role in plot and character development.

The young adult protagonists all consider their experience with wilderness and isolation as making them unique. Mike, in *Hold Fast* argues this, for example, saying “people here haven’t got two clues compared to most people at home” (Major 1978, 126). He reinforces the “him versus them,” “city versus the wilderness,” and “in place/out of place” dichotomies. Yet the desire to remain unique while at the same time belong to a
social group is an important aspect of the pride with which the young adult protagonists in all the books struggle. Attachment to an isolated landscape for the young adult protagonists means the knowledge of a place where they feel they belong, yet that same place, due to its remote setting, is what makes their lives unique. This discovery of the young adult protagonists' uniqueness compared to "other people" (derived from their experience in an isolated landscape) often occurs during escape.

II. How does the young adult protagonist's experience of escaping to nature or from nature change the attachment to an isolated landscape?

Evidence from this study shows that the young adult protagonists' attachment to an isolated landscape increases through escape. Escape, by offering a fresh perspective on the young adult protagonists' lives and experiences allows them to mature. This maturity, along with their growing attachment to landscape, allows them to open themselves to new experiences, and allows them to be aware of the places they know. The protagonists in *Hold Fast* (Major 1978), *The Lightkeeper's Daughter* (Lawrence 2002), and *Whiteout* (Houston 1989) go on a quest in search of something, only to discover that what they are searching for is to be found where they started originally. Mike and Squid learn to accept their past, present, and future, while Jon learns that he belongs in his original place, the south.

The protagonists in *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995) and *Bone Dance* (Brooks 1997) also are on a quest. For Burl, it is a quest for security, privacy, and belonging, which he ultimately finds. Lonny and Alex in *Bone Dance* (Brooks 1997) find love, even
though they were not looking for it. In *This Side of the Sky* (Hébert 2006), Mona and Bird also learn something unexpected through their hiding spot. They discover how vital having a place to escape to can be. Escape is an important aspect of every novel examined, as is the return “home.”

What I discovered is that the sense of pride and uniqueness of identity in the protagonists’ spatial knowledge of the isolated landscapes in which they have grown up (or are determined to understand, as in the case of Jon in *Whiteout* (Houston 1989)) always increases after the protagonists escape their home setting. All the protagonists, with the exception of Squid from *The Lightkeeper’s Daughter* (Lawrence 2002) escape into nature and explore their attachment to the landscape. It is Squid’s return to Lizzie Island, however, and not her escape, that gives her a fresh perspective of her life.

For all the protagonists, escape offers a new perspective in which attachment for an isolated landscape has room to grow. Not surprisingly, escape also allows all the young adult protagonists to mature. They find a place where they belong yet are able to recognize and accept their unique experiences. This acceptance of their lives in relation to their location in an isolated landscape allows them to build new relationships, as occurs in *Bone Dance* (Brooks 1997), recognize nature as a valuable tool, as occurs in *This Side of the Sky* (Hébert 2006), and realize their place in the world, as occurs in *Whiteout* (Houston 1989).

The place the young adult protagonists eventually find themselves is often the same place where they began their journey. Most of the protagonists find themselves home again, or as occurs with Burl in *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995), finally in a safe place that will become home with familiarization. Squid in *The Lightkeeper’s Daughter*
(Lawrence 2002) returns home in order to accept the difficulties of her past, and, although she leaves again, she is not escaping when she leaves the second time. She carries Lizzie Island in her heart and is no longer fearful or resentful of the place she for so many years called home.

III. Do young adult protagonists’ attachments to an isolated landscape differ from region to region?

While regional quotations were the lowest in quantity among the quotations reflecting textual themes, with This Side of the Sky and Bone Dance the lowest among the research sample (these novels are also the shortest, but their regional identity quotations were disproportionately low), results indicated that a sense of “Canada” is nevertheless strong within each novel. The few regional remarks give colour to the settings just enough to develop an image of the landscape that has become familiar to so many Canadians, despite perhaps never experiencing much of it first-hand (Frye 1982b, 49). As Besner suggests, literature in Canada is “a literature that imagines location as identity” (Besner 1997, 92). The plots, with despite minimal references to place names and cultural markers, allow the protagonists to develop as Canadian simply in part to the isolated settings in which the novels take place.

Frye notes that “identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination and in works of a culture; unity is national in reference” (Frye 1971, ii). Although the sample novels were selected in part due to their rural and isolated settings, it is this very isolation
that connects each region of Canada to the next and brings them together to form one nation.

The meaning of attachment, through emotion, necessity, or practicality, differs for each protagonist from region to region, but their physical attachment as a result of the landscape connects all the characters. As Bordessa states, “to be Canadian is to be landscape” (Bordessa 1992, 69). Despite the disconnected regions, there is a definite sense of “Canada” within all of the novels.

From their disconnected regions across Canada, the young adult protagonists from the novels examined in this study are connected by their attachment to landscape, their choice to escape, and their choice to return home. They are linked by their isolated geographic locations. Their experiences differ, but their circumstances are similar. Mike in Hold Fast and Squid in The Lightkeeper’s Daughter, for example, are both trapped physically by the ocean and emotionally by memories of their past. Bone Dance and Whiteout have young adult protagonists who live in wide-open—yet isolated—landscapes that both expose and hide them in the landscape’s expansiveness. Burl in The Maestro and Mona and Bird This Side of the Sky are trapped in the forests of Ontario and rural Quebec. Burl vanishes, however, while Mona and Bird appropriate the forest around them and use it to their advantage to oversee the lives around them.

This finding of connectivity between the young adult protagonists through isolated regional locales is an important one, as it draws together the distance and space that divide Canada in every direction. I found that this discovery of connection between regions through isolation helps to explain why all the novels carried similar experiences of attachment through pride in an isolated landscape, and why escaping only increases
IV. What is the significance of the Canadian literary concept of “here” for adolescent protagonists in Canadian realistic fiction for young adults?

Each relationship between young adult protagonist and landscape is unique in this selection of novels. Tuan suggests that “experience...implies the ability to learn from what one has undergone” (Tuan 1977, 9). Based on analysis of findings, the landscape in Canadian realistic fiction for young adults is a source of pride; it simultaneously offers a sense of uniqueness and belonging; it elicits memories; and it provides protection, shelter, and privacy from the adult world. The landscape means and provides something of significance to every young adult protagonist in the novels examined. All the young adult protagonists judge themselves by—or are compared in the narrative against—their distance from the city and their experience and interactions with landscape. They judge themselves by their here.

*Here* for the young adult protagonists in the novels examined is, initially, a small-scale location, separated from Canada by its regional topography, and distant from the imperial centre (Staines 1995, 17). The young adult protagonists mature through escape; through escape they learn about *there*. With knowledge of *there*, *here* expands from a small-scale location to an area that stretches across the provinces, uniting the country through space and distance. *Here* initially leaves the young adult protagonists feeling
alone, but, by the end of every novel, they belong to someone and to somewhere. *Here* becomes a place of belonging.

This unity of distance and space is part of the answer of this Research Question. *Here* may be wherever you are (Atwood 1972, 19), but *here* is also nationally connected. *Here* refers to the smallest locale, but also to Canada as a whole—and Canada as a whole is created through these disconnected regions that are connected by distance, space, and isolation. *Here* is a place that is at once alone and yet part of a community. *Here* represents what the young adult protagonists experience as a part of their attachment—they want to be unique but at the same time belong to a social group. Their *here* allows them to do this. Their place, their *here*, is unique through its topographical features, its regional activities, and their experiences within it, but their *here* is also connected to the *here* that the other young adult protagonists know. The fact that the young adult protagonists are united to other regions in Canada simply due to their isolation means that they are never truly alone in their *here*. Without escape and recognition that there is something beyond a solitary *here*, the young adult protagonists would not mature and grow to understand *there*.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study has several limitations. The six novels selected provide a very small sample of the hundreds of young adults novels set in Canada. The criteria listed in Chapter 3 limits the study to only those Canadian books that were award-winning or finalists for awards; rural in setting and set in the contemporary era within the past 30 years; and with protagonists from 14 to 17 years of age.
Within these parameters, the selection of novels meeting the criteria was limited. The regions of Northern Canada and Atlantic Canada, in particular, are not common settings in award-winning, contemporary, realistic fiction for young adults. Literature for young adults set in these regions is most often historical, and most often involves time travel, expedition, and high adventure. Books of daily life set in the contemporary era are few. French Canada is also a challenging region for realistic fiction for young adults, as little has been translated into English (Cobban 2006). While realistic fiction for young adults from the Canadian Prairies is rich in numbers of titles meeting the criteria, novels set in Central Canada and Pacific Canada are frequently located in more populous, urban areas. As was found in novels set in Northern Canada and Atlantic Canada, more isolated, northern areas of these regions often act as the setting for time-travel, historical, or high adventure novels rather than those depicting daily life in the contemporary era.

The choice of the methodology of discourse analysis, as well, limited the study. Gee notes that “no piece of work can, or should, ask all possible questions, seek all possible sources of agreement, cover all data conceivably related to the data under analysis, or seek to deal with every possible linguistic detail” (Gee 2005, 114). This study examined entries from a socio-cultural perspective, but this is limited by the researcher’s own experience of region, landscape, and Canada. The results of the study may very well be different if replicated by a researcher with a different experience of Canada, region, and landscape.
Recommendations for Further Research

While this study was concerned with how a landscape and region affect the young adult protagonists within the literature selected, six books is not a large enough sample to state definitively whether or not attachment to landscape and the importance of landscape to character development is an on-going pattern in Canadian literature for young adults. A study with a more comprehensive sample of titles or one based on content analysis may be useful in determining to what extent the landscape plays a role in character development in Canadian fiction for young adults.

This study also examined novels published roughly within ten-year segments over thirty years (*Hold Fast* 1978; *Whiteout* 1989; *The Maestro* 1995; *Bone Dance* 1997; *The Lightkeeper’s Daughter* 2002; *This Side of the Sky* 2006). It may be possible to examine how and if the attachment to landscape changes over this period of time or to compare a selection of contemporaneously published novels with older titles to examine how such changes may evolve.

Although *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995), *Bone Dance* (Brooks 1997), and *Whiteout* (Houston 1989) have protagonists who are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, respectively, an in-depth discussion on ethnocultural identity or Aboriginality was beyond the scope of this investigation. The ways in which the landscape is depicted as integral to the lives of many Aboriginal groups, and how protagonists are shaped as a result, would be worthy of a focussed study.

As well, the young adult protagonists in the novels examined are all born in Canada (with the exception of Jon in *Whiteout* whose southern home is unidentified and may well be American). To examine the Canadian landscape from the perspectives of a
multicultural sample of young adult protagonists who are immigrants to Canada would likely prove a rich study. Although the researcher did not examine novels with protagonists who have immigrated to Canada, and she is unable to say whether or not stories of these protagonists are set in urban or rural settings, their views on the Canadian landscape in general may be valuable. These characters would bring their own cultural understandings of the meanings of landscape as influenced by their home cultures, and this new perspective would perhaps question how the Canadian landscape is discussed in a changing, increasingly multicultural, pluralistic, society.

As this study relied heavily on the discipline of human geography, it would be worthwhile to examine Canadian children’s or adult literature theorists with individual books of the young adult regional experience from the theorists’ perspectives rather than from those of the human geographers. This would likely extend the discussion of Canadian cultural identity as a whole.

Examining differences of identity and landscape in fiction for young adults between English Canada and French Canada, north or south, or east or west may also yield interesting results. As a country of dichotomies, Canada, as Frye notes, “‘goes from the provincial to the regional, which is the more mature form of provincial culture, without going through the national phase at all’” (Cayley 1992, 131). Thus examining Canada, as “a nation of regions” (Jobe 2003, 79), through its multitude of dichotomies, is critical for Canadian young adult protagonists and their sense of place and self and understanding of cultural identity.
Personal Conclusion

Experience of place is profoundly personal. The intimate knowledge that I carry with me of the landscape in Northwestern British Columbia is mine alone, but my pride in this landscape stems from a shared experience of isolation. My high school classmates and I were—and continue to be, despite the distance we have now built between ourselves and Terrace—united by isolation from major urban centres and mainstream Canadian culture. We would discuss it at parties, talk about closing it by leaving Terrace, and pretend that we hated it. As soon as we would go south, however, we were boastful and proud about our isolation, and how it added to our knowledge of "North" and our experience of isolation. Although I have not been camping in years, when I was invited to go camping on Vancouver Island while completing my undergraduate degree, I, like Mike in Hold Fast (Major 1978), scoffed and suggested that it was not "real camping," referencing my privileged sense of pride in the Northern isolation and relationship to "real" wilderness. Only recently, through my years abroad and living "South" in Vancouver and beyond have I begun to recognize that my attachment to the landscape is one that no longer lives in Northwestern British Columbia but, rather, in the idea of Northwestern British Columbia.

The space between home and escape allows attachment to increase and, as a result, regional pride becomes stronger. It is this regional pride in place, as a result of isolation, that unites people like me with others who have experienced life as an adolescent in an isolated landscape. Through this solitary but also shared experience of isolation, we are united across ten provinces and three territories, divided by region, as part of the country. From distant corners of varying topography across Canada human
lives are being lived, as Tuan says, in “a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom” (Tuan 1977, 54). Ironically connected by space and distance, many of these people, like myself and the Canadian young adult protagonists in the novels examined, can imagine “no place else.”

When I was growing up, seeing reflections of young adult protagonists who understood isolation in landscape the way I did was a reassurance that I was not alone. For adolescents who continue to live in remote regions in Canada, it is important to see themselves in the narratives they read, set in places that are familiar, or, at least that represent a shared sense of isolation due to the landscape, like those in which the novels in this study were set. It was books that helped me, as a teenager, come to terms with my location within Canada. Even now if I hear of a novel being written about Northwestern British Columbia I immediately buy it to see how authentically the author has captured the place I know so well.

I believe that for young adults who do not have experience living in an isolated landscape, novels that depict such locations are just as valuable. The settings of these novels are reminders for all Canadians—in rural communities or urban centres—of the wide-open spaces that Canada still boasts, of the challenges that Canadians still face due to this magnitude of space, and of the difficulties that we, as Canadians, have in our lack of identity as a unified nation. Simultaneously, however, I feel that it is this knowledge of space, of our natural resources, and of the communities so distanced from “the imperial centre” (Staines 1995, 17) that serves to unify us. It is this power of place, awe of space, and knowledge of isolation (whether it be isolation in the novels we read or isolation that
we have experienced first-hand) that links us together, place to place, region to region, province to province, and territory to territory, to form Canada.
REFERENCES


CANADIAN REALISTIC FICTION FOR YOUNG ADULTS


APPENDICES

Appendix A

This appendix contains quotations, separated by region, novel, and theme, that were valuable for the analysis, but were not incorporated into the body of the thesis.

Atlantic Canada: *Hold Fast* (Major 1978)

Landscape

- “I could put on the boots and leave the back of the house and in no more than two minutes I’d be up in the country, out of sight of any house in the place. Go all day, then and not see a single soul” (26-27).

Attachment

- “People here haven’t got two clues compared to most people at home, not two friggin clues” (126).

Escape

- “We’d spend the first few days off in the woods somewhere. That’d give the old man something to chew his fingernails about” (134).
- I’m actually leaving St. Albert behind. Heavens only knows where we might end up, but what odds. Every mile was one mile farther away from misery” (142).

Central Canada: *The Maestro* (Wynne-Jones 1995)

Landscape

- “As he watched, one whole side of the cabin sagged inward. He walked towards the blaze until he heard a huge piano chord boom out above the
crackling of the blazing building. The sound echoed out and up into the sky and spiraled into the stars” (197).

Attachment

- “Burl and his mother shared this almost happiness, but they did not talk about it. They snuck around the edges of it, afraid Cal might notice and break it” (20).

Escape

- “Childhood dripped off him in great huge gobs of sweat” (24).
- “When you lived under the same roof as a man like Cal, you had to be ready to run and hide at a moment’s notice” (25).

French Canada: This Side of the Sky (Hébert 2006)

Landscape

- “Trees! If I were a tree, which one would I be? My sister often says she’d be the tallest tree on earth” (86).
- “Suson’s house keeps on standing, still bigger and grander than the other houses with its little awnings, its jagged rock garden, its flower bed without a leaf out of place” (112).

Attachment

- “It’s our lake, our rock. We found them first. There’s no room for anyone else. Especially not him” (50).

Escape

- “‘He just hid in the woods. He did nothing’” (68).
“But can she hear the beaver’s silence saying, ‘if you’re the enemy, clear out of here. You’re wasting your time. You won’t catch us! As long as you’re around, we’re not moving. We’re hidden, well hidden in a place you’ll never find.’ Does she hear the silence of my not wanting anything to do with a baby brother?” (117)

**The Prairies: Bone Dance** (Brooks 1997)

**Landscape**

- “‘My father left me land? And a cabin by the lake?’” (37).
- “There was something out there in the darkness. Maybe it was the land itself. Telling him that he was not welcome” (125).

**Attachment**

- “He had been dreaming of his mother. She had appeared to him as a vision in a shiny white dress decorated with beads the colour of the sunrise and long, soft feathery fringe” (19).

**Escape**

- “In the fourth letter he had moved on to Lethbridge. Moving. Always moving” (30).
- “You couldn’t ever do anything on these roads without someone coming along, asking if you needed help, about how Pop was, wanting to discuss their crops, their kids, their wives, bingo night at the Legion Hall in town, the latest doings of some neighbor” (153).
**Pacific Canada: The Lightkeeper’s Daughter** (Lawrence 2002)

**Landscape**
- “Now it seems smaller than she remembers, the trees crowding more closely around the houses and lawns. The tower has shrunk. The islets and reeds that had stretched on forever now huddle close by” (10).
- “It’s darker than the sea and darker than the sky, a hunched shape like an animal sleeping” (246).

**Attachment**
- “Squid is folded up on a smooth shelf of rock, one of her favorite childhood places, a stony love seat on a clifftop” (40).
- “It isn’t a sad place, as Squid thought it might be” (57).

**Escape**
- “It pained the children, she thought, that they had to face her as they rowed away. They were still watching one another when they made their first landfall, on the island across the lagoon” (134).
- “It drove itself ashore; it almost crawled toward the trees” (210).

**Northern Canada: Whiteout** (Houston 1989)

**Landscape**
- “Jon watched the blue shadow of their aircraft as it winged over a small village with houses scattered to match the contours of the land” (9).
- “‘But closeness and respect for all animal and human life is at the core of their religion’” (16).
• “Theirs did not look at all like conventional southern Christmas trimmings—
no trees, no bells, no candy canes and no Santas here. Instead, colored
animals, birds, fish and humans danced everywhere” (119).

Attachment

• “‘I need training, study,’ admitted Jon. ‘But how can I leave this place now,
when everyone and everything I care about is here?’” (224).

Escape

• “Walski ushered Jon out of the school and firmly closed the door behind him.
Jon realized that he had nowhere in this small settlement to go except back to
the Company house” (56).