"Even in this Canada of Ours":
Suffering, Sympathy, and Social Justice
in Late-Victorian Canadian Social Reform Discourse

by

JANICE ANNE FIAMENGO

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1986
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1988

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of English

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April 1996
© Janice Anne Fiamengo, 1996
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of English

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date April 25, 1996
ABSTRACT

Social historians have identified in late nineteenth-century English Canada a passion for social reform, largely initiated and organized by white, middle-class, Protestant Canadians, and designed to teach Canadian society greater compassion, equality, and humanity. Responding to the changes wrought in a rapidly industrializing, expanding nation, social reformers hoped to alleviate the suffering caused by social hierarchies, particularly the physical distress of the working poor and the stifling confinement of middle-class women. During this same period, a developing nationalist discourse insisted that Canada, for reasons of its youth, political institutions, climate, and racial composition, was already far in advance of other nations in its superior tolerance, egalitarianism, and sympathy for the weak. The tensions, accommodations, and contradictions resulting from the intersection of nationalist and reform discourses is the focus of my study. Although the social concerns of this period have been the subject of a number of recent sociological and historical studies, very little attention has been paid to social criticism in English-Canadian literary texts. To remedy such neglect, this study examines the social problem novel in the context of a broad range of non-literary texts, such as addresses to the Royal Society, social reform essays, political editorials, and reports to reform organizations. I analyze how these texts together produce, contest, or defend an ideal of Canada as a classless, just, and harmonious New World nation.

To examine this problematic and productive conjunction of nationalism and social criticism, I give close attention to three novels that form the centre-piece of my study: Agnes Machar's Roland Graeme, Knight (1892), Joanna Wood's The Untempered Wind (1894), and Amelia Fytche's Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls (1895). Reading these three novels as representative in their discursive strategies, I conclude that the social problem text took on the task of generating compassion among the educated and influential middle classes for the socially marginal in Canadian society: the poor, the intemperate, the fallen, and the transgressive. In these texts, compassion depends on the representation of undeserved,
decorous suffering. Through such representations, these novels are engaged in two processes of definition. They define appropriate objects of philanthropic intervention at the same time as they define the nature and the boundaries of the sympathetic Canadian community. Social problem literature constructs ideal figures deserving hitherto-denied inclusion in this community, but invariably these narratives also identify and expel those who fall outside the community's bounds. Thus, social problem discourses reveal some of the fundamental cultural debates of the period and give us insight into the creation and consolidation of a hegemonic humanist ethic that continues to dominate representations of Canada and social justice today.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii

Table of Contents iv

Acknowledgements v

INTRODUCTION

Critical Context 1
Questions of Genre 4
Methodology 18
Rationale 22
Outline of Further Chapters 25

Chapter One

Nationalism, Uncertainty, and Narratives of Inclusion 32
The Construction of Canada 37
Literature and Nationalism 57
The Publishing Industry in Canada 65
Social Reform and Social Control 67
Maternal Feminism and Social Reform 70

Chapter Two

Sympathy and Social Investigation in the Writing of Agnes Maule Machar 79
Introduction and Context 82
The Sympathetic Community 91
Investigation 111
Fear 129

Chapter Three

Sympathy and the Fallen Woman in The Untempered Wind 147
Introduction and Context 148
Social Constructions of the Fall 157
Determinism and the Sympathetic Narrative 162
Reading, Representation, and Woman's Desire 168
The Reciprocal Ideal 178
Degeneration 188

Chapter Four

Disciplining the New Woman in Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls 208
Introduction and Context 209
The Search for Love and the Construction of Femininity 216
Displacement, Discipline, and Anglo-Saxon Domesticity 232
Class, Compatibility, and the Urban Threat 249

CONCLUSION

The Question of Literary Value 267
Directions for Further Work 277

Works Cited 283
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Probably every thesis writer experiences periods of despondency and self-doubt; at these times, only the support and encouragement of sympathetic readers carry one through. Professors Egan and Ricou have been generous and patient throughout the process: I have valued their constructive criticism of content and kind pruning of stylistic atrocities. I would probably not have begun, much less finished, a Ph.D. without my supervisor's calm, steady belief in my abilities. Professor Kröller's directions, good humour, and faith have been sustaining. Throughout the course of this project, I have participated in two thesis groups, the members of which have provided rigorous criticism, much-needed perspective, and timely props to my self-esteem. For their countless hours of careful reading and astute critical engagement, I thank Professor Egan again, Jenny Lawn, Liz McCausland, and Peter Wilkins. Gabi Helms was part of one thesis group, and also deserves special thanks for proof-reading the entire manuscript--and losing sleep into the bargain--at a particularly stressful stage of its completion and of her own work. (Any remaining typos are entirely my own additions). I would probably not have managed my oral defence successfully without the probing and at-times merciless "practice oral" so kindly participated in by Gabi Helms, Ameen Merchant, Jeff Miller, and Lesley Ziegler, who showed themselves to be extremely intelligent examiners. I am also grateful to Scott McFarlane for helping me to clarify my thinking on theoretical issues pertaining to my thesis. Personal thanks for their love and nurturing are due to my parents, Helen and Vince Fiamengo, and to my dear friends Lesley Ziegler, Sook C. Kong, Ameen Merchant, and Donna Kurek. Special thanks to Clare Hauer for listening to long digressions on Foucault and for understanding when the thesis was off limits for discussion.
INTRODUCTION

I take the title for this study from an essay by Agnes Maule Machar entitled "Voices Crying in the Wilderness" (1891). Published in The Week, the essay is a defence of the American radical Episcopalian Father J. Huntington, whose Georgite ideas had been attacked by George Grant, Principal of Queen's University and a friend of Machar's, when Huntington toured Canada that year. In supporting Huntington together with Salvation Army leader General Booth, Machar criticizes the discrepancy between Christian teachings and contemporary urban-industrial conditions, particularly the injustice that

the employed must consider themselves fortunate if they can 'make both ends meet' in a bare subsistence; if their cramped bodies have a roof that will keep out the rain, walls that will afford some adequate protection from the winter's frost, and a floor not charged with hidden germs of disease; an ideal by no means frequently realized even in this Canada of ours. (169)

The idea and its manner of expression are characteristic of Machar, as is particularly that final phrase; and the phrase is especially pertinent to Anglo-Canadian social reform writing in general. As an expression of regretful truth-telling, the phrase is suggestive of Protestant social reformers' ambivalence, tendency to qualify, defensiveness, and nationalistic preoccupations. With that phrase, Machar both recognizes the existence of social problems in Canada and emphasizes Canada's special status as a place potentially free of injustice and social ills, establishing Canada as an attainable ideal even as she acknowledges the nation's failures. Like many of the writers I have encountered in my

1 For an overview of the controversy, see Cook 1985, 186-90.
2 The phrase is also potentially ironic. In his discussion of patriotic verse in Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness, J. G. Bourinot quotes from a Mr. Edgar's national song entitled "This Canada of Ours":

  Strong arms shall guard our cherished homes
  When darkest danger lowers,
  And with our life-blood we'll defend
  This Canada of ours,
  Fair Canada,
  Dear Canada,
  This Canada of ours. (1893, 26)
research for this study, Machar struggles with the question of how one could express love for one's country and criticize it at the same time; for many reformers of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, both of these expressions were urgent.

I became interested in the subject of social reform writing through my reading in late nineteenth-century Anglo-Canadian social and intellectual history, which revealed an aspect of Canada's past that I had not previously known: a generation struggling to influence the nation's destiny and to bring Canada into line with the ideal, expressed by Machar, of a nation without suffering. Historians have defined the progressive reform movement as one of the defining features of the period. Carol Lee Bacchi contends that "a reform spirit characterized the age" (1983, 7-8). The title chosen by Richard Allen for his study of the Social Gospel identifies the movement as a "social passion" that swept through churches, benevolent institutions, schools, and reformatories (1971). Ramsay Cook has called the social reformers of late-Victorian Canada "the regenerators" to distinguish both the religious underpinnings and the far-reaching nature of the reforms these visionaries sought to implement (1985, 3). The late nineteenth century saw a significant growth in reform organizations, largely in response to the dislocations and social transformations of industrialization and urbanization; at the same time, reformers acted in response to the perceived need to create healthy, productive citizens for the newly created nation. Whether the reform impulse deserves the adjective "progressive" has been much debated among social historians over the last fifteen years. Bacchi, for one, defines the movement as conservative, as an anxious and self-protective response to perceived social disintegration: "[t]emperance, the Canadianizing of the foreigner, the battle against prostitution, the campaign for compulsory education, the desire to rescue delinquents--all reveal a common desire to restore a degree of control over society and chiefly over its deviants" (1983, 9).

This dissertation as a whole is an extension, elaboration, and interrogation of Bacchi's influential assessment in the realm of representation; rather than focusing on specific historical phenomena, as Bacchi does, I examine the social reform movement as a set of
discursive practices\(^3\) aimed at building an imaginary version of the Anglo-Canadian nation state. What kind of nation "this Canada of ours" would be, and which people qualified for citizenship, are the central questions my study attempts to answer.

In my research, I was interested to discover whether this preoccupation with shaping Canada's destiny and defining the nature of its society found expression in the novels of the period. I was particularly interested to see whether women writers were as involved in producing this literature as they were in organizing and staffing reform organizations. While philanthropic and suffrage activity provided one of the few opportunities for women to enter the public sphere, novel-writing provided "a platform for the dissemination of ideas about society" at a time when "almost all other intellectual occupations were closed to them" (Dean 1991, 7). I began to read in the period, and discovered how little criticism exists on this body of writing.

Although my main focus is the novel, I also give a great deal of attention to non-literary texts because I am interested in the relationship between the novel and its contexts, which I find in the essays, reports, and speeches of social purity activists, medical inspectors, religious leaders, social welfare advocates, political economists, temperance crusaders, Social Gospel writers, civic reformers, and cultural commentators. My first chapter examines the ways that Canada was being defined as a nation, and how the relationship between literature and the nation was conceived and represented. The three chapters of literary analysis are organized around three novels: Agnes Maule Machar's *Roland Graeme. Knight* (1892), Joanna E. Wood's *The Untempered Wind* (1894),\(^4\) and

\(^3\) In my use of the term *discourse*, I refer to a sub-language (medical science, philanthropy, social science, religion) and the manner in which it delineates a subject and organizes how it can be talked about. In the words of Lynette Finch, a discourse is "a particular understanding and a particular way of speaking about, acting upon, organizing and reacting to" a subject (1993, 2). Discourses not only determine what their subjects mean, but also what is meaningful in relation to the subject. The reference to discourse does not suggest that there is no reality outside of language, but rather that language systems determine how people apprehend their reality. My interest in the language of various literary and non-literary texts is not, then, to judge them as true or distorted reflections of reality, but rather to understand how these discourses contributed to and supported one another in the production of a number of interconnected subjects, including Canada, the labour question, the woman question, sexuality, and "the race."

\(^4\) Dates are important for any study with a historical focus. In cases of novels and studies that have been reprinted, my decision has been to provide their original publication date both in my text and in my Works
Maria Amelia Fytche's *Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* (1895). Because these three novels are read more as representative than as unique literary texts, the discussion includes references to other contemporary writers, including Lily Dougall, Albert Carman, Marshall Saunders, Sara Jeannette Duncan, Maud Petitt, and Grant Allen. This thesis is not intended to be a definitive study of particular novelists or a history of social reform writing. Neither is it a study of the material conditions of writing and publishing in nineteenth-century Canada, a worthy subject requiring another dissertation.⁵ Rather, it uses these three novelists, and to a lesser degree, their contemporaries, to initiate a new perspective on what I refer to as the social problem novel in English Canada.⁶ My purpose is to examine the social problem novel in the context of emerging Anglo-Canadian nationalism(s) and national self-definition(s). I argue that social reform writing both contradicts and supports Anglo-Canadian nationalist ideology, and that an examination of the texts from this period reveals certain important features about the self-constitution of English-Canadianness in the late nineteenth century, a period witnessing both an increased concern about the problems and possibilities of nationhood and a burst of writing by Canadian authors.⁷

**Critical Context**

In her article on pioneer women autobiographers, Helen Buss refers to the dominance of the Frygian motif of the frontier in Canadian literary criticism,⁸ particularly in criticism of

---

⁵ Susan K. Harris' assertion that social criticism in nineteenth-century literature "had to be covert if [the authors] wanted to sell," underlines the importance of understanding the literary marketplace to contextualize the novels (1993, 267). Lamentably little information is available about the conditions under which the texts in my study were written and published. I acknowledge my study's inadequacy in this respect and applaud the crucial archival work being carried on by such critics as Gerson (1992).

⁶ Consensus regarding terminology has not been reached. Carrie MacMillan uses the term "problem novel" (1993, 172), Shirley Samuels refers to "reform literature" (1992, 5), Deborah Carlin refers to "discourses of reform" in her title and "philanthropic fiction" in her article (1993, 207), Carole Gerson employs the term "social novel" (1989, 132), and Frank Watt titled his influential study "The Literature of Protest" (1965). I use "social problem novel" for literary texts that explain and propose solutions for social problems.

⁷ Gordon Roper notes that the volume of fiction produced by Canadian writers rose significantly after 1880 (1976, 275).

⁸ See Northrop Frye's "Conclusion" to the *Literary History of Canada* (1965).
the nineteenth-century novel (Buss 1990, 123). This body of criticism, the tendency of which is to convert specific literary texts into instances of a monolithic and trans-historical Canadian mind-set, theorizes confrontations between the individual and "an alien continent" filled with "the unknown, the unrealized, the humanly undigested" as the central fact of Canadian literary consciousness (Frye 1965, 217, 220). In fact, Frye does discuss many kinds of literature outside of these parameters, specifically the literature of protest, but his most evocative metaphors concern the now famous "garrison mentality" and the image of the immigrant or visitor to Canada as being "swallowed" by the land (225, 217). The most obvious descendants of Frye in this respect are Margaret Atwood in *Survival* (1972) and Gaile McGregor in *The Wacousta Syndrome* (1985), who extend Frye's provisional remarks that "[i]n the Canadas, even in the Maritimes, the frontier was all around one, a part and a condition of one's whole imaginative being" into a prescriptive and totalizing literary roadmap (1965, 220). Buss does not dispute the validity of such a critical project except to point out that, "once accepted as the only valid one," it "misleads and misdirects the act of reading" (1990, 125). In addition, as Nina Baym (1985) has pointed out in the American context, the idea of the confrontation between the individual and an alien (or liberating) environment is an essentially masculinist one that tends to align women with either nature or stifling social convention; it also largely fails to account for representations of community in literary texts. Thus I would extend the insights of Buss and Baym to suggest that this focus on the individual/land configuration has contributed to the neglect of that aspect of Canadian literary history with which I am here concerned.

As it is defined by the literary academy, nineteenth-century English-Canadian literature has rarely been associated with the social problem novel. Rather, the writers

---

9 In addition, Buss points out the indebtedness to Frye of D. G. Jones' *Butterfly on Rock* (1970), John Moss's *Patterns of Isolation in English-Canadian Fiction* (1974), and Margot Northeby's *The Haunted Wilderness* (1976), and notes McGregor's unacknowledged precursor in Robin Matthews' "The Wacousta Factor" (1978).

10 The myth of American literature, Baym argues, "narrates a confrontation of the American individual, the pure self divorced from specific social circumstances, with the promise offered by the idea of America" (1985, 71).
connected with the late-Victorian Canadian novel tend to be writers of the historical romance (William Kirby, Gilbert Parker); the frontier adventure story (Ralph Connor, Martin Grainger); or the social comedy (Sara Jeannette Duncan, Stephen Leacock). The social problem novel has been little studied because it has generally been assumed not to exist, or to have an existence unworthy of notice. The studies that do exist have tended to over-simplify and to homogenize the novels, either through dismissing them for their failure to engage fully with the problems of Canadian society, or by celebrating them as confused but well-intentioned precursors to mature feminist or socialist writing. As texts repaying full and critical study on their own, they have been almost entirely neglected.

F. W. Watt and Mary Vipond, though providing excellent research, both focus on the inadequacies of Canada's early social problem literature. In his article on "Literature of Protest," Watt identifies a strong "conservative tradition which is mainly responsible for the

11 "The Kinds of Fiction," by Gordon Roper, Rupert Schieder, and S. Ross Beharrell, in the Literary History of Canada (1976) does mention the novel of ideas or of social criticism as one among its seven kinds of fiction; in listing these novels, the article misidentifies Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls as "a melodrama of a young woman who goes to Paris to paint, marries a Frenchman, and is deserted by him" (324). In fact, Dorothy goes to Paris to find work; presumably, Roper was confusing Fytche's novel with Duncan's A Daughter of Today, published the previous year. Mary Jane Edwards' "Novels in English: Beginnings to 1900" in The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature addresses the predominant fictional genres of the nineteenth century, designating historical romance as "perhaps the most popular" and also including "humorou sketches and novels, domestic romances of high society, animal and other tales for children, and adventure stories" (1983, 567). The summary regrets that "the circumstances that allowed these early Canadian writers to publish internationally militated against their being able to develop a Canadian fiction in English that dealt subtly with serious themes of national cultural significance" (567-68). Edwards discusses Frances Brooke's Emily Montague (1769), John Richardson's Wacousta (1832), Rosanna Leprohon's Antoinette de Mirecourt (1864), and William Kirby's The Golden Dog (1877) as examples of "works of Canadian fiction that did at least isolate important Canadian themes and play with their significance" (568). In A History of Canadian Literature (1989), William H. New discusses the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century in terms of six general categories. The English-Canadian novelists and genres that receive substantial treatment (i.e. more than a sentence or two) are the following: documentary romance [Rosanna Leprohon, John Richardson]; historical tales [William Kirby, Gilbert Parker]; sentimentality, satire and social reform [Nellie McClung, L.M. Montgomery, James DeMille, Sara Jeannette Duncan]; social and literary resistance [Ralph Connor]; nature stories [Charles G. D. Roberts, Ernest Thompson Seton]; sketches of reality [Stephen Leacock]. Agnes Machar is mentioned twice, both times in lists, once as the writer of "romantic tales and sketches" (99), and once, misidentified, as "the Salvation Army Novelist" (112). Joanna Wood receives a single sentence; none of her novels is named (106). Amelia Fytche is not mentioned at all.

12 From this sweeping denunciation of academic neglect I exempt the critics to whom I am indebted in this study, particularly Gerson (1983) for her work on Agnes Machar, MacMillan (1980) for her Introduction to the reprint of Kerchiefs, and Barbara Godard (1992) for her article on Joanna Wood. I am also appreciative of Lorraine McMullen's (1986) article on Lily Dougall and the ground-breaking preliminary work of MacMillan, McMullen and Elizabeth Waterston in Silenced Sextet (1993).
building of the nation of Canada as it is today" and explains the failures of protest literature as owing to the strength of this conservative tradition (1965, 473). According to Watt, the "exigencies of nation building" largely quelled any elements of protest and resistance in the literature written in the period following Confederation (475). Because his essay is an overview, Watt cannot give detailed attention to individual texts, but the general impression conveyed in his study is of a self-satisfied and painfully simplistic body of work. Watt's tradition, however, is almost exclusively male (he gives a glancing reference to Agnes Machar), and understands protest only as criticism of industrial capitalism, giving no attention to explorations of the Woman Question in fiction of the period.

Vipond's "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" (1975) presents an astute analysis of the treatment of class relations and the industrial problem in social gospel fiction. Yet the article devotes only very cursory treatment to the three novels it examines (Machar's Roland Graeme, Carman's The Preparation of Ryerson Embury [1900], and Ralph Connor's To Him That Hath [1921]) contenting itself with general plot summary and character description ("[e]ach character in the novel embodies a lesson [34]") and thus simplifying the ideas and representational strategies in the texts. Commenting that "an examination of the beliefs and goals of Canadian social Christians tells us more about the hopes and fears of the middle class than it does about the condition of the working class," Vipond then proceeds to dismiss Social Gospel fiction, arguing that it "served to reassure their middle class readers that social harmony was not lost forever; that all that was needed to restore peace and tranquility was personal commitment to Christian principles" (33). Although recognizing the contradictions in Machar's portrayal of solutions to labour unrest, Vipond does not see these as productive or as leading to greater complexity of presentation, agreeing with Watt that Machar's novel is "'essentially a romantic story of high society'" with a message of "moderation, goodwill and noblesse oblige" (35). Vipond also seems to misinterpret the significance of the cooperative factory that Graeme intends to establish at the novel's conclusion, reading it as "a throwback to the methods advocated by the British
Christian Socialists of the early 1850's" rather than connecting it, logically, to the Knights of Labour, on whose movement the book is partly based (35-36). Although Machar certainly was influenced by the British Christian Socialists, particularly the writer Charles Kingsley, Vipond's comment ignores the novel's contemporary historical context and serves to deepen, even while she laments it, the novel's conservatism.

Other criticism of Canadian writing of the period, particularly of women's writing, is apologetic in tone. For example, the title of McMullen's edited collection *Re(dis)covering Our Foremothers* (1990) suggests a desire for connection that forecloses critical rigour or reading against the grain. Many of the essays in this collection, though excellent as resources for work on lost or marginalized writers, engage in uncritical celebration of the women authors being reclaimed, emphasizing to the neglect of all else the positive proto-feminist qualities of the writers. Similarly, Gwendolyn Davies' "The Literary 'New Woman' and Social Activism in Maritime Literature, 1880-1920" (1994) aspires to reclaim Maritime women writers as heroic foremothers of contemporary feminism. I will look at Davies' article in some detail because it seems to be representative of much of the critical work on nineteenth-century women's writing. Although the article is well-researched and thoroughly scholarly, a lack of critical rigour in its feminist approach leads to inadequacies in its presentation of the social importance of the body of work under examination. Commenting that New Woman characters in literature "reflected the intellectuality and independence afforded women by new opportunities in education and the professions," Davies approaches the New Woman as a straight-forward reflection of current social realities rather than as one of the discourses contributing to her representation (234). Davies evaluates the impact of such writing in terms of gender politics alone; because she interprets any foray of women into the public sphere as liberating for them and subversive of the dominant order, she assesses the fiction and poetry of the 1890s as "an act of negotiation, knitting the separate sphere to the public one in an alliance that claimed social good as much as women's rights as part of their intention" (235). Davies does not
explore the nature of the "social good" these women authors envisioned, nor does she consider any of the other discourses (Canadian nationalism, racial purity, social science, superintendence of the poor, and so on) that intersect with and shape the discourse of maternal feminism. In addition, Davies too simplistically connects the act of writing with subversion/rebellion, failing to interrogate the social mechanisms that enabled a woman's writing (and the woman writing) to serve rather than subvert the status quo. Although she judges Amelia Fytche's *Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* as flawed "in its pacing and melodrama," Davies nonetheless is uncritical in her praise of the novel's "pertinent social observation" (239). In stressing women writers' successes, their progressivism, and their unity of purpose, she fails to interrogate the elements of social control in feminists' programs for social reform.

A notable exception in this regard is Gerson, whose *A Purer Taste* (1989) examines in detail the cultural significance of fiction in Victorian Canada and devotes a substantial chapter to the social problem genre. Gerson connects the dearth of novels of contemporary social analysis to problems of nationhood, finding that "Canadian fiction from this period reflects a country that was struggling to conceive of itself as a place, had little notion of its identity as a society, and shrank from the intimate self-examination practiced by Trollope, Thackeray, and Eliot" (132). As a result, fiction exploring the connections between individuals and the social, political, and economic structures that determine their existence is rare; what does exist is halting, tentative, and evasive in its self-critique. Certainly the daring associated with *fin de siècle* fiction in England is strikingly absent from Canadian novels, even those that deal explicitly with labour and sexuality.\(^\text{13}\) Gerson accurately notes that "[t]he social and economic complexity of the contemporary city, so dominant a feature of international fiction of the last century, is virtually absent from Canadian writing before the First World War; when a Canadian author did choose to describe middle- or working-class urban life the setting was usually deflected to Britain or the United States" (140).

\(^{13}\) Gerson's witty summation is that "[l]abour strife and illicit sexuality timidly entered Canadian fiction in the 1890s, more than half a century after they had become familiar subjects in international writing" (134).
The purpose of my study is not so much to take issue with Gerson's evaluation, for although our critical practices differ, our conclusions are similar. Rather, my purpose is to subject the process whereby Canadian novelists foreclose on self-criticism to a more detailed scrutiny than it has hitherto been given. It is to find in the failure or limitation of Canadian reform discourse a subject of study in itself and to take Gerson's accurate measure of Canadian reticence and digression concerning social problems as a starting point rather than a conclusion.

I would, however, qualify Gerson's assessment in one sense. Whereas Gerson sees bourgeois writers as completely withdrawing from the imperative of the social analyst to expose, assess, and analyze the impact of social injustice on individual human beings ("Far from challenging accepted values, Canadian critics and novelists perceived literature as a medium for reinforcing prevailing norms" [132]), I attempt a more nuanced—though ultimately no less evaluative—reading. That is, I recognize that narratives of resistance and critique are often incoherent, and believe that there may be moments of resistance in a text that is otherwise entirely supportive of dominant structures of thought. A text's subversiveness may be so inextricably intertwined with its conservatism as to make separating the two seemingly opposed strands an impossibility. In keeping with this recognition, my study focuses on the contradictions and ambiguities in Canadian fictional and non-fictional representations of suffering and social ills.

In my study, I focus on the dominant representations of the issues of labour and gender reform; the voices I study are those of well-educated, white, middle-class literary women and men who published in the accepted organs of national opinion. My intention in doing so is not to reinforce the idea of an uncontested, univocal tradition of white liberal humanist ideology. Rather, it is to find in the Anglo-Saxon, bourgeois hegemony of nineteenth-century reform discourse the contradictory and often contested sources of the very muddied reform tradition at the base of the respectable Left in Canadian political and social discourse today.
I also contest what seems to be the embarrassment of the Canadian critical establishment about the incoherence and sentimentality of late-nineteenth-century Canadian reform literature. In this respect, I find instructive the lack of embarrassment demonstrated by critics of more fully-established but equally incoherent literatures such as that of the sentimental tradition in American literature. Jane Tompkins has initiated a fruitful and ongoing period of renewed interest in the sentimental and reform literature of nineteenth-century America with her book *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (1985). In her ground-breaking reassessment of the American literary canon and literary value, Tompkins argues for the study of works of literature as "agents of cultural formation" (xvii). Resisting the literary establishment's assertion that great literature transcends the particular time and place of its creation, Tompkins makes the startling claim that "a novel's impact on the culture at large depends not on its escape from the formulaic and derivative, but on its tapping into a storehouse of commonly held assumptions" (xvi). Thus Tompkins chooses to focus on works of literature that offered "powerful examples of the way a culture thinks about itself" (xi).

Because there has been no equivalent reconsideration of nineteenth-century Canadian literary history, I will recapitulate the terms of the Douglas-Tompkins debate to indicate its structuring influence on my thinking about the political effect of sentimentalism in social problem discourse. In *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977), Ann Douglas initiates the first sustained reconsideration of nineteenth-century sentimental fiction in America. Douglas links the rise of the sentimental novel in America to that nation's rapid industrial modernization and expansion, and the attendant division of American society into a competitive public sphere and a domestic private realm, with its devaluation of female labour and identity. Examining sentimental ideology's replacement of an intellectually-rigorous and self-disciplined Calvinist theology with an infantile piety and self-indulgent emotionalism, Douglas writes acerbically of sentiment's steady descent towards modern mass culture in its "exaltation of the average," its use of emotional excess as therapy, and
its diluted, vacuous Christianity (4). Speaking unsympathetically of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Douglas ventures that "if 'camp' is art that is too excessive to be taken seriously, art that courts our 'tenderness', then Little Eva suggests Christianity beginning to function as camp" (4).

For Douglas, sexual difference not only underwrites the distinction between the great and the mediocre, between those authors willing to confront "the more brutal facts of America's explosive development" and those who sheltered behind "sentimental peddling of Christian belief for its nostalgic value," but in fact gender is at the very heart of the distinction between the serious and the trivial: "Thoreau, Cooper, Melville, and Whitman wrote principally about men, not girls and children, and they wrote about men engaged in economically and ecologically significant activities" (6). For women to have written at all about the world in which they found themselves placed, it would seem, was for them always already to fail to write what mattered. Douglas' central criticism of the literature of sentiment is its hypocrisy. For Douglas, American sentimental literature is damagingly complicit in the evils it protests (as other literature of protest is not). Sentimental fiction is inescapably a part of the culture it condemns, "a way to protest a power to which one has already in part capitulated" (12). In an oft-quoted passage, Douglas points out that "Little Eva's beautiful death, which Stowe presents as part of a protest against slavery, in no way hinders the working of that system" (12).

Douglas' reading of sentimentalism as "an inevitable part of the self-evasion of a society both committed to laissez-faire industrial expansion and disturbed by its consequences" is acute and, I would argue, not entirely inaccurate (12). However, in elaborating this thesis over the next three-hundred pages of text, Douglas achieves a certain clarity of focus at the expense of breadth of vision. Determined to read all sentimental writing of the period through her admittedly partisan lens, Douglas cannot articulate differences between various writers, nor the variety of forms that sentimental ideology could take. For Douglas, "sentiment" is a singular, despised monolith, and its women
promoters at once victims of social forces beyond their control and powerful agents manipulating that society.

Douglas' underestimation of the potential plurality of sentimental ideology leads to inconsistencies in the condemnation she levels at sentimental writers. For instance, she expresses skepticism about narratives of women's suffering and male violence: "[e]ven the determinedly moderate Sarah Hale, chief exponent of the doctrine of the feminine sphere, could occasionally describe the relation between the sexes in terms whose fierce extremism initially leaves a modern reader puzzled and disoriented: Man the murderer and woman the mourner" (47-8). While documenting in some detail the steady erosion of women's position in American culture as industrialization accelerated (her containment within a domestic sphere increasingly segregated from significant economic activity, her exclusion from participation in politics, and so on), Douglas yet dismisses Hale's "conspiracy view of history" which saw women positioned in a world "dominated by a sex hostile to it" (48). Similarly, she expresses distaste for the "narcissistic rage" that fills Harriet Beecher Stowe's later novels (247). At the same time, she blames women for active complicity in their own disempowerment, citing their assertions of contented submission as proof of women's capitulation to "the system of flattery which served as the rationale for the American woman's economic position" (62). Douglas does not consider that these expressions of conformity might contain a coded anger; she characterizes them as "ludicrous and painful" (63). Even when confronted with rather clear examples of at least potential feminist subversion (Harriet Farley's assertion that women must "do good by stealth"), Douglas dismisses the import of Farley's words as unconscious: "[o]n the other hand, she was, of course unconsciously, suggesting something faintly subversive in its connotations" (71, emphasis mine). Douglas' determination to fit every text she discusses into the meta-narrative of teleological development, or rather descent—the "triumphant drift toward a consumer and mass-media society"—betrays the strain of imposing a single pattern
on a heterogeneous collection of texts (253). Douglas' study depicts women writers as at once entirely passive and entirely culpable.

Tompkins engages directly with Douglas' assertions and with patriarchal neglect, arguing that sentimental novels should be understood "not as degraded attempts to pander to the prejudices of the multitude, but as providing men and women with a means of ordering the world they inhabited" (xiii). Rejecting the portrayal of sentimental writers as "self-deluded" and unwitting "apologists for an oppressive social order," Tompkins asserts, quite audaciously, that "the popular domestic novel of the nineteenth century represents a monumental effort to reorganize culture from the woman's point of view" and, further, that "in certain cases, it offers a critique of American society far more devastating than any delivered by better-known critics such as Hawthorne and Melville" (124).

Arguing against the claim that sentimental fiction is divorced from the realities of "political and economic oppression," Tompkins asserts that "domestic fiction is preoccupied, even obsessed, with the nature of power" (160). Her answer to Douglas' accusation of complicity on the part of American women is astute: "[t]he fact is that American women simply could not assume a stance of open rebellion against the conditions of their lives, for they lacked the material means of escape or opposition. They had to stay put and submit. And so the domestic novelists made that necessity the basis on which to build a power structure of their own. Instead of rejecting the culture's value system outright, they appropriated it for their own use, subjecting the beliefs and customs that had moulded them to a series of transformations that allowed them both to fulfill and transcend their appointed roles" (161). As the previous quotation reveals, Tompkins' argument is not so very different from Douglas', but her point of view and emphasis have fundamentally altered, so that the ethic of submission is understood as a counter-strategy for women, an appropriation of an economically and politically imposed condition for women's unique political purposes. Sentiment can be seen as a way of countering men's material power with women's spiritual power. Much of Tompkins' analysis of sentimental fiction focuses
on the alternative definition of power it holds out. She also expresses her recognition that "while the sense of power and feelings of satisfaction that the religion of domesticity afforded were real, not just imagined, they were bought and paid for at an almost incalculable price" (172). Tompkins argues that an implicit recognition of this price is encoded in the novels' emphasis on the suffering of the sentimental heroine, whose pain at "learning to conquer her own passions is the central fact" of her existence (172). For Tompkins, the novels provide a "catharsis of rage and grief that registers the cost of living according to that model" (173). Her point here seems to be similar to that expressed by Patricia Meyer Spacks in *Desire and Truth*, when she argues that "even when a novel tells a story of efforts towards conformity . . . its revelation of the efforts' costs may indicate a counter-message" (1990, 111). Both Spacks and Tompkins suggest that resistance in the sentimental novels can only be read as unconscious, something which can never be voiced and can only be read into the text's testimony to the pain of (an otherwise totalized) submission.

Perhaps Tompkins has too fully accepted Douglas' judgement of the sentimental novels, responding defensively with an alternative monological reading that secures for the texts a set of fixed and coherent ideological positions. Relying on a rather simple gender division of oppressed and oppressor which fails to see women as part of the power system that contains them, Tompkins adopts Douglas' characterization of the ethic of submission at the heart of the novels rather than reading them as sites of ideological struggle. Confident that rage "cannot be named as such in Warner's novel" though its "force is felt nevertheless in the deluge of the heroine's tears," Tompkins conceives of the texts as shaped by a single and seamless discourse, rather than as an arena where conflicting discourses play out struggles that are resolved to greater or less degrees in various texts (173).

Tompkins also fails to address one of the central issues in Douglas' thesis, which concerns the meaning of these novels for feminist readers today. Tompkins' emphasis on the texts as specific historical and cultural documents makes "no apologies" (to echo one of
her chapter titles) for the aspects of the novels which are almost unreadable today. In this sense, despite her interest in understanding "what gave these novels force for their initial readers" and her admittedly partisan positioning as "a woman in a field dominated by male scholars," Tompkins' is a curiously disengaged criticism (xiii, xiv). She acknowledges that it is specifically not her intention to "criticize the social and political attitudes that motivated these writers" as if understanding the texts in their contemporary contexts abrogates the need to understand them in our own (xiii). As such, her project risks becoming merely the reverse of Douglas', a partisan celebration of the texts Douglas belittles.

Moreover, although she defines sentimental fiction as a "political enterprise, halfway between sermon and social theory," Tompkins is at times indifferent to the political implications of the literary texts she examines (126). For example, Tompkins refers with seeming approval to *The American Woman's Home*, a treatise on domestic economy written by Isabella Beecher Stowe and her sister Catherine, to prove that the domestic project was not "a turning away from the world into self-absorption and idle reverie," but was rather "the prerequisite of world conquest" (143). She quotes the following passage as an example of the active and outward-looking "imperialistic drive" which "flatly contradicts the traditional derogations of the American cult of domesticity as . . . self-immersed and self-congratulatory" (144):

\[\text{... ere long colonies from these prosperous and Christian communities would go forth to shine as "lights of the world" in all the now darkened nations. Thus the "Christian family" and "Christian neighborhood" would become the grand ministry, as they were designed to be, in training our whole race for heaven. (144)}\]

Concerned to rescue the middle-class American woman writer from gender-biased charges of narcissism and intellectual bankruptcy, Tompkins fails to comment on the ideological
import of such a passage for the people of the "now darkened nations," preferring to read
the passage as innocently triumphant. In her determination to reverse the judgements of a
"male-dominated scholarly tradition," Tompkins appears to accept some of its hierarchical
values, and thus fails to interrogate the racist basis of this "blueprint for colonizing the
world" (123, 144). Tompkins' account of the "cultural work" sentimental fiction sought to
carry out is here blind to the material effects of such discursive strategies not only upon the
middle-class women whose hegemony it tried to establish, but on the peoples over whom it
sought to erect its empire.

As critics have subsequently argued, Tompkins focuses primarily on the meaning
of sentimental and sensational fiction for white, middle-class America, evaluating it as
evidence of a culture thinking about itself rather than as evidence of that culture
consolidating its dominance over others. Reading Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the
Mohicans as a drama about miscegenation fears and the problem of cultural conflict,
Tompkins concludes lamely that Cooper's novel constitutes "a drama whose purpose is to
work out the rules of coexistence that make human society possible in the first place"
(119). The use of the word "coexistence" in the context of white conquest of aboriginal
territory perhaps begins to suggest the extent of Tompkins' indifference to the violent--in
this case genocidal--mastery practiced by such narratives, despite their passages of
generous nostalgia for the passing of a way of life.14 In response to Tompkins, feminist
critics influenced by post-colonial theory, such as the essayists in Samuels' The Culture of
Sentiment, have focused on the "double logic" of sentimentalism's nationalist project, as it
simultaneously "produces and contests" the culture of which it is a part, focusing "on the
particular circumstances of policies concerning gender, race, and ethnicity, and often on the
involvement of women as objects or agents of these policies" (1992, 4).

Although there is currently much debate about the value and meanings of this
literature, there can be little doubt of the cultural importance of the debate or the centrality of

14 For an excellent analysis of the omissions in Tompkins' study, see Laura Wexler's "Tender Violence"
the sentimental tradition to nineteenth-century American life and letters. A similar debate over the importance of nineteenth-century sentimental literature in Canada has not yet occurred outside of a few reclamatory studies, first because of the lack of a clearly defined nineteenth-century Canadian literary canon against which revisionists could battle, and also, relatedly, because of the reluctance of literary critics to engage in a dismantling of the notion of canon. Robert Lecker argues in the Introduction to Canadian Canons that "[w]e have shied away from theorizing about why certain Canadian authors or texts are 'major,' or 'minor,' or seldom mentioned at all," and although this assessment has been vigorously debated by Canadian critics, its accuracy for nineteenth-century Canadian literature is difficult to contest (1991, 6).

My study of the social problem novel argues that Canadian literary history does include social problem novels that are worthy of more study than they have hitherto received, and suggests one of the possible approaches that could be taken to this body of texts. I am not arguing that these novels are lost classics blindly neglected by twentieth-century critics; in fact, I avoid canonical arguments. Rather, I claim that the social problem novel in Canada is a genre worthy of study because it reveals some of the fundamental cultural debates of the period and gives us insight into the Canadian nation in the process of creating and sustaining a hegemonic culture.

**Questions of Genre**

My study is not a genre study, although I frequently refer to the sentimental narrative techniques employed by the authors I examine; it might be argued that all of the novels I study are socially-concerned sentimental novels. In their own day, however, and subject to a different mode of investigation, they might well have been classified differently. Fytche's *Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* has gothic elements entirely lacking in Machar's *Roland*

---

Graeme, while the rural realism of Wood's *The Untempered Wind* distinguishes it quite emphatically from the other two novels. I am less concerned with clarifying a form called the sentimental novel than with investigating how sentimental techniques and ideology operate in novels with very different forms and styles. I examine sentiment primarily as a rhetorical strategy that operates across different genres and is intended to arouse pathos through the aesthetic presentation of distress. Such writing--fictional and non-fictional--seeks to create sympathy for unmerited suffering in the belief that the reader's textual experience "can intimately affect the living one" (Todd 1986, 4). All of the writers I am looking at joined certain features of the sentimental novel--primarily the display of suffering and some use of stock romance plot elements such as coincidence and melodrama--with a concern for the realistic representation of contemporary social life. These novels are not realistic in the terms that define the classic Victorian novel of representational realism: they tend to rely on character "types" rather than complex, fully-developed and individualized characters; they employ elaborate and sensationalistic plot devices rather than observing the narrative laws of probability, causality, and economy; and they contain passages of overt didacticism that interfere with the novelist's obligation to observe rather than instruct.

What joins the novels, and links them to the non-fictional texts studied here, is their strong pedagogical function. Although this literature was intended to refer to the real world in which readers lived, its mode of reference was not necessarily mimetic, for its concern was the underlying truth of human emotions and actions.

Having referred above to sentimental ideology, I will briefly define what I mean by the phrase, although upcoming chapters will elaborate its meanings. As a way of understanding the world, sentimentalism privileges human connection above all, and posits the equality of all human hearts. In theory, then, sentimentalism is a radically democratic vision of human society, its ostensible purpose being to affirm a common humanity for all people. In his study of the sentimental novel in eighteenth-century France, David Denby describes the sentimental ethos as follows:
Sentimental literature represents the discovery, and above all the popularization and repeated celebration of the humanity of the excluded, and as such is part of the global project of Enlightenment humanism. What the sentimental text enacts is the recognition of the universal category of humanity in each individual case of suffering encountered. (1994, 96)

Nineteenth-century social reform writing is sentimental in its concern to address the nature of community: the stories it tells are about threats to community, the loss of affective ties, the conditions under which sympathy can flourish, the regeneration of the social, the means of accommodating differences in society, and ultimately the relationship between individuals, their community, and the nation. Joanne Dobson accurately comments that "[t]he sentimental imaginative mode is not confined to a specific genre" but is rather "a specific type of imaginative energy" and defines it "as an imaginative mode . . . manifesting itself in narratives privileging affectional ties . . . and language usage designed to address the primary vision of human connection in a dehumanized world" (1993, 171).

In its concern to influence behavior and to guide social change, social reform writing sought to develop or sustain in the reader capacities for feeling, particularly for empathy with fictional protagonists; this emphasis on emotional identification is crucial to an understanding of what Tompkins has called, from her subtitle, the "cultural work" of the literature under consideration. Such writing aimed to teach, but to teach in a particular way: through the emotions. Thus, it aimed for popularity through the reliance on melodramatic and sensationalistic plot elements—startling drama, coincidence, misrecognition, hidden connections, extreme situations—even while it claimed, directly or indirectly, to be representing contemporary life. This element of readerly pleasure should not be underestimated, and the romance features of the novels in my study should not be regarded as mere generic hangovers. By placing their didactic messages about a recognizable world within seductively romantic narrative patterns, the authors sought to accomplish what a sermon would, but more effectively: to transform the subjectivities of their readers, to
create a certain way of seeing Canada and social problems through the appeal to sentiment, and thus to make possible a certain vision of the Canadian community that could be brought about not through legislation or overt political action, but rather through cultural consensus. The authors did not address a pre-existing Canadian public about their society; rather, the authors sought to constitute that public and that society.

Through the production of consent, these texts contribute, I argue, to cultural hegemony, to the predominance of certain cultural ideas and values over others. By appealing to emotions and guiding readers' identification with certain characters and situations, these texts functioned in the manner described by Bruce Curtis in his description of the relationship between humanistic pedagogy and the construction of a loyal citizenry in pre-Confederation Upper Canada:

"Humanization" was a pedagogical device which involved the development of the capacities for feeling and moral behavior. While these capacities were ethically and aesthetically pleasing to school reformers, they were also political instruments for the development of new modes of self-regulation. The "moral" attitude which this pedagogy sought was a way of relating to others and also an ethically-founded acceptance of and affection for existing political forms. (1987, 57)

With Curtis, I argue that social reform writing also has a specific teaching function; it both records and reproduces the process of reconstructing the ethical subjectivities of Canadian subjects. Literature's representational systems express ideology, creating a certain orientation towards the social problems it represents and creating in the reader an appropriate responsiveness. These novels sought to intervene in various cultural debates, to influence how people thought and acted, and through narratives of the movement from disorder to harmony, to present compelling visions of successfully-functioning communities. Because such communities are never entirely secure, the novels also enact, variously, fantasies of containment, border policing, and cultural purification.
Methodology

In my research for this study, I drew my material primarily from three literary periodicals: the Canadian Monthly and National Review (1872-78), which later became the Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review (1878-82), "provided a forum for the best minds of the decade," according to the Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature (1983, 457); The Week (1883-96) inherited the mantle of the Canadian Monthly, and "was the main vehicle for the work of the major poets and essayists of the Confederation period" (457); and Canadian Magazine (1893-1939) took over this function in the 1890s. These three journals were the major literary and political periodicals of the period 1875-95, and saw themselves as upholding a tradition of literary standards, genteel taste, and informed opinion. I rely mainly on Canadian Monthly for the last half of the 1870s, The Week for the 1880s and the Canadian Magazine for the 1890s. In addition, I have taken advantage of collections such as Paul Rutherford's Saving the Canadian City (1974) and Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson's The Proper Sphere (1976) to gain access to the variety of pamphlets, speeches, and reports on subjects of urban, social, and national concern.

I follow recent critics such as Nancy Armstrong (1987), Mary Poovey (1988), Mariana Valverde (1989), and Amanda Anderson (1993) in attempting not only to contextualize literary texts with social and historical documents, but to integrate literary and socio-historical analysis thoroughly, employing a flexible analytical strategy and reading a wide variety of texts in addition to the novels I examine: news items, editorials, Royal Society speeches, scientific treatises, House of Commons debates, reports of women's organizations, and social reform essays. In doing so, I do not mean to suggest that literary and non-literary texts are the same. But although I recognize their differences, I tend to downplay generic distinctions in order to analyze the representational strategies the texts share; my study examines how very different texts work together to construct complex discursive phenomena. As Valverde argues, "[w]ithout ignoring the distinctions among
different types of texts, one can shed new light on complex social constructs by reading texts against the grain" (1989, 171).

The texts that I examine here fit well together for a number of reasons. They share assumptions about audience and rhetorical strategy. Written by and appealing to a primarily middle-class, Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and socially-concerned--though by no means radical--audience, these texts are shaped by the belief that audiences could be moved to right action through powerful persuasive appeals. I have chosen to look at literary journals rather than newspapers partly for the sake of coverage, but also because I have been less interested in specific items of news than in opinion on the state of the nation and its problems. Opinion, as such, is also in abundance in the novels I examine. Oblivious to the incipient modernism that found expression in fin de siècle experimentation with fictional forms, these novels eschewed stylistic innovation and sought clarity for their moral and social messages in passages of overt didacticism.

The editorials, reports, essays of literary criticism, political tracts, and social investigative texts are also crucial to this project because they state explicitly what the novels sometimes reveal only implicitly. Rutherford argues from his study of late-Victorian newspapers that editorial essays from the period reveal the "firm foundation of shared myth" upon which debates about Canadian issues took place (1982, 156). According to Rutherford, these editorials "elaborated a series of mythologies of nationhood which sometimes challenged but usually justified the existing or emerging patterns of dominance in the country at large" (156). The evidence of the non-fiction is intended to highlight what may appear to be only suggestive references in the fiction; similarly, I am interested in reading the non-fictional texts as if they were novels, attending to the complex symbolic systems they create. I avoid using a background/foreground model to discuss the literary text and its non-literary discursive context because I recognize that it is the whole range of texts that make up an interdependent cultural formation such as social reform. By studying the Canadian social reform novel in the context of other reform and nationalist
discourses, we can more clearly examine how they participate in establishing a certain consensus about the meanings of Canadian nationhood.

By using the term "consensus," however, I do not intend to suggest that the social and moral reform texts I refer to in this study were part of a single, homogeneous movement. Rather, reformers were an exceedingly diverse group, a broadly based coalition made up of church people, temperance activists, educators, social scientists, women's groups, civic leaders, politicians, and philanthropists. They had varying platforms, goals, and beliefs. Similarly, the writers I examine would certainly not have identified themselves as part of a single movement, or as writing a certain genre of literature. Machar and Wood would probably have agreed upon very little had they ever spoken, and it is unlikely that they ever did. But they did share a consciousness concerning the need for changes identified by them as progressive. Social reform writers positioned themselves against what they defined as an outmoded view of human affairs, identified variously with orthodox Christianity, laissez-faire capitalism, traditional gender mores, and an older, feudal order. They saw themselves as connected with the emergence of a new social order, one of greater compassion, equality, and humanity. That these discourses often worked within the very terms that they contested should not cause their dissenting status to be ignored. They protested a world view that accepted domination as an inescapable fact, saw suffering as divinely ordained, and accepted the existing gender and economic orders as natural. Thus, even as I return to the limitations in the reforms

16 Samuel Clark et al. identify three inter-related though distinct social reform movements in late Victorian Canada: the Social Gospel, the suffrage movement, and the temperance movement (1975, 41-42). However, such an emphasis overlooks the existence of other equally significant movements such as the Sabbatarians, foreign missionary societies, home mission organizations, civic reform leagues, and prevention of cruelty societies, among others. Given the fact that membership in these organizations was often overlapping, and that many single organizations--the National Council of Women of Canada, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Young Women's Christian Association, for instance--did work on all these fronts and more, such distinctions between movements are difficult to maintain.

17 For an example of the diversity of the political goals of one strand of the reform movement, see Glenn J. Lockwood's "Temperance in Upper Canada as Ethnic Subterfuge" (1993). Lockwood examines the ethnic conflicts at the origins of the temperance movement in Upper Canada in the 1830s. Here, Loyalist settlers and Scottish immigrants used temperance societies to organize politically in opposition to Orange Irish Protestants who had flooded the area. Lockwood argues that temperance organizations offered immediate moral authority for attempts to regain status and political power, and provided a structure to oppose to the political activities of the Orange League.
proposed or suggested by these writers, their oppositional status should not be forgotten. Claims for the humanity of the poor, no matter how self-interested, were different from a perspective that dismissed the poor as abstract ills, as many laissez-faire accounts did.\textsuperscript{18} The novels are often confused, but their confusion is less a literary flaw than a representation of the conflicting discourses of their period.

\section*{Rationale}

It would be tempting to condescend to history through the reading of Anglo-Canadian literature, to find its obsessions with national purity, Canadian destiny, and domestic morality evidence of a regrettable, but safely distanced, cultural neurosis; but such has not been my intention in this study. In fact, far from reinforcing a notion of historical development as a progressive movement away from repression towards the empowerment of the women's and labour movements, my research has made me aware of the often depressing circularity of history and of the way in which contemporary debates are often disturbingly similar to those of one hundred years ago. I have also become aware through my reading of the narrowness of the terms of discussion about women and the poor, how even when writers establish opposing positions in a debate, they seem to be speaking the exact same language. My work has made me realize how dominant conceptual frameworks—the notions of the social organism and bourgeois domesticity, for example—work to constrain what and how it is possible to think at any period in history. I have also been reminded, in attending to systems of classification and definition in reform discourse, of the way in which binary opposition, particularly that between the deserving and the undeserving, continues to structure discussions of social injustice. Although I do not argue that an understanding of nineteenth-century discourse can free us from the discursive

\textsuperscript{18} For example, an item in \textit{The Week} for Jan. 13, 1887, speaking of the problem of housing for the poor, conflates poor people with abstract evils, commenting that "[n]othing apparently would cure the evil but the extinction of the low population itself, the extinction, in other words, of idleness, misfortune, vice, intemperance, and crime" (110). Because this item is unauthorized and anonymous, it appears under "Item" in Works Cited. All subsequent items/notes are referenced in the same way.
constraints of our own period—for the appeal to freedom fails to understand that such formulations enable speech as well as limit it—I do maintain that such analysis can foster at least a certain critical vigilance about one’s own rhetorical and political strategies.

In my study of these novels, I follow Tompkins in focusing on the similarities between the various discourses I study, particularly the connections between the novels and the social reform essays whose ideas they take up in narrative form. I argue not for the literary value of the novels I study, but for their cultural value as illuminating documents. Thus my main focus is, like Tompkins' "the strands that connected a novel to other similar texts, rather than . . . the way in which the text might have been unique" (1985, vx). I do not argue for the originality of the literary texts under discussion, but instead investigate what they shared with other texts of the same period. At the same time, I attempt in my discussion to emphasize the power of narrative and of the emotional appeal of such works in disseminating their social messages.

Although my study of literary and non-literary texts by and about women is concerned exclusively with the writing of well-educated, white, middle-class women, my approach focuses insistently on the intersection of gender ideologies with those of class, race, and ethnicity. At the risk of appearing to seek to justify my exclusions, I would argue that class and race analyses should not be confined to the study of women of colour and working-class women. Such compartmentalization weakens feminist scholarship by ignoring the structuring force of race and class ideologies in privileged white women's lives and discourses. My study explicitly focuses on the ways in which an emancipatory discourse of gender often relied on overtly oppressive class and race agendas, and thus, my study of the formation of feminine and feminist identities in social problem discourse is deliberately interrogative rather than celebratory.
Outline of Further Chapters

Chapter One demonstrates how inextricably the reforms associated with the Labour Question and the Woman Question—as diverse as the issues were—were bound up with the idea of the nation. As Goldwin Smith expressed it in an article on "Female Suffrage," "[t]he very foundations of society are touched when Party tampers with the relations of the sexes" (1874, 68). Arguments about women's social position were framed as arguments about the kind of society Canada should be. Commentators on both sides of the Woman Question debates asserted that Canada's national existence was intimately tied to the position of its women. Mrs. Parker, in "Woman in Nation-Building," stressed the simultaneity of the birth of feminism and nationalism as a very positive element in Canada's development: "[i]t is worthy of note and to us a good augury of the future, that contemporaneously with the enlargement of woman's educational advantages in Canada, have been felt the first fluttering heart-beats of a national life, and we have a conviction that the first happy event is to have a powerful influence over the other" (1890, 459).

Discussions of labour issues similarly evoked fears of general anarchy and national collapse as well as "dream[s] of social revolution." Indeed, a strong sense of national destiny was attached to reform issues. After Wilfrid Laurier yielded to petitions for a national plebiscite on prohibition, the president of the Nova Scotia Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), confident that victory for the temperance forces was near, declared jubilantly that "[t]he world is turning to our country today, with great interest for a solution of the Liquor Question. It is nearer a solution with us than anywhere else on earth" (qtd. in Mitchinson 1979, 157). Social critics understood their various reform proposals as part of an overall project of national improvement. While conservative writers often linked socialism and feminism as twin evils threatening the national body, social

---

19 I take the phrase from the title of an article outlining a utopian vision of class and gender relations, "A Dream of Social Revolution" by A Member of the Toronto Athanaeum Club (1881).
20 Bystander, the author of "Papers by a Bystander: 2" commented of communism, for example, that "it assails the whole existing order of things religious, political and social, not excepting the relations between the sexes" (February 1879, 237).
critics were beginning to identify capitalist patriarchy as the common structure of oppressive class and gender relations. Cook quotes John Clark Murray, a liberal Presbyterian professor at McGill, who asserted in an 1872 speech that "there are two great social problems of which our time is called to attempt a solution: the one refers to the question of capital and labour, the other to the position of women in society" (1985, 180). The central character in Fytche's Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls declares that "[w]oman suffrage and labor problems are the only questions which can rouse enthusiasm in the masses" (159). Although it would be misleading to suggest that gender and labour reform were the only important social issues of the period under consideration, Victorian Canadians certainly considered them to be central to national well-being.

Chapter Two focuses on Machar's Roland Graeme but also discusses her essays on poverty, temperance, and compulsory education in the Canadian Monthly and National Review and Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly. I examine Machar's work as an example of the fantasy of class harmony at the heart of much late nineteenth-century Canadian writing about the working poor and the problems of industrialization. Machar's novel examines the role of the church in modern society and the relationship between Christian conduct and social duty regarding labour unrest and urban poverty. Roland Graeme draws heavily on British depictions of labour problems and the need for a new ethic of cooperation as a solution to the ruthless and divisive individualism of laissez-faire capitalism, combining reform Darwinian social theory with traditional evangelicism, particularly in its vision of the special role of women philanthropists in helping the poor and in easing class tensions. In this context, the novel relies on a discourse of spiritual regeneration and human sympathy as the source of social progress that sits uneasily alongside its more radical commitment to labour union activity and governmental regulation of industrial conditions. At the same time that its pedagogical model of sympathy has clear roots in an English tradition stretching back to the eighteenth century, the novel also has a specifically New World focus that insists on Canadian difference from England, such that
the English model Machar adapts—which valorized middle-class care for the poor in opposition to aristocratic neglect and/or wastefulness—is appropriated to define the virtues of Canada as a whole, as a nation of freedom, possibility, and sound management, a nation balancing between Old World corruption and American disorder. In the end, the novel closes off social critique through a celebration of Christian patience and a nostalgic retreat from the industrial center, and this final representation is strongly suggestive of a nostalgic longing for Canada as agrarian paradise emphasizing health, purity, and benevolent paternalism. At the same time, as I hope to show, the tidy resolution offered by Christian piety and benevolence is at points questioned by the narrative itself, evidence, as I take it, of the novel's awareness of the limitations of its own ideology.

Chapter Three discusses Wood's *The Untempered Wind* in the context of a pervasive and flexible "rhetoric of fallenness" in Victorian culture, in which the figure of the fallen woman organized not only discussions of sexuality, but also more general Victorian concerns with identity, agency, and community (Anderson 1993, 1). Although not as overtly concerned with national issues as is Roland Graeme, *The Untempered Wind* explicitly connects the social body and the female sexual body in a narrative revealing just how fundamentally connected "the social evil" was to questions of national and racial destiny. I argue that the novel manipulates definitions of fallenness and purity so that sexual experience and innocence need not occupy antithetical positions, and thus seeks to redefine the community in the novel as fallen and its fallen woman as pure. The novel, I argue, works not only to bring the fallen woman to a position within the sympathetic community, but actually to make her the centre of this community. It establishes sympathetic authority for its heroine by removing her from the discourse within which she was spoken about. In the portrayal of Myron and Homer, Wood attempts to suggest alternative modes of identity and relationship based on recognition, affiliation, and negotiation rather than opposition and hierarchy. In addressing an audience of women readers, moreover, Wood appeals to a similar model of sympathetic community. In
rejecting legalistic definitions of innocence and guilt, Wood appeals to the "natural" as an alternative discourse enabling her heroine to escape moralistic condemnation. It can do so, however, only on the basis of a new set of rigid and punitive exclusions to replace those it has rejected. Thus, although the novel begins by interrogating the social construction of fallenness--showing how the definition of purity relies upon, and actually creates, the category of fallenness for its own self-definition--the novel ultimately establishes a new series of oppositions to vindicate its heroine, oppositions that intersect with contemporary Anglo-Canadian concerns about racial health, physical strength, and norms of reproductive heterosexuality.

Chapter Four examines Fytche's *Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* in the context of prevalent debates about the New Woman in fiction, the naturalness of the gender order, and the relationship between the domestic and social realms. I show how two very different readings of the novel are possible. The first exposes gender inequality as a social construction by demonstrating how every aspect of the heroine's experience is shaped by the fact of her gender, shown to be a disabling social reality. As such, the novel provides an indictment of women's economic and emotional dependence. The second reading shows how the first reading can work only if it ignores the function of class and race as structuring components in the narrative; in fact, the novel's gender-subversive critique is displaced onto a conservative race- and class-based text in which criticism of Dorothy's mistreatment serves to reaffirm the moral superiority of Anglo-Saxon bourgeois domesticity. This second reading also recognizes that if Dorothy's prolonged psychological suffering and humiliation can serve as a vehicle for critique of an unjust gender order, it can also serve as a warning to women about the consequences of violating that order. Such confusion or doubleness in the text is both a feature of discourses on gender in the period and specifically related to the novel's imperialist-nationalist agenda, in which attempts to define Canadian femininity clash with the novel's feminism. This chapter also reiterates some of the points made in Chapter Two by showing how concerns
about the dangers of the city for women override the novel's concern with gender relations per se.
CHAPTER ONE

"A land in which there is room for all": ¹

Nationalism, Uncertainty, and Narratives of Inclusion

In her Introduction to The Culture of Sentiment, Samuels argues that nineteenth-century American sentimentality is essentially a "national project" concerned with "imagining the nation's bodies and the national body" (1992, 3). In this chapter, I not only follow Samuels' lead in focusing on the relationship between (Anglo-Canadian) nationalist and social reform writing, but also suggest that the connections between nation-building and social reform are at least as intimate and complex in the case of English Canada as they are for America, though they have been less studied. Perhaps it is generally true that sentimentally-charged writing flourishes during periods of national conflict, transition, and unease. Certainly in late-nineteenth-century English Canada, the nationalist project absorbed a great deal of cultural energy because of Canada's extreme youth and the fragility of its national status. As a result, the Labour Question and the Woman Question were very much tied up with what became known as the Canada Question. Social problem discourse became one of the arenas in which debates about Canada's future were staged.

What is most significant, for my purposes, about the period under discussion is that national consolidation and the search for cultural identity coincided with "large-scale changes in the nature of society" (Clark et al. 39). Even during the depression of the 1870s and 1880s, the economy maintained a yearly growth rate of four percent; the period saw accelerating industrialization and ruthless competition among capitalists. Although the beginnings of the labour movement can be traced to the 1850s or even the 1840s, the economic recession of the early 1870s brought labour conflict to the forefront of public consciousness.² Large-scale industrial expansion was propelled by the National Policy of

² Consciousness of industrial development stretches back to Isaac Buchanan's formulation of producer ideology. Isaac Buchanan was a Hamilton merchant, railwayman, and politician whose formulation of an industrial policy for the Canadian colony stressed the common interests of employers and workers. It
1879, which raised tariff barriers on imported goods and thus sought to stimulate Canadian industries to rapid and steady growth. By the 1880s, Canada was experiencing the negative effects of urban industrialization; as a result, the decade witnessed increasing consolidation among the members of the working class, culminating in the solidarity that emerged from Toronto's railway strike of 1886. The women's movement was also gathering strength. The first women's suffrage organization—disguised as a literary society—was founded by Emily Stowe in 1877, and various reform bodies, particularly the WCTU, carried out repeated petitions, delegations to governments, and demands for plebiscites on suffrage throughout the 1880s and 90s. Despite the persistence of an ideology associating women with motherhood and domesticity, a significant number of women were moving into the public sphere: working-class women into factory work, and middle-class women into voluntary philanthropy and professional careers. Industrial-capitalist expansion and increasing agitation and uncertainty concerning women's rights and gender identities intersected with the national search to establish a coherent vision of the nation. Developing nationalism was thus not only inflected by, but actually constituted in, what was arguably the most dramatic period of social change in Canadian history. This particular congruence of historical features leads, as I will show, to a curious passion for reform mixed with a marked conservatism, and establishes the period 1870-95 as a time of profound contradictions and ideological incoherencies that have persistently affected Anglo-Canadian culture and the climate for debates about social issues up to the present time.

attacked the non-producing middlemen in the economic system, such as the bankers, speculators and absentee landlords, and linked national interest with employment. Producer ideology championed the twin causes of currency reform and tariff protection. This ideology was a cornerstone of the Canada First movement, the new Nationalism that began to affect the colony (Kealey and Palmer 1982, 178-79).

However, from the early 1870s on, expanding industrial development made it increasingly difficult to champion the mutual interests of capitalist and worker. Class divisions and antagonisms were becoming impossible to ignore. One of the most significant events in nineteenth-century Canadian working-class history was the Toronto printers' strike for the Nine Hour Day in 1872. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, class relations became increasingly strained.

3 See Edith M. Luke's "Woman Suffrage in Canada" (1895). Catherine Cleverdon, whose The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (1950) is the standard historical source, cites Luke's essay as her authority, but seems to mistake the date of the Toronto Women's Literary Club's inception as 1876.
One can identify a vexed relationship between literature and culture in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The literature, together with all cultural productions in general, is preoccupied with defining and shaping "Canadianness." The 1890s in particular was a decade both of intense nationalism—anticipating Laurier's comments about Canadian supremacy in the new century—and of anxiety and speculation about Canada's political, economic, and social future. Canada was, in Gerson's words, "a society preoccupied with the task of nationmaking" (1989, x). The rise of social reform writing coincides with the discursive development of the Canadian nation state, and this coincidence creates certain unique rhetorical problems for writers attempting to address social conflict. Anglo-Canadian nationalist discourse of the period 1870-95 constructed an egalitarian and harmonious New World nation, free of the gender, racial, and class conflict of her English parent and her American neighbour at the same time that Canadian social reformers were noticing and documenting the presence of disharmony—domestic violence, extreme poverty, labour unrest, immigrant slums—in central Canada's burgeoning cities. The perceived need to fashion a language to describe these and other social problems which did not disturb nationalist ideology led to particularly Canadian forms of evasion, displacement, and outright contradiction that continue to plague contemporary liberal reform rhetoric, with its insistence on the essential soundness of Canadian institutions and preference for criticizing other nations' problems. Publishing conditions resulted in further ambiguities over Canadianness for the Canadian writer. Because markets for Canadian books were extremely small (the Canadian market was one-tenth that of the American), authors usually needed to appeal to an American as well as a Canadian audience; this

---

4 In emphasizing Canada's insistence on its social difference from Great Britain, I do not mean to suggest that in fact Canada's urban conditions were as bad as those in the mother country. As Linda Kealey points out, although Canada also experienced a depression in the years following 1873, "the dimensions of the resulting poverty and unrest were far greater in Britain, especially in metropolitan areas like London" (Introduction to Parr 1979, 169). Rather than denying that economic and social conditions in Canada may have, in certain respects, been better for working people and for women, I am interested in the cultural work that such representations were made to do.

5 Machar published simultaneously in Montreal and New York; Amelia Fytche and Joanna Wood published in Boston and New York respectively.
situation created obvious difficulties for the writer and reader of novels describing particular social issues and complicates questions such as whether a writer is being reticent or merely practical in setting her novel of labour unrest in America. Representing Canadian social problems was a literary enterprise fraught with difficulties.

The peculiarly Canadian features of what I am describing result, in part, from the fact that Anglo-Canadian nationalist discourse was developing at precisely the same time that social reform fiction was being written. While the contradictions of sentimental ideology are to be found in American literature of roughly the same period, these contradictions are heightened in the case of Canada because Canada did not possess a nationalist discourse of hegemonic status; Canada's very nationalism was itself only an emergent and still somewhat oppositional discourse. By this I do not mean only that in content it opposed itself to something else—to other versions of the nation or to colonial dependency, for example—but that even to speak of Canada as a nation, regardless of the content of the speech, was to assert an argumentative proposition. American writers feared for their nation's future during the period of the American civil war, but at least America had been a nation, with a well-established national identity. Most writers about Canada, despite the confident bravado of their rhetoric, would have been aware of themselves as arguing for the existence of Canada rather than simply describing its a priori attributes. Debates raged over whether there was even such a thing as national sentiment, of whatever kind, in Canada. Canada's national status was by no means assured in the late nineteenth century, and thus to write of Canada as a nation was a tenuous and uncertain business. Canada's reform writers, while addressing the problems of the nation, were also engaged in constructing the nation itself rather than writing against an already-constructed version of it.

---

6 Sentimental literature in both America and England flourished earlier than in Canada; Tompkins, for instance, locates it in the period 1790-1860. Critics of English literature such as Armstrong (Desire and Domestic Fiction, 1987) and, more recently, Beth Fowkes Tobin (Superintending the Poor, 1993) locate "[t]he middle-class struggle to find positions of power and authority" in the sentimental fiction of the latter half of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries (Tobin 1).
The fact that consensus had not yet been achieved about Canada--politically, culturally, philosophically, racially--might have resulted in the proliferation of oppositional or alternative discourses about Canada. Instead, in fact, it meant that oppositional discourses were cautious, conservative, and tentative, in part because such protests could have meaning only in the context of a particular version of Canada. In addition, the political and economic turmoil of the 1880s and early 1890s reinforced Canadian conservatism. Carl Berger identifies at this time a "deeply felt need to create a cohesive national heritage" (1970, 99). While the historical romance has generally been recognized as responding to this need for myths of origin, for tradition, for a celebration of Canadian history and ancestry, the social problem novel has not been understood in this context; it should be.

This uniqueness in Anglo-Canadian reform discourses is both a governing hypothesis and an open-ended question throughout my study. It would take an extensive comparative analysis to determine whether the discourses of social purity, moral regulation, and social reform contained more pan-national similarities than national differences. Certainly, the reform movements associated with the late-Victorian period in Canada were not unique: for instance, Australia, America, and England had social purity societies similar to those in Canada. Finch finds in social scientific investigation of this period a distinct rhetorical homogeneity, which she calls "a feature of rational thought" and ascribes to the cultural pervasiveness of Enlightenment ideals throughout Western Europe, Britain, and the former British colonies (1993, 32). Valverde also comments on the difficulty of defining the specificity of Canadian social reform movements (1991, 16). Anthologies such as Samuels' The Culture of Sentiment suggest that very similar rhetorical strategies operated in American texts on social problems such as slavery, labour unrest, and women's emancipation. Heather Roberts' history of New Zealand women novelists, Where Did She

---

7 L. Kealey characterizes the reform movement of the late nineteenth century as "North American in character," and explains that, socially and economically, "the concerns were similar in Canada and the United States" (1979, 3).
**Come From?** indicates that the New Zealand sentimental romance of the late nineteenth century explored similar concerns with women's changing roles, heterosexual relations, and social purity issues such as temperance (1989, 9-36). Discussing the impact of imperialism on Victorian-Canadian reform movements, Barbara Roberts comments that while "the Canadian experience was unique, its broad outlines were shaped by the economic and social conditions of colonial nation-building under capitalism" (1979, 200). My sense is that while the same discursive patterns appear in other literatures of the nineteenth century, their precise configurations, particularly in their relation to the nation, are different. Although I lack sufficient comparative research to come to conclusive results, my study of Anglo-Canadian texts has led me to speculate that small but significant inflections in the discourse allow us to identify in the Canadian texts an element setting them apart from English, American, and other colonial sources, an element derived from the intersection of nationalist and reform ideologies, in which Canada is represented as a pure, northern nation combining a British heritage of order and decency with New World freedom, potential, and racial destiny.

**The Construction of Canada**

Anglo-Canadian nationalists never claimed that nationalism would arise spontaneously from the soil of British North America or from its people, that Canada as an imaginative entity would simply come into existence along with its political creation. If it were to exist at all, Canadian nationalism would be the laboriously-achieved effect rather than the cause of the union of the British North American colonies in 1867. In 1869, Robert Haliburton lamented the want of national spirit attending Confederation, complaining that "the august convention at which our constitution was framed, created as little excitement among the masses, as they would feel in the organization of a joint stock company" (1869, 1). As Berger points out, "the very achievement of Confederation stimulated a debate on the future of the new nationality" that repeatedly stressed the need to create a national feeling (1970,
Promoters of nationalism knew that the idea of Canada had to be actively conceived and promoted; the creation of an Anglo-Canadian nationalist consciousness was an enterprise requiring deliberate and sustained effort. Canadian nationalism had to be made, through the representation of Canadian history, the defence of Canadian political institutions, the celebration of Canadian national figures, the affirmation of Canada's abundant geographical splendors and natural resources, and through many other—broadly literary—endeavors.

Although the union of 1867 had created a Canadian nation state in fact, it was only beginning to exist as an "imagined community," to borrow Benedict Anderson's title phrase (1991), and most commentators linked this fact to Canada's status as a colony. Although Canada had evolved to a position of independence regarding internal affairs, it had no voice in international matters such as foreign relations or trade agreements. For a rapidly-developing country, such "voiceless submission" to Britain was unacceptable (Cunningham 1880, 242). J. W. Longley declared that "distinctive national life will never be realized in Canada as long as it is a mere British Colony" (1882, 147). But criticisms of the British connection that limited Canada's development as an autonomous nation were always balanced by fears of American aggression, which had been revived during the Civil War. Canada's economic depression of the following years (from 1873 onwards) and increasing tensions between French and English Canadians, as a result of the Northwest Rebellion and the execution of Louis Riel, revealed the fragility—and many felt the unworkability—of the new union: "Twenty years after Confederation, there was a good deal of concrete evidence in support of those who predicted Canada's collapse; there was only faith on the side of those who defended it" (Berger 1970, 4). Reviewing George Bryce's *A Short History of the Canadian People* (1887) in *The Week*, G. Mercer Adam expressed both his fears about Canada's future and his sense of the purpose of a national history, regretting that the book had failed "to set before the reader the perils which have long beset Confederation, and is silent on those discordant elements . . . which detract
from the homogeneity of the nation, and menace the path of the Canadian people" (1887, 341).

For many writers, the project of consolidating the future and creating a national consciousness took on the urgency and rhetoric of a religious quest. Lamenting provincial divisions in Canada, Carter Troop, writing in The Week for April 21, 1887, declared that Canadians needed "something higher and better to bring us together in spirit and in fact, if we as a people would work out our own salvation" (331). His own writing was clearly intended to initiate the nationalist quest he called for: "[w]e Canadians have much to inspire us with faith both in ourselves and in our country," he wrote, "and our need is that we should feel this, that it should take possession of our souls, that it should wax strong and become a living and active power amongst us" (332). In an article for The Week of January 20, 1887, Sara Jeannette Duncan bemoaned Canadian lack of appreciation for and confidence in Canadian culture and called for a renaissance, declaring, with characteristic irony, that "[w]hat we need in Canada more than the readjustment of the tariff or the total extinction of the Catholic population, more than the defeat of the present Government or the victory of the present Opposition, more than annexation or independence or imperial federation or any amendment to the British North America Act— is a renaissance" (120). As early as 1865, Henry J. Morgan consecrated his Sketches of Celebrated Canadians to the work of national consolidation, declaring that he wrote out of "[a] just pride, an intense love of our native country, and an ardent hope and desire for its future greatness" (viii).

It certainly seemed necessary to summon "intense love" to defend the idea of Canada in the face of significant political, economic, and geographical difficulties. Vox Clam wrote in the Canadian Monthly that "[w]hat every one knows is that Canada's position is at present most unsatisfactory; that it is embarrassing to the Mother Country, and that, under it, Canadian interests are everywhere at a disadvantage" (1879, 330). Ruminating on "The Future of Canada," Longley complained that despite Canada's rich resources and enterprising population, it "has no national status at all, and no Canadian . . .
is able even to conjecture what its future is to be" (1882, 147). Granville Cunningham
began an essay entitled "Federation, Annexation, or Independence?" with the assertion that
"the position in which this country at present stands to the rest of the world, is not a
permanent position" (1880, 242). Cunningham's title points to the three distinct positions
articulated in response to concerns about Canada's present status: independent nationhood,
annexation by the United States, and closer ties to England through imperial federation.
Proponents of independent nationhood, such as William Norris in the Canadian Monthly
(1880), wanted to remove the last legal and psychological vestiges of colonialism,
prophesying a new strength and unity for Canada once freed of the bondage of the colonial
mentality. Proponents of autonomy were inspired by the vision of continent-wide national
existence that Confederation had made possible; the possibility of expansion to the west,
with its vast territory and rich natural resources, seemed to guarantee future prosperity and
influence. As Norris insisted, though, "[h]alf a continent cannot be settled and peopled by
a colony" (113).

But for many political commentators, Canadian independence in the context of
economic weakness was not a real option. Sir Francis Hincks, believing that "the
inevitable consequence of separation from Great Britain must be the adoption of Republican
institutions," launched a defence of the imperial connection as indispensable to Canada's
welfare, attacking Norris for naïveté and short-sightedness (1881, 402). Not all Canadians
rejected outright the idea of union with the United States, though most commentators
viewed it with mixed feelings. While regretting the death of a national dream, Carroll Ryan
believed that "undoubtedly our condition would be vastly improved thereby in a material
sense" (1879, 410). And while union with the American Republic held material benefits,
Ryan argued, it was almost inevitable under Canada's present conditions as he described
them: "[c]ircumscribed by climate, hemmed in by artificial boundaries projected in defiance
of geographical limitations, with nothing but a fading tradition to separate the inhabitants
from a great progressive kindred people, the dream of Canadian nationality, or even the
perpetuation for any length of time of British supremacy in North America, appears in the
light of sober judgment one of the wildest chimeras that ever haunted the political
imagination" (409). In reaction, many nationalists turned to the imperial tie as a defence of
Canada's unique history and traditions as well as for an answer to her economic problems.

As Berger has argued, imperialism can be understood as "one form of Canadian
nationalism" rather than as a slavish colonial hangover in opposition to nationalism (1970,
259). Benjamin Tayler, in an often sarcastic response to Norris,\(^8\) asserted that Imperial
Federation "place[s] us on a surer footing and safer foundation than independence" (1880,
396). Canada First (1868-75), organized by Col. George Taylor Denison, Henry Morgan,
and the Ontario poet Charles Mair, sought to promote a strongly Anglo-Protestant national
consciousness. Despite assertions of connection with Britain, the imperialists were by no
means colonial in the modern, pejorative sense of the term; on the contrary, they insisted
that Canada was a unique country in many ways superior to Britain. Denison, for
example, imagined the center of empire shifting to Canada's unspoiled land; the Colonel's
borderline-obsessive concern with imperial defence was founded on his conception of the
healthy and virile farmers of Canada compensating England for her enfeebled and sickly
factory-workers. Although the group was short-lived, its vision of Canada's interests and
future stature was to have a lasting influence on the forms of the Canadian national
imagination, as Duncan's idealistic Lorne Murchison in \textit{The Imperialist} (1904) would
attest.

While fearing absorption by an aggressive, powerful, and expansionist America to
the south, and desiring to join with Britain as an equal partner in the Empire, Canadians
were nevertheless faced with evidence of the diminution of British interest in the colonies.
Since the formal loosening of political ties in the 1840s, official policy and general

\(^8\) Commenting on Norris' suggestions for a Canadian flag, Tayler begged leave to "advise the writer, in all
friendliness, to open up communication with the numerous Central and South American States, and offer to
supply them with new devices for flags after every successful revolution," finally suggesting for Canada's
coat-of-arms "the beaver, dressed \textit{à la} John Bull, having a green feather and a white lily twined in its hat (the
latter being of Canadian manufacture, of course) playing the Canadian National Anthem on a Scotch
bagpipe" (396).
sentiment reflected a view of the colonies as economic liabilities rather than valued partners, and the Washington Treaty of 1871 between Britain and the United States, in which Britain made substantial concessions to the States in fisheries and the navigation of the St. Lawrence, showed that Britain was more interested in appeasing America than in protecting Canada. As a result, the Canadian future seemed precarious indeed. The anonymous author (G. H. M.) of one of numerous articles on "Canada's Future" (The Week, November 3, 1887) commented on the title that "[T]his subject is so completely surrounded with enigmas and latent elements that anything beyond mere conjecture is at present next to impossible" (783). As the 1880s wore on, continuing depression was understood to be proof that the National Policy of Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative government--principally its introduction of tariff protection for Canadian products--had failed; the collapse of Canada seemed a real possibility. In response to these severe economic difficulties, the Liberal Party in 1887 adopted a policy of free trade with the United States, known as unrestricted reciprocity. Again, many observers predicted that such an economic agreement would ultimately lead to Canada's assimilation by the United States. As a defensive reaction, the Imperial Federation League established branches in Canadian cities in 1887 and 1888. Yet a significant group of Canadians began to see continentalism of some form as the only practical option open to the foundering dominion. Thus, Goldwin Smith turned from the nationalism of the Canada First movement to espouse continental union in Canada and the Canadian Question (1891) as the kind of honourable federation existing between England and Scotland, to which the imperialist George Parkin (who called himself the Evangelist of Empire) responded with yet another defence of the tie to Britain, in Imperial Federation (1892). The narrow victory of Macdonald's National Policy in 1891 did little to quell the enduring sense of crisis.

The point of this condensed historical overview is to stress the intensity of the preoccupation with Canadian destiny during this period and also to assert the plurality of the visions of Canada in circulation in the two decades following Confederation; it is a
period characterized by many competing nationalisms and conflicting representations of Canadian destiny. Thus even as I go on, in this chapter, to provide an overview of some of the ways in which Canada was being imagined in this period, it is important to remember that this discursive entity was a mobile and provisional one, its affiliations, allegiances, and emphases shifting according to specific historical and political circumstances.

Even with this proviso, it is possible to make a few generalizations about Anglo-Canadian self-representation during this period, for despite the still pervasive perception of Canada as a land without an identity (itself an interesting representational strategy signifying both Canada's famed moderation and grandiose claims to pan-national status), English Canadians in the twenty-five years following Confederation created a rich stock of images and ideals to form the lasting features of a still-recognizable Canadian national character. Then as now, Canadians tended to define themselves negatively, in opposition to Old World social decay and also to American turbulence and disorder. Thus a representative current affairs article in the Canadian Monthly and National Review\(^9\) contained commentary on world affairs that invariably stimulated reflection on Canadian identity. Evidence of "[t]he evil memory of slavery" in the United States led to general reflection on the necessity of racial "fusion" for "political unity and equality" (112). (Canadians frequently congratulated themselves on being free from American racial problems: arguing for Canada's coming political supremacy over America, Norris predicted that "[a] hot-bed progress among alien and half-assimilated people will surely accelerate the end" of American dominance [1880, 118].\(^{10}\) In the same issue of the Canadian Monthly, the publication of a pamphlet on court etiquette by a Professor Fanning becomes the occasion for discussion of the nature of community in Canada, which is egalitarian,

\(^9\) "Papers By a Bystander" (Jan. 1879), Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review.
\(^{10}\) An item in The Week for December 16, 1886 devoted a lengthy summary to Josiah Strong's enumeration of the perils facing the American Republic, listed as "Immigration, Romanism, Mormonism, Intemperance, Socialism, Wealth, and the City," and took the opportunity to add a few Canadian observations on sources of corruption and decline, such as the laxity of American divorce laws (37).
inclusive, and merit-oriented. The attempt to generate interest in court etiquette is significant enough to prompt a vigorous defence of Canadian social equality, with the author exclaiming that "[t]he experiment of inoculating a community of the New World with Old World formality and servility is not only curious in itself, but important as the probable precursor, should it succeed, of a more serious attack on democracy, both social and political" (1879, 119).

Yet the British-American dynamic within which Canada maintained a balance also afforded positive affiliations: as an item in The Week for August 11, 1887 declared, "[w]e are very far from being British, equally far from being American, yet we are willing to defy the charge of being unduly puffed up when we assert that some of the best qualities of both are assimilated in the Canadian character" (596). Anglo-Canadians often aligned themselves with Americans as New World children of the Old, more vigorous and healthy than Europeans; Longley borrowed American rhetoric to describe the "free-born Canadian, who has always enjoyed a universal freedom as broad as the sky, and has imbibed from infancy a notion of equality" (1882, 153). At the same time, Canadians emphasized their allegiance to Britain. "In cherishing her connection with the Parent State," Alpheus Todd declared, "Canada has retained the inestimable advantage of stable Christian government, which affords to individuals the utmost possible freedom consistent with wholesome restraints upon the excesses of democratic opinion or the license of profanity" (1881, 530). This status as obedient rather than rebellious offspring enabled Canadians to emphasize the stability, traditionalism, and orderliness of Canada. Sometimes these apparently contradictory affiliations came together, as in Nicholas Flood Davin's contention that Canadians "have the best form of government in the world, at once the freest, the most Democratic and the most Conservative" (1881, 491). While most nationalists continued to emphasize Canada's British heritage, they began to forge a distinctly Canadian discursive identity based on Canadian geography and the productive features of colonial experience. In this self-representation, Canada was the physical and the cultural embodiment of
progress, health, and morality: Canadian national character was understood to correspond to the pure air, sparkling water, and snowy peaks of the vast country.

This idea of Canada was both temporal and spatial. Nationalists promoted history as a record of material and cultural advancement that positioned Canada as the very principle of progress, reorganizing the past, present, and future through its teleological narrative. Longley declared Canada to be "in the very vanguard of moral enlightenment and political freedom" (1882, 147). Berger paraphrases the rhetoric of the period in terms of this progressivism, asking who "could deny the progressive tendency of history when, to use the language of the day, cities stood where only two generations before the redman and his wigwam prevailed?" (1970, 109-10). The narrative of progress justified British colonization of North America and the disempowerment of and attempted genocide of native peoples. It also positioned Canada in reference to a future of almost unlimited growth and prosperity. Predictions concerning Canada's future population, for example, were often exaggeratedly dramatic. Estimating that Canadian numbers would soon eclipse those of Great Britain, nationalist historians imagined a Canadian giant entering upon a period of international distinction. Norris asserted that Canada "has come into existence at a grand period of the world's history. Humanity, on this continent, has advanced beyond the evils of the old civilization. Feudalism, slavery, and extreme ignorance and poverty, have never been known to any extent among us, and we shall never be handicapped by them" (117-18). The result would be that "[a]s power steps from the disorganized grasp of the United States, it will fall to Canada as her natural right" (118). In the following confident statement on the role of "Woman in Nation-Building," Parker argues that Canada is both free of the social problems that beset older nations and better equipped by history and geography to combat them:

Canada, our beloved land, favored of God in her broad rivers, immense lakes, exhaustless fisheries, illimitable forests and mineral wealth, of boundless extent; with a territory large enough for the homes of
40,000,000; free from the blighting evils that afflict and torment older lands, with the opportunity to graft upon our young national stock the best elements of the four or five nationalities that claim kinship with us; why should not Canada lead the world to-day, in all that makes for human progress. (1890, 465)

As Parker's celebration makes clear, Canadian physical spaces were also appropriated to this story of progress. The snowy mountain peaks, the rugged forest regions, the waters of Canada's lakes and rivers, and the wide open spaces of the Western prairies, all became figurative signs and literal causes of the healthful vigour, self-reliance, moral courage, and spiritual purity necessary in the citizenry of a great nation. The invigorating Canadian climate was held to be conducive to serious thought and moral elevation. Such a climate produced all of the character traits most valued by Christian Protestant ideology and most needed in a new country aiming at world prominence: strength, virility, love of freedom, thrift, energy, and moral earnestness. Such traits in turn were associated with Northern races in general, particularly the Scandinavian peoples from whom the Anglo-Saxons were descended, enabling the argument to be made that Canadian racial stock would combine with the climate, environs, and settler experiences to produce a noble race indeed.11 This relation between climate and ability appeared natural and indisputable when posed by Haliburton in the form of the following rhetorical question: "[i]f climate has not had the effect of moulding races, how is it that southern nations have almost invariably been inferior to and subjugated by the men of the north?" (1869, 2).

The Canadian winter was particularly mythologized in this context, providing the anchor for a range of arguments about Canada's glorious national destiny.12 It was

11 Berger notes that "[t]he adjective 'northern' came to symbolize energy, strength, self-reliance, health, and purity, and its opposite, 'southern,' was equated with decay and effeminacy, even libertinism and disease" (1970, 129).
12 This representation was by no means unanimous. In "Canada's Difficulties," for example, Roswell Fisher argued that Canadian geography and climate posed significant obstacles to national progress, asserting that "[a]s it is usually, and I believe truly, held that the human race attains its greatest vigour and energy in the temperate zone, it is obvious that we cannot hope for our population at the best more than the vigour of the people of that zone" (1880, 523). In addition, the Canadian climate meant barriers to
appealed to as a natural barrier to disease (Davin claimed it to be "a clime in which miasma cannot live," [1881, 491]) and to invasion by undesirable classes and races; it would discourage the settlement of paupers and lower races, particularly blacks but also Southern Europeans. Speaking of the poverty in urban centers in Britain, for example, the author of "Papers By a Bystander: 2" in the Canadian Monthly declared "[t]here is no use in talking about sending the sufferers here. Farm labourers we should welcome if they are hardy enough to bear the climate of the North-West" (February 1879, 236). In addition, national unity would be another result of such a climate, for the French and English would be united by its common hardships and benefits. Such an argument always appealed to the fact that most of the French settlers in Canada were from northern France: Brittany and Normandy. And because the Normans were descended from the Scandinavian conquerors who had also invaded Great Britain, then Canada could be the northern arena for re-uniting a long-separated race. French fears of absorption were justified in the rhetoric of harmoniously reintegrating the Anglo-Saxon race.13 Such visions of racial unity were predicated upon a vision of Canada as an essentially agrarian nation; nationalists of the imperialist branch valued the French for their perceived conservatism, attachment to the land, and resistance to industrialization. Haliburton's address to the Montreal Literary Club, published as The Men of the North And Their Place in History (1869), locates a mythic origin in Europe and imagines migration to an empty land, arguing that Canadians are heir to the mantle of dominance held by the northern peoples of Europe, that in fact they were that people, "all the original elements of the British race" once dispersed and now re-collected (9).

Haliburton emphasizes that the Canadian winter guaranteed the moral and physical predominance of (white, Anglo-Saxon) Canadian people, arguing that "[a]s long as the north wind blows, and the snow and the sleet drive over our forests and fields, we may be

---

13 Interest in the complex racial make-up of the Anglo-Saxon people, and its implications for Canada's national destiny, was widespread. An article by John Reade in The Week reports on scientific investigation establishing a racial correlation between the "eskimaux" of Canada and the "ancient cave-men of Britain" to establish Canada as the arena for a recreation of British stock (1887, 480).
a poor, but we must be a hardy, a healthy, a virtuous, a daring, and if we are worthy of our ancestors, a dominant race" (10). Haliburton objected to the name of the Dominion, for it meant, as far as he could discover, "the land of nothing," suggesting that Canada might be what it most certainly was not, a "nameless race of savages, who have no past which we can recall with pride, and no future which we can work out for ourselves and our children" (10). The alternative to national pride for Haliburton was a terrible absence equated with barbarism and exclusion from history, precisely what Canada had been won away from. Thus he wanted to change Canada's name to Norland and to re-imagine it entirely within an epic narrative of origins pre-dating Columbus: Canadians were the Northmen of the New World, the heirs of the Norse voyagers who had discovered the New World "long ages before the days of Columbus" (10). Although the tradition he evoked was masculinist and explicitly military, Haliburton yet managed to stress its superior domestic qualities, claiming that the Northern races are distinguished for their "chivalry and valour," particularly their respectful treatment of women, and asserting that "domestic love and affection find only a congenial home in the North" (11).

The mythological importance, in nationalist discourses, of winter and the north as both physical and spiritual terrain is emphasized in the title of Machar's Marjorie's Canadian Winter: A Story of the Northern Lights (1892), a novel for children that neatly links the themes of Christian mission, national character, and physical geography discussed above. The novel describes the Canadian adventures of a thirteen-year-old American girl, Marjorie Fleming, who spends a winter with her aunt, uncle, and cousins in Montreal while her father travels for his health. While stressing the many affinities between Canadians and Americans--particularly their common Christian heritage--the novel ultimately distinguishes Canada by locating it within an evangelical and missionary narrative of the "Light that shineth in darkness." This light, first introduced in a story read to Marjorie by her editor father, is both a reminder of individual Christian duty to struggle for one's own and others' spiritual regeneration, and a metaphor for Canada's national
destiny. That Canada is the story of the light in the darkness is made clear through the novel's representation of British and French colonization of the New World. Accounts of Marjorie's first tobogganing and skating experiences are interspersed with stories told by her uncle and a family friend about the Jesuits and their suffering at the hands of the Indians. In these episodes, Machar rewrites Francis Parkman's *History of the Jesuits* for children, such that the harsh northern geography and the savage inhabitants combine to make Canada the testing ground for Christian heroism and martyrdom. The narratives stress the ignorance and barbarism of the first inhabitants of North America—who are metaphorically linked to the people scattered throughout the dark parts of the world—in contrast to the piety, pity, and courage of the missionaries. In the process, the novel tells two complementary—if widely divergent—stories of origin, one presenting a vision of native peoples' joyful reception of Jacques Cartier as recognized saviour and the other describing the missionary settlements as beleaguered outposts of civilization amidst a ferocious, undifferentiated physical and human savagery. By narrating such stories always in the context of the whiteness of the Canadian winter, the novel seeks to blur religious and cultural tensions between French and English into an overarching racial destiny, and to locate a strong, singular Canadian identity in a heroic past characterized by the subduing of the wilderness and the Christianizing of the savage. The fact that Machar published this overtly nationalistic children's novel in the same year as *Roland Graeme*, her novel about the Labour Question, suggests the close alliance between social problem discourse and national self-representation.

Similarly, landscape is directly linked to the transformation of the heroine—from emancipated self-assertion to social purity—in Lily Dougall's *The Madonna of a Day* (1895). Having fallen from a train travelling through the British Columbia mountains, and now in danger from a gang of ruffians, the desperate heroine is yet awakened by the beauty of nature to a desire to "strive for something absolutely noble" (59). In her revulsion from her past life of selfishness, the mountains both prompt and symbolize her change of heart:
"[t]he light was beginning to touch the tops of the other hills; they too, pure and white, pointed upwards, and the great peak rose colossal and glittering, as it seemed, into the very sky" (59). The heroine imagines a spiritual and social destiny for herself that is appropriate to the purity and aspiration of the mountain peaks: "[s]he knew now that never, never again could she see a man degraded from man's estate without knowing that women might have held him up, nay, rather, exalted him, had women been pure enough to do the work that was given them to do" (270).

The connection between Anglo-Canadian national identity and progressive reform was an intimate one. Whereas other nations could refer to centuries-old traditions, revolutionary glory, or cultural, material, and military superiority as the basis for national pride, Canada repeatedly claimed recognition on the basis of its greater humanitarianism and its sympathy for the oppressed. In the early 1870s, Canada defined itself as the haven for the oppressed worker of England, and this characterization was to continue for the next twenty years, even as economic recession and unemployment meant that Canadian cities began to resemble their British counterparts far more than had ever been expected. The pages of the Canadian Monthly and National Review refer to Canada as a classless land, free of strife and promising prosperity to all. The following "Current Events" article of August, 1874, represented Canada as a land free of ghosts, debts, and unjust privileges:

To the labourer, desperately struggling to improve his condition through industrial wars and political uprisings in the old world, we may safely say, leave that narrow heritage, the domain of the privileged few, burdened with the debts, darkened with the shadows, haunted by the spectres of the past, where of every man's earnings a large part goes to maintain the luxury of the lord of the soil, or to pay for wars waged in quarrels now extinct, and in the interest of a class: come to a land in which there is room for all, which is owned by those who till it, where every man receives the full fruit of his
own toil, where the past has bequeathed no legacies of evil to the present--
the ample, bountiful, and unencumbered freehold of the people. (147)

In this representation, Canada's lack of history is an asset, releasing the Canadian labourer into a future of unlimited vistas, both geographically and metaphorically. Commentators also insisted that Canada was remarkably free of the gender conflicts that were disturbing England and America during this period, arguing that Canada's women occupied a privileged position of such respect and freedom that Canadian women were not even interested in suffrage. The moral purity of Canadian women was celebrated by many commentators as both source and evidence of Canadian national advancement. Canadian institutions were lauded for granting women unequalled freedom and political power while protecting them from the abuses suffered by women in other countries. Articles such as the Canadian Magazine's exposé of "Foot Distortion in China," by Archie Stockwell, devoted pages of detailed description to this "infamous and barbarous" custom, directing concerned attention to the mistreatment of foreign women as evidence of Canadian progress (1894, 115).

Such evaluations of the position of women in Canadian society explicitly linked women's emancipation with Canadian difference from the corruption and rigid hierarchy of Old World cultures. In his article on "The Canadian Girl," Hector Charlesworth defined male brutality as a quintessentially Old World characteristic, asserting that "[d]eep-rooted in the character of every English bred man lurks the idea that his wife is his chattel" and that "[t]he wife-beaters are all Englishmen" (1893, 189). He also connected women's social advancement with New World racial and cultural superiority, conjecturing that "the admixture of the liberality of the Scotch, the generosity and chivalry of the Irish, with the English customs, and the assimilation of the best social traits of many nations which is now going on in Canada, has had something to do with this happy result" (189). Canadian women, Charlesworth noted with approval, were naturally more independent, self-reliant, and assertive than English women were, and Canadian men demonstrated a parallel
lessening of aggression and tyranny, such that the Canadian heterosexual couple was developing into the ideal model of domesticity and harmony. Such a sentimentalized version of Canadian gender roles Charlesworth then connected back to the general freedom of Canadian social institutions, arguing that "[t]he absence in Canada of rigid caste regulations, the diminution of that toadyism to superiors and tyranny to inferiors characteristic of England, and, above all, the freedom from restraint in education, has bred a Canadian independence and breezy self-reliance that assimilates poorly with the English desire to dominate" (189). In Charlesworth’s representation, Canada is presented as naturally suited to movements for social reform, and yet so fundamentally egalitarian as to have no need of them.

Greater sympathy for the weak, the outcast, the helpless, and the fallen comes to be seen as the defining feature of Canadian culture. John Langmuir argued that the level of a nation’s humanity could be gauged by "the systems designed by a country to supply the needs of its moral, mental, and physical defectives, and of its dependent classes generally" and judged Ontario favourably for its well-developed charity, reformatory, and prison systems (1880, 239).  

James Whitman similarly comments on the large number of charitable institutions in Halifax as evidence of that city’s enlightenment and humanity:

There is perhaps no city on the continent or elsewhere, of its size, that can boast of better, or a greater number of charitable institutions than Halifax.

Its far famed Asylum for the Insane, on the Dartmouth shore, is an object of commanding interest and aspect, not only upon entering the harbour, but from almost any elevated portion of the city; and its extent... speaks

---

14 Langmuir concludes his essay on "The Asylums, Prisons, and Public Charities of Ontario, and Their System of Management" by commenting favourably on Ontario’s commitment to its dependent population:

That the Province is fully alive to the importance of the interests involved in the system is shown by the fact that during the past decade, she has founded and erected at an expense of nearly two and a half million dollars, three hospitals for the insane, an asylum for idiots, two institutions for the deaf and dumb and the blind, a central or intermediate prison, a reformatory for women, and a refuge for girls, which, along with the institutions established prior to Confederation form one of the most complete, charitable and correctional systems on the continent. (246-47)
volumes for the charity which provides a home so munificent for such unfortunates. The institution is worthy of an article itself, but of course the space of our present paper precludes more than a passing reference. So it may be said of the Asylum for the Poor, and the other numerous houses of refuge, of which, I understand, there are some twenty of different kinds, each accomplishing a vast amount of good in the silent God-like manner of charity, called, truly, the greatest of all Christian graces. (1897, 426)

If charity is "the greatest of all Christian graces," then it would seem from the multiplicity of discourses celebrating Canadian benevolence that nineteenth-century Canada was God's country indeed. It is hardly necessary to add that the repeated declarations of Canadian humanity and sympathy for the oppressed conflict with the conservatism and often extreme punitiveness with which Canadian legislators and social groups treated their population of beggars, fallen women, political radicals, inebriates, and law-offenders. It seems undeniable that wheat prices, tariff questions, and party politics occupied the average Canadian far more than did Magdalen Institutions or philanthropic home visiting. But my point is not so much the disjunctions between Canadian self-representations and social reality--although they provide an interesting sub-text--but rather the extent to which what was institutionally and socially marginal was central to the culture's mythology. What matters is that the mythology of Canada as a land with "no agitators, because we have no grievances," in Davin's words, was taken up and used in the most serious debates about the country's future (1881, 491).

To a large extent, social reform writers saw themselves as extending rather than contesting these dominant representations of Canadian society. Canadian social reformers' characterization of their time and their nation as one of vastly increased compassion is reflected in its textual deployment of scenes of compassion for suffering as paradigmatic expressions of national spirit; in their descriptions of the ideal community, nationalist and reform discourse tended to claim moral authority through appeals to emotion, particularly
the emotions of pity and benevolence. Thus reformers participated in what Samuels has called "a culture of sentiment" (1992, from her title). The key features of this culture were reformers' confidence in the natural goodness of the human heart and their faith in progress. Faith in every human being's capacity for good and his or her fundamental teachability had a powerful influence on Canadian intellectual and social life; this faith recurs in discussions of religion, political economy, morality, the family, education, criminality, and social ethics, and contributed powerfully to public confidence in reform movements. Leaders of new religious movements, directors of reformatories, asylums, and benevolent institutions, women philanthropists and charity workers, and supporters of woman suffrage all expressed their belief in human goodness and perfectibility and in Canada as the nation most suited to facilitate such developments.

In such contexts, the criminal became one of the favourite figures around which these ideas about justice, sympathy, and regeneration were expressed. In "The Criminal of Creation," Lewis Ray asserted that it was environment, not innate depravity, that led men to commit crimes, and linked criminality to suffering, arguing that "degradation and vice

15 For an overview of the philosophical and scientific basis of the emphasis on feeling, see Janet Todd's Sensibility: An Introduction (1986) on efforts by the second Earl of Shaftesbury, David Hume, and Adam Smith to link morality and emotional sensation. Shaftesbury posited an innate moral sense in human beings and understood goodness as the ability to perceive the beauty of virtue. Hume rejected the ethics of rationalism, arguing that passion alone had the power to move one to act for good. Smith continued Hume's ideas in his investigation of the formation of moral judgements through sympathy, arguing that sympathy "derives from an imaginary spectator within, who allows us to change places with a sufferer and put his or her interests before our own" (qtd. in Todd 27).


Although the perspectives of these studies differ, all see the culture of sentiment as an aspect of Enlightenment thought linked to developing middle-class hegemony. Barker-Benfield focuses on the function of sentimentalism in creating a consumer culture through its celebration of domesticity and in aiding the development of an appropriate climate for an emerging capitalist order. Todd places sentiment in the context of a number of social phenomena, including the changing economic and cultural situation of women, as well as interrelated developments in religion, philosophy, and science. Vincent-Buffault, examining the situation in France, traces "a slow passage from sensibility to sentimentality" (in which the latter term is distinctly pejorative while the former is not) throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (1991, ix).
are the natural results of punishment and pain" and that "wickedness is only anguish and
despair in a hardened and concentrated form" (1881, 185). For Ray, the relief of suffering
was the only solution to crime. M, the anonymous author of "Crime and its Treatment,"
condemned former and existing methods of punishment as "radically vicious," laying out a
proposal for prison reform that relied on faith in men and women's potential for radical
regeneration (1877, 166). M. argued for a new understanding of society modeled upon the
affective family, and employing a social welfare paradigm stressing the responsibility of the
state to care for its citizens, and owing "a more intimate and tender regard" for "the poor,
the weak [and] the obtuse" (166). In listing the principal features of an ideal prison,
including authority, rigor of regimen, industry, and instruction, M. emphasized that
"finally, there must be tender sympathy, stooping to the lowest, recognizing angelic
possibilities therein, and seeking to lift up and save" (171). This belief in the possibility of
refashioning human selves is reflected not only in Canadians' fascination with reforming
institutions and projects of all kinds, but also in their fictional and non-fictional
representations of the solutions to social problems, in which becoming truly Canadian often
involves a fundamental ethical transformation.

In The Regenerators, Cook has dealt at length with the importance of Protestant
Christianity in reforming discourse. References to Canada as God's land, and to reformers
as God's soldiers against vice, were neither superfluous nor, in reformers' minds,
exaggerated, and such references indicate the significant intersections between religion,
nationalism, and social reform. Religion provided many women reformers with irrefutable
justification for unconventional activity. The late-Victorian period was a time when
 reformers turned away from theological abstraction to argue for Christianity as the material

---

17 For an overview of the relationship between philanthropy, religion, and imperialism in late-nineteenth-
century English Canada, see Ruth Compton Brouwer's New Women for God (1990), an examination of
women's intense involvement in the Canadian Presbyterian mission in India. Brouwer argues that foreign
mission work was a vital outlet for women's energies in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, providing
opportunity for "a vocation and . . . a larger life than any they could contemplate in Canada" (4). Useful as
an overview, this study lacks an awareness of post-colonial approaches to her subject matter.
practice of social justice. The Social Gospel movement, which brought together the concern for social justice with the privileging of emotion in religious thought, was part of a long tradition of religious reform that opposed the stern Calvinism of the seventeenth century, offering instead a "sympathetic God and a corresponding view of humanity" (Barker-Benfield 1992, 71). The concern with directing religious emotion to contemporary social problems connected the reconstruction of society with the reformation of traditional religious doctrine and practice. Some moral philosophers, such as W. D. LeSueur in "Morality and Religion," abandoned Christianity altogether, finding the moral basis for human action in natural sympathy, men's "just and benevolent feelings" (1880, 166). This faith in the sympathy that every human being possessed inspired confidence in the possibility of reducing, if not eliminating, human evil. Thus the period that saw the growth of religious skepticism and doubt was also an age of heightened belief in social progress.

---

18 As Cook has argued, this movement was also in part a response to the profound intellectual crisis orthodox Christianity was undergoing (1985, 7-64). This crisis was ignited by the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and its implications for the biblical account of creation and man. Another major religious crisis stemmed from historical biblical criticism, which had originated in Germany early in the century, and which raised questions about the authorship and even the authenticity of certain books of the Bible. These scholars insisted that biblical texts had to be understood in their historical context and were not necessarily accurate: they certainly could not claim divine inspiration. One of the ways that Liberal Protestantism accommodated such attacks, then, was by insisting on the spirit rather than the letter of Christianity: as Machar and many others argued, the practical application of Christ's teaching was more important than subtle points of doctrine. For example, in "Modern Theology and Modern Thought," Machar defined religion in opposition to "theory or creed, which is intellectual belief" as "the living principle of action which has been the main spring of so many lives" (1881, 297).

19 In an article he wrote for the *Canadian Monthly* on the relationship between human physiology and moral character, Daniel Clark characterized the new religious thought in the following, somewhat amused, manner:

> The doctrine of total depravity is not insisted on with that positive vehemence with which it was once asserted. It is now often put in an apologetic way, with a tendency to give a poor sinner or heathen credit for disinterested acts of natural goodness and benevolence. ("1881, 347).

20 LeSueur went further than Social Gospel reformers in valuing feeling over doctrine, asserting in "The Future of Morality" that "[a]ll the grace would vanish from an act, say of hospitality, if it were visibly inspired by fear of heaven, or if it were in any way dissociated from the natural human sympathy which it ought to express" (1880, 76).

21 For a discussion of the role of religion in shaping culture and nationality, see John Grant's *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (1988), especially 170-203, and William Westfall's *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (1989). For a full treatment of the often uneasy relationship between 'critical inquiry and moral affirmation' in Anglo-Canadian intellectual discourse, see A. B. McKillop's *A Disciplined Intelligence* (1979, ix) and his *Contours of Canadian*
Literature and Nationalism

The age was also one of literary nationalism. As Roper notes, the late Victorian period in Canada was "a time of talk and writing about the need of a native literature to body forth a new nation" (1976, 277). Many Canadian literary journals, such as the Canadian Monthly and National Review and the Canadian Magazine, were designed to further Canadian interest in cultural matters and to counter the flood of American periodicals; during the period 1875-95, Canadian literature was perhaps as much commented upon as practiced. Commentators on Canadian literary activity posited a direct correlation between national consciousness and literary development, lamented or justified Canada's failure to produce a great national literature, and consciously predicted--or anxiously called for--significant cultural achievements in the near future. Gerson characterizes this period in terms of a search, alternately hopeful and despairing, for a national literature perceived to be integral to national character (1989, 8-12). The writing of J. G. Bourinot throughout the last two decades of the century is one example of the obsession with documenting, analyzing, explaining, and predicting the relationship between Canadian material conditions, political developments, intellectual progress, and literary output, all justified by the belief that, as Berger phrases it, "[a] native literature was both an infallible signal of the development of a national consciousness and the chief source of its nourishment" (1970, 50). Duncan, 

Thought (1987). McKillop details the attempts by intellectuals and church leaders to accommodate the Protestant crisis in faith. While McKillop, Grant, and Westfall provide excellent overviews of Victorian-Canadian intellectual history, my study owes its principal debt to the research of social historians such as Valverde and McLaren. In other words, my study is less concerned with the intellectual and theological spheres than with the discursive realm of the social.

22 The periodicals of the day frequently had mission statements explaining the close connection perceived to exist between the periodical press and national culture. J. Gordon Mowat wrote loftily on "The Purpose of a National Magazine" for the Canadian Magazine that the periodical intended "to stimulate and afford expression to the higher thought and tastes of a people, to bring the country's best thought, under the most favourable circumstances and in the most attractive form, before the best classes of the country's readers--the classes upon whom the shaping of the political, social, intellectual and even industrial future of the nation most largely depend" (1901, 166). Mowat comments on magazine literature from America and England that it is fine, but "does not meet the national needs" (167).

23 Bourinot argued in 1881 that Canadian literature was on the verge of a new growth and period of expansion because of "the greater opportunities of leisure and culture" made possible by political and economic developments in the country (234). He made a direct connection between Canada's political
arguing against American piracy of foreign authors in the Washington Post, asserted that "literature is not only the measure of a people's progress [but] is also the means of their further advancement" and that "[t]he production of books therefore has direct relations to the public good" (qtd. in Tausky 1978, 102). Commentators alternately celebrated and lamented the (non)existence of Canadian literature. Troop, inclined to take a gloomy view of Canada's colonial existence, claimed that "to this want of national life and feeling must in large part be attributed our literary feebleness and the paucity of ideas which Canadians have contributed to the thought of the world" (1887, 331). An anonymous review in "Our Library Table," The Week, of Sarah Anne Curzon's verse-drama Laura Secord, the Heroine of 1812, commended the piece as a contribution to national culture, commenting that "[w]e cannot have too much of that spirit of inquiry, that spirit of lively, healthy interest in national subjects, that is ever the sign of an increasing literature" (1887, 759).

The sense of national urgency meant, as I have previously indicated, that the general debate over realism and naturalism that took place in England during this period never produced in Canada the mass of experimental fiction that constitutes that country's fin de siècle legacy. In Britain, arguments about what fiction should represent, how responsive it should be to new discoveries in science and psychology, and how candid about sexual relations, were taken up in the novels themselves, which dealt in taboo, the overthrow of convention, decadence, and sexual experimentation. As Elaine Showalter has demonstrated, British New Woman fiction was associated with experimental fictional destiny and her dawning cultural strength, suggesting that the national spirit emanating from great political institutions would also animate literary production:

In this land there is a future full of promise for literature as for industry. Our soil speaks to the million of poor in the old countries of the world of boundless hope. Here there is no ancient system of social exclusiveness to fix a limit to the intellectual progress of the proletariat. Political freedom rests on a firm, broad basis of general education. . . . As our political horizon widens, and a more expansive national existence opens before us, so must our intellectual life become not only more vigorous, but more replete with evidences of graceful culture. (234)

In 1893, when he spoke to the Royal Society of Canada (later published as Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness), Bourinot was still predicting significant literary achievements by Canadian authors, looking forward to "the Canadian Scott, or Hawthorne, or 'George Eliot,' or Dickens of the future" and declaring that "the progress in the years to come will be far greater than that we have yet shown" (1893, 45).
forms and a diverse range of sexual possibilities for men and women (1991, 38-58). But while English critics worried that lack of realism in regard to sexual matters was effeminizing the virile English population,24 Canadian critics almost universally regarded sexuality in fiction as debased and debasing, and as inappropriate to the Canadian environment and historical situation. As in all other matters, Canadian products had to be purer than those of either England or the United States. In the debates about the kinds of literature best suited to represent and to sustain a national culture that raged in Canadian presses, anything approaching Zola-esque naturalism was condemned as immoral, and even what we would now call the classic realist text came in for censure by some critics.

The debate between realism and romance illustrates assumptions about the relationship between national development and literary genre. Balancing precariously between the potentially immoral escapism of sentimental romance and the imitation-inspiring grittiness of realism, many commentators asserted that historical fiction was particularly suited--and safe--for an emerging literature, and called for a Canadian Sir Walter Scott or George Eliot to contribute to the moulding of a healthy, moral citizenry.25 In "The Lamps of Fiction," Goldwin Smith found in Scott that perfect combination of realism and idealism that made great art, arguing that although "[t]he materials of the novelist must be real ... they must pass through the crucible of the imagination" because the literary artist "is not a photographer, but a painter" (1881, 70). Writing in The Week, Barry Dane asserted that, as a colony, Canada could not hope to produce a fully-fledged national literature of the stature of Britain's, and should not even try to; instead, the Dominion should aim at what might in generations to come nourish such a literature: 

24 The English critic Elizabeth Linton, for example, complained in the New Review symposium on "Candour in English Fiction," published in 1890, that the "present system of uncandid reticence" resulted in "the queer anomaly of a strong-headed and masculine nation cherishing a feeble, futile, milk-and-water literature--of a truthful and straightforward race accepting the most transparent humbug as pictures of human life" (qtd. in Ardis 1990, 33).

25 For a comparative overview of Scott's critical reception throughout North America, see Eva-Marie Kröller's "Walter Scott in America, English Canada, and Quebec" (1980). For a discussion of the Canadian response to George Eliot, and particularly the parallels between Eliot's and William Kirby's historical fiction, see Kröller's "George Eliot in Canada" (1984). Kröller notes that the historical novel was generally considered by critics to be "the most suitable model for a budding national literature" (1984, 313).
cannot attain the perfection of the butterfly at once; yet we can seek out and store ourselves with that which, in after years, may lend a beauty to our maturer state" (1884, 632). Not surprisingly, Dane recommends history and romance as genres appropriate to the task of recording and celebrating Canada's past; for subject matter, he identifies the languages, religion, and culture of native peoples—called a "fast fading race"—early French settlement, the Conquest, and the 1812 war (632). In contrast, more cosmopolitan commentators claimed versions of realism as appropriate to an emerging nation. Thus The Week reprinted an article by Alice Wellington Rollins from The Critic arguing for a "heroic" realism: "[t]he taste for the impossibly heroic, the grandiloquently virtuous, the magnificently glorious, in fiction, has certainly departed. But the out-and-out realists make the mistake of knowing no middle course between impossible heroes and no heroes at all" (1887, 738). What was needed, Rollins asserted, was a kind of fiction that combined the heart-stirring qualities of romance with fidelity to contemporary life, resulting in a "truth that stirs the pulses and moves the soul" (738). Duncan, the voice of sane liberal thought in literary matters, also thought that the real should be balanced by the ideal. Musing on the feud between romance and realism being carried on primarily in the pages of American periodicals, Duncan sided with realism—she was an ardent admirer of W. D. Howells—while emphasizing its limitations: "[g]entlemen of the realistic school, one is disposed to consider you very right in so far as you go, but to believe you mistaken in your idea that you go the whole distance and can persuade the whole novel-writing fraternity to take the same path through the burdocks and the briars" (13 Jan. 1887, 111). Aspiring after a fusion of idealism, truth, and the just representation of the Canadian nation, Canadian novels of the fin de siècle are very different from their British counterparts. Not yet even established as literature in the new country, Canadian fiction needed to serve the cause of nationalism to justify its position in culture.

Although the novel was, in most cultural commentators' minds, subordinate to poetry and to non-fiction prose such as history, philosophy, and biography, it was
nonetheless constrained to serve a moral and cultural purpose. While regretting that
Canadian novelists seemed to be "wanting in the inventive and imaginative faculty,"
Bourinot asserted that they required "a higher and purer aim than the majority of novel
writers of the present day" (1893, 28, 30). The author of "Books and Authors" (1896)
stated that "[t]here is a moral in everything, and it is the artist's work and duty to discover
it, to reveal it, and to celebrate it so that the world may know and feel it" (1896, 389).
Most Canadian reviewers and commentators took fiction's impact on the people of Canada
quite seriously, agreeing that "[t]he true use of reading is to build character" (Merton and
the Editor 1896, 286). Discussing a recent murder case, this article on "Our Children and
their Reading" drew a direct correlation between matricide and the reading of sensational
literature: "[n]o motive for the cold-blooded murder of their mother by Robert Coombes
and his brother, other than that produced in the minds of the wretched boys by the pile of
cheap romances and blood-thirsty tales which was found in the house at Plaistow, has been
given" (282). The authors worried that "Canada and the United States are flooded to-day
with a class of literature which is sense-destroying and soul-damning" (282). Moreover, it
was not only moral corruption that was feared, but physical restlessness and criminality, "a
taste for that which satisfied not" (283). Good literature must combat the tendency to
sensationalism and fantasy, so that "[a] proper appreciation for the real, the natural and the
simple" is not "destroyed by a constant vision of the unreal, the unnatural, and the complex
and imaginary sets of circumstances" (283). Literary critics focused their reviews on the
"arguments" that novels "work out," and sought to point out potential moral danger where
they saw it.26

26 Conservative Canadian critics found many British (and Canadian-born) authors unacceptable. The
following passage from the "Books and Authors" section of The Canadian Magazine criticizes the writers of
the new fiction, and suggests that morality and artistry should complement one another:

It is generally conceded that most of what is called moral fiction has, in the past, been
inartistic. But, as the Spectator points out, this was not because "there is some deep-seated
and ineradicable hostility between the beauty and the truth of art and the beauty and
the truth of morality," but because "these inartistic moral tales are inartistic only because
the writers of them lack some or all the gifts that make an artist." Hence if Grant Allen,
Thomas Hardy, Sarah Grand, etc., are really artistic they could produce artistic tales
That children's literature was meant to inculcate in their minds the notions of Anglo-Saxon supremacy, virile masculinity, and the glories of imperialism is clear from the following list of recommended titles:

Where can a boy get a better idea of Harold and the battle of Hastings or the differences between the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans, than in "Wulf the Saxon?" Then think of such titles as "When London Burned," "Beric, the Briton," "Through the Sikh War," "With Wolfe in Canada," "The Dash for Khartoum," "With Lee in Virginia," "St. Bartholomew's Eve," "With Clive in India," "Bonnie Prince Charlie," "The Lion of the North (Gustavus Adolphus)," and his latest books, "A Knight of the White Cross," being a tale of the siege of Rhodes by the Order of the Knights of St. John in the time of the Crusades, "The Tiger of Mysore" and "Through Russian Snows." What delightful tales these are, and what a taste for history they engender! (Merton and the Editor 1896, 283)

Literature for adults as well as children was valued for its pedagogical function: it was intended to create healthy and moral Canadian citizens and to promote a vision of national destiny. To this end, critics repeatedly elaborated versions of romantic realism

without bringing in the immoral or the agnostic. They do not need to work out arguments showing that man is largely animal and woman wholly so, and that women lower men rather than elevate them. It is quite possible for a novel to be a work of art and yet have a sound moral at its heart, because the perfect moral and spiritual laws of the universe are expressed in whole or in part in every episode in man's life. (1896, 389)

27 Maud Petitt's Beth Woodburn (1897) illustrates the outlines of the debate over the function of literature in Victorian Canada. The novel's protagonist desires to be "the bright particular star of Canadian literature" but the opening pages of the novel find her engaged in an argument about what good literature is with her friend and guide Arthur Grafton (12). Arthur criticizes Beth's writing as possessing too much "sentimental gloom" (32). He encourages her instead to "bring before [her] reader such sweet little homes and bright faces and sunny hearts... the sweetest mission a writer has" (32). Arthur wants Beth to consecrate her writing to Christianity, but Beth holds to an idea of literature as a purely aesthetic activity separate from any didactic or reformist function. In the following exchange, Arthur finds even George Eliot's work too worldly and lacking in Christian purpose:

"No; I want to be like George Eliot."
A graver look crossed his face.
"That is right to a certain extent. George Eliot certainly had a grand intellect, but if she had only been a consecrated Christian woman how infinitely greater she might have been! With such talent as hers undoubtedly was, she could have touched earth with the very tints of heaven!" (40)
characterized by truth to a moral order rather than fidelity to naturalistic detail: the "deeper truths" were more important than the mere "broad external facts of nature" (Wright 1895, 286). Book reviews praised volumes for representing "our patriotic and distinctly Canadian poems and speeches" and for providing "distinct evidence that Canada has a literature peculiarly its own" ("Book Notices" December 1893, 204; August 1893, 508). Reviewers condemned as injurious to "the morals of the community" sensational stories of "the intrigues of fast women and faithless wives" ("Current Literature" 1878, 117). In a review of Machar's career, Leman Guild praised her nationalist purpose, declaring that her poems "cannot fail in their mission to kindle in the heart of every Canadian a deeper love of country and a more earnest desire to serve faithfully and well the land of his nativity or adoption, as the case may be" (1906, 500).

Although nationalism and social reform were theoretically closely allied, fictional and non-fictional literature addressing Canadian social problems was in practice deeply conflicted. The cultural imperative to represent Canada as a nation so closely identified with progressive reform movements as to be without need of them created significant problems for writers who felt it their duty to criticize specific features of Canadian society. On the most superficial level, such writers often resort to the technique of displacement,

By the end of the novel, Beth has been convinced by Arthur's definition of literariness. She realizes that a novel should "bring more joy into the world . . . sweeten life and warm human hearts" (84). Eventually, she burns the one she has written for it is "filled with dark doubts and drifting fear and shuddering gloom" (94). At the novel's conclusion, Beth is the wife of a missionary in Palestine, and has achieved international literary recognition through harnessing her creative talents to her missionary purpose; she has "marked out a new line of work, and the dark-eyed Jewish characters in her stories have broadened the sympathies of her world of readers" (156).

The connection between moral purpose and literary pleasure is similarly made in Marshall Saunders' The House of Armour (1897), when a comment on the unhealthy aspects of bad novel reading is placed in the mouth of a medical doctor, who asserts that romances lead to sexual immorality:

"Erotic trash!" was the reply. "He crushed her in his arms"--reading from the book--"and smothered her with kisses, till terrified at his passion she was--Bah! I'll read no more. You young men read this amatory rubbish and say, 'That sounds lively,' and look around for someone to practise on. Why don't you fill your mind with something solid while you're young. Do you think you are going to limp around into drivelling old age looking for some one to crush to your breast?" (150)

The doctor goes on to define good novels, which present a clear moral in palatable and easily digestible form: "Good novels have a mission. Many a one preaches a sermon to people that never listen to a minister" (151).
transplanting the problem they are addressing to a foreign locale so that it can be discussed in disguised form. Aspects of national life considered antithetical to Canadianness—labour unrest, tyranny, injustice, social hierarchy, political corruption, sexual immorality, lawlessness—are expelled from Canada and projected onto other societies. While not overtly threatening, such representations can function as warnings about and affirmations of Canadian self-identity. When problems are set in Canada, an elaborate series of qualifications often locates the source of the problem elsewhere, or deflects attention from institutions or social structures onto individuals—who are then defined as not Canadian, expelled from the Canadian community—or locates the source of regeneration at the very core of what was initially defined as the problem. Sometimes the problem itself is redefined as an excess of what in moderation would be useful and morally healthy.

But if Canadian nationalism often interfered with the articulation of national problems, it also worked as a spur to reform, making it more urgent, more invested with national zeal. Women's mistreatment in the home or public sphere could be opposed not on the grounds of their innate rights but because their mistreatment was both a cause and a symptom of national decline. Missionary work abroad depended on stability and health at home. How could Canada bring the light of Anglo-Saxon civilization to the heathens of dark lands if it could not care for its own poor, criminal, and insane? National pride and competitive xenophobia stirred Canadian reformers to resist the encroachment of foreign disorders—labour unrest, socialistic ideas, overgrowth of urban areas, and degeneration of domestic life—that had come to symbolize the American republic and the Old World. When these problems were identified as essentially American or other, then the Canadian social reformer could oppose them in the name of nationalism. Writing about these problems in
Canada was not really criticizing Canada but, rather, defending its originary purity from external threats.

In the late nineteenth century, the social problem novel took on the task of representing the others of Canadian society, variously identified as the criminal, intemperate, unproductive, ungrateful, deviant, or (when sexually or socially transgressive) women. Such literature either expels these disruptive elements from the community or somehow incorporates them into it. As a result, the novels are relentlessly engaged in acts of classification, definition, and demarcation, separating high from low, respectable from nonrespectable, sympathetic from unfeeling, natural from unnatural, fallen from unfallen, redeemable from unregenerate, moral from corrupt, innocent from improper. By bringing certain segments of society within the imaginary boundaries of the Canadian community and by denying community membership to others, social problem discourse is an ideal site to examine the mechanisms of national or cultural self-construction.

The Publishing Industry in Canada

The decade of the 1890s witnessed something of a boom in Canadian fiction. The period saw a rapid expansion in the market for fiction, and literary production kept pace. Appreciative international attention began to focus on Canadian literature, and English-Canadian authors were publishing in major American centres such as Boston and New York as well as in London. But a measure of international success did not mean a strong domestic publishing industry. And although there were calls for a distinctly Canadian literature in all the periodical papers, in practice, the material conditions of publishing tended to complicate literature's relationship to Canadian nationalism in the 1890s. A number of publishing firms, based in Toronto and Montreal, began modest programs in the 1870s, but there were few large publishing houses in Canada, and those that existed
published relatively little fiction. George Parker suggests that making a living as a professional writer was a precarious business in late-nineteenth-century Canada (1985, 233-39). Writing on "Canadian Short-Story Writers," Allan Douglas Brodie commented that "the exigencies of very existence in Canada, to put it mildly, prevent native authors from making even a bare subsistence by the product of their pen alone" (1895, 335). The market for fiction in Canada was small, particularly in comparison with that in America. The population in the last decade of the nineteenth century was between four and five million people, but about one-third of these were French-speaking and a significant number were illiterate. Most fiction published in Canada appeared at the author's expense. In addition, as G. Mercer Adam noted in an article for The Week, copyright laws unfavourable to Canadian publishers were a further obstacle: "the anomalies of the literary copyright law," Adam observed, "surrender the native book-market to the American publisher" (1884, 439). As a result of this situation, Canadian authors interested in making money from their writing had to interest British or, as was more frequent, American publishers in their work; few works of fiction by Canadians were published first in Canada. Many Canadian authors left Canada for the more congenial literary climates of Boston, New York, or London. As a result, their fiction had to correspond to non-Canadian demands concerning fictional setting and novelistic form. As Gerson comments, "[m]ost turn-of-the-century Canadian-born novelists who became literary expatriates either forsook their Canadian origins to write novels indistinguishable from the mass of popular British and American fiction, or constructed an image of Canada that catered to the international taste for exotic colour" (1989, 37). Even for writers who stayed in Canada, the need to interest American and British publishers in their work—necessary if their writing was to be remunerative—meant that their Canada had to correspond to popular international perceptions of Canada as a pastoral land of meadows and blossoms, as exemplified in the

---

28 As George Parker notes in The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada, the activities of these Canadian firms are difficult to trace precisely because few of the books they published were recorded by the Library of Congress or the British Museum, and "Canadian lists were practically non-existent" (1985, 178).
two most popular literary forms of the day, the regional idyll and the romantic tale of French Canada.29

Social reform and social control

My dissertation takes a critical approach to the social reform novels and non-fictional writings of the period, partly in reaction to the recent focus on celebratory reclamation in studies of nineteenth-century women writers, and partly for reasons of ideological commitment. I would like to stress, however, that the point of my work is not to level blame at particular writers.30 Novelists and essayists alike were constrained to write within

29 See Gerson's "Canadian Women Writers and American Markets, 1880-1940" (1994) for a discussion of women writers who exploited the lucrative markets for fiction and periodical literature in the United States. 30 Although I have found Bacchi's revisionist history inspiring as a model, I hope to avoid the tendency to monolithic dismissiveness in her work. As her title suggests (excepting the misleading question mark), Bacchi's Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists is a skeptical and critical analysis of the Canadian suffrage movement; turning away from the feminist tradition of celebrating foremothers, Bacchi characterizes the suffrage movement as "widely dispersed and poorly organized, fragmented both by geography and ideology," and focuses on the conservative, classist, and racist aspects of the movement (35). Bacchi questions the "feminist" nature of the drive for suffrage in Canada, seeing its association with various social reform movements (the Social Gospel, temperance, child welfare, civic reform, compulsory education, slum clean-up) as evidence of a lack of commitment to women's equality. In other words, while a few committed feminists sought suffrage because of a principled belief in women's equality with men, most sought suffrage merely as a means to other ends distinct from feminist change: "[f]or the feminists, the ballot symbolized a desire to change the male's conception of woman and her function. For the social reformers, woman suffrage provided the means to implement their larger reform programme and to give women's maternal influence a wider sphere of action" (35-36). Bacchi makes an absolute distinction between the few "feminists" of the movement (radicals who sought social revolution and questioned women's traditional roles) and the "social reformers" (conservatives who accepted separate spheres ideology). Although the distinction certainly has validity, it fails to allow for recognition of how conflicting attitudes and priorities may have operated together in single individuals or societies. Bacchi's criticism of reform-minded women is somewhat anachronistic as well, applying a contemporary liberal-feminist framework to a nineteenth-century situation. She suggests that some bright women escaped their social and political contexts while most did not, blaming the conservative reformers for the maternal feminist legacy they left to handicap later feminists.

In a review essay entitled "The Ideas of Carol Bacchi and the Suffragists of Halifax," Ernest Forbes critiques Bacchi's methodology and conclusion, charging her work with reductionism, flaws in data interpretation, and a narrow focus on Central Canada (1989, 90-99). Interrogating Bacchi's assertion that the suffrage movement in Canada was largely a conservative one, as evidenced by the fact that many women supported suffrage for leverage on temperance matters and to empower their own self-serving visions of social stability, Forbes points out that the aims of women in temperance organizations were often complex and cannot be adequately summarized in Bacchi's terms. In one example, Forbes points to discrepancies between women's public statements and those recorded from WCTU meetings to suggest that the public persona women constructed for themselves may often have sheltered more radical goals, as "[s]uccessful women leaders of necessity became experts at dissimulation and deference in a male-dominated society" (94). Forbes also stresses, as Bacchi does not, the strength of the forces ranged against the suffrage movement and the resulting difficulty of articulating radical, overtly feminist positions. Anti-feminist forces grew with the movement as the fundamental transformations feminists sought became clearer to conservatives. Thus Forbes suggests that if the assertion of equal rights was modified and muffled by assertions of women's motherly duty to the race and their greater moral purity, this alteration may have occurred in response to the
the terms of Enlightenment discourse, which provided both the enabling framework and the nearly inescapable limit of what they could say about Canada and social problems. Therefore, there can be no question of blaming individual authors for a failure of vision or a lack of imaginative identification. Rather, I am interested in social reform writing as a language operating within certain constraints that determined how it was possible to think about a particular subject. For this reason, I tend not to focus, as literary critics conventionally do, on how individual authors have resisted or transcended the language systems within which they found themselves working. I emphasize instead their common contribution to a certain configuration of Canada and social reform.

At the conceptual level, I am indebted to the work of Foucault on the operation of disciplinary mechanisms in modern society, and I take a suspicious approach to the discourse of benevolence in nineteenth-century social reform. I follow Foucault in recognizing in Enlightenment discourses of humanitarian reform the increasingly invasive control of bodies and subjectivities in the service of modern forms of power. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon as both a specific architectural embodiment and a metaphor for the modern disciplinary apparatus whose effect was to produce in the person under observation "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (1979, 201). The shift in power's forms, as Foucault observes it, is dramatic: from being located in the body of the sovereign, it

---

virulence that equal rights demands provoked. As Forbes notes, anti-feminist forces rallied in the 1890s. The suffrage bill was defeated in the Nova Scotia legislature in 1894 and opponents of woman suffrage "launched a campaign of ridicule against both the doctrine of women's rights and its proponents" (94). That women supported suffrage vocally in the 1890s can be read as "not an abandonment of feminism but a pragmatic shift of emphasis to goals which enjoyed some hope of achievement in the near future" (98).

Forbes offers a useful corrective to Bacchi, but his argument raises further questions focused on his strategy of reading past women's own statements about their reform goals and aspirations. Surely the entire corpus of women's statements of maternal feminism cannot be dismissed simply as the donning of a publicly-acceptable facade. Forbes' analysis denies the seductiveness and usefulness of maternal or domestic feminist ideology as well as its conflicted, contradictory elements in his insistence on reading such statements as strategic. I find more useful Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton's contention that "[w]omen's use of the ideology [of separate spheres] has been a classic example of people trying to shape their own lives in conditions not of their own choosing" (1994, 10). Dismissing women's own public statements implies that there is a realm of truth untainted by ideology behind their words and ignores the extent to which women spoke within discursive constraints that limited what they could say and, in turn, set the terms of debate for the future.
becomes diffuse, unlocalizable; from being visible and discontinuous, it becomes invisible and unceasing; from exercising itself on the body in violent and readily apparent ways, it works internally, efficiently, and almost imperceptibly. This new automatized and disindividualized disciplinary regime creates and maintains the docile bodies and willing minds necessary for the harmonious and productive functioning of the democratic state. The ultimate disciplinary society is composed of an interlocking network of similarly-functioning institutions (schools, prisons, mental institutions, hospitals, army barracks, factories, charitable homes, and so on) that form a structure of generalized surveillance.

Such a regime, once functioning, becomes an internally-regulating system; it operates by creating the conditions within which certain relations between people are automatically produced. With these relations established, the specific motivations of the observer—the one who supervises, controls, teaches, evaluates, studies, observes, expounds—cease to matter. In other words, whether the observer's intentions are benevolent or malicious, empathetic or clinical, the relation between observer and observed is essentially unchanged. Such an understanding of the relations of power structures my approach to social reform discourse, and specifically to the reformers who sought to mould the sympathies, beliefs, and actions of their readers, and who engaged, through their writing, in discursive acts of classification, description, and supervision.

I argue that the shift from prohibition to prevention, from punishment to discipline, is crucial in the writing of Canadian social reformers and social problem novelists as the century nears its end. The emphasis on benevolence, mercy, education, purity work, regeneration, and reclamation all signify reformers' interest in legislation and voluntaristic movements designed to prevent rather than to punish: to remove the social roots of crime, poverty, immorality, and disease. To this end, as Bacchi phrases it, the reformers "created a 'cradle-to-grave' reform strategy, taking the child at his birth and shaping him into a predictable and productive social unit" (1983, 87). They constructed "a complex system of institutions and agencies to perform the task of socialization" (87). Moreover, the psycho-
social mechanisms of this shift are evident in the social problem literature of the period in its intention to support reform organizations in creating healthy, productive, and moral citizens for Canada. This work of social control is never complete: there must always be more novels, more studies, more reports, more addresses to benevolent organizations. Moreover, the subject under the disciplinary regime is never entirely socialized, for disciplinary discourses inevitably contain gaps, ruptures, contradictions, the spaces in which resistance to social control can be articulated. In my thesis I explore the extent to which the new emphasis on reform launched a critique of injustice that itself became a form of social control; I also explore the manner in which such a reform ideology created the basis for further resistance.

**Maternal Feminism and Social Reform Discourse**

In focusing almost exclusively on novels by women (although I include brief discussions of Albert Carman and Grant Allen), and in examining the texts generated by movements in which women played significant roles, I pay particular attention to the functions of gender—and most particularly of the feminine—in representations of social problems. Although the texts examined here address distinctly different social problems—urban poverty, the fallen woman, and women's work—and propose specific solutions, they are linked by a shared concern with the feminine as a principle of regeneration. Many social and cultural historians of the late-nineteenth century have discussed the impact of maternal feminism—also termed separate spheres feminism and social purity feminism—on the women's and reform movements. Linda Kealey defines maternal feminism as the "conviction that woman's special role as mother gives her the duty and the right to participate in the public

---

31 Guildford and Morton define separate spheres as "a powerful and prescriptive ideology, elevated to the level of common sense during the industrial and bourgeois revolutions of the nineteenth century" (1994, 10). Social purity was a term used by reformers themselves, though the term has been reintroduced into discussions of the period largely by Valverde, who describes social purity feminism as "a powerful if informal coalition for the moral regeneration of the state, civil society, the family, and the individual" (1991, 17). Unless referring specifically to the social purity movement, I use the phrase "maternal feminism" to indicate the focus on women's special ability to "mother" the poor, the state, and the nation as well as children.
sphere" (1979, 7). Maternal feminists criticized the exclusion of women from the rights of citizenship through appeals to a patriarchal definition of woman's biologically-determined nature. In a useful overview of the movement marred by occasional sarcasm and condescension, Wayne Roberts identifies a shift in the early Canadian feminist movement from equal rights radicalism to conservative maternal feminism, as "the vigour and experimentation identified with the new woman was absorbed into campaigns for uplift reform" (1979, 17). Kealey, Roberts, and others have addressed the varied and often conflicting uses to which domestic ideology was put by nineteenth-century social reformers. They argue that maternal feminism, although in many ways a reinscription of a limiting and oppressive social order, cannot be dismissed as uniformly disabling for women. Rather, it must be understood as a discursive medium through which women were able to articulate criticisms of patriarchal society and to recognize contradictions within the self-justifications of patriarchy. Although they were undoubtedly limited by domestic ideology, women reformers were able to use it for subversive purposes. Terry Lovell, for instance, argues that the nineteenth-century women's movement in England neither fully accepted nor completely rejected dominant ideology, but rather "developed along the lines of fault of the dominant domestic ideology" (1987, 95). In reading for the ambiguities, hesitations, complexities, and contradictions of the texts in this study, I am particularly attentive to the way that ideas about women, femininity, and the domestic realm contribute to the tension between the call for fundamental change and the conservative appeal to tradition, order, or nature. Such a tension is perhaps most evident in women reformers' appeals to motherhood as the basis for reform.

The complex of ideas to which my discussions will continually return concerns the relationship between gender, class, and the nation. Repeatedly in the narratives I examine, social problems are linked to the national body--to a particular idea of Canada--through the figure of woman and her class-inflected social function. Machar's writing on behalf of women factory workers reveals the link between the ideologies of nationalism,
reproduction, and feminism. In two articles written for The Week in 1896, Machar castigates a social system that placed the heaviest burdens on those least able to bear them. Quoting the 1889 Official Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, she protests that "it is on the weakest and most helpless workers—the women and children—that the heaviest burden rests—the burden of the longest hours, the smallest pay, the harshest and most unreasonable exactions—simply because they are the most helpless and uncomplaining" ("The Unhealthy Condition of Women's Work in Factories" 566). Advocating reduced hours and improved conditions for women workers, Machar claims that doctors and economists, as well as reformers, should be concerned about the effect of extreme drudgery and physical hardship on young women's bodies and morals. Recognizing that the cause of humanity alone might not be enough to sway business-minded readers, Machar employs the language of economics and national resources to argue that "it is a condition of the highest economic efficiency that the race should be provided with good, healthy, and capable mothers, for on them will to a great extent depend the conduct of their future children" (569). Thus she makes her claim that the middle class must interest themselves in the working conditions of labourers not only on the grounds of humanity, but also on "those of economic efficiency and patriotism" (569).

In Machar's writing, mothering has two important rhetorical functions. First, the rhetoric of mothering justifies Machar's philanthropic concerns in general and the writing of her article in particular—both unconventional forays into the public sphere of political argument and community leadership. Far from confining women to the home, the appeal to mothering explains why women need to enter the public arena: women cannot confine their work to the home, Machar argues, because the conditions that affect their children are everywhere; the duties of mothering can know no boundaries. In "Healthy and Unhealthy Conditions of Women's Work," Machar argues that as long as mothers do not neglect their home duties, philanthropy is simply an extension of their mothering role. Although Machar is not herself a mother, her womanly nature still permits—and demands—that she
mother the race. Indeed, it might be argued that because domestic ideology "had literally no place for the single woman," Machar's appropriation of the role of mother justified not only her unconventional actions but her very existence (Lovell, 1987, 96). In claiming the responsibilities and privileges of a mother, Machar could mount a radical challenge to the neglectful fathers of the church, and could claim the superiority of benevolent women over male economic theorists. "Our Lady of the Slums' is wise as well as loving" she claims in an 1891 article for The Week, "often wiser than the cold professional economist" (234).

Alongside the radical challenge to gender norms is a defensive class position, however. For Machar also sees middle-class women as a replacement for the inadequate working-class mother. "Seeing, then, the helplessness of these poor girls, and the incapacity of either themselves or their ignorant mothers, to act intelligently and firmly in their defence, there is good reason why the enlightened and influential women of Canada should recognize their responsibility, as being in some degree 'the sisters' keepers'" ("The Unhealthy Condition of Women's Work" 1896, 568). Although based in separate spheres ideology, the rhetoric of mothering opens an almost unlimited arena for middle-class women's activity, management, and social power.

Mothering plays a second important role in Machar's argument. The urgent necessity to improve the working conditions of women in factories is directly linked to their status as actual or prospective mothers whose physical and moral conditions will bear directly on their children's potential to become moral, well-regulated, and productive citizens and workers within the capitalist system. Thus Machar, though concerned with the individual sufferer and with the cause of common justice, is also concerned with the harm suffered by the race as a whole. The concern with race degeneration and national decline is shared by many of the texts I consider in the following chapters. In Machar's writing, metaphors of society as a single, interdependent system buttress her argument that economic injustice leads to national weakness. Specifically, failures of sympathy cause rifts in the social fabric, leading to working class protests and acts of violence. Machar's
nationalist concerns are especially apparent in her concern with the economic, moral, and sanitary degradation of working-class homes, which lead to the spread of inefficiency, crime, and disease in the public sphere at large.

In other novels, the mother is the source of social affection, national health, and moral regulation. In Wood's *The Untempered Wind*, self-sacrificing motherhood is what saves the fallen woman for full participation in the community; it is also the guarantor of communal health and the model of sympathetic responsiveness against which all the other inhabitants of Jamestown are measured. Spiritual and physical degeneration are allied with the weakness and cruelty of the residents of Jamestown, thus allowing Wood to defend natural female sexuality as the key to the regeneration of the community. In Kerchiefs to *Hunt Souls*, the sexual licence and disregard for bourgeois standards of morality of fin de siècle France compose the antithesis of Anglo-Saxon culture and represent the potential destruction of Canadian womanhood. Here, the bourgeois home is Dorothy's refuge from the economic and sexual exploitation of the urban public sphere; similarly, her moral salvation comes through her realization of her desire for domesticity and motherhood.

Maternal feminists' celebration of women's innate virtue and their critique of male exploitation often led them to make common cause with working-class women, and even to begin to make connections between class and gender oppression. Just as middle-class American women writers appropriated the language of slavery to describe female bondage in a patriarchal society, women writers associated their plight with that of workers, with various consequences both productive and limiting. In *Roland Graeme*, women are central to the novel's vision of class harmony; once awakened to their social responsibility, the middle-class woman guarantees social stability through her role as familial and community intermediary, influencing middle-class professional and factory-owning men to feel greater compassion and bringing the moral attitudes and practical skills of the middle-class home to the slums, where the feminine presence softens, refines, and humanizes. The industrial

---

32 For a discussion of the intersection of feminist and abolitionist discourses in nineteenth-century America, see Sanchez-Eppler's *Touching Liberty* (1993).
world of men is in desperate need of womanly virtue and sympathy. In *Kerchies to Hunt Souls*, the exploitation of the unskilled worker becomes a metaphor for the way that middle-class women are denied opportunities for education and fulfilling work. Dorothy Pembroke comes to a realization of her oppression as a woman through being treated as if she were lower-class. In *The Untempered Wind*, Myron Holder's exploitation by her employer makes possible and parallels her exploitation by her faithless lover, and the imagery of bondage—the "bound" girl—provides both a class-specific critique and a powerful image of the sterility and cruelty of social relations in Jamestown.

Discussions of women and the poor—always discussions about the relationship between the social and the individual—were the occasion to marshall evidence, anecdotes, and hypotheses from recent debates pitting the force of heredity, or nature, against the power of environmental influences. An extended, often vicious, series of articles on the Woman Question in the *Canadian Monthly and National Review* (1877-1882) debated whether women's universally acknowledged timorousness, dependence, and intellectual impoverishment were the result of circumstances or biological function. Applying similar logic, the question of whether the poor should be considered unfortunate or undeserving divided civic reformers and political economists. Reformers argued about whether debased environments produced vice or whether moral depravity was at the core of social problems; at times, reformers simply created a horizontal linkage between poverty, immorality, disease, and crime, without any attempt to distinguish between cause and effect. Eugenicists were that group of theorists, medical practitioners, and civic leaders who believed that mental qualities and character were determined by heredity. On the other side were the followers of J. B. Lamarck, who held the theory of acquired characteristics. The environmental theory of character formation authorized ambitious and hopeful projects of social improvement. These progressive social reformers claimed education and various forms of social welfare as solutions to most urban distress; eugenicists, on the other hand, saw poverty as a hereditary problem. According to the eugenicist view, the poor "were not
demoralized; they were degenerate" and could not be aided by social programs; in fact, many eugenicists actually blamed poverty on social programs, which kept people alive who should have died according to nature's scheme (McLaren 1990, 19). In her Introduction to A Not Unreasonable Claim, Kealey suggests that organized reform work made reformers more aware of the structural, institutional, and environmental determinants of inequality, shifting blame away from the individual.

The difficulty of deciding who constituted the 'deserving' as opposed to the 'undeserving' poor was alleviated by the adoption of 'scientific philanthropy'. In the process of performing the detective work necessary to ferret out fraudulent claims, charity workers were faced with the contradictions inherent in industrial capitalist society; unemployment, disease, insufficient wages and overcrowded housing rather than individual failure began to be seen as causes for poverty. Once the institutional and social character of distress was recognized and an argument for social justice raised, philanthropists became reformers. (1979, 2)

Kealey's assessment assumes that, once exposed to the "reality" of poor people's living conditions and suffering, reformers would "see" clearly the injustice of the capitalist system, and does not take into account how such seeing was determined by specific discursive formations, such that unemployment, disease, and overcrowded housing became themselves signifiers of individual (or class) failure. Kealey's formulation of a clearly definable movement away from the individual's problems to a recognition of systemic oppression is a debatable point and an overly optimistic assessment. My examination of the writing of reformers such as Machar and Saunders, who performed and wrote about the very detective work Kealey refers to, suggests that the recognition of the "contradictions inherent in industrial capitalist society" came more slowly and incoherently than Kealey's model of progress would suggest.
In addition, the belief in the influence of environment often created as many problems as it solved. Environmentalist logic often led, as Amanda Anderson demonstrates in her discussion of J. S. Mill's *System of Logic* (1843), to contradictions and "tensions between free will and determinism" (1993, 28). The emphasis on environmental influence, though intended to counter theories of innate character weakness, sometimes resulted in an even greater apprehension of tragic destiny, as reformers contemplated the task of countering years of social conditioning. And although reformers shifted the terms of their discussion to environmental factors, their focus often remained the individual. As Marilyn Barber points out in her discussion of Protestant mission work with immigrants, "[t]he redemption of the individual immigrant and the redemption of society were intertwined, and it was not necessary or indeed possible to separate one from the other" (1975, 217). Machar's novel oscillates between explaining poverty as the effect of an unjust economic system, and attributing poverty to moral failings, finally resolving her dilemma, unsatisfactorily, through an appeal to the agency engendered by Christian faith, positing a moral consciousness--a realm of self-sacrifice, love, and sympathy--that transcends and influences the particularities of character. Similarly, women writers who imagined the possibilities of greater freedom and self-determination for women did not leap free, in a single bound, from the ideas about women's nature that tied them to domesticity. Wood, while objecting to determinist accounts of a woman's fall that suggest that a single sexual mistake leads inevitably to moral corruption and suggesting that "fallenness" is a cultural construct, ultimately relies on a biologically determinist model of healthy sexuality to exonerate the erring heroine and to condemn her punitive community. Fytche similarly oscillates between social training and nature in her search for a theory of women's subordination; although she explicitly defines women's inequality--and particularly, their own participation in it--as the effect of a faulty, romantic bourgeois education, a narrative sub-text suggests that female sexual nature and loss of middle-class cultural restraints are to blame for their suffering.
Most generally, women and the poor are linked together--and to the nation--through the belief that their treatment defined and shaped the nature of the Canadian community. All of the texts under consideration share a conviction that the social problems they addressed had a fundamental national significance. Although women and the poor were economically and politically disempowered, they were nonetheless powerful symbols of the nation. Denied full participation in national life, they were yet central to how the nation defined itself. In their concern to establish how and why certain members of deviant groups were worthy of inclusion in the sympathetic Canadian community, these texts are representative of the key cultural debates of the period, and provide a fascinating glimpse into a developing Canadian ethical consciousness.
CHAPTER TWO
"Visit, Consider, Relieve": Sympathy and Social Investigation in the Writing of Agnes Maule Machar

Upon first consideration, Roland Graeme, Knight: A Novel Of Our Time is not about Canada at all. The novel is set in the fictional American manufacturing town of Minton, and the labour organization with which it concerns itself—the Knights of Labor—was of American origin, although it also had a significant influence in Canada, particularly in the late 1880s. The only emphatically Canadian features of the novel are its publisher and its idealistic young eponymous hero. In one sense, then, one might argue that the novel enacts that most characteristic of Canadian gestures: the projection onto the American nation of social problems that Canadians renounced and abjured for their own country. On this reading, the hero is literally and metaphorically the "knight" of the story, bearing Canadian good sense, sympathy for the oppressed, and moderation to America in an attempt to rescue it from the disorders of social injustice and class antagonism. In part, I will argue that such is indeed the story that the novel tells. But I will also argue that the novel was not intended to be—and would not have been—received by its Canadian readers as simply a self-congratulatory representation of Canadian superiority to American troubles, widespread and popular as such writing was. The reality of Canadian economic problems, particularly the severe depression of the early 1890s, was making that kind of response increasingly difficult. If the novel pre-empts contemporary film companies in disguising

---

1 The reference is to Machar's "A Pressing Problem" (1879, 458).
2 The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor was founded in Philadelphia in 1869 by Uriah Stephens and soon gained strength in Ontario. According to Gregory Kealey and Brian Palmer, it was "Canada's most important labor organization before 1900" (1982, 57). Although its greatest achievements were in the industrial heartland, Ontario, it was also influential in Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia. The Knights established Local Assemblies in all Ontario towns with populations exceeding 5,000 in the 1880s (61). The growth of the Order was most rapid in 1886, when a total of 99 new Locals were formed, and its highest strength was in the 1885-89 period.
3 This reading is supported by Gerson, who concludes from the novel's setting in the United States that Machar drew back from direct criticism of Canadian society, arguing that "Machar could not bring herself to set the mill town where the action occurs in Canada, which appears in most of her fiction as a rather Arcadian agricultural nation" (1983, 233).
Canada as an American city, it also makes America stand in for Canada, as a conscious narrative choice with powerful rhetorical implications for its Canadian audience.

There are a number of reasons for assuming a Canadian context for the novel. Most relevant is the reputation and stature of Agnes Maule Machar, a well-known Canadian Social Gospel writer and ardent nationalist. Writing for The Week in 1888, Ethelwyn Wetherald could call her "[o]ne of the best known names among Canadian literary women" (300). Wilfred Campbell commented that "as a personality she is a woman whom all Canadians will contemplate with respect and pride" (qtd. in Davies 1979, 196). By 1892, when she published Roland Graeme, Machar's attempts to maintain anonymity, through the adoption of various pseudonyms ("Fidelis" being her favourite) had largely failed. She was a widely-read and highly-respected essayist, poet, and novelist, and had won a number of prizes for her literary efforts. In addition, she had published extensively, in Canadian periodicals such as the Canadian Monthly and National Review and The Week, on urban poverty and labour matters; in these articles, she had specifically addressed the national dimensions of these social questions, arguing that Canada might be spared the fates of England and America--seen as infested with pauperism--if determined ameliorative actions were undertaken. In these essays, Machar identified social reform as an aspect of patriotism, claiming that "[i]t is worthy of the most serious consideration of all patriotic men and women how we may eradicate in time from the system of our young country a growing ulcer, which must otherwise surely sap and impair its natural vigour and vitality" ("A Pressing Problem" 1879, 459). The situation in Canada, Machar assures her readers,

---

4 Campbell's estimation of Roland Graeme was not as high as his estimation of Machar, for although finding the novel "readable [and] well written," he asserted that "there is not a spark of genius from cover to cover" (1979, 195). Campbell's dismissal of sentimentality and of women's writing generally is evident from his comment that "Miss Machar shows a woman's literary weakness in being unable to keep her own individuality out of her favourite characters" (196); his comment that "Miss Machar's work will compare favourably with much of that of the American didactic school" indicates that she was ranked as an equal to her American counterparts by one of Canada's leading literary critics (196).

5 According to Wetherald, Machar sought anonymity so that her political arguments would not be discredited because of her sex. In Machar's words, she chose "Fidelis" because "[f]aithfulness is the quality I most value, and care most to possess" (1888, 300).

6 I have attempted to be consistent in using the Canadian spelling of "labour" in my own text even though many of the texts I quote employ the American spelling.
is not so hopeless as in "older countries," where eradicating "the plague-spot of pauperism may be . . . a question for believers in Utopia" (468). In Canada, all that is needed is "the concerted action of benevolent and judicious men and women" (468). Roland Graeme is best understood in the context of these other documents, as a fictional elaboration of the Social Gospel ideas she was developing and publishing elsewhere. Machar was personally familiar with charitable relief efforts in her home town of Kingston, and the Knights of Labor had an active chapter there; her brother John, a lawyer in Kingston, was a dedicated supporter of the Knights. No reader familiar with Machar's name could have imagined that she was writing about America with no reference to the Canadian situation.

Further, the fact of the novel's Canadian publication is significant. At a time when most publishers in Canada made money through cheap reprints of American and British works, the publication of a Canadian novel by a Canadian publisher was an event of considerable literary interest. William Drysdale, Machar's publisher, was known for his philanthropic and temperance beliefs as well as for his literary nationalism; in the late 1880s, he was responsible for introducing the Confederation Poets to an international audience through the publication of W. D. Lighthall's Songs of the Great Dominion (1889). The publication of Roland Graeme would have been very much a Canadian event, and in fact a reviewer for The Week (26 Nov. 1892) claimed that "Miss Machar has done honour to Canada by taking such a vigorous stand on a question of world-wide interest" (826). This significant Canadian context, then, suggests that a full reading of the novel should neither ignore nor over-emphasize its American setting; we can usefully read the narrative as involved in a double movement, revealing and concealing the problems of Canadian industrial society. The American setting means that the novel is both

---

7 In "A Pressing Problem," for example, Machar gives detailed information on the ticket system established by philanthropists to investigate and relieve cases of distress (1879, 466).
8 See Duncan's "Saunterings" column in The Week (Jan. 13, 1887) for an ironic description of Canadian self-conscious condescension about such publications.
9 See Parker 182.
representation and warning, examining the present and the future of Canada. On this reading, Roland Graeme's nationality identifies him as a figure of hope and recognition. Canadian national identity is established not only in relation to America but also in an Old World/New World context. It is a trip to Europe that convinces Roland of the urgent need for social action at home. Appalled by the sight of "men, women, and children, pent up in rank and wretched slums, fighting with gaunt famine for a miserable existence," he is convinced of the need to work for the betterment of humanity and to prevent the New World from falling to the same wretched conditions (52). Machar knew, as any concerned social reformer did, that Canada in 1892 was inexorably upon the path of industrialization; she felt, however, that the precise form that industrialization would take was still an open question. Thus Machar's writing insists upon the power of new ways of seeing to influence social progress even as it authorizes increasingly anxious containment strategies.

In this chapter, I move between Roland Graeme and various social reform essays by Machar, reading her fiction and non-fiction together as an attempt to preserve the purity of a Canadian ideal even while forcibly articulating the signs of its destruction.

**Introduction and Context**

Machar's social concerns span a twenty year period; to set the context for Roland Graeme, I turn briefly to an 1879 essay published in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review. In this essay, Machar describes urban poverty in Canada as a "[p]ressing problem" (also the essay's title) requiring immediate attention and Christian solutions. The opening sentence of the essay emphasizes the physical sensations of poverty--cold and

---

10 It is also possible that the American setting indicates that Machar's social concerns transcended national boundaries. Like Principal Grant, Machar believed in the necessity for friendly relations between Canada and the United States because they were two Protestant nations sharing an Anglo-Saxon heritage. For a full discussion of Machar's attitude to the United States as expressed in a number of articles she wrote for The Week, see Brouwer's "Moral Nationalism in Victorian Canada" (1985). Brouwer argues that the dedication of Roland Graeme to an American Social Gospel leader, Reverend Lyman Abbott, emphasizes that Machar saw more similarities than differences between the two nations. However, Machar's desire for better relations with the United States does not necessarily contradict her nationalism, nor undermine the complex meanings attached to the novel's American society.
hunger—and the middle-class reader's safe distance from direct experience of hardship: "[t]here are comparatively few people, among the classes which furnish magazine readers, at least, who have ever known by experience what it is to rise on a cold winter morning, foodless and fireless, and not knowing whence either fuel or food is to be procured" (455). Because her readers have not felt poverty, they are unable to sympathize fully with the situation of the poor, for whom "such a state of things is a common occurrence" (455).

From the beginning of the essay, then, Machar characterizes the relationship between her reading audience and the suffering subjects of her essay in terms of an unbridgeable gulf, and she addresses one of the key issues in social reform discourse: how can readers be made to sympathize with what they cannot know? Yet Machar does not doubt her readers' benevolence, confidently appealing to their "sincere desire to ameliorate the condition of the suffering poor" (455). But that benevolence, Machar fears, is often "vague and unimaginative" and not always "judiciously carried out" (455). Even as she addresses an audience she presumed to be concerned and ready to have their sympathies awakened, Machar is engaged in constructing that audience in terms of a specific, visually-based orientation to the poor, an orientation that is to extend throughout all of her writing.

Further, in connecting sympathetic imagination with judicious action, Machar articulates the two central features of her reform thought, features that do not always co-exist harmoniously in her writing: humanity and policy. The "benevolent desire to relieve suffering" must be balanced by "painstaking effort and enquiry" (455). In all of her writing, Machar employs the language of feeling as the basis for an attack on the indifference to suffering of laissez-faire capitalism; at the same time, though, a discourse of control and fear prevents the full identification with the poor's suffering that she calls for. This central tension reveals the extent to which Machar's own vision had been shaped by widely-received representations of poverty, class, and national character.

This chapter attempts to balance two approaches to Machar's writing, one that views her texts as interesting in themselves, and the other that considers them as more
widely representative of a particular moment in Canadian social history. Machar constructs her analysis of the Canadian Labour Question through the sympathetic presentation of the suffering of the working poor, calling on Christian sympathy as the impetus for reforming action. Machar’s philanthropic gaze makes the poor visible in certain specific ways as part of a pedagogical project to inspire benevolence; this project appeals to sympathy as a way to overcome class barriers even as sympathy is designated as the special province of the middle-class observer of suffering. But Machar also stresses the need to combine feeling with system. Thus we find in Machar a contradictory model of philanthropy that both privileges the spontaneous act of generosity and advocates a more disciplined, efficient, and systematic approach to the relief of suffering. The two impulses--to spontaneity and to system--co-exist and at times war with each other in Machar's writing. In addition, slippage in the novel between social reform and moral reform--two closely-related but fundamentally different currents of Christian welfare thought--further complicates Machar's message. Finally, Machar attempts an analysis of the problem of poverty in Canada that does not contradict, and even supports, developing nationalist discourses of Canadian egalitarian abundance.

The creation of a certain way of seeing was central to late nineteenth-century social reform writing, as middle-class reformers, recognizing a need to respond to urban problems, developed a common idiom to represent the sanitary, social, and moral dimensions of the Canadian city. Although still predominantly rural, Canada was fast becoming urbanized, and with urbanization came a noticeable increase in poverty and the accompanying slum squalor, disease, prostitution, child labour, tramps, and alcoholism that were poverty's most visible and (to middle-class observers) distressing signs. The growth of manufacturing, the development of the railways, and the National Policy--which brought a minor industrial boom, particularly in textiles--all stimulated the population explosion of the cities, and encouraged "[t]he looming, sinister image of the swollen city"

11 By 1901, one million people (one-fifth of the country) occupied Canada’s twelve largest urban centers (Rutherford 1982, 9).
that was to dominate Anglo-Canadian rhetoric about urbanization (Rutherford 1982, 14). Urban growth also saw an increasing split between those who earned money through brain work and those who earned it through physical labour, and thus an increasingly clear class division. The concern with generating and directing sympathy for the poor places Machar amongst a select group of novelists and social reform writers in late nineteenth-century Canada. Others include, among novelists, Margaret Marshall Saunders and Albert Carman, and among reform writers, J. J. Kelso, Phillips Thompson, and later, J. S. Woodsworth. Such Canadian social investigation had a well-established international context. Social surveys of the British slums had begun in the 1840s and continued to be produced past the turn of the century. The novel too took part in this burgeoning international interest in—and panic about—the problem of urban poverty. In Victorian Canada, Eugène Sue, Charles Dickens, and Victor Hugo were the most authoritative purveyors of images of the city as the savage, squalid, and labyrinthine haunt of crime and poverty, and Sue's Les Mystères de Paris (1842-43) had many imitators in Canada. Novels such as Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton (1848) and North and South (1854-55) had become part of the public discussion about the responsibilities of the Masters to their Men. These works frequently presented their investigations as an uncovering or revelation of hitherto unknown social ills, a bringing to light of "sad cases of hidden misery."

---

12 For a discussion of urban development in Canada, see Stewart Crysdale's The Industrial Struggle and Protestant Ethics in Canada (1961); Paul Rutherford's Saving the Canadian City (1974); and Michael Cross and Gregory Kealey's Canada's Age of Industry (1982).

13 Finch notes that the shift from the plural "middle classes" (indicating the existence of numerous layers and sections) to the singular "middle class" and the corresponding "working class" occurs in England at roughly the same time that a range of social surveys of the urban poor were beginning to be carried out. "These surveys commenced the articulation of the urban poor as a distinct social grouping, with describable patterns of behaviour, speech patterns, and a distinct (and undesirable) morality" (1993, 9).

14 Some of the most important of these studies were Edwin Chadwick's Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population in Great Britain (1842); Henry Mayhew's London Labour and the London Poor (1861-62); Andrew Mearns' The Bitter Cry of Outcast London (1883); and Charles Booth's Life and Labour of the People in London (1902-03).

15 As Kröller has pointed out, authors unashamedly sought publication success with titles echoing Sue's Les Mystères, including Henri-Emile Chevalier, Hector Berthelot, and Auguste Fortier, who published novels called Les Mystères de Montreal in 1855, 1880, and 1893 respectively. To this list can be added Charlotte Führer's The Mysteries of Montreal: Memoirs of a Midwife (1881) and Arthur Campbell's The Mystery of Martha Warne: A Tale of Montreal (1888). For a full discussion, see Kröller 1987, 107.
Such a rhetorical stance furthered the sense of panic about the "potential threat to social order quietly simmering on the doorstep of polite, middle class society" even as it absolved the reader from responsibility for the poor's condition (Finch 1993, 16).

But before I begin to discuss Machar's specific representations of urban poverty, I want to emphasize the climate of denial within which she ventured to speak. Even to write about class conflict and the extremes of urban poverty in nineteenth-century English Canada was to broach a difficult topic, as is evidenced by the many articles in Canadian periodicals that simply deny that such problems existed. An article in the Canadian Magazine by John A. Cooper, entitled "Canadian Democracy and Socialism" is representative in its depiction of class conflict as an essentially foreign problem; Cooper's main concern was that American literature by "wild schemers and professional agitators" would be "read by yet honest Canadian laborers" (1894, 336). The article alludes to the possibility of labour unrest in Canada only in terms of corruption and disease, a spreading of "poison weeds" from America and Europe to Canada's innocent lands (336). Labour conflict would never germinate naturally in Canadian soil. Cooper makes no reference to indigenous Canadian labour organizing, or indeed to the reasons why such organizing might be necessary, recognizing only that "[t]he conflicts between labor and capital in the United States are increasing in number and viciousness" (336). Even then, the danger to the American nation is located somehow outside, in "its restless foreign population" (336). Cooper's insistence that socialistic agitation has its source in a population both "foreign" and "restless" finally leads him to characterize labour activity as madness, worrying that if workers in the United States "lose their reason . . . why should the Canadian laborer not be strangely agitated?" (336)

---

16 My thanks go to Liz McCausland for making this point in conversation. In addition, the reader that such narratives tended to construct was sincerely concerned to know, but at present barred from the truth since the nature of social misery, as distinct from its more vulgar signs (tramps, prostitutes) is by definition hidden from view. The assumption that the respectable poor tended to hide their poverty may also be a consideration here.
In fact, contrary to what Cooper implies, his "yet honest Canadian laborers" had already caught the contagion. Strikes and lockouts were an increasingly common occurrence in Ontario throughout the 1880s; they sometimes resulted in widespread violence, sabotage, or riots.\(^{17}\) Workers were angry over loss of jobs due to mechanization, and loss of control over their workplace lives.\(^{18}\) Beginning with the telegraphers' strike of 1883, in which workers in Kingston, Brockville, Belleville, Brantford, Ottawa, Peterborough, Georgetown, London, and Thorold battled Jay Gould and his Western Telegraph Company, the Knights of Labor led a number of mass strikes that organized hundreds of workers and polarized communities, including mass strikes by Cornwall cotton mill workers in 1886, Gravenhurst lumber mill workers in 1888, and Ottawa-Hull mill workers in September 1891. But the image of Canada as an essentially agricultural nation made up of hearty, honest farmers and industrious tradesmen persisted as an ideal in the face of evidence to the contrary, and remains a significant feature of Machar's representation.

Canadians had severe difficulty discussing class problems in Canada because the recognition of class divisions contradicted the fundamental myth of Canadian nationhood. A discussion opposing the introduction of titles into Canadian society, carried on over many issues in *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly* from 1879-80, became the occasion for a defence of the honest Canadian worker, prompting Principal Grant to declare that "[t]he idea of a privileged aristocracy, or a court, between the representative of the throne in Canada and our homespun farmers, no sane man would entertain" (1880, 198). In many such discussions, the homespun farmer became the representative Canadian citizen, embodying Canada's virtues and the basis for future prosperity. To be Canadian was to be without class, to take possession of a truer identity. In an article on "Titles in Canada,"

---

\(^{17}\) For a full discussion of the Knights' role in the labour conflicts of the 1880s and 90s, see Kealey and Palmer 330-75.

\(^{18}\) The 1889 Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital told of "long hours, unsafe equipment, poorly ventilated factories, harsh industrial discipline, and the tyranny of foremen" (Rutherford 1982, 20).
Bourinot declared Canada's difference from England, specifically connecting the lack of titles to social justice and prosperity for all: "Canadians have not the stately manors and palaces of England, but they have much to which they can point with honorable pride. They can point to a prosperous country, won within a century from the forest and looking forward to a great future. They have happy homes, and need build no Poor Houses like those which cumber every county in England" (1877, 349-50). While the Poor House was the symbol of Old World injustice and destitution, America was represented as a land of "turbulence and disorder," the consequence of the "terrible revolt of the proletariat" characterized as "a system of brutal terrorism followed by a wholesale destruction of corporate or individual property" ("Current Events," Aug. 1877, 203, 204). This American lawlessness was repeatedly opposed to "the Canadian spirit of sound sense, prudence, and charity" (203).

This nationalist orthodoxy, combined with the conservatism of Canada's colonial society, suggests the relative radicalism of those Christian social critics who began, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, to address the Labour Question as a Canadian problem. Members of Canada's Social Gospel movement expressed doubts about the justice of a laissez-faire capitalism that brought both enormous material progress and a widening gulf between wealthy owners and impoverished labourers; such criticisms, though anchored in Christian tradition, constituted a fundamental attack on the established social, economic, and religious order. Turning away from doctrinal intricacies and preoccupation with the divine, the Social Gospel envisioned a better society, a Kingdom of God on Earth, based on the Christian principles of justice and charity. Many of these reformers were influenced by the work of the American political economist and reformer Henry George, whose Progress and Poverty (1879) was widely known in Canada.19 George's work had a powerful impact on the struggling trades union movement, as well as

19 In a critical article, LeSueur called it "the most readable book, in the class to which it belongs, that has ever been given to the world" (1881, 287). For a discussion of the influence of George's ideas on LeSueur, see Clifford Holland's William Dawson LeSueur (1993).
a major influence on Canadian Protestantism. As Cook has pointed out, George's influence was more tropological than specific; while many socially-minded intellectuals rejected his specific proposals to end poverty, such as the tax on land rent, many embraced and adopted his articulation of the problem, particularly his emphasis on the injustice of the existing order and the responsibility of the wealthy to the poor. A moderately left of centre movement, the Social Gospel attempted to make Christian teaching the basis for a reformed social order in which the suffering caused by the emerging capitalist industrial order would cease.

One of the centres of such discussion was Kingston, where Machar lived. Cook provides the following summary of the social, intellectual, and religious climate of Kingston and Queen's University: "by the 1890s theological liberalism had made a noticeable impact on Protestant thinking in English Canada. Nowhere was that impact more obvious than in the Presbyterian Church, and most markedly in that branch represented and influenced by Queen's University" (1985, 184). Machar was at the centre of Queen's University circles in Kingston, and came into contact with prominent university professors, politicians, novelists, political theorists, religious leaders, and reformers as a result of her family's connections. She knew the controversial novelist Grant Allen through his sister's marriage to her brother, and she corresponded with Lady Aberdeen, founder of the National Council of Women of Canada, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. She knew and shared many of the Social Gospel views of Principal Grant. At her summer house near the Thousand Islands, she entertained the American Social Gospel leader Dr. Lyman Abbott, to whom Roland Graeme is dedicated.

---

20 For an account of this influence see Cook 1985, 118-95 and Holland 1993, 210-14. See Woodcock 1989, 74-87 for a discussion of the growth of socialism and trade unionism (including the development of the Knights of Labor) in Canada up until World War I. According to Woodcock, socialism tended to pursue "the gradualist direction, offering usually an evolutionary approach to an alternative pattern of social relations rather than the revolutionary vision of a world transformed" (74). This moderate approach was necessitated by the fact that labour unions in Canada tended to be small and weak in a country still predominantly rural and which granted unions "few rights beyond the right to exist" (80).

21 It is intriguing to speculate about Machar's relationship with Allen considering their very divergent views on the Woman Question, particularly his assessment of the unmarried woman, whom he wrote about as "an abnormality . . . a painful necessity of the present transitional age" (Allen qtd. in Ardis 1990, 23).
Born on January 23, 1837, Machar lived in Kingston all of her life. She was the daughter of a Scottish Presbyterian clergyman, who was co-founder and first principal of Queen's University. Educated at the theological college in Edinburgh, he was also a minister of Saint Andrew's Church in Kingston, where he performed the ceremony at Sir John A. MacDonald's first wedding. Agnes grew up in a lively intellectual atmosphere, and received instruction from her father and private tutors in Greek and Latin as well as the modern languages, mathematics, drawing, and music. She began to write poetry and fiction at an early age, and became a prolific poet, novelist, essayist, historian, and journalist in adulthood. Her essays reveal wide learning and detailed knowledge of a variety of subjects, ranging from the efficacy of Christian prayer to the unjust treatment of servants in middle-class homes and the importance of higher education for women. She was a feminist, a theological liberal, and a passionate reformer, whose strong convictions prompted her to debate, in writing, such prominent intellectuals as the humanist LeSueur. She was also a tireless supporter of philanthropic causes, one of the many single women of the period who took advantage of the increased opportunities for usefulness offered by church-sanctioned social activism. Cook, who considers her "one of the most gifted intellectuals and social critics in late nineteenth-century Canada" reports that "[s]he held office in the Kingston Humane Society, helped found the Canadian Audubon Society, and devoted a great deal of energy to the National Council of Women of Canada. Included in the many causes she supported was the campaign to prohibit the use of birds' plumage in

---

22 For a detailed biography of Machar's life and writing, see Gerson's excellent study in "Three Writers of Victorian Canada" (1983).
23 For Machar's views on prayer, see "Prayer and Modern Doubt" (1875).
24 Machar was such an accomplished debater that LeSueur identified "Fidelis" as his most convincing opponent (Brouwer 1984, 350). For a discussion of Machar's defence of religious principles against LeSueur's positivism, see Brouwer's "The 'Between-Age' Christianity of Agnes Machar" (1984).
25 L. Kealey explains the movement of women into the public sphere as a result of several factors, including an increased number of women remaining single, the declining fertility rate for married women, and the (grudging) opening to women of the professions of medicine, teaching, nursing, and later, journalism and social work. The tremendous growth in women's organizations after 1880 signalled women's involvement with one another outside the home in charitable or other social work. Mitchinson explains this increased activity with reference to improvements in transportation, the growth of towns and cities, and the increase in leisure time of middle-class women as a result of a greater flow of consumer goods and the growing affluence of Canadian society (1979, 152-53).
women's hats, and the promotion of wilderness parks" (1985, 186, 187). She wrote frequently of middle-class women's need of a wider sphere of activity, and saw work for and with the poor as both a Christian social duty and an escape from enforced passivity.27

"In the Interest of our Common Humanity";28 The Sympathetic Community

In a series of articles she wrote for The Week, Machar argued for the need for protective legislation for factory-workers, particularly for women, and for better treatment of women working as domestic servants.29 In these articles, Machar elaborated the by then familiar idea of society as an organism of inter-dependent parts to provide socio-scientific authority for the call to sympathy that formed the basis of her arguments in Roland Graeme.30

Demonstrating her familiarity with reform Darwinian social theory, Machar argued that

---

26 In an article for The Week entitled "Birds and Bonnets," Machar protests the wearing of stuffed birds on ladies' hats and demonstrates keen environmental concern that "we are destroying our forests at the bidding of selfish interests as fast as we can; so in time, perhaps, we shall have neither birds nor trees for them to live in" (1887, 266).

27 See especially her articles "Higher Education for Women" (1875), "Woman's Work" (1878), "The New Ideal of Womanhood" (1879), and "A Few Words on University Co-Education" (1882) in the Canadian Monthly and National Review and "Our Lady of the Slums" (1891) in The Week. Almost all of the middle-class female characters in Roland Graeme express frustration at their own uselessness. For another perspective, see also "Confidences" (1880) by A Girl of the Period from the Canadian Monthly, in which the anonymous author turns domestic ideology against itself to expose how the middle-class home, supposedly the refuge from the competitive business world, is actually implicated in the sphere of exploitative market relations through its conspicuous consumption.

28 Roland Graeme 10.

29 See "Voices Crying In the Wilderness" (1891), "Healthy and Unhealthy Conditions of Women's Work," (1896) and "The Unhealthy Condition of Women's Work in Factories" (1896). Although the latter two articles were written after Roland Graeme, and are thus perhaps problematic as a context for the novel, I can discern no significant change in Machar's views on labour reform.

30 Woodsworth was most fully to formulate the idea of the city as an organism of interdependent systems, calling it "an immense and highly developed organism in which each minutest part has a distinct function" (qtd. in Rutherford 1974, 87). For a discussion of the development of this metaphor--derived from eighteenth-century medicine--in texts of early nineteenth-century social investigation in England, see Poovey's "Anatomical Realism and Social Investigation in Early Nineteenth-Century Manchester" (1993). Poovey examines James Kays' discussion of cotton operatives in Manchester, arguing that his description of the social system as an animal body in need of a central nervous system--a device for monitoring and responding to the suffering of any part--reveals his conception of social health as requiring "knowledge and sympathy" (6). Health and social inspectors, then, would act in the capacity of this nervous system. As Poovey also argues later in the article, the discourse of anatomical realism involved a degree of descriptive detail and accuracy that could not be transferred to the social realm because of constraints on what could be spoken about the lives of the city's destitute. Such constraints necessitated an elaborate system of connotation that allowed what could not be named to be suggested, as in discussions of prostitution that parallel the social scourge with problems of urban sewer systems. Such systems of connotation function in Machar's representation of the poor and of disease.
society was "not a collection of individual units, or even of isolated families or 'classes,' as it has been too often regarded, but... an organic whole, which, like our own bodies, must suffer throughout, in sympathy with the injury to any one of its component parts" ("Healthy and Unhealthy Conditions" 1896, 421). In another version of this metaphor, Machar combined domestic and Christian models to represent society as "the busy household of a common Father" with the potential to be "a harmonious and happy, because united, household" (421). In self-consciously foregrounding and commenting on the metaphors she was employing, Machar was elaborating not merely an economic truism but an entire social and even spiritual theory that posited an absolute identity between the middle-class home, the larger social world, and God's kingdom, and allowed the continual sliding in Machar's writing from social justice to individual moral regeneration. The metaphor of society as organism seeks to overcome class barriers by showing the interrelationship between parts even as it establishes social distinctions as natural, like those of the body; in addition, the metaphor sanctions the disciplinary imperative of all such sympathetic projects by framing it as the need to classify properly and to ensure harmonious organic functioning.

The interdependency of human society is both a central idea and a structuring principle in Roland Graeme. The novel has two parts: one tells a stock sentimental romance of love betrayed, identities exchanged, misrecognition, coincidence, and beautiful death. The other chronicles the activities of the Knights of Labor in Minton, and is concerned with labour conflict, factory conditions for workers, and the thorny issue of economic realities. In her mingling of romance and contemporary historical material, Machar was not only concerned to enliven her argument for the necessity of Christian compassion in business affairs. As in Gaskell's Mary Barton, the two narratives are thematically and structurally related. The romantic plot elements are intended to suggest the

31 Herbert Spencer was the first to coin the phrase "survival of the fittest" in his Principles of Biology (1864) and to apply Darwinian theory to society. As Allen (1975) explains, social theorists revising Darwin began to argue that the survival of the fittest idea only applied to species' origins; in fact, species survived through cooperation. The cooperation thesis gave Christian social ethics a scientific basis.
presence of God in human affairs,\textsuperscript{32} and by extension the necessity of God in economic arrangements. And, in combining the two stories, Machar rewrites labour relations through sentimental romance, making the romance story of hidden connections a paradigm for the inter-relatedness of social classes.

The romance plot involves the proud, censorious Reverend Cecil Chillingworth\textsuperscript{33} and the woman he abandoned in England because of her hereditary alcoholism. Believed by Chillingworth to have died in a ship-wreck, his wife Celia is in fact alive and living penuriously in Minton with their daughter, having taken the name of her drowned cousin, Mrs. Travers, after an accidental exchange of handkerchiefs bearing their initials. When Celia, seriously ill with bronchitis, sends her daughter, also named Celia, to Chillingworth to request assistance, he refuses to help the little girl, dismissing her as just another beggar. Fortunately, she is noticed by Roland Graeme as he himself leaves Chillingworth's home, his application for the minister's support for the labour cause having met with a cold rebuff. In seeking medical aid for the little girl's mother, Roland meets Nora Blanchard, the doctor's sister. Nora is a philanthropically-minded young woman who is staying in Minton with her brother's family for the summer. Nora and Roland join forces in attempting to assist Mrs. Travers and to unravel her sad story. Nora's subsequent revelation to Chillingworth that his wife is still alive precipitates the first moral crisis of his selfish life and leaves him bewildered as to what he can do to make amends. But diphtheria, the disease of the slums, takes Chillingworth back to his wife and enables a brief restoration of the domestic order: falling ill of the malady, Chillingworth is taken to the hospital, where his wife is recovering from her bronchitis. Discovering him, Mrs. Travers insists on caring for her husband, attending him with such disregard for her own safety that she falls ill and dies, though not before husband and wife have been reconciled.

\textsuperscript{32} The narrator frequently intervenes in the story to emphasize the element of divine guidance in seemingly chance occurrences (9, 228, 248).

\textsuperscript{33} Perhaps Machar had in mind the similarly cold and bookish Roger Chillingworth of Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter (1850).
and Chillingworth has promised to care for their daughter. This story of reconciliation, as I will show, is made by Machar to stand in for the larger reconciliation of capitalists and workers that the novel advocates.

The other part of the novel involves Roland Graeme, who comes to the manufacturing town of Minton to publish a labour newspaper, called *The Brotherhood* to indicate its Christian and social purpose, and to work for the "brotherhood of Masters and Men" by joining the local chapter of the Knights of Labor. Through Graeme's intervention, a fire at Pomeroy's Cotton Mill is put out by the striking men, and this act of selflessness shames the mill-owner into acceding to the workers' demands for better wages and hours. In the meantime, Nora has become interested, through her acquaintance with Graeme, in labour matters, Christian socialism, and the lives of the working poor, and she befriends Lizzie Mason, a young worker at Pomeroy's Mill. Through her intervention, Lizzie's brother Jim is prevented from carrying through a planned attack on the factory-owner's son, Harold, who has been flirting with Jim's sweetheart, Nelly. At the end of the novel, Roland and Nora decide to marry, and Roland is planning to use the money he has inherited from a wealthy Scots benefactor to set up a cooperative factory in Minton. Roland and Nora have also managed to relocate Lizzie Mason's family to Nora's home town of Rockland, a much smaller town where workers are looked after by benevolent men of business. Although Roland is still active in Minton at the end of the novel, the narrative moves away from the large manufacturing center to Rockland as the ideal site for small-scale philanthropy; a place of "green fields and budding woods," clean air, and "benevolent mill-owner[s]," Rockland represents the healthful34 industrial development that Canada should emulate (258, 257).

In many ways, Machar's novel can be read as a fictional illustration and elaboration of the ideas and images she developed in her non-fiction. Inter-dependency as the root of

---

34 Many kindly editors have commented on this word, suggesting that it should be "healthy." But "healthful" seems to me more appropriate in its suggestion of health-giving properties in addition to healthiness.
all real human progress and the solution to present social ills is the subject of Roland Graeme's address to the workers and forms the ruling theme of the novel. In addition, the novel is essay-like in its concern to provide concrete representations of abstract problems, and in its presentation of set speeches and philosophical dialogues. The narrative sections representing the Knights of Labor are interspersed with expository passages on labour issues that show Machar's knowledge of the writing of George and other Social Gospel economic theorists. At a dinner party given by the mill-owning family of Pomeroy, guests debate George's theory about increasing poverty, wage injustice, the need for labour legislation, the responsibilities of owners to their workers, and the living conditions of the poor. A lecture delivered by Mr. Jeffrey, a leading political economist and supporter of organized labour, provides Machar with the opportunity to display her considerable reading in the field, and to quote directly from George, Edward Kellogg, and articles from the Popular Science Monthly.

Many of the scenes in the novel are constructed as debates, contrasting the claims of the poor to the indifference, material self-indulgence, and hypocrisy of the capitalist class. Chillingworth's declaration that Christian socialism would merely "'produc[e] discontent with existing conditions, and with the differences which, in Providence, have always existed'" could be a summary of the orthodox Christian stance on human suffering (11). Roland's indictment of the "'cool, selfish indifference, with which so many people actually shut their eyes to these things'" identifies him as spokesperson for the novel's message of hope and social action in opposition to Chillingworth's icy complacency (34). A dinner at the house of Mr. Pomeroy, the local mill-owner, shows up the complacency and ignorance of the man on whose decisions the fate of so many of the town's workers depends. Pomeroy throws sumptuous dinner-parties for the town elite and commandeers conversations to his liking, dismissing his wife's temperance beliefs with a crass joke and brushing off Progress and Poverty, a book he has not read, with contemptuous disbelief. His wife is a temperance advocate who remarks that "the poor people seemed very happy
and comfortable, so far as she came in contact with them" (94). Pomeroy delivers stock speeches protesting his inability to improve conditions for his workers, speeches that display his indifference to their situation:

Why now, if we were to do as they ask, increase their pay and shorten their hours, how could we compete with firms that went in the old way? The thing is preposterous. As it is, those people who get their pay regularly and have no care, are better off, this minute, if they only knew it, than we who have all the care and responsibility, that they know nothing about. (97)

Roland's comments to Nora as they walk together through the "region of unpromising and dingy tenements" set out the novel's main criticism of the present industrial order: wages that force workers into poverty, the intense competition that destroys employer humanity, and intolerable working conditions that debilitate health and moral spirit (17). Speaking of the Pomeroy Mills as they pass, Roland comments that "[t]he operatives are made simply working-machines, obliged to work more hours than any young woman should be allowed to do; miserably paid, and exposed to petty tyrannies enough to take out of their life any little comfort they might have in it" (35). The factory owners "'are so fully occupied with the business part of their concerns, that they have no time to think of the people by whom the business is made'" (36). The novel's metaphor for the industrial world is that of the machine in opposition to the social organism: the novel describes a world in which human beings are completely governed by factory equipment, "inexorable, never-ceasing machinery, tended by armies of pale, slender girls, many of them children" (69).

Machar's representation reveals detailed knowledge of the Knights' activities and the principles of the Order. Her positive presentation of the Knights is a significant indicator of her progressivism, for the Knights were regularly attacked and reviled in the pages of The Week and the Canadian Magazine. A news note in the Jan. 13, 1887 edition of The Week admitted that trade unions' aims were "reasonable" but called the Knights a
"menacing organization" with its goal of "marshalling all the wage-earners of the continent in a social and industrial war against the rest of the community" (109). The Week of May 12, 1887 ridiculed an article in the Labour Reformer, and accused the followers of Henry George of promoting idleness, profligacy, drunkenness, and dishonesty (385). The Week of August 25, 1887 declared that "envy" was "at the bottom of the Henry George movement" (629). Unlike many Christian writers on the Labour Question, such as Principal Grant, Machar recognized the need for organizations such as the Knights. At the same time, however, in her novel she carefully modifies the platform of the Knights so that its fundamental challenge to monopoly capitalism and middle-class hegemony is muted.

Because its activities and ideas make up such a significant part of the novel, it is worth examining Machar's interpretation of the Knights of Labor in some detail. The Knights was an extremely significant body in Canadian labour history because it sought to form a distinctly working-class culture cemented by a strong sense of class place and class pride, "in which workers saw themselves as a class, and in which members of that class could see past the mystifications of bourgeois domination to the promise and potential of a better world" (Kealey and Palmer 1982, 278). In an attempt to forge an entirely new class consciousness, the Knights sought an alliance of old ideals with a new understanding of the material realities of industrial capitalism; this attempted fusion is evoked in the name, with its combination of chivalric nostalgia and modern class struggle. The Order had a much more comprehensive platform than the trade unions, for its chivalric title indicated one of the foundational principles of its membership: to strive for justice for all, above and beyond mere personal self-interest. This chivalric aspect is emphasized in Roland Graeme

35 This item in The Week interpreted the Labour Reformer's objection to the massing of wealth through unjust laws in the following manner:

The idle fellow, who has not done an honest day's work for years; who squanders in the pot-house the money he filches from his employers on scamped work; who joins, with others of his like, a Labour Lodge, that by hanging to the skirts of better men they may be saved from the poverty their idleness has earned, and the lack of employment to which their dishonest work ought to condemn them;--this filcher of the title of workingman says to the true workman: "Your unjust acquisition of wealth shall cease! We want the whole of your savings after this; and as to what you have accumulated, that too belongs to us; your children did not 'create it by their labour,' therefore it is not theirs but ours!" (385)
in the speech given by Jeffrey, in his insistence that organized labour must not "discriminate selfishly between the organized men and the unorganized" because then they "would simply be repeating and perpetuating the injustice against which they desired to protect themselves" (189). One of the major issues that the Knights fought for was greater control over their workplace lives. Kealey and Palmer argue that the Knights was significant as an attempt, for the first time in Canadian labour politics, to organize all workers along class lines rather than along specific trade lines, and thereby to achieve concerted action and mutual assistance across all working peoples, both skilled and unskilled, regardless of craft, ethnicity, or sex.

The Knights' strong support for the temperance cause would undoubtedly have elicited Machar's approval, for the Knights saw intemperance as one of labour's greatest enemies. In distinction from Machar, however, they tended to argue "that it was the degradation of the worker that promoted insobriety, not vice versa" (Warsh 1993a, 13), while Machar's position, as we shall see, was more moralistic. Similarly, their emphasis on the ideology of sympathy and chivalry would have appealed to Machar's idealism. One Hamilton member described the Knights as "inspired by a sympathy born of the natural religion of the soul, the love of humanity which will strengthen our faith in one another, that we can keep our principles ever before us and act up to them without fear of consequence or hope of reward" (qtd. in Kealey and Palmer 1982, 145). Machar's emphasis on Roland's reluctance to encourage his workers to strike is accurate. The Knights, following Phillips Thompson in The Politics of Labor (1887), thought strikes to be "outmoded tools that cost the workers far more than they could hope to win" (Kealey

36 For a discussion of the struggle over worker control in the workplace, see Palmer's "The Culture of Control" (1982).
37 The Locals in Toronto, for instance, organized black workers, and made a concerted effort to organize women, in keeping with its code of chivalry. However, despite their claim to color-blindness, the Knights participated with other union workers in a large demonstration in Hamilton on October 1, 1884 to exclude Chinese workers from Canadian industries. Their specific target was the use of "coolie" labour in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Workers threw mud and stones at Chinese laundries as they marched to the rally site. The demonstration ended with a resolution condemning continued Chinese immigration.
In this, the leaders of the Knights were often at odds with their workers, who held to strikes as a time-honoured tool in labour struggle and knew from experience the intransigence of employers. As Kealey and Palmer point out, although arbitration was an important element in the Knights' platform, "in an age when most employers denied their workers the rights of collective bargaining, arbitration was all too often unworkable" (1982, 111). Given their understanding of this material reality, the Knights nonetheless "attempted to educate [their] members to regard the strike as a final resort" (111).

One strike concerned the Massey agricultural implements manufacturing factory in Toronto; employing as many as 700 workers, it was Toronto's largest factory. A dispute about the posting of wages and a fortnightly pay-schedule led to Knights' leaders being brought in. When the superintendent refused to meet with the delegation from the Order, and fired five machinists who belonged to the Knights--simply because they were associated with a union--the Local struck. This strike was a huge success. A parade to city hall by the striking workers epitomized order and control; the marchers complained to the newly elected mayor (who had been elected largely as a result of Knights' support) about the massive police presence at the plant. "Not only would they guarantee the safety of the Masseys' property, they would personally guard it" (Kealey and Palmer 1982, 115). The mayor, W. H. Howland, promised to talk to Massey and to investigate the charges; by the second day, the police force was removed from the factory premises. On the second day of the strike, the Molders' Union struck in support of the Knights. On the third day of the strike, the toolroom workers, themselves highly-skilled workers not part of any union, also supported the strike. Faced with the unity of all the workers at the factory, Massey was forced to meet workers' demands on the fifth day of the strike. The result was that the five men who had been fired because of their association with the Knights were reinstated, and the Knights were formally recognized by the shop. Massey agreed to pay their workers fortnightly.

Another strike at the Toronto Street Railway, over workers' right to join the Knights of Labor, was supported by many other workers and by the community in general, preventing the company from operating cars and intimidating scab workers from joining in strike-breaking activities. Drivers of wagons, coal carts, and other vehicles showed their support for the striking workers by blocking the progress of rail cars along their tracks. Again, the Knights appealed to the Mayor, who wrote a public letter to the Street Railway company, condemning them for locking out workers simply because they had organized a Local Assembly. Although the company was able to mobilize the police to quell the popular street uprising, the public disorder generated by the strike was such that a group of aldermen worked out a compromise between the company owner and the Knights. Smith agreed to take back the workers he had fired. However, proclamations of victory by the Knights were premature, and labour troubles soon resumed, with Smith dismissing Knights' members without cause, and refusing to listen to grievances at all. When the Knights' workers struck again a few months later, the mayor this time called for public order. Civic authorities had become concerned about the massive intimidation tactics of the crowd during the earlier strike, and issued warnings about severe punishment in the case of any law-breaking. Understandably, crowd support for the strikers was considerably diminished this time round. Eventually, this strike failed. From this point on, support for the Knights of Labor began to diminish. The Knights were often frustratingly cautious and reluctant to support Locals in their bid for strikes. Conflicts between Local Assemblies and District Assemblies were frequent, the Locals wanting more militant action with the District leaders advising caution and patience in intolerable situations. In some cases, the Knights District Assembly members even aligned itself with employers and ordered their men not to strike, or to return to work early on in a strike. Financial problems also caused this inability to support its members' strike bids. "In the face of defeat and financial ruin, the Order's official reluctance to strike and its vacillating stance in the post-1886 conflicts weakened" the Order (Kealey 133).
Although Machar clearly knew and approved of the Knights' principles and activities, in her representation she employed the imagery of the "harmonious organic community of the preindustrial period" that was clearly inappropriate to the developing class consciousness of the Knights (Kealey and Palmer 1982, 355). The Knights of Labor sought, and partly achieved, a working-class culture in which workers identified, first and foremost, with other workers--across craft lines--and not with benevolent employees or paternalistic public figures. Machar, significantly, rewrites this class consciousness in sentimental terms, in which the workers recognize and respond to the generosity and sympathy of their "betters." The Knights' advocacy of "cooperation"--cooperative stores and other ventures run by workers--is transformed by Machar into the ideology of "cooperation" between workers and capitalists. Although the Knights did not oppose such an ideology, they recognized that it depended on employer good faith, which was often lacking, and did little to redress the existing imbalance of power between the masters and their men. Machar's representation of the Knights of Labor, like all representations, is an interested one: both a defence of worker organizations and a comforting, because safe, vision of a properly respectful, moderate, and patient labour body. Perhaps Machar was remaking the Knights of Labor in a Canadian image.

Partly Machar's muting of the Knights of Labor demands is a result of her attempt to tell another story in the novel, that of the re-awakening of Roland's Christian faith. In its concern with the relationship between Christianity and the Labour Question, Machar's novel engaged with another central preoccupation of late-Victorian Canada: the crisis of faith amongst intellectuals and socially-oriented Christians. At the novel's opening, Roland Graeme is an agnostic, having lost his faith when his father died while he was at

39 Examples of cooperative ventures include the cooperative transportation system established during the Toronto street railway strike.
40 For another representation of this crisis in faith, see Machar's "Canadian Celebrities XXIII--The Late J. A. Allen" (May 1901). Machar explains the theological difficulties that ultimately led to Allan's resignation of his Anglican ministry as typical of the period, noting that "[i]t was a critical time for many, when science, advancing with giant strides, was for a time, by thinkers on both sides, set in needless opposition to Christianity" (14).
college. His ideal home life had caused "his whole being" to be "inspired and colored by
the great principles of Christianity" (47). He goes out into the world expecting to find it an
image writ large of his own family, animated by his father's dreamy sensitivity and his
mother's strong religious faith and practicality. The death of his father, however,
symbolizes the death of God for him. Studying to enter the ministry, he is shocked by the
harshness of the orthodox creed and wonders how his father could possibly have believed
such a punitive doctrine: the standard creed seems to conflict with recent scientific
scholarship, and even worse, its statements "concerning the deepest mysteries of Divine
purpose" cause "his heart and his sense of justice alike" to revolt (49). Although he
holds on to his passion for social reform, he has lost his faith in Christianity, or rather, he
has sublimated his faith into "the enthusiasm with which he caught at every new plan or
measure for lightening the load of the more burdened portion of humanity" (51). The novel
tells of his slow and halting return to Christianity through his friendship with the Reverend
Alden, and particularly through their talk on the day of Grace's funeral, in which Alden
argues that Christianity is not a matter of "the rigid mould of human formulae" but rather
of the "moral beauty" of Christ's love (237). In order to reconcile her concerns for the
working-class with her insistence on the centrality of Christianity, Machar elaborates a
model of sympathy anchored in religious faith. For Machar, "active sympathy with the
distressed" was the cornerstone of Christianity ("Modern Theology and Modern Thought"
1881, 297). In her novel, Machar attempted to prove that only sympathy for the oppressed
could revitalize Christianity, and that only Christianity could direct schemes for the
alleviation of suffering. Within such a model, worker solidarity is harmfully divisive and

41 The problem of reconciling faith in God's infinite love with acceptance of the finer points of doctrine
was clearly one that Machar had struggled with. Lest her readers be themselves launched into a crisis of
faith through reading about Roland's doubts, she hastens to offer an explanation for the rigidity of the
standard creed in its attempt "to compress into a series of logical propositions, mysteries far transcending
human thought, and never thrown into this dogmatic form by the original teachers of Christianity" (49).
42 For another novel that links its narrative of Christian renewal with a discussion of Henry George and the
Social Gospel, see Albert Carman's The Preparation of Ryerson Embury (1900). Like Roland Graeme, the
novel ties the question of religious faith into its exploration of the labour question in order to reveal the
inseparable connection between Christian teachings and support for the labour movement. Unlike Roland
threatening; most seriously, though, it nullifies the profound spiritual benefits of philanthropy for the middle class.

Machar frames her discussions of the needs of the poor and the responsibilities of the middle class towards them within the rhetoric of "sympathy." Although then as now, sympathy had a diffuse and general meaning, within Christian social reform texts it had a powerful ethical charge. Sympathy was a relational mode believed to allow the crossing of class boundaries through imaginative and emotional identification between observer and sufferer: hence the foundational position of the rhetoric of seeing in Machar's non-fictional and fictional representations of social reform. Machar believed that the best remedy for poverty was sympathetic contact. She described it as "the kindly, sympathetic individual dealing of man with man, which is the simplest and most natural plan, as well as the one most fitted to call forth individual gratitude, and develop the best feelings in both giver and receiver" ("A Pressing Problem" 1879, 455). From this reference it is clear that Machar

*Graeme*, the novel is explicitly critical of sympathy as the basis for social reform. The novel's protagonist, Ryerson Embury, has lost his faith to the new rationalism before he becomes interested in labour issues, but his support for the cause of the workers revives his faith. A strike at the college town of Ithica, Ontario, where he is attending school, brings the issues to his attention for the first time, and ultimately leads to his development of a new vision of social relations. At first, absorbed in his studies, he is unable to understand the situation of the striking workers, seeing them without understanding their suffering or their principled stand: "[w]hen he took his short constitutional 'after four' to clear his brain for the night's reading, he would see groups of sullen-looking men standing idly about; or if he went over into the district where the foundry men lived, women with shawls over their heads appeared to be perpetually grouped about some neighbour's door talking despondently. But he only thought of it to wonder at the stupidity of men who would not work when they could, preferring rather to let their families go hungry" (106). Here, vision does not lead to greater sympathy or understanding. On the contrary, understanding must come first. The burst of illumination comes when Ryerson reads George and is converted to the doctrine of the Single Tax, land nationalization, and the brotherhood of labour and capital. His reading of the social commentator also leads to a renewal of his Christian faith and commitment, and to the certainty that Henry George is a true disciple: "[i]f there were a good God, this man was His prophet" (158).

The rest of the novel explores the struggle within Ryerson, a struggle between his sense of the justice of the workers' cause, and his desire for a life of comfort and ease. After speaking to the workers at a strike meeting—and being warned against any further agitation in the future by his employer at the law office where he works—Ryerson experiences a sudden revulsion from the workers' cause: "[h]e thought of 'Black's,' and that night on the Common, and the sallow, unshaven strikers; and a little shudder of relief passed over him at having escaped from them all soon enough. Madden had said that he would become known as a labour leader if he kept on; and what chance would a labour leader ever have to penetrate into such a life as this on anything like equal terms?" (201). But the novel ends with the recognition that the fight for the people must be based on justice rather than a simple sympathy, that one must know the poor by fighting with them, as one of them, in order to overcome class barriers and the distance that they produce, in order to see that the poor "are but men and women, fighting chilled steel with bare knuckles, and opposing to the satin politeness and the lightning word-play of the practised and the powerful what jagged repartee has been permitted them" (238).
understood charitable acts to be not only a method of relief but a particular experience of community that both defined social relations and produced the very feelings that guaranteed harmony and class stability. Because of her emphasis on the powerful social effects of benevolence and gratitude, Machar rejected and feared the introduction of a Poor Law to make state assistance for the poor a right, feeling that "official relief acts as a hotbed of pauperism" (468). A Poor Law would disrupt the individual, sentimental relationship of benefactor and recipient so central to her vision of social cohesion.

The novel's characters are divided on the basis of their sympathetic responsiveness to the suffering of others. Roland Graeme is identified by his "quick sympathy" (13). When he meets little Celia, the two exchange a "mutual glance" in which "a certain sympathy seemed to establish itself between the young man and the child" (12). The sympathetic gaze particularizes, allowing Roland to observe her "grieved, discouraged look" (12). In addition, Roland does not rely on formulaic responses, as Reverend Chillingworth does, but immediately inquires her name and circumstances. His sympathy "catch[es] hold of other people's lives," establishing human connection (13). He is also a hero of sensibility, for upon entering Mrs. Travers' room, his "brow contracted as if with a sharp sensation of physical pain" (18). Similarly, Nora is a woman marked by her "earnest and sympathetic expression" for whom "suffering always . . . enlisted her sympathy" (33, 225). Reverend Alden too has a "keen observant glance" with a "twinkle of both sympathy and fun" (14, 15). Harold Pomeroy, in contrast, has "sensibilities, hardened--almost atrophied-- . . . by a life of unrestrained self-indulgence" and his unfeeling heart is connected with abuses of all kinds, for Pomeroy has "never learned to consider the feelings of an animal, but regarded it merely as an instrument for his own amusement" (203). The novel emphasizes that such a man, "who 'went in' for pigeon-matches when he had the chance, and docked his horse's tail, and tortured him with a cruel

43 In eighteenth and nineteenth century usage, the terms sentiment and sensibility were often used interchangeably. Van Sant points out that "[a]lthough closely related, sensibility and sentiment/sentimental are in one respect easy to separate: sensibility is associated with the body, sentiment with the mind" (1993, 4). But each term often got pulled into the other's context.
check-rein, without an atom of compunction for the creature's suffering, was not likely to be over-particular when he came to deal with human beings whom he also looked upon as an inferior order of beings at that" (203). Such a man is destructive of community and of human relationships at all levels.

Sympathy is not only an important character attribute but also a fundamental component of community, and the development of both plot-lines is structured by the transformations of characters who learn to see their community differently. The main female protagonist, Nora Blanchard, has her eyes opened to the suffering of the working poor and her responsibility to them in a scene in which she visits Mrs. Travers with Roland and converses with Lizzie, Mrs. Travers' working-class friend. The scene presents a classic sentimental tableau, highlighting those features of textual reality associated with the benevolent gaze. Lizzie tells the story of her life to Nora, and in response "tears of indignant sympathy started to the listener's thoughtful eyes at the unconscious revelation of hard, unremitting, monotonous toil for eleven, twelve, and sometimes thirteen hours a day" (66). The passage establishes Nora as a proper heroine of sensibility, her body responding with palpable signs of her sympathetic heart. In addition, the text links seeing to

---

44 Denby (1994) has emphasized the primary importance of tableaux in establishing the sentimental narrative's requisite dynamic of looking. The function of the tableau is temporarily to halt the progression of the narrative and to provide the opportunity for readerly contemplation of the affective meaning of the narrated events. The tableau highlights those features of the text relevant to sympathetic looking: "[t]he relative positions of characters amongst themselves, gesture, facial expression, arrested movement, as well as situational features constituting background or setting" (76). It freezes narrative in order to increase emotional charge.

45 Tears were vitally important in sentimental logic. Vincent-Buffault argues that tears signified the dissolution of those physical barriers that separated people. The literature of the period includes many expressions such as "they cried together," "they shared their tears," or "they mixed their tears," expressions which form part of "an ideal encounter" involving a sharing not only of the signs of emotion but of the very material of emotion itself (1990, 17). Tears are the medium for a direct emotional and physical exchange. Buffault also suggests that tears were one of the few ways in which the body could be made present in the sentimental text. The overcoming of physical barriers was related to the democratic levelling of class barriers frequently invoked by sentimental narratives.

For a discussion of the preoccupation with bodily signs in sentimental narratives, see Denby 1994, 80-90 and Mullan 1988, 61-113. According to Denby, "[t]he sentimental text... constantly insists upon various features and notations which are to be read as signs of the inner life of characters, an inner life which cannot be adequately conveyed to another subject by conventional expressive means" (82). The workings of the body constitute a kind of "universal language of nature" (82). The roots of such an emphasis on the expressive body and the emotional tableau may lie in bourgeois theatre of the eighteenth century, which developed a style of performance emphasizing the communication of emotion above all else (Todd 1986, 32-48).
emotional response. Nora is the novel's exemplary "reader" of narratives of suffering, converting Lizzie's words into pictures in her mind which call forth tears, a capacity figured in the synesthetistic image of the "thoughtful eye," the organ combining sight and cognition. Nora's reaction to Lizzie's tale constitutes a paradigm of middle-class awakening to the suffering of the poor. Where once she had not seen their suffering, now she cannot stop seeing it. We learn that "the sad glimpses into other people's lives haunted [Nora] whenever she closed her eyes" and "[t]he aspect of the miserable little room seemed photographed on her inner sight" (69). The recognition of working women's distress makes her see more clearly her own life of privilege and ease, for "the thought of the girls with feelings and nerves like her own, tending, through so many weary hours, these senseless and relentless machines, oppressed her quick sensibilities like a nightmare" (69). In her sudden awakening, she is representative of many nineteenth-century middle-class women. Carlin reports that "of the approximately 250 novels about American economics published between 1870 and 1900, a substantial number dramatize the conversion of their wealthy female protagonists from benighted 'feminine' ignorance of the ways of the urban American world to an impassioned realization of their social obligation to the exploited working classes upon whom their fortunes have been built" (1993, 204). The connection between women of the leisured middle class and social reform work has been made by many social historians of the period. Women were thought to be best suited for reform work because of their innate capacities for both sympathy and surveillance. Philanthropy required the same feminine qualities--concern for the bodily and moral health of others, practicality, discretion, and the "capacity to supervise" necessary in the domestic

46 Implicit in this description may be the qualification that factory girls' nerves were not like Nora's own. As Poovey explains, the nerve theory developed by eighteenth-century medical science in Scotland (of which Machar was probably aware) held that "manual labor... militate[d] against the refinement of nerves" (1993, 9). Similarly, when Chillingworth comments to Nora that what would be pain to themselves might not bother others, he is employing a class-inflected argument based on such nerve theory that considered the working class less sensitive than the bourgeoisie, a theory that contributed to perceptions of the working class as a separate race.
Nora's perceptive eye and responsive heart thus establish her fitness for philanthropic activity.

One of the novel's first scenes is a failed sentimental tableau directly attributed to the observer's lack of compassion. The appropriately named Reverend Chillingworth, interrupted while preparing in his study for his Sunday sermon, turns away from his door a young girl who has come seeking assistance for her sick mother. The novel establishes the sentimental possibilities of the scene: the petitioning vagrant child with her "soft, grave, appealing gaze," at the very door of the minister's house provides an ideal opportunity for spontaneous cross-class benevolence (11). Chillingworth's failure, the narrative makes clear, results from a limitation of vision and perception: "[h]e heard and saw the child vaguely without according her any more consideration than to his mind was ordinarily deserved by the nuisances he indiscriminately classed as 'juvenile mendicants'" (12). Chillingworth has "delivered himself over to a set of rules" that do not allow him to respond to individual suffering (12). Accustomed to a practice of indiscriminate classification, seeing people as members of groups rather than as individuals, Chillingworth lacks the imaginative recognition of interiority which is crucial to sympathetic benevolence. A few days later, when he discovers the child at the Blanchards', where she is staying while her mother recovers in hospital, he does not "in the least recognize" her "in her altered dress and surroundings" (79). Caught up in his mental cataloguing of outward forms, Chillingworth has only seen her poverty. The novel suggests that Chillingworth's blindness does not result from innate coldness of heart (though his name indicates otherwise) but is rather a reaction, if an irresponsible one, to the sight of too much misery. We are told that he "had grown hardened by the sight of misery that he could not prevent," which has led not to any determination to take action but rather to the adoption of a "well-worn formula," a justification for the poor's misery and his own insensitivity, which has "cramped and limited the flow of human sympathy" (12).

For a discussion of the relationship between supervision and the principles of domestic economy, see Armstrong 1987, 80-88.
Chillingworth closes rather than opens his heart at the sight of suffering, seeing misery in the abstract rather than recognizing the particular miserable individual, as is necessary for sympathetic identification. In fact, Chillingworth reverses the sympathetic doctrine of looking, counselling Nora Blanchard on the way to deal with images of suffering. In response to Nora's complaint that "[i]t is horrible to think that such things can be," Chillingworth recommends a disciplined refusal to see, a deliberate misreading of suffering:

Yes, my dear Miss Blanchard, this fleeting life of ours has many mysteries about it, sad and strange enough, but we should only be making ourselves perpetually miserable, if we were always looking at them and trying to solve them. And then you must remember that things often look worse, when we see them from the outside. Human nature has a wonderful way of adapting itself to circumstances, and this life is only a fleeting one, you know. The great thing is--to lead the sufferers to look beyond! (81)

Chillingworth's practice is to dehumanize and thus to disregard others' pain. He prefers the abstract to the concrete, that which can be contemplated from a serene distance. Here Machar joins with other radical social reformers in condemning orthodox Christianity's acceptance of suffering as an inevitable part of life in a fallen world, even making common cause with her adversary, LeSueur, who rejected any religion that hindered men from alleviating suffering.

As I stated previously, Roland Graeme's emphasis on the inter-relatedness of classes is demonstrated by the novel's melodramatic plot structure, which exposes the hidden connection between the distant Reverend Chillingworth, the destitute Mrs. Travers,

48 Speaking of Italian art, Chillingworth comments that ""we don't see present things quite so effectively, or in such good perspective as we do the past! We need a little distance, you see, in order to take things in as a whole"" (104).
49 In "Morality Without Theology," for example, LeSueur lamented that "[t]he thought of God urges some men on to the most painful of ascetic observances, and, on the other hand, disinclines them to take any interest in schemes for the removal of social abuses, or for any amelioration of the material conditions of human life" (1880, 526).
and the uncommonly delicate vagrant child, Celia. In linking social non-sympathy with parental irresponsibility, the novel represents Chillingworth's rejection of his daughter as a shirking of both his Christian duty to aid the poor and his paternal duty to care for his child; his dim perception is not only a failure to recognize her humanity, but also a failure to recognize her as kin. Unwilling and unable to see his connection to others, Chillingworth believes mistakenly that the little girl has no claims on him. This plot device of the hidden family connection can be explained as a romance convention, but the appropriation of this generic convention has particular ideological import within a novel with such explicit social concerns. The vision of domestic reconciliation between Chillingworth and the little girl he had initially turned away from his door is the novel's blueprint for class harmony. The novel rewrites social relations in terms of family relations, such that social injustice becomes unnatural, a perversion of innate familial instincts. This narrative strategy literalizes Machar's metaphor of society as a family.

At the same time that the scene of unrecognition condemns Chillingworth's hollow Christianity, it suggests the possibility of his redemption; despite his rejection of the little girl, there is a part of him capable of responding to the human ties that she represents. When he returns to his study to continue working on the sermon, "his mind . . . seemed caught by some hidden link of association, operating sub-consciously as such things often do, and was thereby carried off to scenes and events long left behind" (21). These scenes and events, though vaguely presented, are his memories of an earlier period of happy love with his young wife, before their estrangement. Clearly, the memories have been suggested to him by his "sub-conscious" recognition of the little girl's resemblance to his wife. That these associations operate sub-consciously suggests that Chillingworth's heart is still capable of sympathetic response, and illustrates the novel's assertion of innate human goodness. Below consciousness, covered over by his own pain and his fear of acknowledging the pain of others, is that human sympathy that will ultimately be the source of his redemption.
The scene of non-recognition also connects Chillingworth's failure in sympathy with his failure to live Christ's teachings. Religion for him is a matter of form, a hollow shell. The subject of the sermon that he was working on was "the absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice demanded by the religion of Christ," but Chillingworth is himself unable to live out such self-sacrifice because of intense personal ambition (8). Religion has become, for him, a way of glorifying the self rather than a guide to action on behalf of humanity. He represents an orthodox Christianity unable to respond to social crises or to make Christian doctrine the basis for ethical social action. He is one of those men who "can absorb themselves in beautiful ideals and vague generalities, till the practical side of life, with its tiresome details and rude collisions, becomes for them almost nonexistent" (64). The novel traces this deficiency to a point of neglect in his upbringing. His indulgent and evangelical mother believed in the doctrine of faith rather than good works, and consequently Chillingworth "had never been taught that salvation meant becoming Christ-like, and that to follow Christ was to care for others, to deny himself for his brother's good" (245-46). Throughout the course of the novel, Chillingworth will have his eyes and his heart opened through the novel's "pedagogy of seeing" (Todd 1986, 4). At the novel's conclusion, he makes a "silent, passionate vow, that, henceforward, his life should be lived, to the utmost of his power, in the spirit of that unselfish love which he had preached so long and practised so little" (256). True Christianity, the novel argues, is active sympathy.

The many scenes in which benevolent middle-class characters catch glimpses into the poignant lives of the working poor represent Machar's extended answer to the "vague and unimaginative" sympathy of the readers that she had addressed in "A Pressing Problem." Thirteen years later, Machar offered nothing less than a full Christian commitment to seeing another's pain; neither personal comfort nor liberal economic theory must be allowed to blur one's vision or re-direct the gaze. But the textual evocation of sympathy is a problematic endeavour: how to make sure that what people see provokes the
desired response? The technique through which the novel attempts to generate compassion is what Van Sant calls "sympathetic visibility" (1993, 16). Van Sant differentiates between "obnoxious visibility" and "sympathetic visibility." In obnoxious visibility, the sense of the destitute as a fearsome and annoying mob or horde is predominant. Sympathetic visibility, on the other hand, reinterprets the suffering object, reducing the multitude to a small group or single individual, providing these with narratives that particularize and individualize them. The prime example of such an individual is Lizzie, a worker at Pomeroy and Company's silk and woolen mills. Lizzie is identified by her "pale tear-stained face" and "life of perpetual self-sacrifice": she offers no objection to the philanthropic imperialism planned by Roland and Nora, who re-locate her entire family to Rockland. "Poor, self-denying Lizzie" who has "learned the lesson of 'patience'" and is appropriately grateful, is the ideal pitiable type. She makes no difficult demands and expresses no anger. Characters such as Lizzie emphasize for the reader not only the necessity but the pleasures of sympathy. In the sentimental model within which Machar wrote, it was not enough that suffering be exposed. Exposure alone might cause readers to react as Chillingworth had, with appalled recoil. Rather, the relief of suffering must be a source of aesthetic and emotional gratification. Just at the beginning of her philanthropic career, Nora realizes "that they alone could be counted happy who knew how to lighten a little the cheerlessness and gloom" of poor peoples' lives (77). Sentimental narrative seduces readers to its cause by emphasizing how sympathy enriches the lives of those who feel it.

As we trace the logic of Machar's sympathetic narrative, we begin to notice here what many critics of sentimental literature have pointed out: the seemingly inevitable connection between the sympathetic gaze and the controlling gaze. Nineteenth-century narratives of suffering were governed by the belief that "sympathetic feelings, which require vividness and proximity, arise through an act of the imagination largely dependent
on sight" (Van Sant 1993, 16). What people could not see, they could not be concerned about: sympathy requires the spectacle of suffering. But social reform writing also betrays fundamental suspicion about sight—and the feelings evoked—as potentially fallible: the appearance of suffering may not indicate real suffering. To judge the extent of suffering, investigation, inquiry, and follow-up are required. The sympathetic gaze becomes the controlling gaze in an attempt to fix and contain the object of sympathy as worthy of compassion. And in order to validate the sympathetic impulse, the object of the gaze must continually be reinvested with its pathetic charge.

"Glimpses into Other People's Lives": Investigation

As I turn now to a discussion of how surveillance underpins Machar's discourse of benevolence in the novel, I am reminded of the second part of Machar's criticism of middle-class sympathy in "A Pressing Problem" (1879). As I argued initially, Machar seeks to correct, first, its "vague and unimaginative" character, and second, the fact that it was not always "judiciously carried out" (455). In emphasizing the policy as well as the humanity of social reform, Machar's writing betrays some of the more sinister aspects of nineteenth-century Canadian philanthropy. For despite her insistence on the need for sympathetic identification, Machar's admiration for scientific method—for efficiency, measurable results, and predictable conclusions—is often in conflict with her championing of personal contact and spontaneous generosity. Bacchi has pointed out that industrialization was both feared and admired by Victorian social reformers; while romanticizing the agrarian past, they were attracted by the "elimination of waste and inefficiency" promised by new technology and economic systems (1983, 55). Even while employing metaphors of society as a natural organism and rejecting the individualism of laissez-faire capitalism, the reformers were seduced by capitalism's promise of

50 Van Sant examines how two philanthropic institutions, Magdalen House and the Philanthropic Society, used visual display to attract and maintain benefactors (1993, 16-44).
51 Roland Graeme 69.
transforming society into a well-run corporation. In Machar’s non-fiction, this fantasy of efficiency is expressed in the image of a perfectly balanced economic system; she argues, for example, that “if all the money annually given in this country towards the relief of the poor in some form or other, could be collected and applied with strict judgment and economy, there would not only be sufficient to meet all cases of real distress in ordinary years, but also, pauperism, pure and simple, would rapidly diminish” (1879, 455).

Jacques Donzelot, writing about poor relief in post-revolutionary France, characterizes the shift from charity to philanthropy as a movement from impulsive feeling to utility and system: "philanthropy differed from charity in the choice of its objects, based on this concern for pragmatism: advice instead of gifts, because it cost nothing; assistance to children rather than to old people, and to women rather than men, because such a policy would pay off, in the long run at least, by averting a future expense" (1979, 66). In Roland Graeme, I will argue, we find both an overestimation of sympathy as an end in itself for the middle-class viewer, and an elaborate system of classification, reeducation, and control directed at the suffering object.

Before I return to Roland Graeme, however, I would like to contextualize the novel by looking in more detail at the preoccupation with surveillance articulated in "A Pressing Problem." Here, even while stressing benevolence as a Christian social duty and a pleasurable enactment of community, Machar worries that indiscriminate generosity actually produces more of the problem it seeks to address, resulting in a contagion of pauperism which "spreads till it infects whole districts" (458). To illustrate the hazards of "giving without enquiry," Machar details how two maiden ladies inadvertently convert an entire court of previously "hard-working, and on the whole sober, families" into paupers through unwise charity (458). Entering a community that had subsisted without charity

52 Writing on "Woman's Sphere," for the Canadian Magazine, Mrs. Willoughby Cummings noted of the tremendous growth in women's organizations in the preceding decade that one of the most significant achievements of the women reformers was "the progress made among the workers themselves in the promotion of business-like methods, of system and order, and of the faculty of clearness and conciseness in public speech" (1901, 187).
for years, the ladies begin to give money to one lazy family amongst the group. Soon other families cease in their attempts at honourable self-support and exertion. Eventually not one of the families is uncorrupted, with pauperism through charity spreading like a noxious infection:

No band of locusts could have done their work more effectually; for the fruit of their labours was that not an undemoralized household remained in that luckless court. Idleness, drink, vice in various forms, with rejection of missionary visitation once welcomed or at least accepted, at length took the place of the opposite habits previously cherished. Once more had that kind, self-denying, conscientious evil doer, unorganized Charity, been sowing by mistake a curse for a blessing. (458)

The only guard against such a devastating contagion was unceasing vigilance and investigation. It is worth noting in this passage an element of Machar's novel that I will wish to highlight: the slippage between social and moral reform. While "A Pressing Problem" began by evoking the suffering caused by inadequate food and shelter, it has moved without apparent change of subject to the moral degeneration so closely allied with poverty in every nineteenth-century philanthropist's mind, sliding from the economic issue of poverty to the moral issue of pauperism, represented here as a mental and emotional in addition to material condition. A pauper, in the social reformer's lexicon, is not only a poor person; a pauper has lost those qualities of character which constitute respectability: self-reliance, self-respect, morality, industry, cleanliness, thrift, sobriety, and perseverance. This particular understanding of pauperism as a moral issue considerably broadens the mandate of reform to encompass the individual's psychological as well as physical well-being, necessitating close monitoring and guidance.

In her essay, Machar recommends a book that has clearly influenced her own thinking. Entitled *Confessions of An Old Almsgiver*, it is the narrative of an English man
who devotes himself to uncovering fraud in requests for charity. Machar quotes approvingly his resolve to "personally visit and personally watch all cases seeking [his] help, seeing everything with [his] own eyes" (457). This emphasis on seeing as detective work becomes itself a form of philanthropy--separating the needy from the criminal--as well as a strategy of control. To provide religious authority, Machar quotes the words of a Toronto clergyman as the motto for all charitable enterprise: "[v]isit, consider, relieve." She stresses the disciplinary imperative of the middle term, consider, explaining that "even visiting and relieving are, we see, not to be trusted in company, without considering as a vigilance officer to watch their ways and keep them from reckless transgression of all sound principles of political economy" (458-59). Although Machar uses the "vigilance officer" as a metaphor, her rhetoric reveals her real concern with policing the poor themselves, who also transgress political economy. In focusing on the poor's mismanagement, Machar attempts to manoeuvre between two fundamentally incompatible understandings of poverty in Canada, one blaming the poor and the other targeting Canadian economic realities and, ultimately, the capitalist system. Her uneasy solution, which manages to establish a precarious position between the two explanations, effectively establishes the middle-class home as the only appropriate Canadian social arrangement, and argues for benevolent management of the poor as a nationalist's duty.

In identifying the causes of poverty in Canada, Machar identifies three factors, "improvidence, intemperance, and the great scarcity of work for ordinary labourers in winter" (459). The first two belong to a discourse of moral censure; the third identifies an

53 The book, published by William Hunt in London, seems to have been popular in Canada. The author of a "Round the Table" discussion in the Canadian Monthly heartily recommends it for its "excellent common sense" and "genuine, unadulterated humour" (Dec. 1877, 639).

54 This period also saw the rise of the detective novel in the enormous popularity of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. For an interesting discussion of the connections between crime detection and social investigation, see Audrey Jaffe, "Detecting the Beggar" (1990). As Walkowitz notes, the urban investigator is also related to the flaneur, the white bourgeois male who made the city his own through his command of leisure and mobility (and thus part of the opposition to women reformers was the perception that their practice of visiting the poor challenged the male prerogative of urban exploration). For a discussion of the relationship between "tourism, exploration/discovery, social investigation, [and] social policy," particularly the manner in which "[a] powerful streak of voyeurism marked all these activities" see Walkowitz 1992, 15-39; 16.
intractable economic factor that Machar identifies as particularly Canadian. The Canadian winter is "the great barrier to what might otherwise be the comfort of our large class of day-labourers" (459). Employing the methodology of the social economist, Machar performs a series of mathematical calculations to demonstrate "how difficult it must be for them, even with the utmost forethought and prudence, to 'make both ends meet'" (459). At this point in the essay, it seems that Machar has, after claiming that sound management can end poverty, actually worked herself around to declaring that it can be ended nearly anywhere but in Canada. Only a few paragraphs earlier, she has claimed enthusiastically that "[i]f we could only secure the careful consideration of the poor, on the part of all almsgivers, and the united and organized action which alone can ensure against imposture, we should have done much towards the satisfactory solution of the problem how we are to keep the rapidly growing pauperism among ourselves from ever developing into the chronic disease which it has become in Britain" (459). Having argued for the essential purity of Canada from that which has burst all bounds in England, Machar must now declare Canada to carry within itself the seeds of its own corruption. To extricate herself from this impossible position, Machar must return to the moral discourse she had implicitly rejected. Referring to her statistics, she states that "even in the most favourable circumstances, anyone can see that it would require a very much more accomplished manager than the ordinary labourer's wife to maintain a family in any degree of comfort on such a slender pittance" (459). Even while excusing the housewife of her representation, Machar subtly emphasizes her inadequacy. A few lines later, inadequacy is expanded to complete moral and practical helplessness: "[a]nd when we remember that this class of people, uneducated, undeveloped--many of them emigrants, with the pauperized habits of their old world life still clinging to them--are very much like children in their lack of forethought and self control, it is not to be wondered at if there is a very strong tendency to 'take no thought for the morrow,' in the literal sense, but to live generously while the money is plentiful, and let the coming winter take care of itself" (459). As her reference to the immigrant poor makes
clear, Machar formulates the problem of poverty and its solution as a problem of converting Old World paupers into productive, New World Canadians.

At this point, I would like to look briefly at the wider context for this nationalist argument, for Machar was here writing against and within what had become a staple of Canadian journalism, which was anxious to absolve Canada of responsibility for poverty by blaming it on immigrants, justifying Canada as a land of opportunity for the honest worker. An item in The Week of August 25, 1887, cautioned against condemning Canada for a problem that was not its own: "[t]he foreign pauper arrives here in filthy laziness and immorality, and is at once a burden on the nation and on society.... Nothing can be argued from his appearance against the general prosperity of our country or the opportunities of the industrious poor" (629). The Poor Laws of England were felt to deter the (natural) manliness of the labourer in Canada, having accustomed people "to look to the State for assistance in their industries," a habit "destructive of character [that] introduces a spirit of state socialism fatal to that independent manliness which should ever distinguish a free people" (Ryan 407). Whether blame fell on Eastern Europeans, the Jews, the English or the Irish, pauperism was a foreign import. Protesting that Canada could not protect itself from unwanted shipments from the Mother Country, The Week of December 13, 1883 lamented the arrival of "a consignment of Irish of the most destitute and most helpless class" and avowed that "[t]he pity which we all feel for the sufferings of these hapless people will not prevent us from seeing what is their character and condition" (19). The article used the occasion to emphasize the distinction between home-grown poverty and pauperism: Canadian poverty was sporadic and incidental to the fluctuations of trade, while pauperism was a permanent condition originating in Old World conditions. The Canadian poor are resilient, proud, and hard-working, so proud as to conceal their poverty, while the foreigners are "shameless beggars" who "regard mendicancy as a perfectly

55 For a discussion of Protestant church responses to the fear "that foreign immigrants constituted a present or future danger to the country," see Barber's "Nationalism, Nativism and the Social Gospel" (1975). Barber describes how the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches saw themselves as part of a nationalist movement to protect Canada through the Canadianizing of immigrants.
natural and most agreeable mode of getting their bread" (19). In these articles, which appeared with regularity throughout the 1880s and 1890s, each influx of the foreign element threatened an always previously pure Canadian population. Protesting that Canada was becoming "a dumping ground for pauperism," The Week of May 15, 1884 warned that foreigners could "inoculate [sic] the community with its habits, particularly with systematic mendicity [sic], a thing hitherto almost unknown in Canada" (370). By definition, wide-spread, constant poverty could not be a Canadian problem, even if it existed in Canada and amongst Canadians. Its source was always elsewhere.\(^{56}\)

Despite the sincerity of her compassion, Machar cannot reject these nationalist representations: she too claims Canada as the honest worker's paradise. The problem of poverty, then, must be located within the poor person. The problem is not Canada, Machar (re)writes; but poverty is nonetheless exacerbated by the rigours of Canadian life, the very rigours that could potentially make the best of workers out of this pauper class--if the poor can be properly managed and instructed in the middle-class virtues of thrift, cleanliness, and self-control. Thus the project of overseeing the domestic economy of the poor--through the "gradual influence of kindly and interested but not officious lady visitors"--is not only patriotic in the general sense that any social improvement would be, but specifically is a project of patriation, of Canadianizing the pauper (464). Poverty, then, is a failure in domesticity. The only proper Canadian home follows the middle-class model, with a saving, planning, domesticated housewife and a sober husband who shuns the tavern, centering his recreation in the home. Middle-class values, Machar suggest, can easily cross class barriers even if working-class people cannot.\(^{57}\) After a long detour

---

\(^{56}\) Similarly, in Duncan's Cousin Cinderella (1908), both the American Evelyn Dicey and the Canadian hero and heroine comment on the ill-advised generosity of the British to the poor, which Graham calls "poor relief run sentimentally mad" (214). In their opinion, the English have created a race of paupers who have come to expect relief as a right and thus feel no gratitude at all.

\(^{57}\) For another discussion of this contradiction in bourgeois depictions of the poor that suggests a strong parallel between the mid-century English and late-Victorian Canadian contexts, see Poovey's "Domesticity and Class Formation: Chadwick's 1842 Sanitary Report" (1991). Discussing the role played by Edwin Chadwick's Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain in the formation of a certain working-class identity and in the development of apparatuses of control by the middle class, Poovey comments on the conflicted rendering of class difference:
through various solutions to the poor's mismanagement, including home visits to inculcate lessons in domestic economy, the construction of reading rooms and places of "innocent recreation" to draw working men away from taverns, and the introduction of cooking classes for poor men's wives, to turn the hovels of the poor into respectable if impoverished equivalents of the bourgeois home.\(^{58}\) Machar returns to the problem of the scarcity of work for five months out of every year. Having established the necessity for middle class philanthropists to show the worker how to be Canadian, Machar suggests that businesses have an obligation to create work for labourers in the winter. But rather than establishing work as a right to which the Canadian worker is entitled, Machar imagines a system that will increase middle-class control over working people's lives and guarantee class harmony; employment would be given first to those labourers who "showed themselves most willing to work at reasonable rates during the summer" (465). In Machar's philanthropic scheme, benevolence, management, and surveillance are inextricably linked.

In Roland Graeme, Machar illustrates this massive project of middle-class assistance, instruction, and guidance of the poor. From the moment that Nora, Roland, and Reverend Alden step into the room where Mrs. Travers lies ill, her life and that of her child are changed forever. Mrs. Travers is moved to the hospital, where she is placed under what seems to be twenty-four hour surveillance by Nora's close friend, Janie Spencer, who observes her wedding ring, melancholy air, and tendency to alcoholism, and thus divines her sad story. Meanwhile, her daughter Celia is placed in the Blanchard home, where she is "stud[ied] with much interest" for evidence of her social class and early

---

\(^{58}\) The focus of many of Machar's planned reforms was the working-class housewife, who must learn the skills of prudent household management. In this instance, the full range of the woman reformer's natural talents must come into play, for she must not only be able to teach the principles of home economics, but must do so with tact, delicacy, and kindness. Machar stresses that lady visitors must have "tact enough to suggest, not dictate" ("A Pressing Problem" 1879, 464).
upbringing (86). Reverend Alden remarks that she "doesn't look like one accustomed to beg" (16). Under the gently curious collective gaze of Nora and her philanthropic circle, mother and child are turned into eagerly-read texts yielding the secrets of their past lives and present condition. Tenderly, rapidly, and efficiently, the middle-class characters in the novel put into operation what Finch has called a "classing gaze" that categorizes, assesses, and orders the people in its range. Certain individuals, such as Lizzie, are selected as promising and coached in middle-class values; others are classed as potentially immoral (Nelly) or dangerous (Jim), and are watched in a different way. Nora's friendship with Lizzie immediately establishes Nora's right to know and to direct all of Lizzie's affairs and thoughts; Nora takes charge of her spiritual as well as her practical destiny. Soon Nora's and Graeme's personal interventions expand into an interlocking web of friendly visitors and advocates, who undertake to organize, educate, and morally uplift the working people who come into the range of their vision. Some girlfriends of Nora organize an evening meeting-place for working girls, where they can read improving books or play music, while Graeme joins the Knights of Labor as a moderating influence, and also organizes lectures and Christmas entertainment as part of the overall regulation of working-class leisure time that the novel advocates. All of these activities contribute to a general remaking of working class life from a perspective that understands middle-class living habits as natural as well as wholesome and productive of happiness. The steady round of visits, sermons, and social encounters contribute to an overall plan of domestication and control.

Machar's interest in regulation and control is nowhere more evident than in her preoccupation with alcohol. In "A Pressing Problem," alcohol is both the cause of and the miserable refuge from poverty, locking the poor labourer into a self-perpetuating cycle of

59 The concept of choice became the central feature distinguishing the respectable working class from the degenerate poor, the "vicious and criminal classes" (Saunders, The House of Armour 1897, 241). As Finch explains, it was not the presence of drinking that mattered so much as whether drinking affected men's reasoning powers and women's sexual behavior. A housing test involved not crowding, but whether attempts had been made to clean the room, and thus whether the crowded conditions and dirt were something thrust upon the poor or in fact a moral choice (1993, 12).
60 For a more detailed discussion of the way in which social investigation measured working-class life against a middle-class domestic norm implicitly defined as natural, see Poovey 1991, 70-78.
misery: "[w]hat wonder, then, if, losing hope and heart, he seeks to drown present misery in the cup that seems to offer so ready an anaesthetic, though it sink him still lower in degradation, and poison the springs of his physical, mental and spiritual life" (1879, 460). For Machar, as for many middle-class reformers, alcohol signifies discord and depravity. In her fictional and non-fictional writing spanning a twenty-five year period, it remains a focus of her nationalist, feminist, moral and social agenda, conceived to be a root source of individual, societal, and national ills. On the individual level, alcohol leads to poverty and immorality. In turn, the weakening of individuals means national decline. Contrasting "the food which nourishes and invigorates" to "the alcoholic poison which . . . debilitates and destroys, not the physical frame alone, but the mental and moral being of its thousands of victims," Machar sees alcohol as "the greatest barrier to our elevation as a people--to our physical, intellectual, and moral culture" ("The Temperance Problem" 1877, 371, 378). In Machar's writing, alcoholic indulgence is specifically associated with social turmoil, posing both sanitary and political threats to the social fabric. In Roland Graeme, alcohol leads to the destruction of family and of society. Chillingworth's wife's alcoholism allows Machar to make the explicit link between family and society; alcoholism allies Mrs. Travers with the lower classes and precipitates the crisis in the domestic unit that eventually leads to her destitution, illness, and death. As Warsh notes, "female drunkenness and poverty

61 For an overview of patterns of alcohol consumption in British North America, the history of the temperance movement, and theories explaining the rise of temperance as a social phenomenon, see Warsh's "John Barleycorn Must Die" (1993a).

62 Describing a notorious tavern in Roland Graeme, Machar calls it "the place, also, where many days' wages were sunk in ruinous indulgence, instead of being spent in comforts for hungry families. There men lured each other to destructive excesses that besotted them till there was apparently nothing of their better nature left to which to appeal" (125-26).

63 In Saunders' The House of Armour, a temperance statement is placed in the mouth of an abusive drinker who has just assaulted a young girl, claiming that it is the "gentlemen that send us to hell" (1897, 244). While gentlemen drink "fine brandies and whiskies," they do not care what poor men drink, "licensing the devils that sell us .. . malt liquors that are half poison and make us run mad at anything we see" (244). In fact, as Finch notes, many legislators and prohibitionists were very concerned about the effect of low-quality alcohol on the poor, for "skimping on hops, combined with the warm temperatures, was producing a particularly powerful and debilitating beer in the colonies" (1993, 44).

64 Alcohol had, of course, a more literal role in disrupting domestic harmony in that it contributed to male brutality in the home, as Machar and other prohibition feminists were well aware. Enumerating how the alcohol trade impinged on the rights of members of society, Machar's first concern was its conflict with...
increasingly were associated by medical and social commentators" (1993b, 75). Because alcoholism was primarily associated with men, women's drinking was a potent symbol of degradation. Machar's decision to have alcoholic Mrs. Travers subject to a hereditary illness partly absolves her of moral taint but also necessitates that she die so as to be unable to continue to propagate potentially defective children. The theme of alcoholism enables Machar to explain the causes of class disparity as stemming from two sources: one is neglect on the part of the middle class (Chillingworth's failure to do his paternal duty), but the other is the natural inferiority of the poor, Mrs. Travers' "hereditary craving." Innate qualities of the poor, such as shiftlessness, irresponsibility, laziness, and intemperance, lead to rifts in the social family, although such rifts also occur because father-figures such as Chillingworth fail in their duties of benevolent guidance and discipline. Mrs. Travers, like the destitute in the novel, could have been reformed if Chillingworth's powers of sympathy and imaginative identification had not failed. Chillingworth's reunion with his daughter, whose possibility of regeneration is suggested in the fact that she has begun to

"the rights of wife and children to the support and protection of the husband and father" ("The Temperance Problem" 1877, 370).

In Roland Graeme, however, Machar relinquishes the opportunity to make the connection between intemperance and male violence in order to warn of cross-class sexual liaisons. Her feminist concerns are overridden by class concerns. The novel suggests that it is because Chillingworth's marriage to Mrs. Travers crossed class-barriers (as her name, perhaps, suggests) that his affection "began to cool down a little" and he "began to tire of her constant society" (217). The novel suggests that the relationship between middle-class benefactor and working-class girl should be a sentimental rather than a sexual one. In the terms of the novel, the marriage is a mistake, based on bodily lust rather than true love, because it was entered into "while the spell of her beauty still blinded him to all other considerations" (246). Thus it must end in death.

Alcohol also enables Machar to explain why all philanthropic schemes have thus far ended in failure. Without alcohol, their failure must either need to be blamed on the poor themselves as inherently incapable of social elevation, or on the complete inadequacy of schemes of benevolence to address the root causes of social disparity. Either alternative meant the destruction of the sentimental ethos. Thus intemperance, though it interfered with social reform, also provided a protective buffer for Christian philanthropy, such that Machar could argue that ",i;t is in vain that every agency is set to work that philanthropy can devise, when those whom we seek to benefit are habitually tampering with their faculties of reason and will" ("The Temperance Problem" 372).

For a discussion of the extreme repugnance with which the female drunkard was viewed in nineteenth-century Canada, see Warsh's "Oh, Lord, pour a cordial in her wounded heart" (1993b).

Even if Mrs. Travers is not actually fallen, the novel often alludes to fallenness in her representation. When the police are called to take an inebriated Mrs. Travers off Mr. Pomeroy's property, they naturally connect her drunkenness with prostitution, mistaking Roland's concern for sexual interest (214). In the scene in which she is restored to the hospital from which she fled, she is compared to "the repentant Magdalen" (227).
show "traces of resemblance to her father, as well as to her mother," figures ideal class relations in terms of the reformed middle-class patriarch and the reclaimed vagrant child (272).

Roland Graeme also emphasizes the specific association between the pub, male drinking, and social discord. One of the great successes of Reverend Alden's work with the labouring men has been his transformation of a former tavern into a meeting-place for temperate fraternizing among the working men, who scarcely miss the alcohol. Nineteenth-century reformers understood pub culture as lack of culture, evidence of disordered and inadequate home life. As Warsh notes, the tavern represented the "anti-home" in Victorian-Canadian culture (1993a, 6). In addition, Roland Graeme associates alcohol and the congregation of working men with disorderly conduct, reflecting bourgeois fears about collective organizing (Poovey 1991, 75). It is significant that the night on which the mill burns, Roland observes a group of drunkards, Lizzie's brother amongst them, congregating in the mill's vicinity. Violence against property owners and destruction of property, the novel warns, are the results of intemperance. In this context, Machar's deep concern about the evils of alcohol, and the existence of taverns, serves a specific social agenda; it is no accident that, as Armstrong points out, "those aspects of working class culture that, in purely moral terms, most threatened the laborer's hope for salvation were also the practices that best fostered political resistance" (1987, 17). Alcohol is aligned with non-sympathy as a source of social conflict and misunderstanding because it causes working men to forget their place, to talk together about their grievances, to vent anger, to engage in violence, and to cut themselves off from the aid and benevolent regard of the middle class.

In fact, though, no damage to property takes place in the novel. Catching sight of the fire, Roland successfully rouses the town and mobilizes the men, who are initially reluctant, to put it out. As a consequence of this quick aid, the strike is settled promptly.

67 In fact, drinking establishments actually possessed many of the comforts and conveniences—in terms of warmth, space, and furniture—that working-class homes lacked (Warsh 1993a, 9-10).
and fairly. By saving the property of the capitalist, rescuing the machines that symbolize and materially produce their subjection, the labourers act in their own best interests. Roland's successful attempt to generate working class concern for the machines is an education in the bourgeois values of respect for property—particularly labour-saving machinery—and the ideology of individualism, whereby the individual men's personal connection with their specific kind of work overrides their sense of collective identity as exploited labourers. At first, the men only want to watch the fire destroy the mill: "[w]hy should they toil to save a place in which they might never do another day's work?" (206). But Roland, unleashing all the rhetorical power at his command, convinces them that a higher principle is at stake, that their self-interest is less important than the symbolic value of the machines. He evokes the intimate—one might even say sentimental—connection between the men and their machines, and manages to turn the tide of their feelings. The reference to the machines "touched a chord of feeling," we are told, as the men visualized "the wrecked and twisted bars and coils" of the burnt equipment (207). The men decide that these machines, so "familiar," so "long . . . like a part of their daily life" must be saved (207). What appears an appeal to their identity as workers actually erases class consciousness by substituting for it a bourgeois notion of the personal moral value of work. The men's awakened sense of connection to their machines also represents the symbolic movement in the novel from the machine as adversary and destroyer to the machine as ally and instrument of civilization.

The rescue of the machines by the men is a crucial turning point in the novel, hinging, as I have argued, on their successful assumption of a bourgeois work ethic and individualistic values. Roland's social concerns, the novel demonstrates, are essentially pedagogical. The intersection of philanthropy and education was well-established in late-Victorian Canada, and Machar's writing on education is interesting as another parallel text for Roland Graeme. Her 1881 essay on "Compulsory Education" about the reform of poor children demonstrates Machar's insistence that the middle class home is both the model for,
and the basis of, social stability and national strength, and her championing of invasive technologies of surveillance. If the poor in Machar’s texts are often figured as children in need of mothering by philanthropic ladies, then poor children are the paradigmatic objects of the philanthropic gaze. Arguing that new legislation making a certain term of schooling compulsory for children between the ages of seven and thirteen is beneficial to those seeking to rescue children from lives of poverty and criminality, Machar begins the essay with a typical sentimental scene allying herself as writer with a community of concerned middle-class observers of the poor, who witness with helpless abhorrence the initiation of innocent children into a vicious cycle of destitution. It is "well known," she argues "to every one who observes the condition of the poor" that these children, kept from school to beg for their parents, become in time "frequent inmates of our prisons, or . . . live a miserable hand to mouth existence and become, in their turn, the parents of a similarly unhappy progeny" (174). Education is the means to intervene in a pathetic and frightening generational cycle.

Machar employs the paradigm of the family to contextualize the reforms she envisions, in which the state becomes the good mother (providing an "education for all her children") and replaces the irresponsible real mother who fails to send her children to school, being "utterly destitute of the firmness or the self denial of insisting on their regular attendance" (174). The purpose of education is to remake the child into a citizen, to replace the functions of the middle-class home. The most important components of education are emphatically not knowledge (even considered dangerous for the poor) but rather "moral discipline," "self-control," and "respect for authority" (174). Schooling purges lower-class habits from the child and instills middle-class virtues in their place, "breaking up idle habits of vagrancy . . . awakening some germs of mental life, and developing some habits of obedience and self-control" (175). The transformation of character is specifically envisioned as an ascension through a class hierarchy, for these habits, Machar argued, "may serve as a basis . . . for lifting the children to a somewhat higher plane" (175).
For children who refuse to attend school or "prove refractory" when attending, Machar advocates increased powers of the state to undertake "means of coercion and beneficial punishment" with truant schools (178). The metaphor of domesticity shades into the reality of penal control, united by the theme of benevolent discipline: "[c]ommittal is usually for a long period--even four years--but on the child's improvement and good conduct he may receive a license permitting him to leave; which license, however, must be periodically renewed--an arrangement which gives the effect of a continued supervision of the child's conduct, since at any time the renewal of the license may be refused, and the child re-committed without further formality" (178). Machar's ideal reform system resembles nothing so much as Bentham's panopticon, in which the "effect of a continued supervision" means that the truant child will develop a state of self-watchfulness, never knowing when his behavior may come under scrutiny and his freedom be curtailed.

Sympathy and surveillance are joined by a colonizing trope associating the working class with eastern barbarians and heathens. Machar compares children unaccustomed to school attendance to "street Arabs," the epitome for Machar of lawlessness, disorder, and barbarity. This association between the poor and the heathens of the East was a standard rhetorical move in the late-nineteenth century; the imperialist rhetoric operated to "constitute the poor as a race apart" (Walkowitz 1992, 19). Colonizing foreign lands and maintaining social order at home were strictly paralleled through the missionary rhetoric of bringing light into dark places (Stallybrass and White 1986, 134). Machar knew and approved of the work of General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, whose publication In Darkest England (1890) asked rhetorically "[a]s there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England?" (qtd. in Showalter 1991, 5). In Machar's logic, the family, religion, and imperial conquest are associated, with the bourgeois family and its ties of affection and duty operating as the basis of moral and religious life, and thus anchoring the claims to world domination of the Anglo-Saxon race. Speaking of unruly children in orientalist terms, Machar argues that
The untamed 'Arabs' have no conception of doing anything but what is right in their own eyes. And so the most benevolent and persistent attempts to bring them under religious influences have often ended in failure. For the root idea of religion must necessarily be obedience to authority. And for this reason, the discipline of the family—as it should be—has been made the first step in the religious training of our race. (175)

Later in the essay, the theme of imperial conquest appears again in connection with the reform of vagrant children. The bringing of middle-class Christianity to the east is linked to the benevolent discipline of vagrant children at home in that both are to be brought to bourgeois subjecthood:

To begin with the children and take them young is being more and more accepted as the most hopeful and economical method of elevating humanity whether heathen and barbarian, or nominally civilized and Christian. (176)

Machar's scheme blends hopefulness with sound economy, human sympathy with institutional discipline, and Christian charity with imperialism.

As Machar's essays make clear, the Social Gospel never claimed to be, and in fact would have disapproved of, a design of pure benevolence, of sympathy for sympathy's sake. In Roland Graeme, philanthropy remakes the people given aid into useful members of society. Improved working conditions and profit-sharing arrangements not only alleviate suffering but also produce better workers. For Roland, the Knights of Labor is a useful organization not only because it provides workers with a collective organizational base from which to lobby for industrial reforms, but also, and perhaps most importantly, because it performs the work of reform on its own members. It turns discontented and possibly fractious men (the kind represented in Lizzie's brother) into a unified body of cooperative, disciplined, and orderly workers. The organization, Roland informs Nora, "'teaches the men to respect themselves, and that is one step toward respecting others'" (149). Clearly, Roland believes that the energies of the organization are best directed
inward, to the characters of its members; thus Roland characterizes the work of the Knights of Labor as a kind of education in citizenship. In addition, Roland approves of the Knights because their meetings provide a place "where all grievances can be ventilated—a sort of safety-valve" (149). The Knights is the ideal labour organization because it promotes the very qualities in its men which will ensure the smooth functioning of the capitalist industrial machine. It demonstrates to labourers that their interests will best be served by serving the interests of their employers, that social organization is not, in fact, unjustly hierarchical, but rather is "'one organism [with] common interests and common dangers'" (123). To achieve reform, workers must show themselves to be deserving of the sympathetic cooperation of the masters. The qualities of this ideal sympathetic worker are exemplified in the description of Roland Graeme's newspaper, with its "temperate and moderate tone" that "set forth existing wrongs . . . and appealed to the sense of justice and humanity of those with whom it lay to remedy them" (127). The ideal worker recognizes and confirms both the humanity and the power of his social superiors.

As this discussion suggests, the bodies of the poor were not the sentimental project's only focus of reform. Their very selves, what Valverde has called their "ethical subjectivities," were the targets of reforming intervention as well (1991, 17). Such attention to the lower-class "self" showed that sentimental ideology was concerned with "the organization of assent," above and beyond mere "outward conformity to legal and administrative rules" (26). As we have seen, the narrative has little reforming work to do with Lizzie, since she already possesses most of the requisite virtues, including a finely-developed respect for class hierarchy. Yet even Lizzie is depicted as a subjectivity susceptible to reforming influence. More than content to be directed by Nora, Lizzie acknowledges Nora's superior moral power, commenting that Jim "'would listen to [her]'" and Nelly would "'mind what [Nora] would say, a sight better than anything I could tell her,'" and inviting Nora to her home to speak to them as if her mere presence in the house will do the desperate family good (88). And Nora is ever alert to ways in which her
missionary work with Lizzie can be furthered. One day, after hearing Chillingworth read Browning's "Pippa Passes," Nora attempts to comfort Lizzie with the certainty that the poor's service is equal to that of the rich in the eyes of God, "gently trying to raise her mind to the ideal that had so cheered herself in thinking about the poor overweighted life" (115). Her coaching in resignation and faith inculcate the "serene peace" that characterizes Lizzie at the novel's end (280).

In the context of educating the ethical subjectivities of the poor, then, the panoply of recreational, instructive, and social activities organized by the middle-class characters in the novel do more than simply occupy the time and energy of working-class people. They do more even than bring these people under the ever-watchful eye of their employer's daughter, wife, or neighbour. In providing opportunities for sympathetic "contact of the higher with the lower," these occasions extend the possibilities for education into every avenue of working-class life (115). In offering their "kind sympathy and cheering talk," the middle-class reformers of the novel offer a solace that was, Machar believed, the very basis of social order (114). For the novel makes it clear that although surveillance is necessary, it is not sufficient: social control operates most effectively when it is not only consented to, but actively aided, enacted, and supplemented by the docile subjects themselves. If education is a form of philanthropy, philanthropy is also a form of education. Nora's work with Lizzie spreads through Lizzie to her brother Jim and her friend Nelly, as Lizzie gently administers lessons in appropriate class and gender conduct. In a sense, Nora trains Lizzie to perform the work that she has begun, to act in her place, from inside the working class. Without such education, Machar suggests, the most watchful, vigilant, and efficient system of control was always in danger of being overthrown, of being consumed by the fire of social revolt, or infected by the spreading corruption that the poor embodied. Thus Machar's hopefulness about the possibilities of social regeneration always operates alongside an awareness of the precariousness of social stability. The following section examines Machar's representations of breakdowns in
social order as evidence of the fear that working-class people could not be successfully remade, controlled, and educated into respectable deference.

"Marshalling without Fife or Drum":68 Fear

Even as it evokes the humanity of the suffering poor, the novel continually figures them as potential agents of destruction and disorder. In "A Pressing Problem," Machar speaks of the magnitude of the problem of poverty by referring to the "ignoble army of 'tramps', detachments of which are to be found everywhere" (1879, 459). Her language vividly suggests the fears of class warfare that the discourse of benevolence so often evokes. For example, she warns of the spread of "materialistic atheism" and "the spirit of Communism" as a "moral epidemic" among the lower classes (468). Similarly, Roland Graeme continually conjures the memory of the French Revolution and the spectre of the "big, silent army, marshalling without fife or drum" across Europe and North America as a spur to middle-class benevolent action (99). It is no accident that Mr. Dunlop, the Scots labour champion at the Pomeroy dinner party, uses the language of commerce to encourage cooperation between capitalists and workers, arguing that "it would pay all you capitalists and employers just to take a look into things a little, to see what your men are doing and thinking . . . and consider if ye couldn't arrive at some rational understanding. There's nothing would propeetiate [sic] them quicker than that" (98). That sympathy is intended to counter socialism—with the rich giving some of their wealth so that they may keep most of it—is made clear in Machar's statement that "[t]he Christian charity which gives, out of love for its needy brother, must be the preventive and the cure of the grasping greed which would take, by force or fraud" ("A Pressing Problem" 1879, 469).

In her references to a "preventive" and "cure" for the "moral epidemic" of Communism, Machar evokes another potent image of social disorder: the spread of disease. Disease is both a recurrent metaphor for and a literal example of social breakdown

---

68 Roland Graeme 99.
in all of her work. On the metaphorical level, poverty is a disease of the social body that produces a staggering collection of distressing moral and physical symptoms. On the literal level, even if tramps and oppressed workers were not angry or organized enough to overthrow middle class hegemony, they posed a serious sanitary threat. In "A Pressing Problem," Machar compares the tenement buildings of the poor to the miasmatic source of vice, calling them "the incubus of squalid nests in which vice and degradation find a natural harbour and breeding place for a noisome progeny of evils" (1879, 464). Her colourful rhetoric, though designed to press home the social costs of economic injustice, pushes beyond its ostensible subject so that it is poor people rather than poverty who are associated with disease. Such figurative sliding occurs in the novel as well, where the scarlet fever arising in the tenement buildings owned by Pomeroy kills Reverend Alden's daughter. This fixation on disease was common among social reformers and purity advocates, for the rapid spread of disease from person to person and from place to place illustrated their understanding of the interdependency of society even as it seriously threatened their ideals of class harmony and healthy interaction. As Bacchi notes, "[t]uberculosis, venereal disease, and other infectious diseases spread quickly in crowded urban quarters and no class was immune from their contagion" (1983, 10).

In Roland Graeme, disease acts in the way that the poor do, wreaking revenge on the complacent bourgeoisie. In the rhetoric of the period, disease was understood to creep forth at night and by day to invade the respectable homes of the bourgeoisie like a thief or a source of contamination. The 1889 Quebec WCTU Report states the need for middle-class intervention into the lives of the poor because of the growth of slums in the city, imagining the invasion of the bourgeois home by the monster of disease and depravity: "[o]ur paths may not lead down to the city slums or within the prison walls, but this 'monster of so frightful mien' comes up to our hearthstones" (qtd. in Bacchi 1983, 41). The novel presents the poor's infectious diseases as their revenge for neglect by the middle class. The tenement buildings where the fever breeds are owned by Pomeroy; thus disease is directly
linked to capitalist exploitation, and is figured as one of the poor's few means to force the wealthy to redress the problem of inadequate housing. As Dr. Blanchard comments when the Alden children become ill, "It's disgraceful for men like Mr. Pomeroy to own such hovels as that in which you found Mrs. Travers. I hear there's one case of diphtheria in that region already, and there are sure to be more. If it spreads to their own houses, perhaps they'll wake up" (230). The emphasis on scarlet fever's disregard for class demarcations suggests middle-class fears about the nature of industrialization and the consequent mobility of the poor. Disease could be confined to the slums only if labourers stayed at home. With the ceaseless mixing of people in industrial centers, however, people of all classes were continually coming into close contact with one another. The imagery of bodily contamination also suggests anxiety about the potential permeability of class barriers.

In addition, the scarlet fever episode expresses, in displaced form, fears about the corrupting influence, moral in addition to sanitary, of the poor on the middle class. That the fever strikes Grace, that image of pure benevolence, with her "tender and gentle spirit" and "the moral sensitiveness of generations of Puritans," seems to warn figuratively of the death of sentiment itself, suggesting Machar's fear that the growth of poverty and the attending coarseness, brutality, and inhumanity of the poor may exhaust middle-class capacity for sympathetic identification (68). This incident suggests that too-close contact between classes can result in death to the innocent and sympathetic middle-class girl. Thus, Machar's novel emphasizes both the necessities and the deadly dangers of close communication. The novel warns that engagement with the poor should not be too active, reinforcing the need for distance and containment. What the sympathetic narrative continually runs up against is precisely the number of people to whom full humanity cannot be granted. Even as it strenuously undertakes to remake certain marginal beings normally denied subjectivity or nobility of spirit, many remain outside the charmed circle.
This concern with containment extends to the function of narrative in the novel. Because sentimental ideology must continually re-invoke class distinctions to maintain the sympathetic relation between benevolent middle-class observer and pathetic petitioner, the power of narrative is not granted to the poor. They are not meant to look, only to be looked at. They do not author their own stories or command their own self-representation. This point is obvious given that Machar is the author of the novel and that the narrator she creates is clearly a sympathetic member of the middle class. But even within the narrative, concerns about story-telling and the power of representation are frequently suggested. Near the beginning of the novel, for example, Lizzie tells the story of her life to Nora. At this point, it might appear that the power dynamic between these two women is temporarily reversed or at least equalized. Nora is ignorant; Lizzie is wise; Nora listens while Lizzie speaks. But although Lizzie speaks, she does not command sentimental rhetoric. Her story is "simple" and "matter-of-fact" and its effect on Nora is not in any way controlled by Lizzie: she is "unconscious" of what her story reveals about the hardship in her life (66). Although she is the subject of her narrative, she is not really its author. Rather, Nora reads pathos into her unadorned tale. Nora shapes the tale through her questions, finding its points of interest, its telling details, its sentimental power. And significantly, most of Lizzie's story is filtered through the narrative voice rather than presented as Lizzie's own words, as if her story needs the intervention of the middle-class narrator. One of the first things that Janie Spencer and Nora Blanchard discuss when they meet at the hospital where Mrs. Travers has been placed for care is the "history" of the unfortunate woman, speculating about her marital status, her child, her child's father. The poor do not have a story until the wealthy grant them one, and they are confined to be the objects of sentimental narratives, never themselves authors or readers of them. Thus the social reform novel depends on the inarticulateness of the poor, for its subject is precisely that "hopeless, inarticulate hardship and misery, which rarely finds expression in speeches or pamphlets" (Roland Graeme 53-54).
This concern with the potentially-misplaced power of story-telling extends to what and how the poor are to read. The narrator disapproves of Roland's reading of inflammatory passages from Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* at the Christmas concert put on by the Helping Hands Society. His decision to read passages of social criticism is ill-advised: he "ought, in the exercise of a judicious discretion" to have skipped the passages in which Dickens critiques social injustice because their effect on a working-class audience is incalculable (144). Nora, sitting in the audience, is aware of the potential danger when the objects of sympathetic narratives become reading (or listening) subjects, and she looks around "to see whether such words might not have too much effect on that particular audience" (144). Nora's concern at the possibility of the story having "too much effect" indicates the very clearly-defined class boundaries of the intended reader of sentimental social problem fiction. Although working-class people are to be remade in a middle-class image, they are not to acquire middle-class intellectual abilities, particularly concerning reading. Fortunately, the audience at the Christmas concert "was not reflective enough to take in the satire," having "ears unaccustomed to intelligent listening" (144-45, 146). After the concert, Reverend Alden warns Roland of his tendency to give to the poor "'what was intended for a different class of readers'" (148).

The effect of sentimental narrative on working-class readers is emphatically not to produce a working-class consciousness but rather to encourage the working class to (mis)identify themselves as middle-class. At Pomeroy's dinner party, a young Englishwoman tells of her father's management of the poor, describing a profit-sharing arrangement as ideal in a number of ways, particularly in the emphasis on how cooperation and self-policing by the poor go together. The enterprise is a perfect example of Foucault's "non-corporal penalty," whereby discipline of the body--in the form of shop rules and

69 A similar point is made by Wexler in her discussion of 'the 'unintended reader'... readers who were not the ones that sentimental authors... had in mind" (1992, 18). The effects of such reading, as Wexler demonstrates, could be emancipatory in ways subversive of sentimental logic. "Literary eavesdropping could lead to stunningly vibrant political insights into the nature of class distinctions, when the unintended reader compared his or her life and even habits of reading to the situation of the reader who was deliberately being addressed" (18).
penalties for transgression--is replaced by an internalized domestic model, an authority all the more absolute because based on affiliation rather than fear (1979, 11). The labourers, the father reports

made . . . 'capital partners'--they took such an interest in the business, were constantly suggesting little improvements and ways of saving waste, and were always on the lookout for all carelessness or 'scamped work' among the other men. And when a tight time came, they were able to convince the others that if they were kept on at all, it must be at a reduction. 'You see we can't afford more,' I've heard one man say to another, going home from work. And when there were 'strikes' and failures all around, his business continued to live on, like an organic creature, as he used to say, drawing itself in or letting itself out according to circumstances. And sometimes the generosity of the men in a slack time used to bring tears to his eyes, as he would tell us about it with pleasure and pride. (100-01)

Here a degree of power is extended to certain workers so that they internalize capitalist values and ways of thinking, and thus police themselves and one another more effectively than a lone mill-owner could ever do. The underside of the sentimental project involves not only a specific way of viewing the poor, but also a specific way of managing how the poor ought to view themselves.

With its mixture of fear and compassion, repulsion and regret, the novel presents a complex and often contradictory vision of the poor that reflects Machar's combined need to emphasize both their pitiable condition and the material stakes for the middle class in intervening to improve it. The many references to disease, dirt, deformity, and wretched poverty in all of Machar's writing are, in one sense, her attempt to bring before her comfortable middle-class reader the full horror of the hidden and unknown suffering of the urban poor. Convinced that the middle-class reader does not know the horror of poverty, Machar undertakes to document it in as many genres as possible. While everyone else
refuses to see it, she refuses to turn away. But such graphic representations of suffering would seem to contradict the fundamental imperative of sentimental writing, which was to represent the humanity of the sufferer and the aesthetic possibilities of sympathetic contact. In also representing the grotesque ugliness and spreading disease of intense poverty, Machar makes it unfamiliar and frightening rather than a spur to identification and sympathy. At this point, then, it is necessary to ask what else is accomplished, for the middle class observer, by the gaze of social investigation.

Stallybrass and White have noted that even while middle class reformers and novelists were ostensibly attempting to solve the problem of poverty, they were fascinated with the material conditions and moral depravity of the slum-dwellers. Poverty is fascinating to the middle-class observer because of its very difference. Entering a squalid tenement building, the philanthropic visitor is both shocked and intrigued by the scene of domestic disruption before her. Nothing available in the circumscribed lives of these lady visitors could have presented a more vivid representation of otherness. How could anyone live on so little food? with so little room? with so little furniture? in such extreme filth? How unusual if it had not been exciting. The domestic lives of the poor are fundamentally different from those of the middle class precisely because they are studied in a way that the domestic, by definition, was not meant to be. As represented in late-Victorian texts of social investigation, working-class homes are like bodies whose clothing has been removed to facilitate the cleaning of a sore or the examination of a rash: the sudden exposure of previously unseen flesh involves the same combination of prurient curiosity and detached medical interest.

Voyeurism appears to be a primary element in the book *Confessions of* For a particularly interesting fictional tour of the tenement slum, see Saunders' *The House of Armour*. Like Machar, Saunders links a romantic plot with a detailed presentation of urban distress that evokes the sense of forbidden pleasure in social investigation. In one scene, the philanthropic heroine, Stargarde Turner, pays a visit to the home of one of her little wards, Zeb, an Italian child from a neglectful family. In the description of the home, the moral character of the occupants is easily read off the facts about the dwelling, especially their shocking untidiness, failure to demarcate their interior living space, and their "glorious disregard" of thrift and management, for they "kept their tap running to save it from freezing" (157). As the description proceeds, the house takes on the features of the diseased bodies of the poor occupants: the walls are "flecked with ugly sores where the plaster had fallen off in patches" (158). The slum dwelling becomes a metaphor for the slum dweller's body, whose lower regions are not decently
an Almsgiver cited by Machar in "A Pressing Problem." The author sets up his investigation like a business, "as though . . . bound by a contract, and in receipt of a salary," but it is clearly pleasure: the pleasure of looking, the thrill of detective work, of entering into the squalid lives of the city's destitute (457). Machar acknowledges her pleasure in reading the book, declaring it to be "no less entertaining in a literary point of view than instructive in a moral one" and commenting with approval on the writer's "racy Saxon and fearless plainness of speech" (457). As Stallybrass and White note, it was no accident that the middle class chose the poor as their subject of investigation: "[i]n the slum, the bourgeois spectator surveyed and classified his own antithesis" (1986, 128).

Explaining the relationship between a degraded environment and moral deterioration in "A Pressing Problem," Machar begins by emphasizing the combined guilt and wonder felt by the middle-class observer of seemingly sub-human living conditions: "[w]hen one sees the damp cellars, or, more commonly, in this country, the wretched rickety board hovels whose cracks afford almost unimpeded entrance to frost and snow, places in which, as has been truly said, a humane man would hardly like to leave a horse, but which are the best that the poor man can get for his three or four dollars a month, the visitor from a warm and well furnished house can hardly help a pang of self-reproach mingling with the wonder how, with the scanty supply of fuel at the command of the poor, winter, in such circumstances, can be endured at all!" (1879, 463). Comparing the housing of the poor to the abodes of animals was standard practice in such texts of social investigation (Machar's correction of her own description suggests that she had in mind an English source text); the consequence of the comparison was that it became easy to explain why the poor might undergo the same degradation as their circumstances. If they lived like animals, no wonder covered and separated from the respectable body: "[t]here was a large hole in the floor utilized as a receptacle for the refuse and the garbage of the house, which were thrown through it into the cellar. As for the cellar itself, it was entirely open to the winds" (157-58). Not only is the home of Zeb's family like a body content to live in its own waste, but it is a body that carelessly exposes its nakedness and filth to any passer-by, for "[t]heir door had been broken in some quarrel . . . and one whole panel was gone. There was a garment clumsily tacked over it, and Stargarde might have pulled it aside if she had been so minded" (159). Even as they are surveyed by appalled middle-class reformers, these people are shown to invite the voyeuristic gaze, to be incapable of resenting it.
they became like animals, and thus the description of living conditions was always also the opportunity to classify degrees of animality and moral corruption. Machar's next sentence illustrates the inevitability of such logic: "[l]ittle wonder, indeed, if self-respect and decency take flight--if life becomes a mere animal hand-to-mouth struggle for existence" (463).

In their emphasis on the fascination of looking, Stallybrass and White suggest that the gaze of social investigation became a fundamental part of middle-class self-definition. Other commentators on sentimental narrative have noted that its celebration of the viewer's ability to be moved by suffering suggests a double logic: the experience of looking at extreme suffering involves both identification with the object and a certain detachment, an awareness of oneself as observer responding at one remove. This emphasis on sympathy as self-constitutive is suggested in the passage in which Nora listens to Lizzie's sad story. Nora's sympathy causes her at first to forget herself as she identifies intensely with Lizzie's feelings and experiences. Imagining herself in their place, she forgets her place. But at the same time, the experience makes her more highly self-conscious. Awakening from a nightmare in which she is following Graeme through a labyrinthine factory and surrounded by the never-ceasing drone of machinery, Nora experiences "a glad consciousness of liberty and restfulness" and is led into introspection about the effect of her experiences on her unconscious (70). One of the primary effects, for Nora, of recognizing Lizzie's suffering is a deeper consciousness of her own capacity to feel. This capacity for sympathy becomes a defining feature of her sense of self, separating her, for example, from Chillingworth and Harold Pomeroy, and aligning her with Roland. Roland's shock and outrage in Europe at the spectacle of beggars "searching heaps of rubbish for a few crusts, only too eagerly devoured" is likewise depicted as a fundamental moment of self-definition that alters the course of his life: "[t]he sights he then saw burned themselves into his heart and brain forever" (53). The effects of this experience are so intense that Roland

71 For a fuller discussion of this aspect of sentimental consciousness, see Van Sant 1993, 16-59.
not only sympathizes with but actually becomes one of the working men by joining the
Knights of Labor. Becoming a Knight is an experiment in self-hood through Christian
social action for Roland; it enables him to assume a new identity, in a process combining
philanthropic duty with exciting personal transformation. Roland's actions are the ideal
combination of sympathy and control in that he realizes his own moral and political identity
through sympathetic contact with his inferiors. Throughout the novel, many characters are
awakened to sympathy, a change that involves not only a reordered relationship to the
social world but an appreciably heightened self-identity. It might be argued, then, that the
novel brings the poor into view in order that the middle-class characters and readers may
more completely understand their own humanity.

Such an appropriation of poverty had a well-established international context.
Since the rise of the middle class in eighteenth-century England, benevolence to the poor
had been made to support middle-class hegemony. The middle class authorized its status
and power by managing the poor more efficiently and benevolently than the landed
aristocracy. Tobin argues in Superintending the Poor that the novels of the late eighteenth
and nineteenth centuries participated in political arguments designed to "discredit the landed
upper classes as managers of the rural economy and to promote the talent, intelligence, and
expertise of the middle classes in the regulation of the countryside and its people" (1993, 1).
Tobin argues that evangelical reformers such as Hannah More launched their attacks on
the inefficiency of charity as part of an overall critique of aristocratic self-indulgence and
wastefulness in opposition to middle-class self-discipline and sustained, regulated
compassion. Along these same lines of argument, Roland Graeme dramatizes the urgent
necessity for the middle class to become involved in charitable projects in order not to lose
both its own humanity and its class privileges. Writing for The Globe on "Toronto Sick
Children's Hospital" (1886), Duncan emphasizes the salutary moral effect of gazing on
suffering as a remedy for the indifference brought on by material prosperity. The middle
class was in danger of allowing their hearts to "grow harder with comfort and health and
happiness, as hearts will under such circumstances" (qtd. in Tausky 1978, 88). Without philanthropy, the middle class might become like the aristocracy. Thus Duncan advises her readers to visit the hospital to have their sympathies awakened, claiming that "[t]he good you may do the hospital will really be insignificant beside the good the hospital may do you" (88). For Machar as well, middle-class sympathy will have important social benefits for the poor, but the moral, emotional, and psychic benefits are reaped by the middle class.

Once middle-class social investigators began to look at the poor, they could not seem to stop looking. The element of pure fascination can be seen in much of the sketch writing and slum journalism of the period. Representations of poverty provided a way of looking at all of those things that the middle-class self rejected for its own identity even as the act of looking, cataloguing, and classifying confirmed middle-class responsibility and knowledge. At times, the element of social concern almost completely drops out of these representations, which give themselves over with undisguised relish to scenes of exotic depravity. Such voyeuristic excess is evident in Archie Stockwell's "The Criminal and Artificial Production of Deformities and Monstrosities" (1894) in the Canadian Magazine. The article describes the extensive varieties of self-mutilation practiced by professional beggars to engage the sympathies of the ignorant public. Feigning the loss of a limb or an eye, or artificially inducing hideous sores, such individuals are able to "eke out a precarious existence in comparative idleness, and at the same time successfully indulge in the most vile and depraved of debaucheries" (208). The article emphasizes the pleasure that the "mumpers" take in inflicting these deformities on themselves and on helpless children. While hinting that many more vile practices could be catalogued, the essay sensationally indulges the exhibition of grotesque depravity. While pretending to draw back from describing the more brutal of the mendicants' practices, the article compulsively brings them before the readers' sight: "[t]here are good reasons for believing, moreover, that children are deliberately deprived of vision--made blind by an operation unnecessary to describe, but in which the insertion of red-hot needles into these organs figures
prominently" (209). In its minute description of physical horrors, the text exhibits
deformity as the literal evidence of an immorality so shocking as to be appropriately bodied
forth in these pustulating ulcers, grafted limbs, and monstrous half-human, half-animal
creations. In this article as in many others of the period, one can discern a compulsive
pleasure in contemplating those aspects of the self that one has renounced. In such a
context, social investigative writing becomes that place where the boundaries between the
self and the other are both "established and transgressed" (Stallybrass and White 1986,
126). The 1890s was an era when journalists frequently ventured into the slums to provide
eye-witness reports on their inhabitants and conditions: such investigative reporting was
called stunt journalism. Kit Coleman, for instance, wrote a series of articles on London, to
gather the material for which she disguised herself as a man in order to explore, with the
protection of a male detective, "all sorts of queer places, thieves' kitchens, tramps'
shelters, midnight markets, Jews' corners and other savory spots" (qtd. in Freeman 1989,
82). Although Coleman expressed her sympathy for the poor in her work, the sketches
were clearly also meant to be exotic and voyeuristically entertaining. Stallybrass and White
note that in the late nineteenth century, "there was a flood of writing about the slums which
could be consumed within the safe confines of the home," writing that "made the grotesque
visible whilst keeping it at an untouchable distance" (1986, 139).

Although the element of voyeuristic pleasure in Machar's writing is always
governed by a framework of social concern, the fascinated gaze of the slum journalist
provides an important context for her writing, which frequently gives evidence of its own
compulsive need to look. Visiting Mrs. Travers, for example, Roland finds himself

72 For another example of the sketch as an opportunity for the middle classes to look at beggars and
tramps, see Louisa Murray's "Traits and Portraits of Irish Beggars," which combines racist caricature with a
fascination with beggars' ingenuity and technique, as they "mingljed] tragedy and comedy together in a way
that was at once pathetic and grotesque" (1879, 53). The sketch discusses the beggars outside of any social
context, developing into a nostalgic memoir of the author's own childhood that ends on the following
elegiac note:

Peace to thy shade, old Ally, and the shades of thy vagabond compeers, tragic and comic;
forever in my memory blended inextricably with scenes of romantic beauty, with kind,
loving friends, and the happy days of childhood. (62)
"absorbed... in the distressing scene" as the narrative lingers over the details of the "wretched little room" (18). Machar's interest in the poor, however, is more firmly tied to the project of national self-definition. She repeatedly emphasizes the patriotic dimensions of philanthropy: looking at the poor should make her readers more conscious of who they are as Canadians, of what it means to be Canadian. Her insistence on the spectacle of suffering demonstrates not only her interest in reforming and Canadianizing individual paupers, but in Canadianizing philanthropy itself.

I have already mentioned that many literary critics have noticed the connection between sentimental fiction and bourgeois hegemony, noting that sentimental narratives argued for the superiority of middle-class management of the poor to aristocratic neglect. In Canada, the very same argument is generalized to the nation as a whole, so that Canada itself is defined in terms of the conventional middle-class virtues and moral authority. Canadian commentators discussed poverty at home and abroad in such a way as to emphasize Canada's superior compassion and management of its suffering population. If the emigrant from the Old World was regularly figured in the press as absolutely incapable of self-management, for "he has lived in such a state of vassalage, and has been so accustomed to act mechanically under the guidance of his master, that power of self-guidance in him there is none," then his transformation into a self-reliant, self-disciplining citizen was nowhere more likely than in Canada ("Current Events," Dec. 1874, 547).

"Papers By a Bystander: 2" was careful to blame poverty on conditions that did not exist in Canada, tracing British cities' widespread famine and misery to "the government of a class socially remote from industry, and though not cruel, more moved by Imperial ambition than by sympathy for factory hands" (1879, 235). Canada, possessing neither imperial ambitions nor an aristocratic class, cannot be accused of producing poverty, though it may inherit it. "Current Events" of November 1874 had earlier blamed class unrest and faulty management on the practice of masters living in "luxurious villas in the country" remote from "those dingy rows of unpleasant cottages" attached to the mills (462). At the end of
Roland Graeme, Roland is setting up a cooperative factory in Minton, where he will watch with his own eyes the running of the mill and the living conditions of the workers. At the same time, Canadian commentators emphasized the importance of combining social progress with social stability. Change must not come too fast, or too radically. The republic to the South was the epitome for many Canadians of just such radicalism and lawlessness. The growth of Mormonism, Oneida Socialism, Ku Klux Klanism, and the Free Thought of Robert Ingersoll were all thought to be evidence of American licence. A train of events confirmed for them the dangers of indiscriminate liberty and lack of respect for authority. Berger notes that "[t]he violence which Canadians always associated with American society seemed confirmed by the great strike of 1877, the Haymarket massacre of 1886, [and] the labour conflicts at Homestead in 1892" (1970, 160). Speaking of the nation-wide strike of 1877, the writer of the Canadian Monthly's "Current Events" section for August depicts America as the land of unrest, alleging that "[t]he wave of turbulence and disorder which has swept over the United States, from Baltimore to San Francisco, discloses to view, with fearful vividness, the substratum of lawless recklessness and criminality which underlies American society" (203). As early as 1872, Goldwin Smith, delivering an address on "The Labour Movement" to the Mechanics' Institute of Montreal summoned a destructive image of radicalism to warn of American interference in Canadian affairs; the American philanthropist was really an "agitator" who "makes an eloquent and highly moral appeal to all the worst and meanest passions of human nature" (530). Machar's attempts to teach people how to see the problem of poverty in Canada becomes, then, a process of defining the Canadian community, of making poverty support rather than contradict the notion of Canada as the arena of benevolence. Rockland, which becomes in the novel a metaphor for Canada's industrial future, is the ideal managed community. It is a "quiet little place among the hills;--where everybody knows everybody else, and where [the] one or two employers think it their duty to know all the circumstances of all their workers, and are always ready to help them on, and to tide them over a
difficulty" (35). The power relations between capitalist and worker have not shifted; instead, worker cooperation is encouraged and rewarded by the benevolence of the factory owner, who supplies them with all the necessities of life in return for obedience and gratitude. Rockland is an illustration of the family metaphors Machar employed in her description of an ideal social formation, in which the rhetoric of brotherhood masks the reality of control:

Regarded in this way, we can surely rejoice in the conception of this great world as the busy household of a common Father, the needs and capacities of each being so fitted and adapted to the needs and capacities of the rest that, if each man and woman would do his or her particular kind of work in the true spirit of brotherhood and service, the industrial world of today, so troubled and distracted, would present the aspect of a harmonious and happy, because united, household. ("Healthy and Unhealthy Conditions" 1896, 421)

In Machar's formulation, Canada will manage its poor with prudence and charity, according to system and fairness. This very management of its dependent population becomes, then, a measure of Canadian society. Machar's writings do not deny that problems exist in Canada, but she continually constructs Canada as a place of possibility, where poverty can be overcome through individual fairness and responsible community organizing. At the same time, Canada needs the spectacle of poverty--defined as an Old World problem, an attribute of foreignness, of the unregenerate--against which to measure New World egalitarianism, humanity, and judicious state policy. Even while denied as a Canadian problem, the poor are necessary to its self-construction.

As I near the end of this discussion, I would like to pause to trace the path I have followed, and to question whether my narrative has participated in the very sliding or contradictoriness I identify in Machar's writing. At the beginning of this chapter, I argue
for an understanding of Machar's novel and non-fiction as significant interventions in and challenges to contemporary conservative discourses on Canada's (putatively non-existent) poverty and labour problems, but I end by emphasizing Machar's inability to imagine a social order fundamentally different from the one that guaranteed her class privileges. I point out her recognition of the systemic causes of poverty only to highlight her retreat from this recognition into ideas of personal responsibility and sympathetic contact. I argue for the radicalism of her positive portrayal of the Knights of Labor only to show her abandonment of class analysis in favor of the rhetoric of Christian salvation. I champion the radicalism of her call for human sympathy in order to expose its cautious, fearful, and creepily-fascinated underside. And I depict the overshadowing of her social consciousness by her nationalism. But I have done so not in order to dismiss Machar's work or to indict it for being trapped within the very discourse it set out to attack. I wish neither to defend Machar uncritically against her detractors nor to expose every call to sympathy in her work as a cynical ruse of power. Rather, in this chapter I have attempted to represent Machar's text as an arena of struggle, in which she both stages and participates in what was for her the most wrenching and bewildering social debate of her time. It was impossible for Machar to escape a situation in which her material and psychic investments were so great. What is more, as I hope to show, Machar was not unaware of the inadequacies and contradictions of her representation.

Machar frequently highlights the ambiguities of representation itself, including its tenuous relation to right action. Machar's textual solution to oppression is interesting precisely because of the way that it exposes and even comments on its own limitations and contradictions. Along with the metaphor of seeing, the novel repeatedly invokes the trope of "waking up"--mostly the middle-class capitalists who need to wake up to the realities of suffering and their own responsibility to alleviate it. The image of the rich slumbering in ignorance is central to the novel's anger and its impetus to reform. With the wealthy properly "awake," the capitalist system will function benevolently and fairly. But the novel
also suggests that the poor might be woken up. After the Christmas entertainment, Roland is chastised by Mr. Alden for reading inappropriate sections of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and he replies recklessly: "But, anyhow, if we can't wake up the rich, why mayn't we wake up the poor?" to which Mr. Alden replies "Let the horrors of the French Revolution answer that question, once for all" (148). The poor must be left sleeping, Mr. Alden counsels, or all social organization will be overturned. In moving to close off the possibility of revolution, the novel invokes it, suggesting that the novel's solution of minor reforms and benevolence involves a deliberate perpetuation of ignorance on the part of the working poor to their real suffering as well as their real strength. Sentimental narratives are themselves dangerous if they reach those for whom they were not intended. In stressing that the poor must continue to be barred from certain kinds of knowledge, the novel admits the inadequacy of its own solutions, admits even that sentimental ideology functions on behalf of the middle class, conferring a form of power/knowledge denied to the poor. Middle-class identity, self-awareness, and security, the novel acknowledges, come at the expense of workers' identity and security.

Further, the novel contains an even more explicit passage of self-critique that shows that Machar is not unaware of the dangers of sentimentality and its attendant aestheticization of poverty and charming distress. At the Pomeroy dinner party, for example, Chillingworth reads Browning's "Pippa Passes," and the middle-class audience is entranced and moved, without their sympathetic appreciation in any way leading to a greater commitment to changing the lives of the real poor in their midst. During the reading, Nora glances around at the group and is appalled at their misdirected sympathy:

She glanced at Mrs. Pomeroy, who sat with clasped hands and attitude all attentive, and at Miss Pomeroy, reclining with her check resting on her hand and an unusually softened expression in the lines of the somewhat hard face. She wondered if it occurred to them, how many real dramas might be going on about them, as worthy of their sympathy as this one, idealized by
the power of the poet. She began to think how it would be, if she were, there and then, to go to Mr. Pomeroy with a petition to restore to his toiling maidens their full measure of wages. Strange that people should feel so much more for a girl in a book, than for the real flesh-and-blood ones, in daily life! (107)

Ironically, even as it critiques the idealization of suffering, the passage performs its own, with the reference to the "toiling maidens." In one sense, the passage provides an explicit mini-lesson in how not to read the novel; but more radically, it also comments on the very nature of literary representation, which as it appropriates the bodies of suffering humanity for its own purposes also erases the materiality of that suffering. In fact, as the novel makes clear, it is not strange at all that people should feel more sympathy for fictional sufferers. Even Roland becomes impatient with the vulgarity and ingratitude of the workers he attempts to assist (212). Literary sympathy provides the perfect experience of compassion that real life rarely offers--an intense, aesthetic pleasure which is infinitely repeatable and therefore always available for consumption. In life, as Machar herself knew all too well, such moments were fleeting and unreliable. It was perhaps her search for such elusive aesthetic and emotional gratification which led to the increasingly rigid attempts at control evident in some of her essays.

In seeing Machar's writing as representative, I have examined the project of Canadian social investigation as a whole as a significant part of the movement of Canada from an agriculturally-based, scattered colonial population towards a modern, industrial nation. Sympathetic social investigation played a role in the establishment of middle-class hegemony and in the construction of Canada as a land of possibilities for personal improvement and advancement, though always within the parameters of good sense, morality, and decency. The sympathetic model of the social organism employed by Machar and other social reformers established Canada not as a classless state but as a nation in which everyone lived or had the potential to live a life on the middle-class model.
CHAPTER THREE

"Reconstructing the Social Life of the Nation":

Sympathy and the Fallen Woman in The Untempered Wind

This chapter attempts to weave together the concepts of sympathy, suffering, and social justice introduced in the previous chapters, and to read Joanna Wood's The Untempered Wind in the context of the idea of sympathetic community articulated in philanthropic writing such as Machar's. As we have seen, Machar's ideal community relies on a model of enlightened charity that produces and maintains class distinctions and a hierarchy of subjectivities. The sufferer occupies a tenuous place in this community: despite the observer's benevolence, the sufferer herself is always in some sense other, an object of sympathy, investigation, or fascinated horror. Wood's novel, however, places the sufferer rather than the benevolent observer at the centre of the narrative, and condemns reformist discourses that locate the source of suffering in the individual. Her critique of philanthropic programs to reshape the subjectivities of the poor is evident in the following depiction of a Machar-style encounter between Mrs. Deans, one of the leading matrons of Jamestown, and a beggar:

[Mrs. Deans'] audible meditations were interrupted by a tramp's voice at the open door—a forlorn-looking object, asking for something to eat. Mrs. Deans gave him some good advice about idleness, drinking, and begging, and sent him off. (73)

Within this pedagogical model of philanthropy, Wood indicates, any kind of reciprocal, sympathetic exchange is unimaginable. In opposition, Wood constructs her novel in the form of woman-to-woman address, appealing to women's shared experiences of sexuality and motherhood as a basis for compassion. The loosely Christian framework—although

---

1 The reference is to Parker's "Woman in Nation-Building," (1890, 459).
2 For drawing my attention to the significance of modes of address in establishing literary authority, I am indebted to Lovell 1987, 82-94.
critical of conservative (mis)applications of Christian doctrine, the novel is centrally concerned with sin, atonement, suffering, and purification—is joined by a feminist recognition of women's oppression. However, in challenging social constructions through appeals to the natural, the novel establishes a set of rigid and punitive categories no less exclusionary than those it protests. Although Wood positions her narrative in opposition to many of the period's most widely-accepted discourses of fallenness, she ultimately relies on a form of biological politics, with its defence of the "mother of the race," that is problematic, to say the least, as the basis of an emancipatory politic. We have seen that mothering had a pivotal function in women's justifications of their right to enter the public sphere as full citizens, in their defence of women from male sexual aggression, and in their claims for increased educational opportunities for women. In justifying the fallen woman's claim to sympathy and social reintegration through the reproductive work of mothering, however, Wood appropriates a complex set of assumptions about women's biology and sexuality derived from eugenics. This aspect of Wood's novel has been overlooked in the little criticism that exists on Wood to date.

**Introduction and Context**

In an article for *Canadian Magazine* appraising the work of Charles Algernon Swinburne, whom she had met socially, Wood commends the poet and critic for being unafraid of defying societal conventions in order to "paint the beauty of the flesh in words" (1901, 8). Calling herself in the article "a Scot, and a lover of romance," Wood clearly aligns herself with Swinburne and the artistic avant-garde (8). Her deep admiration for Swinburne as a writer (she calls him "the greatest of living poets") and as a man signals Wood's identification of herself outside of conventional Victorian religious and social norms (3). In a statement that might be read as a declaration of her own self-positioning, Wood protests puritanical contempt for the body and boldly implies the need to represent the material and sexual aspects of the self: "[t]o despise the bodily life as apart from the spiritual and mental
is as who should despise the very precious vessel which contains the elixir of life; of bodily needs and passions is twisted that 'silver cord' which binds body and soul together" (8).

Surely no subject in Victorian discourse was so thoroughly a mixture of the bodily and the spiritual as that basis of all social life, the mother. Women guaranteed the literal reproduction of the community as well as the transmission of its moral values. It was a commonplace to assert, as Cecil Logsdail did in an article for Canadian Magazine, that "the future of the race depends on women—on their physical power to give birth to strong and healthy, as well as intellectual children" (1893, 268). Perhaps nowhere is this discourse of motherhood more powerful and conflicted than in discussions of motherhood outside of marriage: the fallen woman was a key rhetorical figure of the period.

In the period that Wood wrote, most progressive reformers (with the exception of free love radicals, such as Victoria Woodhull, who were publicly excoriated) and conservatives alike agreed that the woman who was sexual outside of marriage was a clear source and sign of evil, though they differed on the evil's source. Debate raged in the House of Commons over John Charlton's and others' efforts to criminalize seduction.

National women's groups had special departments devoted to detection and rescue work, while international gatherings of

3 For a discussion of the contradictory mythologies of Victorian motherhood, see Sally Shuttleworth's "Ideologies of Bourgeois Motherhood" (1992). Shuttleworth explores how the image of the bourgeois mother as pure angel in the house "was shadowed by potent images of disruptive physicality" (33). Shuttleworth points to the economic and material aspects of motherhood, recognizing that the ideology of motherhood "was not solely a spiritual mission but "also an intensely physical process, and a mode of social productivity vital to the middle class's maintenance of power" (32).

4 As many scholars have noted, the designation "fallen" covers a rich and diverse range of female identities, including the prostitute, the seduced innocent, the adulteress, unmarried, "loose" women, and disreputable working women.

5 For a full discussion of the legislative campaign for the Charlton bill and an analysis of specific criminal prosecutions of seduction under the law, see Dubinsky 1992, 27-64. Dubinsky explains the bill as follows: The salient features of the bill were that it introduced the concept of seduction—as opposed to forcible, coercive attack—into Canadian law. Consent was not an issue in seduction cases. The law proclaimed that in certain situations there could be no consent to sexual relations. The situations specified changed throughout the period under investigation, but in general they applied when the female was between the ages of fourteen and sixteen; to all women under the age of twenty-one when sex had been accompanied by the promise of marriage; and to all women under twenty-one who were the wards or employees (in factories, mills, or workshops) of their 'seducers.' In all of these cases, the law only applied to women 'of previously chaste character.' (34)

Charlton introduced the bill into the House in 1882 and saw it passed in 1886, but calls for such a law had been made at least as early as the 1870's. For an overview of the debate concerning the bill, see Klay Dyer's Introduction to The Untempered Wind (1994).
social purity activists convened to discuss the problem. Sexual immorality was also a serious business in late nineteenth-century Canadian law. Immigrant women from all countries could be deported for sexual transgressions. In choosing to write a novel vindicating its protagonist, Myron Holder, who is "a mother, but not a wife," Wood sought to intervene in one of the most prevalent debates of her period (6). Her novel announces itself as a discourse of resistance and instruction, and it must therefore be evaluated on these terms.

Wood was twenty-seven years old when The Untempered Wind was published in October, 1894, by J. Selwin Tait and Sons of New York. Born in Scotland, she immigrated with her parents first to New York in 1869 and then to Ontario in 1874, settling in the rural Niagara region. After attending St. Catharines Collegiate Institute, she travelled in the late 1880s to New York, Paris, and London. Returning to Canada in 1890, Wood began to publish short stories in American literary journals. She never married, and divided her life between family commitments, travelling, and writing. The Untempered Wind was her first novel, and it earned her a reputation as one of Canada's very best.

6 For example, at the National Purity Congress of 1895, held in Baltimore (and later published by Powell 1896), the Rev. C. W. Watch spoke on "Social Purity Work in Canada." While emphasizing the injustice of the sexual double standard and advocating sympathy for the victims of sexual assault and seduction, he could still refer to the fact that "one birth in every seventy-nine or eighty is an illegitimate birth" as a self-evident sign of "social evil" (274). Whether he was distinguishing between social and moral evil is not clear. At the same congress, D. A. Watt, speaking on "The Canadian Law for the Protection of Women and Girls" advocated the criminalization of adultery for both parties involved, and declared that "adulterous connections are, perhaps, the most fruitful source of ruined homes, brutality to children, and even of child murders" (447).

7 In 1913, the Report of the Board of Home Missions, a branch of the Presbyterian Church devoted to missionary work among immigrants, listed 574 women as deported for bearing illegitimate children (Valverde 1991, 123).

8 One of the most striking aspects of the novel is its stinging contempt for established social institutions, including organized religion, the temperance movement, politics, and conventional piety. For example, the novel's attitude to the established church is expressed unequivocally in the following dryly ironic reference to doctrinal misogyny: "It must be conceded that the Church is not very lenient with women. We remember its attitude when chloroform was introduced" (299). Similarly, a paragraph describing a (non) conversation between Mr. Deans and Mr. Carroll ends with a wry observation about the purposelessness of male "learned arguments" in general (38). Side by side with the novel's denunciations of spiritual corruption are many direct appeals to the audience for compassion and justice. The combination of criticism and exhortation link Wood's novel to the tradition of the jeremiad, which Tompkins describes as an important mode of address for nineteenth-century women writers whose novels were concerned with political, social, and moral issues. Tompkins quotes Sacvan Bercovitch's definition of the jeremiad as "a mode of public exhortation . . . designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity, the shifting 'signs of the times' to certain traditional metaphors, themes, and symbols" (1985, 95).
novelists. Shortly after its publication in New York, *The Untempered Wind* was described in *The Week* (12 Oct. 1894) as "fully entitled to rank with the masterpieces of the century" (1073). Upon its Canadian re-issue by the Ontario Publishing Company, *Canadian Magazine* said it was "perhaps without a peer among Canadian novels" (July 1898, 180). Writing in *Canadian Magazine* in 1901, L. E. Horning listed "Miss Wood" among Lily Dougall, Jean McIlwraith, Susie Frances Harrison, and Agnes Laut as the finest women writers of the decade (150). After *The Untempered Wind*, a work of serious social commentary, she published four more novels in the sensational, mythic, and romantic styles; all show an affinity for *fin de siècle* decadence and "unorthodox women of passion and sensuality" (MacMillan 1993, 200).

*The Untempered Wind* traces the moral development of Myron Holder against the backdrop of the spiritual emptiness and stasis of her community of Jamestown. Although Jamestown is a fictitious locale, commentators have assumed it to be modelled on Wood's home town of Queenston Heights. Small details—a reference to the neighbouring town of Ovid, allusions to the war of 1812—establish Jamestown as a village in rural Ontario (86, 95). As the narrative progresses, Myron moves from a condition of passive despair to one of active, heroic self-sacrifice, motivated by her intense, pure love for her child, her decision to accept suffering without seeking retaliation, and her commitment to her own word—her vow of fidelity and secrecy to her lover, who vacationed for one summer in Jamestown and promised to return to marry her. She is prevented from attaining the peace she deserves by the persecution of the Jamestown villagers; they use her as a convenient scapegoat for their own vices and personal failings. The novel reveals that Myron is an outcast not because she has had sexual relations outside of marriage—many women have been guilty of this moral lapse—but because she has refused to name her seducer, has

---

9 These novels are *A Martyr to Love* (1897); *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe* (1898); *A Daughter of Witches* (1900); and *Farden Ha'* (1902). For a fuller treatment of Wood's life, works, and critical reception, see MacMillan's "Joanna E. Wood: Incendiary Women" (1992). Dyer (1994) relies heavily on MacMillan's biographical material.

10 MacMillan claims that Jamestown is "undoubtedly based on Wood's observation and experience in the rural Niagara area of Ontario" (1993, 172).
maintained a stubborn silence that is read by the village women as defiance rather than fidelity. She has refused to acknowledge the illicitness of her pledge by breaking it. As in the case of Hawthorne's Hester Prynne, Myron's silence on this point infuriates the village community and magnifies their sense of her sin. Only one of these villagers, Homer Wilson, befriends Myron; their developing love and desire for one another is a model of reciprocal sympathy and the cause of further suffering for them both, for Myron refuses to accept Homer's offer of marriage, believing herself already married. As the narrative progresses, Homer is killed when he saves Myron's little son from being trampled by a horse, an action interpreted by many of the villagers to prove that Homer is the child's father.

Towards the end of the novel, Myron's son dies too, from a fever caught because Myron has nursed another sick child. With her last link to Jamestown severed, Myron contemplates leaving the community to begin her life over. Before she leaves, she encounters two travelling preachers who come through Jamestown on the revival circuit. One of them, a stern prophet of eternal damnation, warns her that she must declare her sin wherever she goes so as to avoid spreading her impurity to unsuspecting neighbours. The other minister, the emotionally unstable and doctrinally confused Philip Hardman, holds out to Myron the promise of divine love and forgiveness; Hardman loves Myron, but is too wavering to win her when they meet a second time at the city hospital where Myron has been trained for nursing. Shortly after rejecting Hardman's uncertain proposal of marriage, Myron—in an episode reminiscent of Gaskell's Ruth—volunteers to work in the cholera ward at a time when the position is understood to be a death sentence; here Myron dies heroically fighting the epidemic alongside her faithless lover, Dr. Henry Willis, now a famous bacteriologist. She marries him just minutes before her death, having extracted his promise to return to Jamestown to write his name above the grave of her son, a promise Dr. Willis fails to fulfill.
Myron's sufferings throughout the novel are biblical in magnitude, as is her strength, though it is disguised by her humble aspect: "[t]here was something in this woman's hard-wrought hands, and simple garb, and weary eyes, and tender mouth--nay, in the undefinable meekness of her attitude, that belied her courage" (64). She is described as a modern-day Madonna and as a type of Prometheus, who "neither rebelled nor struggled--[but] endured" (7, 37). Her love for her child is holy: "[s]he looked at it with eyes of adoration--touched it almost humbly, as the Madonna we are told of may have tended the Christ-child on her breast" (153). Such comparisons are not unique in the history of literary treatments of the fallen woman (Hawthorne's Hester Prynne is both fallen Magdalene and sanctified Madonna), but Wood's focus is different. Victorian depictions of the fallen woman often equate sexual innocence and victimhood: as in Ruth and Tess, the heroine is seduced/raped precisely because she is so innocent. Myron Holder, however, is not a seduced innocent but a strongly sensual being who chose to enact her own sexual contract, with "no more sacred canopy than the topaz of a summer sky" (66). The narrator's ambiguity about Myron's guilt deliberately complicates those narratives of female sexuality and agency available to women writers at this period, which tended to rely on deterministic explanations and an absolute opposition between sexual experience and innocence. In troubling the opposition between purity and fallenness, Wood directs attention to the social construction of fallenness by Myron's community.

Despite its resistance to convention, Wood's novel has important literary precursors in English and American novels that Wood seems to have read and incorporated into her text. Like The Scarlet Letter (1850), to which it was compared by The Week and whose heavy, sombre style it resembles, and its closer contemporary, Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891), the novel elaborates the conflict between nature and man-made law, emphasizing that the heroine is guilty of breaking only a social--and not a divine--covenant. As Dyer points out, The Scarlet Letter was very much a part of the consciousness of Canadian society at this period (xix). As in Ruth (1853), the novel traces
the moral and spiritual growth of the heroine, whose self-redemption follows from her pure love for her son and her suffering as a result of rejection by her community. Both Hester Prynne and Ruth Hilton repay cruelty with self-sacrifice, and are noteworthy for their dignified acceptance of their "badge of shame," also the means of their regeneration (Ruth 119). And both novels emphasize the purifying effect of accepted pain. Like Tess, Myron's beauty and sensuality are paired with an enduring purity. These well-known literary precursors provided Wood with a rich narrative and thematic context for her novel.

Whereas the fallen woman was a frequently addressed topic—as symbol of social injustice or as object of censure—in Victorian literature, Wood's defiant and detailed representation stands alone in Canada. As Gerson has demonstrated, literary consensus proscribed the depiction of sexual vice: "[t]he notion of a Canadian Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, Hetty Sorrel, or Tess Durbeyfield was unthinkable" in Victorian-Canadian culture (1989, 144). Gerson traces the general absence of attention to contemporary social problems to the "insistent idealism of the English-Canadian literary community," which preferred to represent Canadian communities in idyllic rural settings, a garden-like natural world "perceived as manageable and regenerative" (142). Suited to the purposes of such representation, the regional idyll was one of Victorian Canada's most popular genres. Blending romantic plots and subject matter with realistic details of place, the genre—popularized in the writing of Charles G. D. Roberts and Gilbert Parker—tends to portray life in rural Canada as "intrinsically Arcadian" (140). Wood's novel attacks the regional idyll by refusing to locate the fallen woman in that conventional site and source of corruption, the city. It exposes the falseness of the pastoral myth of Canada even in its ironic title, which identifies Myron as a shorn lamb for whom God has not "tempered the wind."11 Yet although this decision to set her narrative of fallen womanhood in a rural village rather than an urban space is a rejection of a popular genre, it nonetheless functions within a well-established tradition in North American sketch writing. This tradition's

11 The reference is to Laurence Sterne's A Sentimental Journey (1768).
frequent use of the individual village community to stand in for the nation as a whole allows Wood to invest her story of one woman's tragedy with both social and national significance, and to exploit highly-charged associations between sexuality and national health. In a provocative article entitled "Petticoat Anarchist?" Barbara Godard has provided the first sustained analysis of the novel in terms of its participation and intervention in discourses of its day. Godard places the novel in the context of the "fictions of sex" and representations of the New Woman that "scandalized the reading public of the 1890s by representing women's desire" (1992, 99). According to Godard, the novel participates in the "interruption of the binary codes that constrained women within the opposed valences of Angel in the House and public woman" (99). Wood's representation of Myron deliberately troubles the opposition between pure woman and sexually fallen woman that underpinned those medical, biological, and sociological discourses that arose during the period of women's rights agitation in late-Victorian Canada. Myron is both the femme fatale, the sensual woman whose voluptuous beauty contradicts the imagery of female passivity, duty, and selflessness, and the Madonna, whose maternity and suffering guarantee her purity. She confounds by containing within herself the central binary opposition upon which patriarchy builds the oppression of women. For Godard, the novel is a hysterical discourse opposing the sexual and textual multiplicity of the woman's body (the verbal excess of its naturalistic descriptive passages, criticized by reviewers seeking wholesome and well-regulated prose) to the binary abstractions of the Father's Law, and in the process troubling the (apparently) smooth

---

12 For a discussion of nineteenth-century American women's representations of the nation through the village sketch, see Sandra Zagarell's "America as Community" (1993). Zagarell argues that the fictional sketch "constitutes one important site of an ongoing debate about the composition and character of America—a debate about the place of difference and diversity in this nation" (143). 13 For Godard, the 1890s was a particularly important decade; as the "high point in the political action of the women's suffrage movement," it was also a time when challenges to traditional representations of women were at their peak, "[n]amely in the topos of the 'fallen woman'—unrepentant Magdalene, not guilty one" (99). At the same time, a backlash discursive movement emerged through the scientifical-co-biological "hysterization of the body of the woman" (99).
functioning of patriarchal logic. In the novel, she argues, "may be discerned an emergent feminist reading of the connections between the repression of femininity, of the body, and the politics of women's oppression" (122).

Godard's reading situates the novel in terms of its contribution to conflicting discourses of gender at the end of the nineteenth century. I agree with Godard that much in the novel's foregrounding of the fact of corporeality is subversive of patriarchal discourses on female sexuality, and that the novel takes its place amongst other novels of the time engaged in clearing a space for feminist critique of misogynist social contracts. Particularly subversive is the novel's deliberate and ironic ambiguity concerning Myron's sexual guilt. But sexuality has other, equally important, functions in the novel. I will propose that an examination of how ideologies of gender intersect with those of sexuality, the family, and the nation enriches our understanding of the cultural work that Wood's novel performs. In addition, whereas Godard focuses on the novel exclusively in terms of its representation of the individual woman and the problem of female desire, I argue that the novel is also centrally concerned with representing the community as a social problem. Jamestown as a communal subjectivity is as much the focus of the novel as is Myron's individual subjectivity. Jamestown is a representative rather than a particular community, for "there are many Jamestowns, and many women therein," and thus Jamestown may be seen to function as a model (non)community (295). Attention to Jamestown as representative also suggests the significance of Wood's decision to set the novel in a rural village rather than a large city. As we have seen, the country was crucial to contemporary discourses of national life, which consistently linked Canadianness with farming, pure air and water, and healthy activity. Jamestown is an outwardly ideal community. Thus the novel refocuses the concept of social harmony by interiorizing it, making the basis of the healthy community a moral attribute, an aspect of natural law, rather than a social, economic, or political structure. Such an interiorizing move has mixed consequences for the novel's redefinition of fallenness.
"The Penalty They Pronounced":14 Social Constructions of the Fall

The novel is concerned not only with the moral journey of one fallen woman but also with the way fallleness is constituted through social relations. In the opening pages, Jamestown is introduced before Myron is. The first six paragraphs present Jamestown as if it were an ideal small, rural village. It is a morning in early spring and Jamestown's varied collection of residents is beginning the day: already the streets are "bright and busy" (5). A mother sends her child off to school, the child joins a companion, two brothers cross the street together, an old man wends his way, shops are opening. The accent is on relationships, human variety, and a certain quiet vitality. As the mother stands "strain[ing] her eyes after the little girl, now only distinguishable by the brightness of her cap," the narrative seems about to detail scenes of happy domesticity and peaceful community (6). Into this scene, though, is introduced Myron Holder, isolated and unhappy, and in a communicative void: "[n]o one spoke to her, and she addressed no one" (6). Her aloneness and silence emphasize her exclusion from the community, a condition, the narrative suggests, that is its own kind of fall.

Jamestown is a community of outward forms and inward hollowness or rottenness. In the following passage, for example, the Jamestown women's participation in the rituals of birth and death is shown to be essentially corrupt; the rituals have degenerated to the level of outward observance without appreciation for the spiritual content which initially animated and inspired such rites:

To be present and assisting at the coming of a life or the passing of a soul was the highest excitement and most precious pleasure these women knew; but this was a height to be attained only after many years of wifehood. And what novitiate of suffering experience--years, knowledge--might fitly prepare for these mysteries! The taking up and laying down of the burden, the beginning and the ending of the spinning--for, from our first moments,

---

14 *The Untempered Wind* 36.
our hands are bound to the loom; we must weave our own webs, but Fate
doles out the thread and Circumstance dyes the fabric, not as we will, but as
Destiny designs, and Death spares no pattern, however lovely, but stops the
shuttle when our reel of thread is spun.

By what holy purification, by what fastings, by what soul-searchings may
we prepare to enter Nature's holy of holies? Surely, ere entering the
meanest hut of clay and wattles wherein life springs or withers, we should
put the shoes from off our feet.

But of all this Mrs. Warner recked nothing. It was not the spirit she was
interested in, but the body it was casting off; the gasping lips, and not the
vital breath that already almost eluded them. (167-68)

The passage suggests an essential connection between women's physical experience and
the fundamental human processes of birth and death. Women's maternity connects them to
the entire life cycle; they exist at that liminal point where nature and culture join. The
Jamestown women, however, fail to participate fully in the rites that strengthen and
underpin both their individual and their communal lives. Though they have suffered in
childbirth, risking death to produce life, their contribution to the mysterious and sacred
experiences of the life cycle is limited to a formal, status-conscious observance. They lack
the knowledge that Myron, in her acceptance of suffering, has obtained.

In its representation of the community, the novel examines the social construction
of fallenness and the reciprocal relation between the categories of purity and vice.
Imagining the social condemnation leveled at the mother of Christ, who also "perchance
shrank before the cruel taunts and pointing fingers of women at the doorways and the
wells," Wood suggests the difficulty of determining moral truth, its dependency on context:
"[I]et those who jeer with righteous lips at women such as this poor village outcast,
remember that the meek Maid-Mother whom they adore" was also persecuted in her time
(7). But Wood goes further than the injunction to judge not; she examines the political
function of such judgements in the construction of community boundaries and exclusionary
domains of power and knowledge. The question is not whether the community women are
correct in their censure of Myron. Wood is less interested in the truth of Myron's guilt than
in the discourse that establishes her guilt. Whether or not Myron deserves censure (all the
narrative will say on this subject is that when "a woman gives herself utterly, then she is
doubtless lost" [7]), the Jamestown women need her as the object of their censure.
Myron's shame justifies and gives meaning to the whole tenor of their gossiping,
suspicious, and intolerant lives. In fact, Myron's transgression becomes the basis of social
solidarity, as the village "forgot its private quarrels to point the finger at its common victim"
(16). In Myron, the village women find irrefutable proof of their own righteousness.

Suggesting that virtue is dependent upon the construction of vice for its own
apparent stability and coherence, the novel implicitly indicts the work of social reformers in
addition to conservative moralists for their part in affirming and producing categories of
deviance and fallenness. The novel demonstrates how social groups not only act upon but
are actually involved in producing the very forms of sin that they claim to wish to eliminate;
unfallen identities rely on categories of fallenness to buttress their own claims to purity and
authority. "What an ugly complexion it would put upon our intolerant attitude to those
fallen ones, if we dreamed for one moment that our immaculate virtue was preserved by
their vice," the narrator exclaims (160). Just how virtue is preserved by vice is made clear
in the novel, in which women who have themselves been guilty of moral lapses,
indiscretions, or infidelities participate in the discourse condemning Myron as a way of
affirming or renewing their membership in Jamestown's community. As a result of
Myron's public exposure, these women are purged clean of former taint and re-admitted as
citizens in full standing. Wood thus suggests that all claims to virtue are made in relation to
a posited fallenness outside of the self. Only Myron, positioned outside the social realm of
virtue, escapes such a punitive dynamic of self-construction.
In its recognition of the reliance of virtue for its identity and stable meaning on constructions of fallenness, the novel also struggles to explain—and to point the way beyond—women's cruelty to other women. For Myron's persecution is largely initiated, practiced, and sustained through the agency of women. Women are her most vocal detractors and her most subtle tormentors, always on the alert for new ways to remind her of her fallen status. Women are not more generous with Myron because they have had first-hand experience of similar community harshness. On the contrary, they are less forgiving. Wood refuses the easy equation of powerlessness with benevolence; she does not assume any essential empathy in female nature. Instead, she indicts patriarchal systems of meaning—the separation of women into categories—for Myron's victimization. Wood can understand the possibility, even the necessity, for women to be cruel to Myron precisely because they are women. Knowing what the category woman means in patriarchal culture, the way that Myron could be any of them, and any of them could be Myron, they are determined not to be that thing. The clearest way to exercise agency within a patriarchal framework is to deny this common womanhood, as the narrator reminds her woman readers:

Think of it, you holy women, who fare delicately, sleeping on soft couches, guarded and consoled, caressed and kept from all evil! For you are like Myron Holder in one thing: Not in suffering, nor shame, nor sorrow; not perhaps in humbleness of heart, nor meekness of spirit, nor in courage, in patience, in faithfulness, nor in hopelessness; not in poverty, nor in endurance; but with her you share, despite yourselves, a common womanhood. Remember that! (185)

The non-sympathetic community is explicitly linked to woman-hating. The scene in which Mrs. Deans joins with the ragman in lamenting "what wimmen [sic] is coming to these days" illustrates Wood's acute analysis of the social operation of misogyny (33). Nominating herself chief investigator in discovering the paternity of Myron's child, Mrs.
Deans participates in policing the distinction between good women and bad women in an attempt to join the ragpicker--and more importantly, the male establishment--in defining personhood in opposition to Myron's depravity. But the distinction can never be absolute, based as it is on a notion of female evil as inherent, always barely repressed, and often hidden duplicitously under a cover of fair action. A few pages later, the ragman and old Mr. Carroll chuckle together over Carroll's assertion concerning Mrs. Deans and Myron that "women are all alike. "Set a thief to catch a thief"" (34). According to Mr. Carroll, Mrs. Deans is particularly suited to discover the truth about Myron not because she is a good woman but simply because she is a woman. Patriarchal discursive power relies on the double manoeuvre of dividing women into rigid categories while stressing their common, underlying corruption. The intense misogyny of Jamestown is reflected in Carroll's story about the man who killed snakes, an allegory for men's fear and hatred of women's sexual power (142-44). Thus, The Untempered Wind recognizes the source of women's cruelty in self-hatred and their positioning within a patriarchal culture.

Wood's critique of the community and how it divides women is important because, through this critique, Wood imagines and implicitly posits a different kind of community, based on women's shared sexual experience and motherhood. At the beginning of the novel, Wood's narrator explicitly directs her story to women readers, appealing to a sympathetic female community as the appropriate audience to read the journey of her Everywoman. She warns her readers that the story of Myron's suffering is "a painful relation; but when one woman lived it, we may not shrink from contemplating it, nor hesitate to view step by step the way one woman trod" (22). Here she suggests the didactic nature of the narrative and the moral imperative for women readers not to turn away from the scenes presented or the implications of those scenes for their own lives.

Women's sexual destiny--their suffering in childbirth, their bodily connection to the natural cycles of birth and death--is the source of their pain and of their potential strength. The project of the novel, the passage suggests, is to make its women readers "see" that
strength; thus Wood explicitly delineates the operation of the sympathetic gaze: the necessity of contemplating another woman's pain, minutely detailed. When women recognize their shared suffering and their shared strength, she suggests, they will no longer be divided. For each woman "is more nearly allied to woman than man to man. Each woman is linked to her sister women by the indissoluble bond of common pain" (295). This suffering is also the source of "a dignity far beyond the gift of man" (310). In the novel's mode of address, then, Wood gestures towards--and exhorts her readers to begin the work of building--a community of women based on common sexual experience and innate power: "'[f]or men must work and women must weep' may have its exceptions as to men who, by favoring fortune or a kindly fate, may escape their heritage of labor; but did a woman ever elude her birthright of tears?" (295). In this way, Wood both appeals to a common womanhood--women's shared suffering and strength--as the potential basis for community, sympathy, and resistance to oppression and also acknowledges and explores the social construction of womanhood.

"Nothing to be said in defence of Myron Holder": Determinism and the Sympathetic Narrative

But while the narrative is at pains to document, analyze, and judge the spiritual corruption of Jamestown as a community, it is reticent about the precise nature of Myron's sexual fall; in its seeming indifference to justifying, explaining, or defining Myron's past history, the narrative distinguishes itself from many contemporary treatments of persecuted women. Sympathetic narratives of the fall often emphasized the heroine's inducements to error: her poverty, vanity, ignorance, or helplessness. George Eliot devotes a significant part of Adam Bede to explaining the causes of the beautiful dairy-maid's seduction. Despite a sympathetic treatment of Hetty's tragedy, the narrator's dissection of her vanity,

---

15 *The Untempered Wind* 7.
16 The scenes in which she contemplates her image in the mirror emphasize her "vain little nature" and her "love of finery" (244, 296); her unhappy destiny is foreshadowed by the narrative emphasis on the gifts of jewellery she has accepted from Arthur Donnithorne, her eventual seducer.
"dreams . . . of luxuries," and shallowness is part of a well-established censorious tradition that sought the causes of sexual immorality in women's material desires.  

Gaskell's representation of Esther in *Mary Barton* similarly makes the connection between desire for fancy clothes and abandonment of self to sexual passion. Other novels took pains to vindicate the fall as owing to the heroine's extreme innocence. Ruth is an unhappy orphan longing for an escape from the hard drudgery of dressmaking. Because she was "too young when her mother died to have received any cautions or words of advice respecting the subject of a woman's life," she is so innocent and "snow-pure" as to be unaware of her danger and shame before and even after her seduction (44). Tess, powerless and probably raped by Alec D'Urberville, on whose good favour she depends, has been urged into danger by her own mother. At best, her consent is "confused surrender" (80).

Unlike other novelists who sought to vindicate fallen women—or at least to provide mitigating explanations—Wood begins her story of Myron with an account of the sexual lapse and makes little attempt to suggest that circumstances—poverty, environment, a faulty upbringing, ignorance, deception—were to blame. It is true that Myron and her grandmother are poor and that, after her father's death, Myron is alone but, unlike Gaskell's Ruth, she is hardly innocent or deceived. She breaks a law, knowing full well that she does it, choosing to believe her lover and to defy social mores. Myron herself seems to be aware of such mitigating narratives and rejects them for herself. Visiting her father's grave, she wonders whether she would have "lost herself" had her father not died,

---

17 Valverde has examined the connections established in Victorian discourses between sexual immorality and fine clothes in "The Love of Finery" (1989). According to Valverde, political, scientific, religious, and literary discussions intersect in their assertions of a link between female vanity and sexual lapses. The link, as Valverde explains, is always class-specific, for although middle- and upper-class women might be judged for their vanity, their sexual chastity was not jeopardized by their desire for beautiful clothes.

18 Explaining his conviction that Esther has "fallen" rather than come to physical harm, John Barton points to his wife's sister's love of fancy dress as both general cause and specific evidence of her fate: "'My wife frets and thinks she's drowned herself, but I tell her, folks don't care to put on their best clothes to drown themselves; and Mrs Bradshaw (where she lodged, you know), says the last time she set eyes on her was last Tuesday, when she came downstairs, dressed in her Sunday gown, and with a new ribbon in her bonnet, and gloves on her hands, like the lady she was so fond of thinking herself'" (1848, 5).
and she finds that she must answer "'Yes' to that poignant self-interrogation" (66, 67).

Myron's descriptions of her fall tell of ecstatic union rather than deception or shame: "I believed we were married as sacredly as though Mr. Prew had married us. Believing that, I gave myself to him," she tells Homer (189). In refusing to explain Myron's fall and in emphasizing her self-acknowledged desire, the novel departs from the conventional Victorian narrative of seduced innocence.¹⁹

Here I would like to move away from the novel to examine the non-literary context of stories of fallen women in Canada. In general, nineteenth-century Anglo-Canadian thought, like that of its English parent, relied on two complementary narratives to explain the sin of seduction. In one case, the woman was an innocent victim, a passive object whose extreme purity of mind was both proof of her virtue and the reason for her fall. Canadian women reformers lobbying against the double standard of sexual morality ("the white life for two") employed narratives of fallenness to emphasize the pervasive dangers a sexually predatory society posed for innocent virtue and the importance of right knowledge in arming women against seduction. Rather paradoxically, given the reformers' concern to educate women to protect themselves, many of the narratives emphasize the obliteration of female agency. In an 1898 address to the Nova Scotia chapter of the WCTU on "Social Purity," Jessie C. Smith portrays young girls rendered unconscious by "utterly abandoned men" bearing drugged sweets (qtd. in Cook and Mitchinson 1976, 234). Smith's narrative emphasizes not only the girl's extreme physical vulnerability but also the eclipsing of her mental faculties, her incapacity to know her situation. This is the story of "a young girl innocent, sweet, religious [who] was ruined by her lover, and quite without her knowledge or even a suspicion. Her anguish was terrible" (234). The victim of sexual assault in this narrative is not only unable to resist her assailant but also prevented from even recognizing what has happened to her own body.

¹⁹ Here I disagree with Dyer, who writes of Myron that she is "in many ways the prototypical 'victim' Charlton's bill had set out to protect. Her explanation of her consensual relationship reads like a scenario that Charlton himself could have written and raised as evidence in the House of Commons" (1994, xi). I think the description of the sexual relationship is far too sensual to have served Charlton's purposes.
Smith's narratives convey a sense of paranoiac gloom because of her insistence that, even without consent or consciousness, virtue can be irreparably lost. In the tradition of Richardson's *Clarissa*, her story of the young girl raped while drugged ends by emphasizing the incontrovertible ruin of this young life. The girl, though married through her parents' intervention to the man who raped her, "has never lived with the man who served her so, and now, with her little child, lives worse than widowed" (234). Smith also tells a story of thirteen young girls raped by their music teacher, reflecting that "[t]hey were ignorant, but the world will never again call them innocent" (233). In the vast majority of these narratives, the bodily defilement of an innocent girl has an unequivocal meaning. But although most narratives emphasize the permanence of fallenness, such a narrative is not monolithic. Smith's stories of irrecoverability are paired with another narrative emphasizing the reclaiming of individual souls. Referring to Christ's work with Mary Magdalene, Smith proclaims that "[e]very soul may be saved—Shall we let the women of the city go down to death and lead the young after them, when we may, like Christ, approach them in some humane office, win their confidence, awaken interest, love, and bring them, by the grace of God, again to the purity and peace that is ever for women" (qtd. in Cook and Mitchinson 1976, 235). Even when the discourse emphasizes regeneration, it is regeneration towards the passionless, passive ideal of feminine purity.

In condemnatory discourses of fallenness, on the other hand, the woman participates actively in her own demise, a desiring agent whose overt sexuality lures (and excuses) the forgivably weak man. In discussing proposals to criminalize seduction, the author of the "Current Events" column in the *Canadian Monthly* (Nov. 1875) complained that men would be victimized by a law that automatically assumed them to be sexual aggressors. His rhetorical questions employ the standard opposition, referred to by Godard, between good and bad women: "[w]hat comparison, for example, can be made between the villainy of a *roué* who lays siege for months to unsuspecting virtue, under promise of marriage, as one of the monarchs of the reigning house is said to have done,
and the frailty of the man who is unable to resist improper advances, or who falls a victim to the wiles of a designing intriguante?" (445). In cases where the woman enters knowingly and deliberately into illicit sexual relations, or fails to repent after her first fall, her actions are unforgivable, and commentators generally reacted with horror to such cases. Responding in the Mail's "Woman's Kingdom" column to a reader's letter about women's greater moral purity than men, Coleman emphasized women's greater potential for degradation, asserting that "no matter how low a man falls, there is a depth of degradation which he cannot reach; only a woman, a depraved fallen woman, can drop therein" (qtd. in Freeman 1989, 66). Smith speaks of the spreading of seduction by lost women, noting that "[a] girl ruined early becomes a seduction, a ruin to the young men" (qtd. in Cook and Mitchinson 1976, 234). Depictions of the woman who lures men into sin rely heavily on familiar metaphors of disease, infection, and corruption.

The binary opposition between passive purity and active corruption rests on the assumption, as Dubinsky (1992) points out, that an active sexuality was a given in men and a depravity in women. In Canada, a lengthy series of debates preceded and followed John Charlton's introduction in the House of Commons of a bill to criminalize seduction, an offence previously redressed only in civil suits. Charlton was concerned to protect women from the inevitable ruin which befell them and their families as a result of seduction. Perhaps even more significantly, Charlton was actuated by his apprehension of a fundamental link between women's domestic virtue and national/cultural strength (Dubinsky 1992, 34). Vociferous opposition to criminalization focused on the image of the "designing woman" who would use her sexual power to prey on innocent men. The writer of "Current Events" (Nov. 1875) saw in the criminalization of seduction a potential imbalance of power in which the man "would be placed in the dock with closed mouth, and the [woman] in the witness-box to tell any story taut enough to stand the ordeal of cross-
These two narratives "offer[ ] little space for positive or autonomous female sexuality" and deny women agency (Dubinsky 1992, 38). The key issue in seduction legislation was that women could not consent to sexual activity; more precisely, their consent did not count as such in legal or moral terms. Amanda Anderson (1993) has argued that even extremely sympathetic discourses of fallenness denied women's autonomy; similarly, the notion of seduced innocence denied self-determination to the woman even before the sexual fall took place. That the seduction law applied only to pure women emphasized the irredeemability of the loss of innocence. In court, if it could be proved—or even persuasively suggested—that the woman had previously had sexual relations with other men, then the loss of her moral character meant the end of proceedings. While a seduced innocent could not say yes, a loose woman could not, in effect, say no. More specifically, the giving of one's word to an immoral woman was not binding: she ceased to exist as a party to a contract in the legal sense. The Untempered Wind, I suggest, challenges such notions of the contract. Wood does not claim that Myron consented to sex in exchange for a promise of marriage, trading her virginal purity for her lover's name. Rather, Myron agreed with her lover that their sexual union was a form of marriage, sacred in itself and receiving her full consent. In choosing to represent her heroine as both actively desiring and pure, Wood challenges and enriches contemporary discourses of female sexuality.

20 The writer's fears were ill-founded. When the bill was finally passed into law, conviction rates throughout the 1890s were only 35% (Dubinsky 1992, 50). Dubinsky explains that "[t]he seduction law did not change or improve women's standing in the sexual barter system because, despite the chivalrous rhetoric advanced by proponents of the new law, women's stories of sexual betrayal were simply not believed by the courts" (40).
"Poignant but indecipherable": Reading, Representation, and Woman's Desire

In The Untempered Wind, the narrative account of the sexual act is obscured by the metaphor of a sacred ceremony, which both suggests profound parallels to and emphasizes its difference from an actual marriage ceremony. A series of ambiguous allusions to a bridal ceremony create an idyllic scene of mutual bliss in accord with nature which is interrupted by the reference to woman's transgression of artificial laws:

When under no more sacred canopy than the topaz of a summer sky—with no other bridal hymn than the choral of the wind among the trees—in obedience to no law but the voice of nature—and the pleading of loved lips—with no other security than the unwitnessed oath of a man—a woman gives herself utterly, then she is doubtless lost. But it must be remembered that the law she breaks is an artificial law enacted solely for her protection: and it must be conceded that there may be a great and self-subversive generosity which permits her to give her all, assuming bonds of sometimes dreadful weight, whilst the recipient goes his way unshackled—uncondemned. (6-7)

The collective impact of the opening list of metaphoric parallels is to suggest, even as it draws back from suggesting, the greater authority of the natural law governing human actions over the artificial laws of men. The ambiguity of the "no more sacred canopy" both obscures and multiplies a reading of the comparison. In suggesting the symmetry between institutionally sanctioned and natural actions, the passage implies that human ceremonies merely copy their natural origins. In paralleling the voice of nature that the novel everywhere appeals to with that of God, the passage introduces the religious skepticism and pantheistic spirituality that will form the keynotes of the novel. Through these references, the novel begins to shift the classificatory terms by which sexual acts are evaluated: from ideas of the lawful/unlawful to ideas of the natural/unnatural. Myron's

21 The Untempered Wind 9.
transgression is unlawful, the novel suggests, according to an outmoded discourse of sexuality; her stigma is not meaningful within the framework of the natural.\textsuperscript{22} The other villagers of Jamestown, as we shall see, are condemned for behavior which, though in most cases "lawful," is clearly unnatural.\textsuperscript{23}

These elements complicate the narrative's following statement about man-made laws enacted for women's protection. It might be argued that this statement reveals a poor understanding of the issues of property and patriarchal ownership that marriage sought to guarantee, and constructs women as naturally monogamous, selfless, and maternal. At the same time, the statement is complicated and undermined by the novel's own insistence on the sociality of fallenness itself. Taken together, all of these statements leave doubt as to how the narrative evaluates Myron's action. The nature of the fall—even how to name it, as seduction, rape, or consensual sexual liaison—is deliberately left unclear. When referring to it, the narrator retreats into rhetorical questions, irony, and overdetermined allusions, leaving the act itself unreadable. At this point, the novel directs attention away from the specific problem of Myron's action; the subject of the novel is Jamestown itself. It is the community, the novel suggests, that is infinitely narratable, that must be made intelligible:

There may be nothing to be said in defence of Myron Holder; but there is much that could be told only with bleeding lips, written only by a pen dipped in wormwood, of the attitude of her fellows towards her. \textit{(7)}

Here the status of what is narratable is deliberately foregrounded. Indeed, the issues of reading and representation return again and again, and are key to an understanding of the novel's treatment of the fallen woman and her society. The narrative frequently suggests the inadequacy of language, the difficulty of naming complex emotions or fleeting states of mind, and the dangers of trying to explain with words what can only

\textsuperscript{22} Here the parallel to \textit{Tess} is clear; Hardy tells us that his heroine "had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly" (1891, 84).

\textsuperscript{23} I am indebted to Finch for pointing out this shift in discourses concerning the body and sexuality (1993, 38-40).
properly be felt with the heart. Near the beginning of the novel, for example, the narrative emphasizes its struggle to represent the extremity of Myron's suffering, asking "[b]y what written sign may we symbolize the agony of a heart, bruised and pierced and crushed day after day?" (26). The narrative suggests that Myron's story must be read sympathetically if it is to be understood at all, even as it laments its own task of telling in language an emotional, non-verbal truth. But I do not think that the novel's emphasis on the act of narration is merely a self-reflexive comment on the elusiveness of truth or the opacity of language. For the narrative foregrounds more than the struggle of language. There are times when the narrative simply refuses to tell at all. I suggested earlier that the narrative is not really interested in assigning causes for Myron's fall or in explaining her own consciousness of sin. We are given very little information about her family life, upbringing, influences, and conditioning. The determining forces in the shaping of her character are omitted; the only vision of a Myron before her fall is presented through the consciousness of Homer Wilson, and the narrative makes it clear that its colouring is as much a product of his own mental state at the time as it is of Myron's. Homer's memory is of Myron singing:

He recollected how a rippling laugh prolonged the song. He had caught a glimpse of her that day; she was standing beneath a cherry tree--her upstretched arms held a blossomed bough, and she gave it little jerks in time to her singing--the white petals of the cherry blooms showered down upon her hair in fragrant snow. Her grandmother called her in--scolding her as an "idle maid"; Myron had fled into the house still laughing, and with the cherry blooms clinging to her dark hair. (56)

The memory emphasizes her freedom, joyful sensuality, and unconcern with forms of power outside of herself. The image suggests a fertile, pagan sexuality that ironically foreshadows Myron's "natural" wedding, with its image of the white petals falling, confetti-like, into Myron's hair. We have moved, then, from this image of a joyful,
carefree Myron to the image of her present sorrow, with no sense of inevitable
development, gathering forces, or predetermining conditions; no sense of the narrative
unlocking the secret of Myron's fall, finding its source in her environment or character.
Her fall has simply happened; its meaning is contained by the event, inaccessible to curious
readers.

The elision of explanations emphasizes the autonomous agency of Myron's action
in opposition to standard explanations of female sexual immorality, which heavily
foregrounded causation. In *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces*, Anderson argues that the
fallen woman, in both the major literary and non-literary nineteenth-century accounts, tends
to be a figure "lacking the autonomy and coherence of the normative masculine subject" and
subject to a tragically familiar "predelineated narrative" tracing a steady and irrevocable
descent (1993, 1, 12). She symbolizes a range of positions of extreme abjection, and her
representations suggest, variously, the loss of self-determination that follows a single
sexual indiscretion, the dangers to selfhood of extreme innocence, and the impossibility of
intersubjective communications between the unfallen and those who are irretrievably lost.
In some accounts, she may be vindicated as so entirely pure and selfless as to deserve no
blame for her sexual lapse, but such explanations deny her agency as thoroughly as do
accounts which chronicle an inevitable downward path from foolish vanity and improper
ambition to utter physical degradation and moral corruption. In all cases, the fallen state is
associated with the failure to "maintain an authentic, private, or self-regulating identity"
(Anderson 1993, 2). Often, despite justifications of her fall, she receives extreme narrative
punishment.

Anderson identifies the formulation of a "downward-path scenario" in Victorian
accounts of the sexual fall, and certainly Canadian non-literary discussions rely on the same
structuring narrative (51). For example, an article in *Canadian Magazine* entitled
"Neglected and Friendless Children" (1893), written by child-reformer J. J. Kelso, shares
many of the standard features of the rhetoric of fallenness, including a scientific and
empirical perspective, an emphasis on the influence of environmental causes on moral conduct, and the conceptualization of the fall into prostitution as a process defined by predictable and inevitable sequences or stages. Kelso begins by characterizing the latter part of the nineteenth century in terms of its progressive understanding of the trajectory of human crime; contemporary sociology finds the origins of vice and crime in early childhood conditions of poverty, ignorance, filth, corrupting companionship, and parental neglect. Kelso moves to establish the scientific credibility of his study through his deployment of statistics in the assertion that "[i]t would not be too much to say that seventy-five per cent of the criminals of to-day were made such in early childhood" (213). In his emphasis on origins and inevitable result, Kelso establishes a grimly deterministic vision of human evil.

Kelso's narrative describes the steady and irrevocable descent of the young, lower-class girl as a completely determined and determining event. After discussing the particulars of a young boy's corruption into a life of crime, Kelso turns to the story of the girl, emphasizing the force of events beyond her control in his use of passive verbs:

With the girl the downward course is somewhat different, though the result is essentially the same. Escape from the family quarrels and squalor is sought on the streets, where vice is easily learned, and the road to comfort and luxury made to appear comparatively easy, until by stages she sinks into a common outcast, unpitied and unloved. (214)

Kelso's description of the girl's descent, "by stages," into outcast status evidences moral repulsion and disgust at the girl's fall even as it emphasizes that the blame for her condition lies "[n]ot with the helpless victim of untoward circumstances, but with the parents, and with the community which failed to step in when the parents proved false to their duty" (214). Although Kelso certainly suggests that this girl deserves sympathy for her tragic fate, his non-particularizing language and his choice of syntactical structures to emphasize the girl's immobility and passive acquiescence, tend to militate against a response of
sympathy. Thus Kelso's account, like that of many commentators on women's sexual transgressions, laments the failure of community sympathy even as it implicitly valorizes a response of non-recognition.

In The Untempered Wind, Mrs. Deans is a fine example of such determinist, teleological thinking; the narrative tells us that "her philosophy--like some other philosophies--first created a result, and then strove to invent circumstances to justify and explain it" (109). For Mrs. Deans, every action has an explanation, immutable as social class and human nature, which it is the duty of the virtuous to investigate and proclaim; this act of classifying and naming forms of human evil is itself a sign of virtue, and thus Mrs. Deans is unceasing in her condemnation of evil-doers in the community. Of the "bound" girls who perform domestic service for her, for example, we learn that Mrs. Deans "described them often," categorizing their laziness, moral weakness, and shiftlessness in order to establish that "[t]heir individual characteristics, capabilities and tendencies had nothing whatever to do with their case" (29). A caricature of the censorious social reformer (she and her husband are famous in Jamestown for their efforts in the temperance crusade), Mrs. Deans believes that every human impulse or motivation is predetermined and easily uncovered by her searching eye.

But Myron, though forced to work for Mrs. Deans and thus to suffer under the "vituperative imagery" of her tongue, escapes the explaining and condemning force of Mrs. Deans' causative generalizations (15). This inability of Mrs. Deans to make Myron fit into a general "case" is a paradigm for Wood's rejection of determinist philosophy in the novel. Unlike most fallen women in Victorian discourse, Myron is not the mere effect of determining forces: she is a subject. Wood's concern with the consequences of all-encompassing explanatory models is reflected in her method of characterization: the reader rarely sees inside Myron's consciousness, and the effect of this strategy is not to de-emphasize Myron's subjectivity but rather to highlight it through an implicit linking of privacy and autonomous subjectivity. (While providing limited access to Myron's
consciousness, the narrative accounts in detail the smugly cruel workings of Mrs. Deans' mind.) The narrative refuses to make a spectacle of Myron, to invade her consciousness and subject it to readerly scrutiny in the way that the women of Jamestown force Myron to submit to their gaze; thus it grants her the private self that the village women would deny. Although the villagers make of her a story that all feel authorized--through their moral superiority--to appropriate, Myron's consciousness exists, in some sense, outside of the bounds of this story. We do not doubt that Myron has a rich inner life though the operations of her mind remain, for the most part, hidden. The narrative reticence about Myron's thoughts, I suggest below, links up with Wood's interest in social relations and theories of subjectivity.

It could be argued that the text makes Myron's body speak the struggles that are taking place in her consciousness. Godard, for example, claims that Wood makes Myron into a hystericized body, arguing that "[a]s the changes in her face show, the language in which she communicates is the somatized, symptomatized one of the hysteric who speaks with her body, a body under the governance of the 'uterus,' the 'hystera,' site of maternal (re) production, that represents her difference in the semiotic field and naturalizes social differences as gendered dis-ease" (1992, 111). She argues that "[t]hrough much of the narrative, Myron is silent, represented in these verbal 'portraits' as spectacle for the narrator's gaze, her face either pure white or blushing, sign in her body language of 'this mask of arrested life' . . . hieroglyphs transcoded into the narrative prose" (Godard 119). Although Godard makes a persuasive case, I would argue that Wood also emphasizes that Myron is not an entirely readable text, not all surface. The narrative defers to her complex subjectivity and inaccessibility. In this way, she is accorded a depth that the other characters are denied.

The novel conveys a strong sense of the ineffability of Myron's developing subjectivity. Myron is a different person as a result of her experiences of suffering, but the
narrative stresses the impossibility of naming her difference, using the metaphor of unreadable symbols to suggest the mystery of Myron's interiority:

But sorrow and shame teach subtle truths; etched clear upon the metal of this woman's soul, burned deep upon the tablets of her heart, their acids had graven the symbols of their teachings. (191)

Though her new, hard-won insights are "etched clear" and "burned deep," these messages are inaccessible to the eyes of the curious reader. Even when the narrative attempts to read Myron's bodily signs as expressions of resistance to the dominant discourse that her culture would impose upon her, it stresses the difficulty of a determinate, finalizable meaning. Discussing the complex self-consciousness represented in Myron's gaze, the narrative asserts Myron's lack of internal self-condemnation. Although her eyes are "filmed by acknowledged shame," the narrative hastens to assure the reader that they are "only filmed, however, for the eyes themselves held no vile meanings, no defiant avowal of guilt, no hint of sinful knowledge, no glance of callous indifference" (8). This list reads like a litany of the possible deterministic consequences of fallenness: the fallen woman may be tainted by sexual knowledge, she may embrace her new life of impurity, or her feelings may become deadened. Myron, we are assured, exhibits none of these fallen traits. The narrative insists that Myron, though properly aware of her shame, has not so fully internalized the censure of her community as to be paralyzingly convinced of her corruption. However, although the narrative avows that Myron has somehow managed to avoid societal determination, it stops short of a full explication of Myron's self-consciousness. It can only define her in negatives. A page later, it confesses to an inability to read the signs of Myron's expression, acknowledging the ambiguity and unreliability of the very physical indicators on which it had previously relied as incontrovertible proof. Describing Myron's arrival home after a typically gruelling day, the narrative comments that "a new expression had found place within her eyes--upon her lips--poignant but
indecipherable. For resolution, resignation, and despair are sometimes so analogous as to be inseparable" (9).

In its emphasis on unreadability, the narrative foregrounds the problem of "reading" the other as a problem of intersubjective relations. The women of Jamestown repeatedly and spectacularly fail to recognize the humanity of the sufferer in their midst. Although she is constantly being looked at, scrutinized, considered, and commented upon, the gaze fastened upon her produces objectification rather than recognition; it is surveillance rather than sympathy. The narrative emphasizes that to gaze without sympathy is to inflict a worse than physical suffering. Myron dreads "the ordeal of walking up the path, under [the] scathing eyes" of the village women who come to the house to commiserate with Myron's grandmother and to speculate upon the identity of her child's father (21). As a fallen woman, she is supposed to inhabit a fixed and unvarying trajectory, and is read according to a punitive and inflexible set of predetermined guidelines.24 The Jamestown women read Myron with an end in view: to discover what they already know they will find--her fallenness. Further, their reading is also an inscription, a writing on, for they are interested not only in revealing her corruption, but in fixing it by closing off any other possibilities of readerly interpretation and thus of selfhood for Myron. Myron, however, through various kinds of silence, resists and defeats the villagers' attempts to control the meanings of her life, refusing to take up the position of determined object of a narrative beyond her own control.

The villagers, like many Victorian commentators on the fallen woman, sympathetic and censorious, believe that Myron is entirely determined, that she has become like every other fallen woman: any narrative about her is merely a story, the same old story, rather than a personal history. "Them kind always lives," says Mrs. Warner after Myron bears her child, unassisted by any of the village women. At the same time, they hate her for

24 Anderson has shown how Victorian commentary on the career of the prostitute tended to insist on "some form of downward-path scenario" (1993, 51). In standard accounts of prostitution, that is, prostitutes were represented as experiencing "wretchedness, misery, destitution, loss of the affections, deadening of the mind (or, in some alternate formulations, insupportable mental anguish), disease, decay, [and] death" (51-2).
thwarting their full knowledge by withholding the name of her child's father, withholding the last link of the story that they long to own: "[t]he village knew her shame, but it could not fathom her secret. . . . Her face, holy with the divine shadow of coming maternity, turned to her questioners an indecipherable page—writ large with characters of shame and sorrow, but telling naught else" (17). Despite their convictions of Myron's status as a degraded, pre-scripted text, the villagers discover that Myron is neither easily read nor easily written on.

The novel emphasizes both the power of social discourse to enforce narratives of fallenness and resists social determinism as a master explanation. Recounting Myron's long experience of persecution, the narrator employs the trope of the fall to emphasize its status as a social construct, asking whether Myron is in danger of being destroyed by the accusing, condemning wrath of the villagers: "[w]ould those merciless mockers not cease until, deprived of life and hope, Myron Holder faltered and fell to what they pictured her?" the narrative asks (213). It emphasizes the constituting power of discourses that claim to be merely descriptive. A few paragraphs further on, there is an even more forceful statement of this same idea:

    Nowadays, when on every side they talk so much of the force of "suggestion," it almost makes us wonder if our fellows' lives are not a reflex of our conception of them—if a consensus of opinion that a person is guilty does not tend to make him what we assume him to be. (213)

Here the narrative explicitly intervenes in the debate between theories of personal agency and those of social determination. Yet while recognizing the power of social forms, the novel holds to a notion of personal salvation through sympathy.

The novel's rejection of social determinism as a master narrative is evident in its condemnation of the Reverend Fletcher, the visiting revivalist preacher. His speech to Myron, in which he casts her as a vilely contaminated and eternally contaminating figure spreading "moral pestilence" and "contagion" everywhere, is one of the novel's most
damning representations of the downward-path trajectory of religious discourse. Reverend Fletcher chastises Myron for her plans to leave Jamestown, warning her that she poses a danger to pure-minded men and women who do not know of her sinful condition:

Evil will come of it. Your influence will not be for good. You will spread a moral pestilence. Once I took a long journey in the cars; the car was very dirty, and there was much soot and smoke, and the black coat I wore absorbed the dust and grime. Well, it lost nothing of its good appearance; it was a black coat, like other black coats—to look at. But listen! One day soon after, in a crowded train, I sat next a woman with a white dress on. What was the result? Her dress was smirched and darkened where her sleeve touched mine. So it was always. That coat defiled everything it touched, until I put it from me. (292)

On Fletcher's analogy, the mere physical presence of Myron, though fair seeming, is contaminating. Her intentions, will, and actions count for nothing. His narrative forecloses on repentance and spiritual redemption even as it demands them, representing Myron as a completely determined creature incapable of change and growth. Fletcher's brand of sternly unpitying evangelism arrogantly appropriates the power of divine providence, insisting that it sees all the workings of evil and the ultimate end of the individual soul. In response to Fletcher's harsh determinism, the novel deliberately steps back from the question of Myron's personal culpability to posit an ideal of sympathetic reciprocity that redeems whatever transgression she may have committed.

"Most subtle sympathies": 25 The Reciprocal Ideal

Myron's achievement of heroic stature is based on a number of choices she makes: to accept suffering, to love her child, and not to retaliate against her tormentors. As a result of these difficult choices, she changes "from a commonplace woman to a creature of most

---

25 The Untempered Wind 248.
subtle sympathies" (30). Although her development of sympathetic capacity is related to her motherhood, motherhood does not guarantee unselfish compassion: there are many mothers in Jamestown. Myron's redemption is fundamentally connected to her conscious acceptance of suffering. She is not instantly redeemed through the birth of her child. Rather, as the novel makes clear, initially "no maternal love warmed her heart towards her child" (18). Seeing her baby as the emblem of her guilt and the source of further blame, Myron even contemplates murdering him. (Here Wood may have had Adam Bede in mind.) In detailing Myron's progress away from hatred to pity and love, the novel outlines an ethic of compassion that involves, centrally, the choice of suffering as part of sympathetic susceptibility. Rising on the morning after a night in which "[a]ll the tales she had ever heard of desperate women's crimes came to her, assailing her weakened will and tired brain with insidious suggestions of safety, and freedom, and immunity from blame," Myron looks in the mirror and is frightened by the image that she sees; she feels "a sick shuddering against the woman of the past night" (19). At this moment, Myron recognizes cruelty and hatred as ineffectual defences against pain. Rejecting such a defence, choosing pain over hatred, she prays for her "old heart" back again, her own "suffering, fearing, trusting, loving, betrayed heart" and is thus saved from the descent into self-alienation that began when she looked into the mirror to find that she did not recognize herself (19). This choice of suffering leads to a resolution of a life for others, in which "she would be true and faithful and self-sacrificing in every relation she assumed to others" (19). In choosing a life governed by sympathy, Myron wards off the determining influence of grief, shame, and resentment.

Here Wood redefines fallenness. The fall is no longer a fall into sexuality, but rather into the self-alienating bitterness and indifference of the face in the mirror. In choosing to respond rather than to close herself off to feeling, Myron rescues herself from the far more profound moral lapse that threatens her. Even now, she does not yet love her child. It is only through her recognition of her child's utter reliance on her that she can
come to love him. Rather than maternity guaranteeing sympathy, sympathy and the recognition of inter-subjective relations lead to mother-love. Ultimately, the experience of suffering leads to a strength and compassion that heal and succour all who seek aid in their own suffering; the narrative makes clear the intimate connection between suffering, sympathy, and the possibility of regenerative community in a passage reminiscent of Hawthorne's description of Hester Prynne's effect on her puritan community in *The Scarlet Letter*:

> The pleading of pained eyes was eloquent to her, and the curves of dumb lips told her the tale of their sufferings. The touch of her hand brought rest, the pressure of her palms, peace; whilst the infinite sympathy from a heart that had itself been smitten eased those pangs which, keener than any physical anguish, rend those that are near death. (248-49)

Again, though, the narrative seems deliberately to step back from drawing precise correlations between experience and character, acknowledging the influence of social determinants on identity but not wishing to allow deterministic explanations full sway. Thus the relationships between Myron's fall, her subsequent suffering, her motherhood, and her personal purity are often alluded to only to be blurred or sometimes even contradicted. For instance, early on in the novel, the narrative cautions against a simplistic equation between victimhood and moral stature. The caution, however, is itself couched in indecisive language. "It is perhaps true," it hesitatingly begins, "that martyrdom is a form of beatitude; but, if compulsory, it rarely has a spiritualizing effect" (36). Speaking of general cases, the narrative fails to locate Myron within the mass of unwilling martyrs, leaving it to the reader to decide whether Myron is an exception to or a representation of this tentatively-expressed rule. Then, in describing the day-to-day torment of Myron's life, the passage appears to stray from its original focus on the effect of unmerited suffering upon individual character, as if the calculation of such causal relations presents insuperable difficulties:
She arose in the morning and ate her hasty breakfast to the sound of bitter words, directed with the unerring malignity of long-suppressed dislike, at last given an excuse for expression. She worked all day, subject to the taunts of a vulgar virago, the coarseness of that unlicked cub, Gamaliel, the intolerable leers and jibes of the half-paralyzed Henry Deans. She returned at night to be greeted by her grandmother's venomous reproaches. Doubtless she deserved all this—but her acceptance of it might have been different. . . . It would scarcely be a matter for wonder had Myron Holder fought with her back against the wall, defied the world she knew, utterly--its narrow prejudices, cramped conventions, traditionary decencies; but she did not. At this time she neither rebelled nor struggled--she endured; so did Prometheus. (36-37)

The final sentence, describing Myron's monumental endurance in the face of persecution, appears in some sense to circle back to answer the implicit question posed at the beginning of the paragraph regarding the spiritualizing effect of Myron's social castigation, but in choosing the figure of Prometheus to represent Myron's moral status, the narrative steps out of the explicitly Christian framework it had employed to set the terms of its discussion, and thus avoids addressing the consequences for Myron's spiritual self of her experiences. Thus, while it is clear that both Myron and Homer Wilson develop morally through their experiences of suffering, Wood is wary of drawing any mechanistic or deterministic explanation of the process. The change in both of them--from preoccupation with self to a selfless, even self-sacrificing, "sympathetic responsiveness" cannot be absolutely read or known (Anderson 1993, 111).

Homer's attitude to Myron is initially the mere reverse of that of the villagers. He sees her as a pure victim rather than an unrepentant sinner, but similarly determined and lacking in interiority. Defending her against his mother's charges of ingratitude, Homer has a spectral vision of Myron, in which she appears before his eyes in wraith-like form:
"suddenly Myron Holder's pale face seemed to show out of the gloom before him, as he had seen it a little while before against the dark background of her hair" (44). In this representation, Homer's inability to recognize Myron's humanity is doubly represented, in that he has not only converted her into a disembodied vision of pure spirit, but has imposed that vision upon her embodied presence as well. Homer's thoughts of Myron are repeatedly represented in terms that point to an objectifying and reifying impulse in his pity; thinking of Myron, Homer sees "a woman's pale face, carven cameo-like against a night of hair, and exceeding sorrowful" (56).

In presenting Homer's past life, the narrative emphasizes his character as a basically benevolent man conforming unthinkingly to cultural scripts. After "avowing conversion" at Jamestown's Methodist Church, Homer is vaguely aware that he has acted under the pressure of social expectation rather than personal conviction: "[h]e knew he had done what was expected of him, and believed it was the right thing to do, but was a bit confused as to the impulse which had prompted him to take the step" (45). After leaving Jamestown to attend business school, where he falls in love with a classmate's sister, Homer relinquishes his professional ambitions to return to the farm to assist his aging mother and father, who are unable to pay their mortgage. Repelled by the prospect of hard work and poverty, his fiancée betrays him. In his extreme grief, hereditary influences overtake him as he attempts to stifle his sorrow in the obsessive pursuit of wealth:

He had no longer anything to live for but money; he rose to search for this only good with eager, greedy eyes. For this poor countryman had come of a long race of penurious, grasping men and women, and that mercenary craving for money and land had been latent in his nature since his birth. When he went to the business college it stirred within him vaguely, and might then have developed, but better ambitions ousted it. But these aspirations were gone, and in their place flourished--grown to its full height in a single night--the Upas Tree of Greed. (52)
Desperate to hide his misery from his family and fellow villagers, Homer adopts a
defensively hearty, swaggering exterior. His motives continually misinterpreted by his family, he descends into a self-obsessed bitterness and resentfulness, during which he "cursed the resolution which had brought him back to rescue his old people" (54). At this point, the narrator moralizes, "the disintegration of his soul would seem to be complete" (54).

Homer's descent into hardened misery is halted by his recognition of Myron's suffering. His pity for her leads "dimly" to a sense of his own loss of feeling, his surrendering of self in reaction to pain. Initially, Homer imagines that he will save Myron from the suffering that she endures from the townsfolk by marrying her. His luxuriously self-glorifying imaginings of the social benefits to Myron of being his wife point up the rigidly hierarchized model of rescuer and victim to which this fantasy belongs, in which, as the narrative notes with clear disapproval, "he felt he would bestow an inestimable benefit upon Myron Holder by making her his wife" (161). For Homer, Myron is the perfect sentimental victim. He imagines her as a figure of absolute pliability, passivity, and innocent suffering grateful for relief. Thinking of her one calm autumn day, Homer murmurs aloud "'[a]s a lamb before its shearer is dumb, so she opened not her mouth'" (160). Although the line is clearly meant to refer to Myron's refusal to reproach those who berate her, the reference to silence also signifies Homer's apprehension of Myron's iconic status. Homer's self-gratifying reveries of vengeance upon the townsfolk figure his rescue of Myron through marriage as a reproach to the town and a guarantee that Myron will no longer be a victim. Spitefully, Homer reflects that he would "like to hear any she-cat in the crowd open her lips to [his] wife" (160).

The narrator reflects upon the transformation of Homer in relation to Myron, telling the reader that "[i]t is plain to us that Myron Holder's shame was Homer Wilson's salvation" (160). In reversing the sentimental relation, the narrator questions the equation of fallenness with supplication, and refuses to see such a relationship as natural, stressing
the objectification and extreme inequality in power involved in it. Homer's vision of freedom for Myron, his act of "free[ing] her from the shackles of shame" effectively reduces her autonomous subjecthood. He does not recognize that in imagining himself as rescuer, he further reifies Myron's victim status and gathers to himself the self-justifying attributes of agency and power. While giving Homer credit for the generosity of his impulses, the narrative nonetheless identifies their unintended assault on Myron's subjectivity, telling us that Homer "never thought of the woman-soul that strove to justify itself by rigid adherence to those vows that had seemed so sacred" (161). Initially, then, Homer approaches Myron from a position of social and perceived moral superiority, offering her a relationship based on non-symmetrical and unequal exchange. He will offer her relief from suffering through social legitimacy; she in turn, will owe him gratitude. This is the traditional sentimental relation, with Myron the "object of condescending sympathy" (Anderson 1993, 167).

In articulating the insufficiency of Homer's model of rescue, however, the narrator takes pain to distinguish between the social forms through which Homer's generosity is mediated and the unmediated, impulsive and sympathetic movements of his heart, which intuitively recognize the self-conceit involved in his fantastic formulation. This part of him is "inarticulate but existent" and is "not born of self-conceit or paltry self-seeking, but rooted in the knowledge of his own weakness in time of trial" (161). Homer's love for Myron can initially find expression only through a culturally-predetermined narrative. Myron too has visions of rescue through marriage and societal acceptance; she cannot help but also imagine the malignant satisfactions of repaying the women of Jamestown with scorn and humiliation. Fast upon her "evil dream" of retaliation, however, comes a recognition of the self-mutilation involved in the exercise of power (156). In the midst of imagining herself glancing with "contemptuous condemnation" at one of the Jamestown matrons brought low, Myron cannot help but imagine the shame of the woman she would
condemn (156). Her own lessons in humiliation and pain have left her a legacy of empathy even stronger than her own resentment.

Myron rejects the unequal bargain that Homer holds out to her as a form of prostitution. The encounter gives her the opportunity to redefine her fallen status through the same analogy to marriage employed by the narrator at the novel's beginning.

"If I cannot justify myself in my own eyes, I shall go mad. To do so, I must indeed remain as I am. I must act as though I were in very truth his wife. What does a wife do for her husband? Give up all? Have not I? Suffer? I have suffered. Obey him? I have obeyed him. Be true to him? I have chosen him before myself. Trust him? I have. I have trusted and waited. I will wait to the end." (192)

Here again, the boundaries between erotic desire and selfless generosity are blurred, allowing Myron to assert a degree of autonomy that relies upon, but is not absolutely contained by, the ideology of feminine chastity within marriage. Indeed, Myron's self-definition is complicated and enriched by a certain enabling illogicality. Marriage, she argues, does not gain its real power through institutional sanction. Rather, it is the keeping of loving vows by two people that makes a marriage. Homer's response is predictable: the vows of one of the parties have been shown to be completely false; thus the "marriage" is nullified. Although Myron acknowledges that her lover has been unfaithful, she will nevertheless remain true to her own word. The narrative even suggests that this vow of Myron's was unspoken, making even more internalized the moral sanction Myron is elaborating. In her account, Myron is faithful not so much to the man as to her own (unspoken) vow—to an ideal of integrity that forms the basis for self-constitution. Thus although Myron employs the traditional rhetoric of women's disappearance in marriage to justify her actions, she uses it to claim an entirely independent moral selfhood.

To add another layer of complexity, Myron's explanation of her vow is not only a statement of allegiance to her own word, but also a justification of her desire. At first,
Myron's words appear to assert the feminine ideal of self-sacrifice for love: "I believed his promise under the sky . . . was as true and binding as mine when I said I would be silent and do all he wished me to," she tells Homer (189). The coordinating conjunction joining the references to "be[ing] silent" and "do[ing] all he wished" is ambiguous; it could be read as relating the two actions—keeping silent is part of fulfilling her promise—or it might refer to two distinct actions. Certainly the phrase "do[ing] all he wished" suggests more than silence and passive waiting on Myron's part; it suggests her sexual giving of herself and thus complements the paradigm of selfless generosity so common in narratives of fallen women. But a few sentences later, Myron refers to the sexual act in terms that suggest a much more active desire on her part: "[h]e told me the stars were truer witnesses than men. That heaven was nearer there, among the trees, than in the churches; and it did seem near--so near I almost entered in" (189). In this description of union under the stars, Myron makes no mention of shame, folly, or mistaken passion, insisting on the "sacred[ness]" of their mutual pledge and the love-making that consummated it. Thus Myron's narrative joins sexual ecstasy and enduring faith in a pure union that values rather than denigrates sexual pleasure.

Desire and fidelity are linked in the narrative account of Myron's rejection of Homer's proposal. In being faithful to her word, Myron is also faithful to her desire:

She knew that life held no prize high enough to pay for infidelity. There came suddenly athwart the dreary room the mirage of another scene: A wide stretch of sky and water, blended in a far-off blue, a mass of tossing tree-tops, a scent of fresh green ferns and flowering grasses, a swimming sense of light, exhilaration, freedom . . . Homer was speaking. She did not hear his words; his voice was but an obligato to other tones that struck across it. She paid no more heed to Homer's voice than she had done that day to the rustle of the leaves, the whispering of the water far below. (191)
Though a "mirage," the scene is not merely an illusion: its beauty and passion are clearly still significant for Myron. Her memories of desire and its fulfillment, depicted in this passage as a rapturous half-consciousness, are sustaining in themselves, a record of pleasure and erotic gratification that compensates for Myron's present suffering and loneliness. Her memories of her fall are presented not as the descent into bondage Homer dreams of rescuing her from, but rather as a soaring upward and outward.

As a result of Myron's assertion of selfhood and rejection of Homer's condescending proposal, the possibility of another kind of relationship is born, in which both equally acknowledge risk, vulnerability, need, and compassion, and work toward a relationship of reciprocal aid and support. Only when Homer recognizes that he has as much to gain as he has to give, and that the only exchange between them can be a love without material or sexual rewards, can the relationship be reciprocal. Accepting her refusal of his marriage proposal, Homer recognizes his need of Myron: "I was fast getting to be such another as old Haines or Jacob Latshem—all pocket and no heart. But I saw your courage, and it made me think shame of myself. You saved me--I thought to save you" (193). In Homer's representation, each takes turns being the savior for the other. As the two perform equivalent acts of heroism and rescue for each other, the balance of power between them is continually shifting.

Wood develops the relationship between Myron and Homer as approaching the ideal of sympathetic community, involving mutual recognition, unselfish love, and heart-to-heart communication. Their relationship is always shifting and adjusting, never static or hierarchized. The acts of sympathy Myron and Homer perform are not end-oriented, existing outside of clearly-defined social relations and expectations. Their conversations and walks together are mutually sustaining and healing; they feel intense pleasure in knowing and being known by the other. One sultry summer evening, Homer comes to

---

26 Philip Hardman fails to win Myron when he could have her precisely because he fails to know her, to see into her heart, and to recognize the "purity" and "strength" of her "womanhood" (303). He cannot know love and therefore he cannot truly know her. The narrative laments human failure to heed the many lessons of love, for thus "so few of us know each other face to face" (304).
Myron's house to repeat his request that they marry, and Myron nearly yields; on this night she is tempted not by her need to give her child a name or to escape social humiliation, but by sexual desire itself. On this night, Homer rescues her as he has wanted to: his recognition of Myron's personhood and desire for integrity enable him to resist his own desires when she is at her most vulnerable. The scene between the two of them describes an intuitive, sympathetic understanding more immediate and direct than words. In response to the "broken syllables" of Myron's appeal, Homer "uttered a passionate word or two of comprehension, offered an incoherent pledge of aid--comfort--approval, and then, stumbling out of the door, hastened away" (228). Homer finds that his love for Myron, in causing him to attempt to see through her eyes, has made him "very uncertain and humble about his own judgement" (238). His perceptions of her moods and emotions have become "sharpened . . . by pain and love" (238). Later on, Myron worries about the effect of her absolute refusal on Homer; she "felt a deep tenderness spring within her heart for Homer, and sought to show him in every way that he was her only friend and that she trusted him" (233). The narrative emphasizes the mutuality of their sympathy.

"Averaged down to a commonplace uniformity":27 Degeneration

Up to this point in my analysis of the novel, I have described Wood's project as a radical and fundamental challenge to dominant Victorian conceptions of morality, selfhood, and social relationships. The novel dismantles conventional social morality by emphasizing the self-constituting function of moral censure, and establishes non-hierarchical sympathy as the basis of a just society. But as I suggested at the beginning of my discussion, it is also necessary to examine carefully the grounds from which the novel launches its challenge. Ultimately, the novel cannot maintain its equation of pleasure, sexuality, and selfhood within the discursive terms it has set itself; for, in reversing rather than dismantling the Victorian discourse of fallenness, it continues to rely on an understanding of self-control as

27 The Untempered Wind 93.
the key to self-definition; Wood's redefinition of purity ends up mandating its own project of exclusionary classification that is as punitive and ethically problematic as the one it opposes. The extraordinary emphasis on self-regulation explains why the novel contradicts itself in its description of the mutual temptation of Myron and Holder. The scene describing the night of their greatest longing for one another reverses the narrative's earlier vindications of desire by re-animating the very distinctions—between love and passion, selfhood and loss of self, spirit and body—that it had earlier collapsed. On this night, Homer finds not the devoted mother nor the faithful wife but the desiring woman. Myron's momentary surrender to passion is figured as demonic, for she is a "spectre Demon ... the Devil of her own passion" (229). On this night of passion, she is a literally fallen woman, "prone upon a bare floor, sobbing and wrestling with the evil of her own nature, with hard-wrought hands half-outstretched to him--half-withdrawn, to cover her shamed eyes" (228). To conquer the wilderness within her, manifest in wild hair "blown across her flushed cheeks, wild eyes and parted lips" (230), Myron escapes into the night and into nature to "outwear her passion by her patience" (231). Homer, in a parallel act of renunciation and self-control, must "overcome his passion with his love" (228). It is almost as if the narrative must enact its own version of a fall before rescuing Myron from it.

At issue here are key concepts of virtue, identity, and community. As Anderson has demonstrated, fallenness in Victorian discourse was consistently associated with attenuated agency, absolute determinism, and loss of self control. Correspondingly, moral virtue was defined not mainly as the absence of (sexual or other) taint, but in terms of "self-control, freedom, and self-consistency" (1993, 36). In refusing the downward-path trajectory assigned to her by the village women and in constructing her own internal moral standard, Myron achieves a degree of self-determination. But as if to compensate for its radicalism, the narrative grants her this autonomy by displacing onto the other villagers all of those aspects of attenuated agency traditionally associated with the fallen woman herself.
In a key reversal by the narrative, the downward-path trajectory applies not to the shamed woman but to her decaying community. It is the Jamestown villagers who are shown to be determined--determined by the laws of heredity, by their physical and sexual appetites, and by their overwhelming need for a social scapegoat. In closing themselves off to sympathy, the residents of Jamestown are seen to have given themselves up to far less benign determining forces, to be far more completely under the sway of dangerous passions than the woman they condemn. The discourse of determination structures Wood's description of the inhabitants of Jamestown, who, we are told "had stagnated year after year, generation after generation, marrying and intermarrying" (93). In the description of the loss of individuality of Jamestown's residents, biological and cultural determinants become indistinguishable: socioeconomic environment and genetic inheritance mutually reinforce one another, for Jamestown's people are "descendants of the same families, subjected to the same mental influences, the same conditions of life, the same climate, the same religion" (93). Here, "Jamestown" comes to stand for a set of interlocking physical, biological, and cultural forces--a massively determining totality. Whereas Myron achieves a coherent identity through her suffering and her allegiance to an ideal of love and loyalty beyond the self, the villagers of Jamestown are both self-consumed and vampirically predatory. This community that suppresses human bonds is doomed to a literal erasure of individual identity and character.

The inhumanity of the people of Jamestown is figured in their physical indistinctness from one another. Lack of sympathy--the failure to recognize and care for one another properly--is symbolized by a kind of facelessness, a literal loss of identity. It is as if the practice of psychological inhumanity were manifested in a physical deterioration into a faceless, sickly, uniform viciousness: the negation of humanity practiced by the people of Jamestown against Myron is reversed by the narrative: "[t]he Jamestown people of Myron Holder's day bore a strange resemblance to one another... every prominent or individualized feature of mind and body had been obliterated and averaged down to a
commonplace uniformity" (93). Furthermore, Jamestown people not only cannot be
distinguished from one another but also their very features have become indistinct, with
"the nostrils merging into the cheeks, the chins into the necks, the pale lips into the dull-colored faces, with no clear line of demarcation, no pure curve to define form" (93). Only
Myron's identity and features are protected. Even a stranger to the village, Philip
Hardman, can tell at once that Myron is "no native of the village. The purely cut, martyr
face; the broad brow, sensitive lips, and cameo-like nostrils were too utterly unlike the
other faces in the church to be for one moment associated with them" (266). In addition,
the novel is careful to delineate Myron's moral and physiological heritage, informing us
that she "had come of no slavish race of down-trodden serfs. She had sprung from a long
line of sturdy English forbears, lowly indeed, but free and bold" (36-37). The villagers'
loss of a distinct identity means that they have become literally unable to be recognized or to
recognize one another; they cannot participate in sympathetic human community. Their
featurelessness may also be a prefiguration of the facelessness of modern industrial society,
to which the narrative explicitly gestures.

Here, physical degeneration is a metaphor for spiritual decay; at the same time, this
discourse of racial impurity is evoked so insistently as itself to take on the status of subject.
In describing the physical deterioration of the Jamestown villagers, Wood shows her
familiarity with fin de siècle theories of degeneration. Although the Darwinian theory of
evolution was at first understood to guarantee the survival of the fittest—the development of
simple into more complex forms, this model began to be questioned and extended by some
of Darwin's followers, who contended that degeneration was as strong a possibility as
progress in the evolutionary schema (Pykett 1995, 25).28 Godard argues that the novel
reads the body of Myron Holder, but it is at least as concerned with the bodies of the
villagers, with their physical weakness, sexual corruption, and mental decay. Jamestown
is not only a cruel town of "narrowness and prejudice" but also a physically and mentally

28 See Pykett for a discussion of the "avalanche of books, pamphlets, and articles" on degeneration
published during the last two decades of the century (1995, 29).
unhealthy community. Valverde explains that the term degeneration, which originally signified nerve tissue decay "was in the 1880s and 1890s appropriated to refer to wider social processes of decadence and decay" (1992, 13). The vagueness of the term gave it a certain flexibility evident in Wood's description of Jamestown, for it is not clear whether the community of Jamestown is imperilled because of an infecting moral corruption, because of inbreeding and the consequent physical weakness, or because of encroaching industrialization. All three causes, though hardly complementary, seem to co-exist alongside each other and even to support one another. For example, Bing White is not only spiritually corrupt but also physically deformed, being "no larger than a child of twelve" although he is sixteen or seventeen, and possessing "an ill-conditioned, withered, hard little figure" (128). Similarly, mental deformity is common in the village, for "[t]here appeared in Jamestown families every now and then an imbecile, presenting, as in a terrible composite picture, the mental and moral weaknesses of his related ancestors" (94). In the narrative's insistence on the interrelatedness of physical weakness, moral sterility, and community decay, Jamestown becomes a metaphor for the nation: dangerously weak, vulnerable to deterioration, and in need of protection. As Valverde observes "[t]he nation . . . is, in the discourse of national degeneration, seen as rather fragile and as subject to a quasi-physical process of decay that can only be halted if the individuals, the cells of the body politic, take control over their innermost essence or self" (1991, 28). In Jamestown, inward health leaves a record on the body; this individual body constitutes and parallels the national body. And thus the story of one woman's regeneration is balanced by a cautionary tale about social degeneration.

If Myron's spiritual ascent is directly counterpointed by the community's moral and physical descent, the two stories are also linked through the emphasis on sexuality. Insistently, the sickness of Jamestown's inhabitants is correlated with various unnatural sexualities. Myron's active and transgressive sexuality is excused--perhaps even celebrated--because fears of immoral and depraved sexuality are displaced from the fallen
woman onto the residents of Jamestown, who are shown to be motivated by variously immoral, sterile, and inappropriately-directed sexualities. Bing White's depravity, for instance, is described in terms of a range of sexual perversions, including masturbation—the secret sin for the Victorians—masochistic self-mutilation, blood fantasies, and sadistic torture. We are told that Bing has a mind "perverted by morbid and horrible cravings" (96). Fascinated by the arrowheads and bullets that he finds in Jamestown's fields, Bing retreats to an attic space in his father's house to fondle these relics of conflict, "turning his many specimens over and over with lingering, affectionate touches" and indulging in "strange fancies" (96, 97). The intensely erotic charge of his fascination with imagined and actual pain is made clear in the following passage, which describes Bing in his secret, enclosed space, drawing his own blood with one of his prized arrowheads:

At the pain he would drop the flint, but at the crimson drops which showed its bite he would gaze hungrily, delightedly, tracing them out in tiny red lines upon the white flesh of his meagre arm until the last vestige had disappeared; and then he would start and tremble, his fingers twitching strangely, his eyes peering here and there through the dusky perspective of his refuge, as if hoping to see some blur of the crimson fluid he loved. Then he would kiss the vicious arrowhead, and fondle it, until, hearing his mother's call, he would lay it down gently and flee across the joists, surefooted and nimble, to the trap-door. (98)

Here all of the trappings of illicit sexuality—secrecy, darkness, compulsion, self-pleasing, fetish-objects, and polymorphous perversity—come together to describe a depravity so profound as to place Myron Holder's fall in perspective. Bing's perversity is so intense as to encompass all of the practices on the continuum of proscribed pleasures. Although he enjoys drawing his own blood, for example, he dreams of torturing others,

29 The suggestion of masturbation makes Bing not only a symbol of immorality but also its author, for masturbation, as Mitchinson points out, was thought by social purity activists to have "horrendous results on subsequent generations" (1979, 163).
and has already begun a series of sadistic experiments on animals, such that "[i]nexplicable
cases of maimed and killed animals attested his devotion to the gratification of his curiosity" (99). Whereas before the narrative voice had, through irony and ambiguity, distanced itself from the censorious judgement of the community on Myron, now it clearly aligns itself with moral authority in informing us of Bing's nauseating actions, which are "horrible to relate, sickening to contemplate" (100).

Similarly, the cruel energies of Jamestown's women are presented as explicitly or implicitly sexual in nature. If Bing's sexual titillation through inflicting pain on innocent creatures is depicted as an aspect of a thwarted and inverted sexuality, similarly the bond between the leading matrons of Jamestown society and their common victim, Myron, is a source of erotic gratification that the novel condemns: "[t]here was a strange and horrible parallel between [Bing's] nature and the nature of the women who tortured so ceaselessly the woman whom fate had made their victim" (100). In their pleasure at watching Myron, speculating about her child's father, and planning ways to increase her suffering, the women of Jamestown exhibit a sublimated version of the very aggressive female sexuality that the narrative's depiction of Myron contests. Female monstrosity is displaced from reproductive heterosexuality onto non-reproductive and selfish desire. Carnality is rewritten as cruelty. For example, the following description of Myron's grandmother and Mrs. Deans in conference over the means of depriving Myron and her child of their burial plots emphasizes the equation of cruelty and lust:

There was something grotesque in these two women: their souls grimed with the dust of their own sins, their hearts hardened beneath a crust of their own self-seeking lusts, their bodies calloused by the world, defiled by their own passions, fearing contamination, living or dead, from too near vicinity to that child. (78-79)
This passage emphasizes not only that the relentlessness of the women's cruelty is paralleled by the monstrous longevity of their sexual desires but also that their cruel acts are the means of sexual satisfaction.

In the same way, Mr. and Mrs. Deans achieve a clearly sexual enjoyment from their joint contemplation of cruelty. Remembering how they exploited the local tavern keeper's generosity in order to have him fined for selling liquor unlawfully, the two share spoonfuls of sarsaparilla and enjoy their memories in silence; the narrative tells us that they have "partaken of the closest communion they knew" (70). Cruelty substitutes for sexuality as the unalterable, erotic bond between this pair. Mrs. Deans is depicted as a figure of enormous sexual energies, which she directs into schemes for other women's suffering, shown in the narrative's insistence on the force of desire in her actions, as when she hopes to prove that Homer, son of her friend Marion Wilson, is the father of Myron's child: "[g]reater than her desire to see her lifelong friend disgraced by the proof of her son's fault-greater than her desire to vindicate her own superior cunning--greater even than her desire to berate Myron Holder, was her determination to make Myron Holder suffer" (109-110). It is as if Wood has taken all of the characteristics of the fallen woman cited in censorious discourses of fallenness—loss of moral sense, perversion of sexual appetite, a cynical disbelief in innocence, and a cunning desire to corrupt others—and made them the qualities of the upstanding citizens of Jamestown. Ironically, then, the one woman scapegoated by the town for her lack of sexual morality is in fact the one woman depicted as winning the battle for self-control. Everyone else has given in to a voluptuous, sublimated eroticism.

The model of (non)community presented in the novel is one of vampirism; even the children are grotesquely vampiric; not only Bing but all of the Jamestown children practice the self-inflicted "wolf-bite," fashioning their own limbs with marks of savagery and blood-lust (164). Jamestown feeds off the one source of strength—moral and physical—within its midst and seeks suicidally to destroy its own mainstay. In its emphasis on Jamestown's need for new blood and its inability to sustain itself physically for very much
longer, the novel taps into eugenic discourses on the promotion of a healthy race, which believed that a balanced mixture of northern races would profitably contribute to a healthy, moral, industrious, and versatile Canadian race. Following this eugenic line of reasoning, Myron's sexuality is not a forgiveable, natural human impulse, but an essential cornerstone of social life. Her fecundity and health are resources that the village people, immured in their own tragic destinies, fail to embrace. After Myron leaves Jamestown, retribution and further decay fall on the townspeople.

Thus it is clear that to speak of the decayed physical forms of the people of Jamestown only as metaphors for their spiritual corruption is incomplete. It is incomplete for a number of reasons, most obviously because Victorian popular scientific thought posited a direct link between physiological and mental or emotional qualities. As Finch notes, the nineteenth century saw the emergence of a method of psychological diagnosis that believed in "the possibility of reading the psyche of an individual through the face" (1993, 41). Within such a discourse, the face is a record of unnatural acts and immoral thoughts. An 1893 article entitled "A Study in Criminology" by W. S. Blackstock in The Canadian Magazine links anti-social behavior to physiology, correlating crime and depravity with "certain physical types of humanity" (526). The signs of mental and moral imbalance, Blackstock suggests, reveal themselves to "men of observation" who know that they can "never expect to find the mind of a Shakespeare, a Locke, or a Bacon pent up in a contracted skull and compressed brain" (526). In Blackstock's description of physical signs, the body is not only the index of the inner mental faculties but also the source of mental disease, for "[i]nsanity is no longer regarded as, primarily, a disease of the mind. It is in the malformation of the body, or in its diseased condition, that the root of this terrible malady is to be found" (526). Blackstock suggests that bodies tell the story of one's internal organization. His assertions about the roots of mental disease, while appearing on the one hand to take away the stigma of such diseases by formulating physical causes, actually extend the definition of degeneration to the entire body, confidently positing a one-
to-one correspondence between physical form and mental capacity, paralleled in Wood's
description of Jamestown's inhabitants.

Although Blackstock is interested in the correlation between physical organization
and mental and moral capacity (frequently conflated in Victorian discourses, as in the
reference to "moral insanity"), his interest is not based only in the scientific pleasure of
classification and detection, on reading the body as an end in itself. On the contrary,
Blackstock's concern is with the health of the race as a whole. For the body is not only the
sign and cause of mental/moral dysfunction but also its carrier. Using the Lamarckian
model of acquired characteristics, Blackstock warns of how intemperate living habits in
parents produce "a debased offspring" (528). According to this understanding of the body,
the sins of the father and mother--alcoholism, sexual indulgence or perversity, and general
immorality--are visited upon their children's bodies and minds, just as Bing White is the
physical and moral embodiment of his ancestors' cruelties and "secret sins." In speaking
of "intemperance," Blackstock is not referring only to the ingestion of alcoholic substances.
Rather, a whole range of thoughts, emotions, fantasies, and sexual acts falls into his wide
classification: "[w]hatsoever inflames the blood, undermines the health, weakens the
constitution, enfeebles the will, and robs the individual of self-control, not only tends to
criminality in the persons who indulge in it, but also in their offspring yet unborn" (528).
Sin itself--the corruption of the human heart--can be passed on to one's children, for, as
Blackstock warns, "there are forms of secret sin which touch even more directly the
fountain of life than this [intemperance] does, and that contribute even more powerfully
toward the production of an imbecile, vicious, criminal, or insane offspring" (528). As
Valverde comments of the connection between individual sexual sin and racial strength,
"the loss of individual self-control over sexuality was perceived to have far-reaching
consequences even if nobody ever knew about it " (1991, 21 emphasis in original).

Although it is tempting to dismiss Blackstock's discussion as the deranged wanderings of a

30 See, for example, "The Cure of Moral Insanity" (1882) by J. L. F., which refers to sexual crimes as a
species of such a hybrid disorder.
mind overly concerned with the consequences of sin, his understanding of heredity—in which living habits become characteristics capable of being passed on to one's children—was widely held during the period that Wood wrote, and I suggest that the range of concerns about the race and reproduction that Blackstock evokes provides a crucial context for understanding Wood's representational strategies in *The Untempered Wind*. In representing the sickness of Jamestown as physical as well as moral and spiritual, Wood directs us to consider this community in the context of prevalent discourses on heredity and the race; such a consideration casts her vindication of Myron Holder in a quite different light.

In choosing to employ the discourse of racial degeneration to represent a fallen community, Wood evokes a potent set of ideas about race, reproduction, and the role of women in nation building. At this point in my discussion, I would like to take a significant detour through late-Victorian discourses on racial purity, especially those addressing the significance of motherhood, in order to elucidate the complex range of associations operating behind Wood's appropriation of the language of degeneration. I am suggesting through this detour that what might appear to a modern reader to be random, Gothic references to physical and spiritual deformity had a well-established context in late-Victorian Canada, and that Wood's evocation of this context completely changes the nature of the social reform argument I have traced in her novel. Race degeneration had become a widely-accepted and seemingly tangible concern for Canadians of the fin de siècle. According to Angus McLaren, "the term 'race' was casually employed by social commentators of every stripe and most assumed that the race could and should be 'improved'" (1990, 7). Eugenicists saw hereditary and biological connections between mental or physical subnormality and delinquency, crime, immorality, intemperance, unemployment, and venereal disease. Tending in their studies to exaggerate the fertility of those they classed as mentally and physically defective, eugenicists thought that the
control--and in many cases, the halting--of reproduction of the unfit was imperative.\textsuperscript{31} Racist fears about the effects of immigration on Canada's ethnic composition, moral distress about the possible meanings for the traditional family of the woman's rights movement, and nationalist anxieties about Canada's international and domestic status all reinforced one another and were organized by this central phenomenon. Access to contraception and to abortion potentially undermined patriarchal assertions of women's proper place in the home, their biological and spiritual responsibility to mother children. A great deal of the opposition to women's calls for increased educational and work opportunities arose from fears that access to the outside world meant that middle-class, white women were choosing not to marry or were having fewer children, while the fertile lower classes continued to produce enormous families. By the 1890s, concerns had also increased about the perceived invasion of Canada by non-white races, also known for their fertility. Thus, a complex interweaving of ideas about class, gender, race, and nation-building underlay what, by the 1890's, had become one of Victorian Canada's touchstone moral panics. The new science of eugenics, in positing a direct link between parents' and children's physical and moral health, provided a scientific basis for these concerns.

These eugenic ideas had widespread authority in Canada in the 1890s.\textsuperscript{32} The renewal and betterment of the race provided the central platform of Canada's influential social purity movement, dedicated to the moral and social regeneration of Canadian society. The WCTU, one of the foremost feminist organizations in the country, set up a department of Health and Heredity that disseminated ideas about racial health among Canadian women. Using, as they did, the rhetoric of mothering to justify their reforming activism, WCTU

\textsuperscript{31} McLaren lists some of the leading methods for ensuring such reproductive control: "restriction of marriage to those holding certificates of health, segregation of the unfit on state farms where the sexes would be separated, limitation of some subnormal families by doctors' discreet provision of birth control information, and finally, sterilization of the defective" (1990, 8).

\textsuperscript{32} As McLaren points out, much of the original impetus to eugenics was given by medical practitioners, who used the science as a way of boosting their own professional status and legitimizing doctors' control over aspects of social policy. In turn, public health officials, immigration policy-makers, and social planners turned increasingly to eugenics to find a scientific solution for the social problems associated with industrialization, burgeoning urban populations, and massive foreign immigration.
women found the emphasis on heredity in eugenics thought to be a particularly apt and powerful focal point for their social purity work. Campaigns against alcohol, tobacco, red meat, corsets, fatty or spicy foods, and caffeine were all parts of the effort to combat the degeneration of the race and to ensure that strong, healthy children were born to Canadian mothers. Eugenicists' emphasis on the national importance of reproduction and early influences in childhood seemed to provide feminists with a scientific basis for their struggle to improve the lives of women and children. And it must have been exhilarating to have felt so much at the center of national life.

As Valverde points out, the close connection between reproduction and national and imperial politics should not be underestimated: "[w]omen did not merely have babies: they reproduced 'the race.' Women did not merely have just enough babies or too much sex: through their childbearing they either helped or hindered the forward march of (Anglo-Saxon) civilization" (1992, 4). Feminists claimed for women a powerful role in the work of national consolidation. In her "Woman in Nation-Building," Parker argued that the physical, moral, and intellectual character of Canada's future citizens lay almost entirely in the hands of women: "[w]hether we shall be a strong, pure, intellectual people depends most of all upon our women, and their just apprehension of all the possibilities attaching to the holy office of motherhood" (1890, 466). Parker urged women to devote their lives to "reconstructing the social life of the nation," which they could do through a literal and a metaphorical extension of their domestic duties, scouring the national body and the social landscape with that most powerful "cleansing element, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (459). On this analogy, women were both the spiritual custodians of the nation and the literal mothers and molders of moral, healthy sons.

Similarly, Charles Mair's article on "The New Canada" in the Canadian Monthly (1875) pinpoints motherhood as one of the key indicators of national strength; Mair points to the depravity of American womanhood as a contrast and a warning to all Canadians.

---

33 See Valverde 1991, 58-61 for a fuller discussion of these various reform movements.
about the dangers of material decadence and insufficient attention to one's duty to the race. Without naming them—and yet bringing them before the reader's mind forcefully through suggestion and inference—Mair singles out abortion and contraception as the terrible signs of a "foul ulcer" festering beneath other social and political ills, forming "a prevalent and extending vice, which is rapidly converting the human economy of the Republic into a vast hortus siccus of pruriency and disease" (162). Mair's employment of the language of political economy reflects a general acceptance of the equation between material and human resources in the model of the nation. No resource was more precious than women's reproductive power, always linked to their moral purity. To refuse to have children was not only to fail in a national duty but also to do a serious harm to oneself. According to Mair, evidence of the widespread practice of abuses against nature can be found in the many indecent advertisements fouling the pages of American newspapers as well as in the visible proof of the small families of American women (163). While childlessness among American women has long been explained to be a result of "the delicacy and tenderness of their constitution," Mair reveals such physical weakness to be an effect rather than a cause of childlessness.

Mair traces this spreading cancer of childlessness to the unwholesome pursuit of material pleasure, the "universal desire for a life of luxury and self-indulgence" that has "infected the otherwise amiable and really clever women of America" (162). For Mair, the moral and physical deterioration of American womanhood is a direct result of the refusal to bear children. So preoccupied with thoughts of maternity is Mair that a confused language of pregnancy and its termination structures his description of contraception's injurious spiritual and physical consequences; the practice, he informs us, is "undermining the health of American women everywhere, destroying their moral sense and delicacy, and swelling the annals of criminal miscarriage to monstrous and incredible bulk" (163).

The consequences of such a "terribly unwomanly crime" are a life of "hopeless physical suffering, self-contempt, and despair" (163). But Mair is even more concerned
about the political consequences, the fact that "the reins of government are slowly but surely slipping from the hands of the Anglo-American" with the result that the very future of America is in doubt, menaced by "alien antipathetic and reproductive races, one of which, perhaps, in the distant future, will write in blood the word 'supremacy'" (163). Although Mair's language refers to the material realities of conquest and domination, it also extends the metaphorical framework his logic relies upon. For Mair, supremacy is indeed "written in blood," in a complex yet clearly legible signature of moral and physiological characters. In order not to follow the precipitous decline begun by the selfish and pleasure-seeking women of the United States, Canadian women must remain true to their destiny as the mothers of a strong, moral country, itself gendered masculine.34

The emphasis on healthy, genteel white women's duty to themselves and to their race had profound consequences for women's reproductive choice and for socially-sanctioned expressions of femininity. While promoting sterilization for the unfit, one prominent eugenicist could not condone birth control for intelligent (white) women, calling such measures "repugnant to a member of the medical profession whose work and whose desire is to promote health and happiness" (Helen MacMurchy qtd. in McLaren 1990, 45). Constance Backhouse has noted that "the nineteenth century witnessed a rapid expansion in the laws prohibiting fertility control" (1991, 166). Whereas women in the early part of the century had a certain limited access to abortion procedures, political and medical opposition to abortion rapidly increased in the second half of the decade, until by the end of the century all forms of abortion were outlawed. The final decade of the century was also the period of increasing regulation of all aspects of women's reproductive lives. "[w]ith the passage of the Criminal Code in 1892 the sale, distribution, and advertisement of contraceptives were also banned" (166)

Wood's denunciation of the corrupt community of Jamestown is powerful, then, precisely because it taps into cultural narratives about national strength, racial purity, and

34 Mair refers to Canada as "standing], like a youth upon the threshold of his life, clear-eyed, clear-headed, muscular, and strong" (163).
moral health that were highly familiar to Canadians from all points on the political spectrum. Arguments appealing to the future of the Canadian race were mobilized in discursive fields as diverse as economics, medicine, literary criticism, and political science. In these discourses, anything that contributed to bodily and national degeneration, including sexual vice, was unpatriotic. In the context of the imminent demise of the Jamestown population, Myron Holder's passionate, suffering motherhood becomes its own defense. The village of Jamestown is the arena where the battle of the race is being carried out. Wood's criticism of the punitiveness of the villagers gains its rhetorical power because their cruelty is paralleled with racial weakness and unnatural sexuality. Reproductive heterosexuality is linked with natural sympathy while unnatural, non-reproductive sexualities are linked with non-community.

The novel appeals to the self-sacrifice of motherhood to justify Myron's fall and as a solution to the physical and moral degeneration afflicting Jamestown. The narrative refers to the bond between mother and child as both sacred and spiritually and culturally regenerative: listening at Myron's bedroom door for evidence of further sin, Ann Lemon hears only "the cadence of the breathing of mother and child--a music sweet to the old gods long ago, they say, and sacred still to us, the incense of love's devotion and sacrifice of suffering" (215). Not only is this community in dire spiritual need of the strength, humility, and compassion that Myron possesses but it is also, literally, in need of her blood.

An understanding of the novel's concern with elaborating a model of a healthy community helps us better to understand the conflicts, noted by Godard, in its portrayal of the fallen woman. Although Wood is certainly engaged in critiquing, undermining, and rewriting the idea of womanly purity, her very critique is indebted to notions of cultural and racial purity at work in larger nationalist discourses. In her novel, anxieties about female sexual corruption are displaced onto the national body, which is itself seen as succumbing to a host of sexual, social, and physical perversions. Such a nationalist discourse has
consequences as troubling for Canadian women as the definitions of womanhood Wood opposes. Within this nationalist discourse, women are resources, the mothers of the race responsible for the future of Canada; they are purified through the suffering of motherhood if they embrace it—as Myron does—as their destiny. Their shared sexual suffering equips them to be the backbone of sympathetic community and to guide others on the path toward purity.

Wood was certainly not alone in linking her feminist social critique with a conservative ideology of reproductive politics. Rather, her novel fits into a tradition of writing in the 1890s about the New Woman, feminism, and female sexuality. Lovell points out that much of the English feminist fiction of the period centers on the "victim of matrimony" (1987, 124). Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), for example, explores the tragic effects of male debauchery and women's compulsory sexual ignorance in her depiction of the effects of syphilis on an unfortunate young mother and her child. The novel makes its call for chastity in men and openness about sexuality for women on the basis of fears about race degeneration and the imperilled future of the middle-class home. Similarly, Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895), although ostensibly concerned with the hypocrisy of social respectability, ultimately displaces its analysis of social forces onto the sexualized body of its heroine, Herminia Barton. It is worth considering Allen's novel in some detail here because he was also, technically at least, a Canadian, and his scandalous novel provides an interesting counterpoint to Wood's.35 *The Woman Who Did* is the story of Herminia Barton, a beautiful, highly-educated New Woman who deliberately sacrifices social respectability in a protest against the tyranny of marriage. She enters into a free union with her lover, Alan Merrick, eventually bearing his child, a daughter, and raising her alone after his death. In the novel's vision of freedom, the sum of what any woman or man can do for the woman's rights cause concerns freedom in sexual choice. Although both Allen and his character Herminia advocate the overthrow of "the evil growth

---

35 For an overview of the outraged reception of the novel, see Sarah Wintle's Introduction (1995).
of man's supremacy," neither imagines doing anything to provoke structural changes in society, and Allen's analysis of social forces does not extend to an examination of how the imbalance of power between men and women might impede the free union he advocates.

The reason for Allen's disinclination to investigate the material causes of women's oppression is not far to seek. As his characterization of Herminia makes clear, Allen's feminism rests on a profoundly conservative understanding of woman's natural purpose and place in society—her role as mother and helpmate of man. In Allen's view, social conventions do not construct femininity but rather obscure it. The text frequently asserts the naturalness of female submission and male dominance, insisting that "deep down in the very roots of the idea of sex we come on the prime antithesis—the male, active and aggressive; the female, sedentary, passive, and receptive" (65). This arrangement, the text frequently reiterates, "must be always so" (65).

Despite her unconventional education and beliefs, Herminia fully accepts this arrangement. Her analysis of women's enslavement at men's hands has not lessened her conviction that women are men's destined mates. Although she has a plan for the structural reformation of modern society, Herminia envisions that men, "who do the hard work of the world," will bring it about: she imagines a world in which women will be secured "complete independence" to carry on their natural function (59). This understanding of the essential relation between the sexes is crucial to Allen's portrayal of Herminia. For Allen hastens to assure the reader that, although a reformer, Herminia's aspirations for women's emancipation fall clearly within the novel's obsessively-reiterated boundaries of true womanhood:

Herminia was far removed indeed from that blatant and decadent sect of 'advanced women' who talk as though motherhood were a disgrace and a burden, instead of being, as it is, the full realization of woman's faculties, the natural outlet for woman's wealth of emotion... Widowed as she was, she still pitied the unhappy beings doomed to the cramped life and
dwarfed heart of the old maid; pitied them as sincerely as she despised those unhealthy souls who would make of celibacy, wedded or unwedded, a sort of anti-natural religion for women. (94)

The intensity of feeling in this passage is inconsistent with the clear-souled, gentle, and compassionate Herminia Allen has outlined; it is clearly the author's own repugnance being articulated. Although women's choice is supposedly paramount in Allen's vision of an ideal order, her choice cannot exclude motherhood and heterosexual relations. As the above passage makes clear, The Woman Who Did is just as eager to mark out a sphere of unnatural and unhealthy reform as it is to criticize intolerance.

From a perspective that would understand nineteenth-century discourses as uniformly repressive of women's bodies and sexualities, The Untempered Wind can be read as a liberatory text intended to initiate the entry of female sexual desire into discourse. Although I would argue that Wood's novel is, to some extent, involved in this task of liberation, the novel also has a regulatory function. It is perhaps worth pausing, again, to reflect on the strategy my own narrative has employed in this chapter. As in my reading of Machar's writing, I introduce Wood's novel in terms of its resistance to confining discourses about women and end by emphasizing its reinscription of another set of confining discourses. I set up the author as a radical reformer only to unmask her as an anxious, defensive conservative with a rather prurient fascination with deformed bodies and morbid sexual perversions. Although it may be that this is the story my chapter tells, I hope it is clear that my point has been not to blame Wood or to discredit her significant achievement but rather to clarify its location in the discursive formations of her period.

Godard's contention that Myron is, transgressively, both angel and whore needs to be interrogated further. For the novel makes clear that the breaking of a social law can be forgiven if an internalized law is strictly held to; thus Myron becomes the figure not of the transgressive potential of female desire to break the phallic law of the proper, but rather of the self-identity of natural motherhood with propriety. Although she is a transgressor in
one sense, in another she is the ideal self-regulator. In her, sympathy and self-discipline co-exist.

Ultimately, *The Untempered Wind* does not so much interrupt the discourse on purity as modify and metaphysicalize it, making purity an internal property and entrenching it as a moral principle. Myron is vindicated by the narrative not because her fall into sexuality is shown to be no fall at all but because that fall is mitigated by an overarching selflessness and healthy sexuality. Myron embodies the ethical subjectivity and physical strength capable of regenerating the Canadian community at large. Her sexual body is written into discourse, then, as the physical basis of national health and strength.
CHAPTER FOUR

"We Glory in Our Bonds": Disciplining the New Woman in Fytche's Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls

Upon my word, I do not wonder that so many girls go under when men offer them every inducement to do so, and put so many obstacles in the way to prevent their getting on independently of them.

Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls

Godard identifies The Untempered Wind as a novel of the New Woman, but perhaps the genuine New Woman novel in nineteenth-century English Canada is Maria Amelia Fytche's Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls. In this novel, the heroine's suffering is both the vehicle of a sustained critique of women's limited opportunities in a patriarchal world and a conservative warning to women about the consequences of passion and independence. Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls is a very different novel from Wood's The Untempered Wind, but it also traces a woman's fall—in this case into dependency, passion, and the degradation of an illicit relationship. Unlike Myron, Dorothy is not strengthened by her suffering; it nearly destroys her and she must be rescued from it by the man she initially rejected. Despite its acute analysis of the structures of women's powerlessness, Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls is, ultimately, even more conservative in its representation of the needs of the nation and the natural place of women than is The Untempered Wind. Despite the fact that the heroine leaves Canada at the beginning of the novel, never to return, I argue that Kerchiefs is particularly Canadian because of the series of evasions and displacements that it effects in its treatment of the New Woman. In taking its heroine to France, where she meets an irresponsible, aristocratic rake, who ultimately abandons her, the novel critiques male

1 The reference is to Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls 289-90.
cruelty while at the same time organizing culturally-sanctioned discourses of race, nationality, and class to reaffirm Canada's Anglo-Saxon heritage and the necessity of women's submission to a confining gender order. In establishing the Anglo-Saxon, middle-class home as the site of safety and even power for women, the novel projects onto the French rake all of the characteristics of excess, disorder, and danger—characteristics of the New Woman herself—that prompt Dorothy to leave Canada in the first place. In the process, it identifies the source of women's oppression outside of the Anglo-Saxon home, and thus purges Canada of the need for a woman's rights movement.

**Introduction and Context**

The *fin de siècle* was marked by a "series of crises around the issue of gender," crises signalled to a large extent through the label New Woman, which came into the English language in the early 1890s (Pykett 1995, 15). That Fytche should have published a novel about this controversial figure in the year 1895 was certainly timely. Lyn Pykett notes that "1894 was the New Woman's *annus mirabilis* with the staging of Sydney Grundy's play *The New Woman*, the addition of several widely reviewed novels to the growing body of New Woman fiction, and the appearance of a number of articles naming and exploring the phenomenon" (17). The label, almost always capitalized, was and continues to be something of an overdetermined term, signifying sometimes sexual emancipation and the rejection of convention, and sometimes the heightened purity and idealized femininity of moral reformers. Although the idea of elevated purity sits uneasily beside the rejection of convention and sexual freedom, these two very different strains of thought were not entirely incompatible. In Marshall Saunders' *The House of Armour* (1897), for example, the heroine is a mixture of social purity and women's emancipation, refusing to marry and consecrating her life to helping the poor: her suitor's words to her show the conflation of emancipatory and purity discourses: "You're one of the new

---

2 For a history of the New Woman's naming, see Ardis 1990 10-28.
women, you know. "A White life for two," isn't that your motto? Same thorny path of
virtue for men and women'" (291). On the other hand, Lily Dougall's The Madonna of a
Day makes a clear distinction between woman's emancipation and the "holy ideal" of pure
womanhood (1895, 264). The heroine of the novel is transformed, through a remarkable
adventure in the wilds of British Columbia, from a bold, unconventional New Woman who
"drink[s] plenty of wine and smoke[s] cigarettes" to a social purity New Woman who
longs to "do the work that was given [women] to do," namely that of saving men (15,
270). In the process, she will presumably give up cigarettes, drink, and immodesty.3 But
in general, we can say that the New Woman was associated with emancipation from
confinement in the home and financial and emotional dependency on men; the New
Woman's most public causes involved opening up larger fields of education and work for
women, causes linked with the related demographic concern over "odd" or "superfluous"
women who could not marry.4 Although the conjunction of social purity and feminist
ideas undoubtedly limited the radicalism of the women's movement in Canada, in practice it
gave the movement a certain rhetorical agility that was extremely productive in the late
nineteenth century, whatever its legacy to future generations of feminists has been.

Insisting that "[e]very woman, in her heart of hearts, regards a home where she shall reign

---

3 Wandering through the snowy environs of British Columbia, the heroine suddenly feels a revulsion for all
her previous life:

She had striven with pertinacity for what had seemed to her noblest in life, yet now she
saw herself, as a child who with innocent unconscionness has been enjoying a play in a
dirty place, will sometimes suddenly perceive the filthiness of its raiment when it rises to
meet its mother's embrace. (59)

In this passage, the B. C. wilderness is the snow-pure mother leading her daughter back to gender-
appropriate behavior.

4 In her Introduction to the Oxford edition of The Woman Who Did, Wintle chronicles the New Woman's
various literary antecedents:

She was a new version of the fine Victorian fictional heroine who yearned for spiritual
and intellectual distinction; an attenuated literary great-granddaughter of George Eliot's
Dorothea. On the other side, she was descended from the heroines of the sensation novels
with their capacity for melodramatic emotions, women like Mrs. Braddon's Aurora Floyd
with her two husbands and passion for horses. She could be seen as a descendant of the
'girl of the period', the name the Victorian novelist Mrs. Lynn Linton gave, in a much-
quoted article, written in 1868, to self-willed young women who pursued frivolous
pleasures and self-expression at the expense of the conventional social proprieties and
traditional morality. ... She was above all educated, articulate, and modern; she
exemplified the new age that was on its way, and that itself had not yet settled into any
definite shape or structure. (1995, 10)
the queen the happiest lot in life for her," the author of "Higher Education for Exceptional Women" (1884) could yet argue that because all women could not marry, they deserved the opportunity to live a useful life. J.M. Loes' conservative language allows her to argue for radical changes in women's lives. This element of contradiction, in fact, became a distinguishing feature of the New Woman. Duncan wrote that "her conclusions are apt to be paradoxical" (qtd. in Tausky 1980, 31). Thus Fytche was tapping into a well-established literary tradition in making her heroine a woman of contradictory desires and conflicting emotional tendencies: although Dorothy exclaims twice in the novel that "[m]arriage, thank goodness, is not the aim and end of woman's life in this nineteenth century," she also muses about her inability to inspire love rather than merely respect (9, 211-12). Evidence in the novel indicates that such a contradiction affected its author as well, for Fytche seems caught between rejecting and affirming traditional gender ideology.

The author of this novel about feminism and women's subordination was Maria Amelia Fytche, a Maritimes writer about whom little is known. Fytche, who changed her name from Fitch, probably to facilitate publication, never married, and lived with her family in Halifax and St. John. Her father was a physician who had travelled widely in Europe and her mother was descended from a prominent United Empire Loyalist family. Fytche earned money through private teaching with at least one family in St. John. She also lived in England for substantial periods of time. Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls was her first novel, published in 1895 by the Arena Publishing Company of Boston. The novel received some favourable reviews; a Boston periodical, the Arena, called it a "remarkably clever and interesting realistic novel with a purpose" about "the new woman" (qtd. in MacMillan 1980, x). A reviewer in The Week (17 Jan. 1896), while criticizing the novel for "crudeness of thought and wildness of expression" in early chapters, asserted enthusiastically that "Canada will be the better for having this book. Its place was waiting,

---

5 For a more detailed, though necessarily sketchy, biography of Fytche, see MacMillan's "Research in Nineteenth-Century Canadian Women Writers" (1990).
and it is worthy of its place" (188). The novel captures the tensions surrounding Anglo-
Canadian discussions of women's place and national character.

Discussion of the New Woman was heated and ongoing in the Canadian periodical press from the late 1870s through the 1890s even as writers insisted that the "woman question" was not an issue in Canada. In an 1893 Canadian Magazine article entitled "The Canadian Girl," Charlesworth comments that "[W]oman's rights movements make small progress in Canada, because the Canadian woman gets what she wants without let or hindrance. . . . Canadian legislators are quicker to grant privileges to women than Canadian women are to demand them" (188). In an 1895 article entitled "An Estimate of Canadian Women," Stephen Blackburn argues that Canadian women are uninterested in acquiring the vote, for "as a rule they hate politics, and they say they neither understand nor desire to know much of what is passing in that direction" (535). This indifference Blackburn attributes to Canadian women's extraordinary freedoms and privileges: "women with us are so free, so untrammelled, so secure in their personal and property rights that no cause for complaint arises" (575). At the same time, though, Blackburn could not resist a passing attack on the Woman's-Rights Woman--whom he locates in America--that type "who tears passion to tatters and is teary on the old theme of the tyranny of the 'monster,' man" (575). Writers on the Woman Question located women's oppression outside of Canada, in alien cultures and ancient times. Reviewing the social history of women, Logsdail quotes French authors with particular disapproval as evidence of non-Anglo-Saxon contempt for women: "[T]o Diderot, she was only a 'courtesan'; to Montesquieu, 'an attractive child'; to Rousseau, 'an object of pleasure to man'; to Michelet, 'a natural invalid'" (264). The New World, in contrast with the corruption of the Old, is associated with the most recent phase in human progress, for "humanity has now moved forward to an era where wrong and slavery are being displaced, and reason and justice are being

6 Anti-feminist writers in England made similar claims that the New Woman was a reality only in fiction and not in fact, but Canadian comments seem to be unique in their smugly patriotic assertions.
7 For a history of suffrage campaigns by various women's organizations from the 1880s onwards, see Bacchi 1983, 24-143 and Alison Prentice et al., Canadian Women (1988) 142-88.
recognized as the rule of life" (264). In the context of such celebrations/warnings about the absence of the New Woman in Canada, it is perhaps not surprising that Fytche's heroine leaves Canada near the beginning of the novel. And yet, I will argue, the novel is very much about Canada. The narrative of Fytche's heroine's suffering and rescue becomes the site where powerful ideas about Canadianness, feminism, and domesticity are ordered by an ideology of Anglo-Saxon supremacy.

*Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* dramatizes the conflict between a woman's desire for love and her search for independence and fulfilling work, and also emphasizes her economic, social, and sexual vulnerability. The heroine of the novel is Dorothy Pembroke, a New Woman who advocates woman's suffrage and emancipation (7). "The modern girl," she comments, "thinks a workless life a worthless life" (85). At the beginning of the narrative, she is giving up her private boarding-school for girls in an unnamed Canadian city in order to travel to Europe to find a "life work" and a passionate love. Dorothy's emancipation is signalled in her decision to travel alone, for travel was still a distinctly unorthodox undertaking for a single woman. The narrative of travel allowed Fytche to situate her story in the context of the "Jamesian theme of North American innocence exposed to the wiles of wicked Europe" (Kröller 1987, 55). But the narrative also emphasizes those elements in Dorothy's education and character that have prompted her to abandon home for an imagined paradise. Admitting to having been "badly brought up on romantic literature," Dorothy evokes the chivalric ideal in her assertion that her "ideal happiness is to have for [a] lover one who will go through fire and water for my sake" (20). She leaves behind her Harry Alexander, an English-born Canadian, who wishes to marry her. Dorothy rejects his mundanely rational offer of a marriage "of inclination and

---

8 For this reason, even though she travelled with a woman friend, Duncan dedicated to "Mrs. Grundy," her travel narrative entitled *A Social Departure: How Orthodocia and I Went Round the World by Ourselves* (1890). Dougall clearly aimed for shock value when she depicted her New Woman heroine travelling with a woman friend on a train across Canada; like Duncan and Lily Lewis, the two women are journalists beginning a round-the-world adventure.

9 Dorothy's conception, as she describes it, corresponds perfectly to what Leslie Rabine designates the myth of romantic love, "a total love, combining sexuality, emotional intimacy, and self-reflecting intellect" (1985, vii).
knowledge, guided by reason" (8). In Paris, Dorothy is unable to find secure, respectable employment, and becomes vulnerable to the advances of an aristocratic artist, Gaston de Gallerand. Desperately seeking work, Dorothy is surprised and delighted to be hired by the Princess Nesvitsky, a Russian aristocrat seeking a live-in English tutor for her young son. But when Dorothy discovers that the Princess is a wealthy courtesan, her concern for her reputation forces her to move on, leaving her earnings behind her. Increasingly low on money, Dorothy must live at a dreary English Home for women in search of employment. There she meets Alice Jeffreys, a young woman also searching for governessing work, who has become embittered and resigned because of "the life, and the struggle to live" (187). Dorothy's economic situation worsens, and she is forced to turn to Gaston for aid.

After she rejects his suggestion that they become lovers, they marry secretly in England and for a brief time are happy together as they travel throughout Western Europe. But Dorothy's expectations of freedom, love, and companionship are disappointed. After two years, Gaston leaves Dorothy, pregnant, in the Alps and returns to Paris, where he agrees to marry a wealthy Catholic woman to please his mother. Informed of his impending marriage in a flippant note from Gaston, Dorothy rushes to Paris to prevent it. Hysterical at her discovery that their English marriage is not legally binding in Catholic France, Dorothy contemplates killing Gaston before falling seriously ill. Rescued by old friends, she is nursed back to health and recovers her will to live when she sees her child. Harry Alexander, now living on the Isle of Wight, visits her frequently, and at the end of the novel, after Gaston's death, they are planning to work together to set up a philanthropic home for poor women. Although Dorothy remains hesitant about marriage, the novel makes it clear that she will very likely succumb to Harry's gentle persistence. Friendship within a heterosexual union and a generalized philanthropy are the solutions that the novel offers to Dorothy's frustrated dreams of independence and mission.

In this narrative, Dorothy moves from the role of traveller, the one who crosses borders, to that of one whose only longing is to go home. She learns that only by staying
home can she be free. Although Fytche is careful to create a heroine whose longing for usefulness, freedom, and passionate love presents no fundamental challenge to traditional social mores, even her comparatively modest aspirations must be disciplined. Dorothy's suffering brings her back within the bounds of hegemonic femininity. Thus, even while the novel details the mechanisms of women's victimization and protests women's continued exclusion from economic independence, it records and celebrates the process by which she attains an appropriately domestic, bourgeois subjectivity. It both recognizes and deflects the problem of women's economic and sexual oppression by men.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a number of male and female writers described in conflicted terms the fate of the New Woman, whose entry onto the social and literary scene provoked puzzlement, rage, and fear. Writers such as George Gissing, Thomas Hardy, and George Meredith gave the New Woman sympathetic treatment, but also chronicled her taming or expulsion from the conventional world she disrupted. Hardy's (1895) Sue Bridehead undergoes extreme suffering and, eventually, pathological self-mortification as a result of her social transgressions. Gissing's (1893) Rhoda Nunn is neither tamed nor destroyed, but holding to her principles leads to intense suffering, and, in the end, a life without love. Meredith's narrative sanctioning of Diana's rejection of the legal and moral ties of her unhappy marriage does not prevent its celebration of "her unprotesting submission" in a second marriage (1885, 441). In Olive Schreiner's Story of an African Farm (1883), the heroine's suffering and early death are "identified with her feminism" (Gilbert and Gubar 1989, 51). Her refusal of conventionality seems causally related to her intense psychic and physical suffering, while her conventional cousin, Em, survives. Duncan also wrote about an unconventional New Woman in her

---

10 For a discussion of the social ferment and literary productions of this period, see Ardis' New Women, New Novels (1990). Ardis notes that "over a hundred novels were written about the New Woman between 1883 and 1900 (4). Ardis argues for the existence of a subversive tradition of unconventional heroines who survive, rebellion intact, in the writing of female novelists of the period, but I have chosen, for reasons that will become obvious, to contextualize Fytche's novel within the other, better-known, tradition.

11 For a full discussion of femicidal fantasies and dramas of the New Woman's defeat in literature by men, see Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's No Man's Land, 1988, 28-62. Gilbert and Gubar claim that these narratives demonstrate that men feared they were losing the battle of the sexes during this period.
novel A Daughter of To-day (1894), and this chapter will examine the parallels in the two Canadian writers' treatment of this figure.

"Brought up with such old-fashioned notions":\textsuperscript{12} The Search for Love and the Construction of Femininity

Viewed through the lens of gender alone, Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls offers an extraordinarily detailed account of the process of a woman's surrender to her own subordination. Count Gaston de Gallerand convinces Dorothy by the relentlessness of his pursuit that he offers the love she has always longed for. Initially resentful and suspicious of him, Dorothy tries to assert her independence and to keep him at a distance, but her ineffectual attempts to defy him are met with laughter, and her rebukes provoke assurances that she belongs to him alone. Made uneasy by his dubious, if compelling, protestations of love, Dorothy seeks financial independence and secure lodgings safe from Gaston, but she is unsuccessful. Her time in Paris is a period of profound self-humbling for Dorothy. Each time she meets Count de Gallerand, she loses a little more ground, and finds herself assenting to what she had previously refused. Although her reason tells her that Gaston is not to be trusted, Dorothy's desire to be passionately loved overrules her caution. When her letter asking for assistance from Harry Alexander remains unanswered, Dorothy convinces herself that marriage to Gaston is her fate. In fact, fate has had little to do with it. Gaston has successfully cut her off from all sources of aid or self-sufficiency. He has engineered her social downfall by arranging for her to be hired by the Princess Nesvitsky to ensure both his own easy access to Dorothy and her subsequent inability to find other respectable work. Gaston arranges for Dorothy's letter to Harry to be intercepted. His presence in her room at the English boarding-house is the cause of her eviction and subsequent financial crisis.

\textsuperscript{12} Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls 287-88.
Throughout the narrative, then, the novel repeatedly stresses the material and psychological barriers to women's independence.

The narrative rendering of Dorothy's encounters with Gaston, and her education in submission, is structured by the gendered dynamic of looking. In the traditional psychoanalytic understanding, scopophilia and exhibitionism—the urge to look and the urge to be looked at—have biological and developmental gender assignation: looking is active, aggressive, male, while being looked at is passive, masochistic, female. Such distinctions are intelligible within relations of ruling and in turn crystallize the structures of dominance and submission that organize gender relations. The socially privileged look at their subordinates, whose eyes are cast down. In such scenarios, the gaze is itself a form of domination. In this context, the novel chronicles Dorothy's increasing acceptance of her role as someone to be looked at. From uneasiness and anger to delight and gratification, Dorothy's reactions represent her gradual (mis)recognition that being looked at marks her as appropriately feminine and valued.

At the beginning of her story, Dorothy is the subject who looks. The novel emphasizes her eyes and their power of looking and knowing, her vision a source of resistance and self-definition. In her childhood, those eyes sent a rebuke to her father and a schoolteacher. Not surprisingly, Dorothy's scopophilia is annoying to these authority figures, emphasizing the appropriation of power through the gaze and Dorothy's transgression of the boundaries between subordinate and superior. The novel informs us that "[m]ore than once her father had said to her, 'Don't look at me in that way; you hear what I say; lower your eyes;' and on one occasion at school she had so annoyed her mistress by it that she sent the child to her room for the day, promising to punish her severely if she ever looked at her in that way again" (15). On board the ship on her way to Europe, Dorothy evaluates and classifies her fellow passengers, particularly interested and amused by the groups of American travellers and pleased to find "a type . . . she had never

---

13 For a discussion of men and women's unequal access to "the sovereign status of seer," see Sandra Lee Bartky's "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" (1988, 67).
met before" (46). Although people look at her (the women passengers commenting on her bold stare), Dorothy is not aware of herself as an object constituted by the gaze of others.

From her first meeting with him, Gaston's presence in Dorothy's life changes her self-identity. On her first morning in Paris, she dresses in "an exquisite visiting costume" and sets out to explore the city (55). She is exuberant with interest in her surroundings and confidence in her personal resourcefulness. When warned by her landlady that she should not venture out alone, Dorothy announces that she "can take care of [her]self" (55). But as she stands in front of the Notre Dame, she becomes aware that she is being watched by two men.14 Immediately, her consciousness is dominated by their gaze. As they stand staring at her, she realizes that they have been following her for some time, and she attempts, unsuccessfully, to escape from them. They approach, one on each side of her, and speak across her to one another, discussing her in the third person and agreeing on her extraordinary physical beauty. At this point, the narrative describes the figures' spatial arrangement to emphasize Dorothy's position as the de-personalized mediator of a male exchange; looked at and spoken about, Dorothy is immobilized and silenced. In this first encounter, however, Dorothy reverses the direction of the gaze. She "step[s] back a little so as to face her tormentors" and directs at them "one of her curious, innocent glances" (57). Although her French is limited, Dorothy chooses a simple declarative utterance which stresses her first-person subjectivity (and her nationality, but more on this later): "je suis Anglaise." The men "beat a hasty retreat" (57). The narrative describes the encounter as a "victory" for Dorothy, but also emphasizes the way in which it has coloured--and constricted--her experience of Paris. Annoyed and humiliated, Dorothy decides that she will never "go out alone in Paris dressed fashionably" and will not speak of the incident to

---

14 The quiet menace of the men's observation echoes the scene in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* in which Lucy Snowe is followed by two men upon her arrival in Villette; they, too "spoke with insolence and, fast as [she] walked ... kept pace ... a long way" (1853, 125). Walkowitz describes such sexual harassment as a regular feature of London life for women, as "[m]ale pests' persistently dogged women who tried to experience the freedom of the city" (1992, 51).
her fellow-boarders because it has shamed her (57). The spatial and verbal restrictions symbolized in the encounter extend to her every movement in Paris.

In the coming weeks, through a series of elaborate coincidences, Dorothy meets the older of the two men on a few different occasions. The first time, he is in a train carriage that she and her American friends are taking to Versailles. Next, she meets him in the Latin Quarter. It seems that wherever she goes in the city, he is close at hand, ready and watchful. The meeting in the Latin Quarter echoes some of the features of the first meeting, establishing a surreal, repetitive quality to the interaction. Dorothy is again initially in high spirits until she feels his gaze. His speech after greeting her has a sinister playfulness that establishes their relationship as an unequal struggle for mastery: "I've been expecting you, mademoiselle; you need not look about for a way of escape. I shall not let you go this time" (77). His address is both familiar and frightening. Employing the sadistic language of confinement and punishment, it indicates an unopposable, because mysterious, knowledge and power. "'You were a perfect picture that day, mademoiselle; come now, confess you have never worn it since, because Paul Caro and I spoke to you,'" he teases her. His words taunt her with her status as a sexual object and his control over her through the mastering power of the gaze. His promise of protection, that he "'will take precious good care . . . that no other fellow follows [his] example'" is also a declaration of ownership that establishes the sexual text of the look (78).

As in the previous encounter, Dorothy determines to break the power of the gaze and to establish her authority. She decides that "she must be firm; it would not do to mince matters" (78). Again the novel is explicit about the necessity for Dorothy both to speak and look to wrest subjectivity from the man who wants to possess her. So she looks him "full in the face" and begins to speak "haughtily" (78). But this time she is literally silenced in the very midst of a sentence, silenced by what appears to be sexual longing. We are told that "[h]er heart jumped to her mouth and choked her"; the metaphor makes explicit the cutting off of the political voice by something like desire. Rather than forcing him to turn
away from her gaze, Dorothy finds that she is the one who "[can] not turn away" and feels herself "magnetized" by "his black eyes fixed on hers" (79). The encounter is described as a moment of self-surrender, both sickening and exhilarating, in which "[s]he felt a sudden revulsion of feeling rising that made her thoroughly ashamed of her gibing; and though she knew that his look was more intimate and inquisitive than he had yet dared, she had no strength nor wish to resist it" (79). In accepting her inability to resist, Dorothy can believe that her desire and her material situation come together; she wants what she has no power to prevent. Suddenly laughing, Dorothy signals her capitulation by pointing to it as a condition of their relationship: "'I suppose if I told you, monsieur, that I preferred to go alone, it would make no difference; you'd please yourself"' (80).

As their relationship develops, Gaston's attacks on Dorothy's independence become more and more pointed. Dorothy continually refuses to see him again, but soon finds herself in another position of weakness, at which time he reappears. Despite her refusals, Gaston is always undeterred, claiming with ominous assurance that "the time will come when you will sue for my protection with more persistence than I have to-day sued for a kind word and look from you" (105). Even in refusing him, Dorothy feels that she is bound to this confident, mocking man. Upon leaving her at her request, Gaston "stoop[s] so low over her that she felt as if clasped in his arms, though he did not even touch her" (105).

At one level, Dorothy's transformation is inexplicable. At the beginning of the novel, she is an astute reader of the inequalities of gender politics, as when she refuses to accept Harry's financial support because of the implications of contractual sexuality and laments that a woman "'can't have a platonic friend to confide in without his falling in love with her'" (7). And the novel takes pains to make Gaston an unattractive figure. He is repeatedly identified as a man knowledgeable in courtly forms—a man of carefully studied movements, looks, and gestures designed to please—but also a man without heart, incapable of empathy, compassion, or comfort. All surface, he is ludicrous.
At another level, though, the novel focuses on Dorothy's self-surrender as the result of a profound and self-alienating social training that has convinced her that independent women are selfish, cold, unlovable—not really women at all. A scene between Dorothy and Gaston as he attempts to convince her to meet him at his artist's studio shows Gaston's unerring assault on Dorothy's weakness, her fears about her inability to inspire love: "Ah, mademoiselle, you English and American women are very clever, male, what you call 'strong-minded'; not unlike the précieuses of Molière's time, but not lovable" (85). His words hit home. In addition, Dorothy has learned from anti-feminist discourses that women's desire for work is misplaced in that they already have a life's work: to care for and inspire men. Thus, Gaston follows his assault on the independent woman's womanliness by indicating how Dorothy might be saved for love: "Ayez pitié de moi, a poor artist who never did anything yet worth exposing. Now that I have seen you my head is filled with visions of what may be, if you will only give me a sitting" (86). That Dorothy frequently figures her internal conflict as one between her reason and her heart, between the intellect and her nature, demonstrates the power of the argument from Nature, source of woman's weakness and affections.

The struggle is not all in her head, however. As if by some special power of divination, Gaston frequently makes appearances when Dorothy is depressed in spirits and frustrated by her inability to find work: in other words, the novel reveals that she is set up for emotional exploitation by economic difficulties. Turned away once again by an employment agency, as she leaves the building Dorothy surrenders momentarily to a sense of despair, and Gaston is upon her. The metaphor of assault is clearly delineated:

The pent-up feelings of years had burst their barriers and threatened to engulf her soul. Her equilibrium, however, was partially restored by the fresh autumn air, and when she got to Parc Monceau she threw herself on one of the benches with a sigh of relief. She was alone at last, and at liberty to think. But her trials were by no means over; she had another battle to
wage. Comte de Gallerand was close behind her; hardly was she seated ere she heard his merry voice, so little in harmony with her present feelings, calling, "Whither so fast, ma belle Anglaise?"

Without turning, without replying, she jumped up and hastened on. He was at her side in an instant. "Mon Dieu! Psyche, what is it? has anything happened? Why so sad? You're as pale as a sheet; are you ill?"

"No, I am perfectly well; I only wish you would not pounce upon me in this way; you startled me, and I detest being startled when I have a headache and am nervous," she petulantly exclaimed.

Comte de Gallerand took her onslaught with an amused smile; he was contemplating a coup and would not be put off. (102)

Gaston tries to persuade Dorothy to give up her search for work. Offering economic security in exchange for possession of her body, he uses the language of courtly love to mask the brutality of economic and psycho-sexual coercion, begging her to let him "provide for" her, and exclaiming that "[w]e were made for one another, Psyche. The first time I saw you my heart went out to meet yours" (103).

Dorothy continually rejects Gaston only to have him assume an even more powerful role in her emotional life. She has only to say "I am glad I am rid of him" (108), for him to return with even greater power, and for Dorothy to "laughingly consent[ ] to give him another trial" (121). This intertwining of desire and repulsion in Dorothy's response to Gaston's pursuit suggests the novel's connection with the Gothic. For example, the scene in which Gaston intrudes into Dorothy's room at the English Home deliberately evokes the Gothic horror of darkness, confinement, confusion, and the suffocating certainty of being watched. It is the fourteenth of July, and Dorothy sits watching the fireworks that commemorate Bastille Day. An abrupt transition in narration indicates the shift to another narrative mode in the suspension of certainty and the cultivation of fear:
How long she lay there she never knew. She remembered hearing the clock on the neighboring Greek church strike nine, then must have fallen asleep—when suddenly she became conscious that she was cold, and trembling like a leaf. With a supreme effort she sat up and looked around her. The room was in shadow; could it be only a nightmare, a dream? But no, it was too real. She had an indefinable feeling of fear; something had touched her; someone was in her room. (216)

Fear and uncertainty are partially dispelled when Dorothy discovers that it is Gaston who has invaded her room, but in the nightmarish scene, the division between Gaston as demon and Gaston as lover, between predator and protector, is effectively blurred:

At last she summoned up courage enough to make a spring for the door.
Before she reached it she was caught, and she fell, almost fainting, into the arms of Count de Gallerand. (216)

Here Dorothy's absolute vulnerability to Gaston is emphasized: even lying in her own bed at night, she is not secure from him. That the night of his midnight invasion is the night on which he finally proposes is perhaps not coincidentally connected with her earlier terror.

The Gothic, as Michelle A. Masse has suggested, is centrally concerned with such "intertwining of love and pain" (1992, 3). Its affinities with the sentimental romance are evident in Masse's description of the Gothic as "a terror-inflected variant of Richardsonian courtship narrative in which an unprotected young woman in an isolated setting uncovers a sinister secret" (10). But while the conventional domestic novel covers over--through its promise of a happy ending--the masochism of the heroine's subordination of her identity to that of the man who will love and protect her, the Gothic is precisely about such masochism, unique "in its insistent representation of the process through which a woman becomes a masochist and assigns subjectivity to another" (3). While the domestic novel and the sentimental romance stress that what looks like suffering and self-denial is actually happiness and self-fulfillment, the Gothic magnifies and exploits that suffering.
to Hunt Souls is similarly explicit in its portrayal of the erasure of Dorothy's subjectivity and her "willing" self-annihilation. Furthermore, the novel suggests that Dorothy's acceptance of her suffering and objectification is a cultural rather than a natural process; her masochism is something she is taught, not something that she is.15

Dorothy's experience in Paris is one of the repeated destruction of sources of safety. She flees from Gaston continually only to have him discover her hiding place, until it appears that there is no place in the city where he cannot find her. Every place of refuge is vulnerable to his penetration, as shown in his securing of an apartment from which to watch her at the English Home; often what appears to be refuge is in fact only a more secure cage that he has himself procured for her, as is the case with her seeming deliverance by Princess Nesvitsky. It is as if he is continually watching her, a one-man panopticon. Like the women-victims in contemporary horror movies--and classic horror novels--who repeatedly open the door they should not, Dorothy seems unable to recognize, or to resist, the danger to herself that Gaston represents. Massé uses Freudian psychoanalytic theory to examine the Gothic in terms of the "repetition compulsion," in which "the reactivation of trauma is an attempt to recognize, not relish, the incredible and unspeakable that nonetheless happened" (12). This formulation allows Massé to revise traditional readings of the Gothic that suggest that its endless repetitions of suffering point to the heroine's (and by implication, all women's) repressed desire for painful pleasure. On Massé's reading, the sufferings of the heroine in the Gothic text are a re-enactment of an original trauma--in cultural terms, the denial of subjectivity and identity to women. This trauma is re-enacted not for pleasure but in an attempt to gain mastery of it. In Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls, repetition functions to highlight the paradigmatic quality of Dorothy's suffering and serves the novel's social analysis of how, through repeated trials, women's sense of self is worn down.

15 Massé explains this acculturation in terms that the novel endorses, seeing masochism as "the end result of a long and varyingly successful cultural training" (1992, 3).
Like the heroines of the Gothic, Dorothy finds that her "ideals... have little efficacy" in directing or interpreting her experiences (Massé 14). She is continually formulating ways of resolving her experiences within traditional paradigms and with recourse to traditional figures of authority and support—the Bible, charitable organizations, protective men, a wiser, older woman—only to find them inadequate and in many cases menacing. Gothic irony reinterprets Dorothy's assurance that God has answered her prayers when the novel reveals that in fact Princess Nesvitsky is acting on behalf of Gaston (112). Over and over again, Dorothy is thrown into an anxiety-producing situation only to have her fears lulled by a misplaced confidence in God, fate, love, or her own good luck and personal resources. Here another aspect of the repetition compulsion is apparent. Massé quotes Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle to show how the repetition compulsion is concerned with the task of "develop[ing]... an appropriate anxiety to cope with real danger" (14). Dorothy must learn what many Gothic heroines discover: the limits to their ability to imagine themselves, the reality that their vulnerability cannot be laughed or reasoned away. The repeated references to dreaming ("she seemed to herself to be walking in a dream") suggest the peculiar combination of paralysis and fearful desire that informs Dorothy's experience. The events described in the novel are not in any sense fantastical; rather, the dream-like elements suggest the paradigmatic nature of Dorothy's experience, as well as her sense of herself—also repeatedly expressed in the novel—as uniquely subject to forces beyond her control that appear to push her into Gaston's arms.

The novel follows the process of Dorothy's internalization of patriarchal messages about feminine value. Dressed as an object of beauty by the Princess Nesvitsky, Dorothy is surprised at how well she looks, and wonders if she can inspire the passion she craves. She begins to see herself, and her value as a potential mate, from the outside: "[a]s she stood there the thought came, 'If Harry saw me now, would he love me as I want to be loved--passionately?"' (118). As Dorothy attends the opera with Princess Nesvitsky, Gaston sketches her likeness without her permission, an act described as a symbolic rape.
In this scene, also, Gaston exultantly renames Dorothy as a mark of his artistic ownership: "I am going to call you Psyche whether you like it or not. Psyche you are to me, mademoiselle, and I'll awaken your soul if you have one,' he savagely, almost brutally, exclaimed" (128). The fact that Gaston is a painter of nudes signals the danger he represents for Dorothy. But his determination to possess her completely convinces Dorothy both of Gaston's genuine love for her and the fatedness of their union: "[a]s Dorothy listened there came over her for the first time in her life a fear, a fatalistic feeling, that, struggle as she would, it would be of no use" (128).

Finally Dorothy agrees to see the portrait that Gaston has painted of her. She approaches his studio "with the undefined fear experienced by some in visiting a surgeon's office" (139), but when she sees the picture, she is overwhelmed by its beauty. Awed that a man would see fit to turn her into a piece of art, she takes to heart Gaston's words about the unfortunate seriousness of her expression. Her look, he tells her, "is too serious--the one you have when you are scolding me" (142). Thus the painting provides Gaston with an opportunity to literally re-make Dorothy's body and subjectivity. Dorothy now responds with shame to her earlier assertion of autonomy. Her resistance to the Count's attempt to possess her seems selfish. Dorothy signals her capitulation to the Count's dominion by engaging "gayly" in misogynist jokes (143). Speaking of the painting--and by extension, herself--as a wayward object deserving of discipline, she explicitly rewrites the violence of patriarchal relations in terms of the needful punishment of ungrateful women. The picture, she exclaims, should be stood "in the corner with its face to the wall; it ought to be punished for scolding. That used to be considered a capital crime in wives, you know; I am sure it is quite as bad in a spinster" (143). Dorothy's hesitation about sitting to have her portrait sketched dissolves. In agreeing to sit, she imagines the process in terms of bodily transformation, the successful creation of a docile body: "then you will have two pictures of me, which you can mark 'Dorothy before--and after taking,' as they do in the quack-medicine advertisements" (143). Dorothy's words figure
Gaston's drawing of her—and her consent to his drawing—as a kind of "cure," her woman's anger and resistance painted over by a loving smile. And in this she is rewarded, for looking up after the sitting "she caught the count's eyes fixed upon her with a look of love she had never seen there before" (143).

If it is a question of sacrificing autonomy or love, then, Dorothy has decided that she will choose to be loved. Once married, Dorothy makes herself an extension of her husband, his inspiration, assistant, model, and plaything. Centrally, this transformation involves becoming the specular object he had said he admired:

Then, becoming the most docile of models, she posed in any character he wished without a murmur, though it was something she detested. Also, remembering what Count de Gallerand had said about his ideal wife being one who knew how to dress, one that they stared at in the streets and ogled at the play—in a word, the observed of all observers--she dressed picturesquely to please him, often copying some old picture. (244)

Such a self-transformation cannot be dismissed as merely negation, however. Dorothy's actions are also ways of holding on to some identity; she seeks recognition through the gaze. Her identity and her possession of love are predicated on Gaston's approving glance, however, and thus the erotic dynamic of their relationship falls apart once Gaston and Dorothy are separated. "[d]ay by day Dorothy felt him slipping further and further away from her" (249). Tragedy follows.

Dorothy is never coerced in the relationship with Gaston; although he describes their encounters in the imagery of battle, direct physical force is not his weapon. By locating the source of her subordination within Dorothy herself, then, the novel identifies women's faulty education as the cause of their unequal status. Dorothy's destructive obsession with love and freedom, we are told, results from an unhappy home life in which her father tyrannized her mother, who slaved for him. She has been poorly educated, and has derived most of her ideas about life from romantic novels. The novel suggests that,
rather than recognize the need for mutual respect, forbearance, and converse of minds.

Dorothy seeks passion as the solution to her parents' abusive and loveless marriage. Like many sentimental novels, this novel critiques the conflation of strong feelings with morality in sentimental fiction; instead, it associates sensibility with sexual passion and the attendant dangers of loss of reason. At her most passionate, Dorothy considers murdering Gaston before his second marriage. She wants to possess Gaston just as completely as he has possessed her, to kill him into object-status. Passion in the novel is constructed on a sadomasochistic trajectory and presented as destructive of women's moral autonomy and of male-female relationships in general.

In its insistence on the subtle psycho-sexual mechanisms of women's victimization, Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls presents a startlingly modern analysis of femininity as a social construct, and makes a powerful contribution to the record of Victorian-Canadian debates on the Woman Question. My discussions of Machar and Wood have demonstrated that the primary rhetorical strategy employed in arguments about social injustice was the spectacle of suffering. In this context, the case of the respectable bourgeois woman presented certain problems for pro-feminist reformers. As distinct from their labouring sisters, who were victimized by poverty, disease, or domestic violence, middle-class women did not usually suffer visibly.\textsuperscript{16} Thus arguments about their condition often revolved around the question of how and to what degree they could be said to suffer psychologically and morally from their dependence on men and their exclusion from political and professional opportunities.\textsuperscript{17} A series of articles in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National

\textsuperscript{16} Not surprisingly, the celebrations of women's extraordinary privileges and freedom conflicted with the reality of male violence against women in Canada. In "The Prevention of Cruelty, Marriage Breakdown, and the Rights of Wives in Nova Scotia," Judith Fingard reports that court records and newspapers in Victorian Canada "revealed sensational cases of battered wives and neglected children," not all of whom were working-class (1994, 211). In 1876, the Nova Scotia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty was formed. Originally aimed at the protection of animals, it turned its attention to women and children in 1880, recognizing domestic violence and neglect as problems of significant proportions in Halifax.

\textsuperscript{17} For example, in "The New Ideal of Womanhood," Machar argues that the appearance of pleasure and ease often disguises the oppressiveness of women's confinement and lack of opportunities: "many a girl, fitted for nobler interests, chokes and frets under her silken bonds which yet she sees no way of breaking" (1879, 671).
Review (July - December, 1879) mobilized scenes of suffering—a favourite were heroic shipwreck stories—to argue about which sex made the most sacrifices under the present gender order. While anti-feminist writers argued that civilization was built on heroic male sacrifice, pro-feminist writers demonstrated how dependence stunted women's potential in every area of their lives. In this sense, Kerchiefs is an important feminist novel in its dramatization of its heroine's extreme psychological suffering. At the same time, though, the representation of Dorothy's rescue from pain, and the manner in which Fytche seeks to guarantee her heroine's sympathetic status, illustrate the ultimate conservatism of Fytche's diagnosis of women's needs.

Dorothy's words at the end of the novel, as she lies recovering from her trauma in a hospital bed, indict her earlier education for her suffering and convey the pedagogical impetus of the novel: "I had been brought up with such old-fashioned notions. I wonder more girls are not led astray when the whole drift of education is emotional" (287-88). Here Fytche takes up a prevalent theme in nineteenth-century feminist writing stemming from Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1797). As in Fytche's novel, the language of slavery and bondage occurs frequently in Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* to describe the condition of women, who are "[e]ducated . . . in worse than Egyptian bondage," and become "abject wooers and fond slaves" (221, 224). Taught to believe that they are "created rather to feel than reason" and that their sole object and pleasure in life is to "excite emotions in men," women quickly learn to participate in their own subjection, to the extent that any reason they possess "is employed rather to burnish than to snap [their] chains" (153, 221). Much of Kerchiefs can be seen to bear out both the critique and the pedagogical trajectory of the *Vindication*. While Wollstonecraft laments

---

18 The genealogy of such narratives of shipwreck is discussed in Mark Girouard's *The Return to Camelot* (1981) 8.
19 To trace this debate, see the following articles: A Woman of Newfangle, "Some Newfangle Notions" (July 1879); A Non-Resident of the Same, "Newfangle And Its Opinions" (Aug. 1879); A Woman of Newfangle, "Another Word or Two" (Sept. 1879); A Non-Resident, "Newfangle Again" (Oct. 1879); Our Old Friend of Newfangle, "Some Last Words On the Woman Question" (Nov. 1879); and A Non-Resident of Newfangle, "A Brief Summing Up On the Woman Question" (Dec. 1879).
women's socialization "to raise emotion instead of inspiring respect," Fytche has Dorothy ponder anxiously "[w]hy is it that I never inspire love, only admiration?" (Wollstonecraft 121; Fytche 37). Wollstonecraft counsels that, sensual love being an unsteady basis for a life-long relationship, one had better "substitute the calm tenderness of friendship, the confidence of respect, instead of blind admiration, and the sensual emotions of fondness" (113-14). Similarly, Harry advocates a "marriage of mutual respect and mutual aid" (289). In Wollstonecraft's terms, Harry is the "man of sense" while Gaston is the sensual libertine, "the slave of his appetites," who enslaves women in turn (221, 134). Describing the association of ideas that link women to their sexuality to render them physically weak, emotionally dependent, and morally vulnerable, Wollstonecraft comments that "genteel women are, literally speaking, slaves to their bodies, and glory in their subjection" (130). At the end of Kerchiefs, Dorothy argues that women "have so long been deceived, flattered, and hoodwinked that, like the slaves, we glory in our bonds" (289).

Alongside its insistence on the social construction of women's dependence, the novel presents another, contradictory, argument. While indicating the need for improved education for women, the novel also suggests that women's natural passions need to be curbed; a second reading of the novel uncovers that it ultimately blames Dorothy's own unrestrained passions for her tragedy. That Dorothy can fall in love with Gaston points to her moral irregularity: he appeals to her sexuality, her passion, to that aspect of herself that needs to be disciplined. Visiting Dorothy at the hospital, Alice Jeffreys notices a change in Dorothy's face, from which "all traces of passion had departed, leaving only a pathetic sadness" (271). In emphasizing the purging of passion, the novel falls into what Jane Spencer describes as "the most continuously sustained of the women's tradition, the novel of the heroine's education" (1986, 108). Harry too has suffered in his earlier life, and is now an appropriate husband for Dorothy because he has had the passion snuffed out of him; he has a "calm, noble face, without a spark of passion, but, oh! so tender, so loving, so faithful" (171). If The Untempered Wind is contradictory in its representation of female
desire—seeing it as at times joyful and potentially liberating and at others as something in need of control—Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls is monolithic in its presentation of sexual passion as that which explains rather than that which unsettles women's oppression.

As Cora Kaplan points out, the "passionless and rational ideal" asserted by Wollstonecraft does not constitute "an unproblematic feminist inheritance" (1986, 34). Part of that inheritance, evident in Fytche's novel, is a revulsion against female sexuality, which is presented as women's degradation. Kaplan claims that beneath the feminist critique of the Vindication lies another text, "one that is arguably as interested in developing a class sexuality for a radical, reformed bourgeois as in producing an analysis of women's subordination and a manifesto of her rights" (34-35). A different reading of Kerchiefs may also uncover such a class-inflected text. By reading the novel in the context of key arguments about the role of the bourgeois family as the core social unit of an enlightened democracy, we make visible the more conservative aspects of the novel's politics. Moreover, such a reading clarifies the morality-tale elements in the novel—-in addition to its uneasy critique—-that its Gothic features suggest. On this reading, Dorothy's sufferings are not only the vehicle of critique but also salutary preparation for her role in domesticity. The novel's class argument is strengthened by a national/racial subtext that presents bourgeois domesticity as an essentially Anglo-Saxon national trait. The novel's decision to locate its heroine's sufferings in Paris at the hands of a decadent Parisian aristocrat/painter/rake effectively displaces and diffuses the critique of gender relations onto a hegemonic nationalist and class-based discourse. On this reading, Gaston's objectification of Dorothy is less a function of patriarchal power than it is both a relic of an aristocratic form of sexual relations and a symbol of non-Anglo-Saxon moral corruption.
"In la belle France": Displacement, Discipline, and Anglo-Saxon Domesticity

The novel's emphasis on Gaston's identity as a Frenchman—through excessive use of French dialogue, and especially French terms of endearment, through passages in which Dorothy and Gaston fail to understand each other (even when speaking the same language), and through explicit commentary on racial or cultural difference—relies for its meaning on an understanding of racial categories that was widely accepted amongst English-speaking people throughout the nineteenth century. The term "race" was both vaguer and much more narrowly applied in nineteenth-century Anglo-Canadian writing than it is today. As Valverde (1992) points out, such uses of the word "race" (and "people" and "culture") in Victorian texts were productively ambiguous, meaning sometimes the human race in general and sometimes what we would now call a particular ethnic group—and sometimes both simultaneously. "In turn-of-the-century Anglo-Saxon thought," she writes, "the paradigm of the human 'race' was the Anglo-Saxon Protestant ruling bloc, with other groups (from the Irish of Manchester to the Zulus of South Africa) being regarded as human only by analogy" (5). Sometimes the term "English-speaking race" is used, establishing a connection between language and racial identity.

English and Anglo-Canadian commentators developed an elaborate system of classification to evaluate and rank non-Anglo-Saxon peoples in terms of geographical, physical, and moral criteria, such that The Week for December 16, 1886 could provide the following brief racial taxonomy of European immigrants to the New World as if stating facts of nature: "[f]ortunately the German is by nature a good and orderly member of the community; while the Italian, who is now becoming an important factor in immigration, though little civilized and liable to outbreaks of stabbing passion, is not, like the Celtic Irishman, naturally hostile to authority" (37). J. S. Woodsworth's treatise on immigration to Canada entitled Strangers Within Our Gates (1909) presents chapters
discussing immigrants in descending order, beginning with the "very desirable" (64)--
"Immigrants from Great Britain"--and proceeding through "Immigrants from the United
to the "terra incognita" (92) of "Southeastern Europe," "The Balkan States," "The
and the Indian" lumped together as one group (5-6). The French are clearly something of
a liminal case, favoured because Christian, Western-European, and light-skinned, but
distrusted because Catholic and associated with the sexually-passionate south. Fytche's
novel demonstrates how such liminal cases operate as subject-constituting others in
nationalist discourses to reinforce notions of Anglo-Saxon moral superiority. In addition,
ideas about Anglo-Saxon moral superiority serve to naturalize both class and gender
differences.

The Anglo-Saxon, middle-class home represents safety and even power for the
Canadian woman in opposition to a Frenchness that stands for danger to women as well as
moral laxity and effete decadence. Gaston's French identity would have been a
notorious signifier of loose morality, frivolity, and infidelity. The English practice of
projecting sexual excess and immorality upon the French had been common at least since
the sixteenth century, and it received a fresh impetus in the international debate on the
naturalist movement in art and literature, which most Anglo-Canadian commentators
associated with vulgarity and immorality. The novel reinforces such a characterization: in
an argument with Gaston on the subject, Dorothy expresses Anglo-Saxon distaste for
French realism, calling it "an outcome of an effete civilization. History repeats itself;

---

20 For a description of French men even less flattering than Fytche's, see the travel journal of Gertrude
Fleming née Mackintosh, quoted in Kröller 1987, 63-74. Fleming's assessment reveals the stock of
conventionalized images from which Fytche undoubtedly drew: "[s]uch mincing shrugging acting
popinjays. Perfect little monkeys! And they look at women with such an air of conquering hero that I
long to box their little French ears" (1987, 70).

21 For a discussion of Wollstonecraft's attitude to the French, see Kaplan 1986, 40-41. France was for
Wollstonecraft "the very essence of sensuality" in which "a kind of sentimental lust has prevailed" in
relations between men and women (1792, 86). Massé also points out the English practice of identifying
the French with sexual irregularity, noting that "the nineteenth-century British [saw] sadism as a continental
practice" (1992, 52).
licentiousness, voluptuousness, and shamelessness have always been the outward signs of moral and spiritual decay in man and nations. Still, it is sad to see a young republic with all the vices of a worn-out people" (158). Perceptions of Paris as "a powerful embodiment of the city as Babylon" were particularly prevalent (Kröller 1987, 134). A note in The Week of Feb. 10, 1887 found evidence of Parisian immorality in the city's disregard for the marriage tie, noting with disgust that "in Paris, which, let it always be remembered, is not France--it appears that, among other signs of moral disintegration, divorce is becoming a joke" (173). "Current Events" in the Canadian Monthly (Aug. 1874) represented French culture as debased, noting "[t]he unsound morality which pervades the popular literature of France [and] the want of truthfulness which pervades French histories" (161).

More generally, the novel stresses Gaston's connection with an Old World culture associated with women's subordination. Dubinsky has shown the way that Canada was constructed in opposition to a foreignness defined by the abuse of women (1993, 138-42). The novel constructs "'wicked Paris'" (84) as a place of potential dissipation and seduction. Dorothy speaks of "'the risks English and American girls run in Paris, and how careful they should be'' (84). During a conversation with Gaston, Dorothy speaks of the absolute difference between the Anglo-Saxon countries and France, effectively erasing the possibility of any French feminist movement.

Rebuking him for a comment about independent women, Dorothy exclaims, "'you say that because you know nothing about us. Neither you nor any other foreigner, monsieur, can understand the position of woman in England and America to-day'' (160). During another conversation, Gaston reinforces the view of France as absolutely foreign in its insistence on parental dominion over marriage: "'You English have no idea how we are brought up to respect our parents' wishes in regard to..."
marriage. With you, if two young people love each other, that is sufficient for them to get married and make a home for themselves when and where they like. . . . With us in France it is quite different" (219). France, in the novel, is both decadent and primitive, lacking the Protestant internal regulation and respect for democratic ideals that enable true freedom.

Such understandings of French character intersect with notions of class morality, with Frenchness associated with a corrupt aristocracy and Anglo-Saxon character associated with bourgeois decency, solidity, and common sense. In her discussion of the political function of domestic fiction throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Armstrong describes the sentimental tradition as that "in which a woman's virtue alone overcomes sexual aggression and transforms male desire into middle-class love, the stuff that modern families are made of" (1987, 6). According to Armstrong, the sexual struggles represented in Richardson's novels represent the struggles between two different understandings of sexuality, and ultimately establish middle-class hegemony.\(^24\) The older form of social relations saw woman as a commodity exchanged between men to consolidate alliances rather than as a repository of moral virtues necessary to the functioning of the (bourgeois) home. Within Gaston's social class, marriage is an alliance between titled families, and Gaston's insistence on the distinction between affairs of the heart and socially-sanctioned marriage, as in his conversation on the night before he marries, illustrates his adherence to the aristocratic code. In the symbolic system developed in the novel, it does not matter that Harry too is titled by the end of the novel; he is represented in safely bourgeois terms.\(^25\) In the same way, it does not really matter that France is contradictorily represented as a republic bound by aristocratic codes. Anglo-Canadian thought associated both the extremes of republicanism and of the ancien régime with vice and social disorder. Likewise, the image of Canada that all agreed upon was less a matter

\(^{24}\) Armstrong argues that middle-class hegemony was not a reality until well into the nineteenth century, long after it had been represented in fiction (1987, 61-75).

\(^{25}\) As Armstrong points out, middle-class domesticity was, in theory at least, open to anyone willing to live it, and by the late-Victorian period had become the model by which many members of the aristocracy represented themselves (1987, 74).
of particular economic or political principles (to which the oscillations of the Liberal Party attest) than an abstract ideal of sanity, social cohesion, and moral order that could be mobilized in opposition to either republicanism or the aristocratic order, depending upon the current political target.

Gaston's function as a symbol of this aristocratic view can be seen in his insistence that Dorothy devote her time to fashioning her body for public display. In the scene in which Gaston declares his eternal love for Dorothy, his declaration is firmly anchored in the physical—in her person, as the Victorians would have said:

You are precisely my ideal; oui, exactement mon type. Il me faut une petite femme originale, gaie, jolie, tres-jolie, qu'on regarde dans la rue, et qu'on lorgne au spectacle.

And puis, with such a wife one can amuse one's self. (223)

His insistence that she be the observed of all observers signifies his failure to value Dorothy for her moral virtue and feminine qualities—and negatively establishes the terms for a just valuation of Dorothy. In this way, the novel carries on much the same function that Armstrong argues was played by eighteenth and nineteenth century conduct books, in which the body of the woman provided a topic upon which divergent and even competing social groups could agree, in opposition to an elite who ruled according to birth and title alone. Armstrong argues that the bourgeois notion of inherent feminine virtue as the basis of the domestic sphere was explicitly opposed to the aristocratic signalling of status through external forms. Gaston's objectification of Dorothy, then, is a sign of his social status.

26 Armstrong's description of the development of a bourgeois conception of female virtue is worth quoting for its relevance to the condemnation of Gaston levelled by Kerchiefs. In the program set out by conduct books, a woman was ranked according to the specifically female virtues she possessed rather than the value of her family name and social connections. But in order to create such a female system of values in the first place, the conduct books represented the domestic woman in opposition to certain practices attributed to women at both extremes of the social scale. A woman was deficient in female qualities if she, like the aristocratic woman, spent her time in idle amusements. As the conduct books represent them, such activities always aimed at putting the body on display, a carry-over from the Renaissance display of aristocratic power. For a woman to display herself in such a manner was the same as
His emphasis on Dorothy as a body for display repeats with a difference the earlier scene in which Dorothy mistakenly walks the streets of Paris dressed in one of her most dazzling outfits, an action which signals to Gaston that she is sexually available. In this case, Dorothy's flamboyant dress signals not aristocratic frivolousness but the New Woman's mistaken belief that dress no longer signals sexual virtue, a sign not of Dorothy's corruption but of her innocence and misplaced confidence in her own powers of self-determination. Gaston misreads her naive exuberance.

The life that Gaston makes for Dorothy is continually shown to be inadequate to what she deserves. Count de Gallerand and Dorothy have no permanent home and no social position within a community. Dorothy has no domestic sphere to manage. The Count fails to provide for the family; during Dorothy's pregnancy she even has to save money for her child on her own. His inability to save money, a sign of his unearned privilege, is linked to sexual licence, the inability to postpone gratification. Gaston even "resent[s] economy in his wife," a quality he should prize. His rejection of bourgeois domestic economy is also evident in his lack of interest in--and even resentment of--the child his wife is about to bear. He represents what Carol Smith-Rosenburg has called the "nonproductive elegance of the aristocracy" (1988, 160). He possesses a degenerate sexuality separate from reproductive monogamy. What is even more telling is the Count's failure to value or to respond to Dorothy's moral nature. Where the bourgeoisie built its class identity upon the purity and moral power of the middle-class wife and mother, Gaston wants Dorothy for a sexual playmate rather than for a moral guide and companion. We learn that "Dorothy's influence over him had not been as powerful as she had hoped" (243). In her attempts to convince him of the moral seriousness of their union, Dorothy is judged by Gaston to be "too serious." Gaston's refusal to provide Dorothy with the secure home life valorized by bourgeois ideology signifies his inability to truly love her. His desertion of Dorothy to marry a titled French woman and the subsequent revelation that saying that she was supposed to be valued for her body and its adornments, not for the virtues she might possess as a woman and wife. (75)
their English marriage is not binding in Catholic France merely illustrate in concrete terms what the novel has already established figuratively: the marriage's illegitimacy. Love, in the novel, is a function of middle-class values.

Strong anti-Catholicism is also evident in the novel's depiction of Gaston's childish superstition and inability to make independent moral judgements. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw a resurgence of anti-Catholic sentiment in English-speaking Canada; political commentary in the Canadian press contrasted the enlightened democracy of Canada with the medieval ignorance of France, and identified the papacy as responsible for France's benighted condition. Describing evangelical Protestant attitudes to Catholicism in Canada, Barber emphasizes the argument that Catholicism unfitted its subjects for full citizenry in a democracy: "[N]ot only were Roman Catholics misled by ceremony and superstition, but, in addition, the hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church was considered antithetical to true democracy" (1975, 209). In the novel, Catholicism is associated with both the stifling overprotection and infantilization of women--as when Gaston comments that no unmarried French girl would have been allowed to travel as Dorothy is doing--and their undervaluing as chattel passed from father to husband. In the novel, Catholicism opposes democracy and prevents its subjects from becoming autonomous, self-governing citizens.

Finally, despite--or perhaps, because of--his assessment of Dorothy as a sexual object rather than a moral being, Gaston is represented in terms that link him to debased femininity, a further sign of social disorder. His mood swings, childishness, and conceit are typically feminine, as is his extreme, if grudging, subservience to his mother; his insistence on living for the moment in pursuit of sensual gratification marks his connection to fin de siècle degeneration, as does his identity as an artiste.27 Speaking to Dorothy of French men's "appreciation" for women, he describes the male sexual appetite in terms of a highly refined taste for good wines: "in la belle France men sip and coquet with women as

27For more discussion of the relationship between decadence and fears of "cultural degeneration and decay" in fin de siècle culture, see Showalter 1991, 169-84.
with wine; some are like the *vin ordinaire*, a necessity; some like Burgundy, a delight; some like champagne, intoxicating; some, hélas! like *eau de vie*, maddening; it is *l'espritFrançais* that works the mischief" (85-86). Gaston both distinguishes women—not according to their characters, but to sexual qualities—and makes them the same, objects for male delectation and consumption. Such gastronomic sensuality and unrestrained self-indulgence mark his effeminacy, as does his use of the feminized "coquet". Such feminization is also a feature of Anglo-Canadian representations of France in the nineteenth century. Discussions of international relations frequently figure European powers such as Russia and Germany as predatory and aggressive—in other words, as masculine, if overly so—while France is feminized and degraded, as in the following listing from the *Canadian Monthly*’s "Current Events" identifying Canada's position amongst nations "ambitious as Russia, fickle and restless as France, and warily self-seeking like Germany" (Nov. 1877, 535). Similarly, French sensibility and emotional variability were constructed as evidence of a feminized and weak moral character in an anonymous travel article entitled "A Flying Visit to Paris" (1877). Commenting on the apparent prevalence of suicide among the French, the author notes that "[t]he moral courage and moral health to aid in sustaining great trials are not common qualities, and the French, especially the Parisians, pass rapidly from the extreme of vivacity to the extreme of dejection" (591). In this context, Gaston's abuse of Dorothy is a sign of sexual weakness rather than strength, in contrast to the purity and manliness of the English Harry, who combines an "'imposing and masterful'" presence with "'tender[ness]'" toward "'children and animals'" and a complete absence of "'egotis[m]'" (11). In Gaston, male cruelty is displaced onto a man who is not a real man, and healthy masculinity is figured as safety for women. The novel is interested in defining appropriate masculinity as well as appropriate femininity. Gaston's emasculation serves to link femininity with romance, excess, and disorder—he is the embodiment of the romantic literature Dorothy has been unwisely brought up on—while healthy masculinity is linked with rationality and control.
Dorothy's journey to France is a journey to the antithesis of Anglo-Saxon bourgeois culture. Her experiences there are the novel's proof that fin de siècle culture—particularly its new conceptions of art, experience, and gender—promises nothing but pain for women. Interestingly, both the New Woman and the effete male artist of fin de siècle decadence were associated with cultural anarchism and decay. According to Showalter, "the decadent or aesthete was the masculine counterpart to the New Woman" (1991, 169). Pykett comments that the linked figures of the New Woman and the decadent or homosexual man were the "focus of moral panics in the mid-1890s" (1995, 16). In a sense, then, Gaston functions as Dorothy's masculine "double," and her journey to France is a journey to that part of her self that must be expelled in order for her to take her place in Anglo-Saxon culture. Made unhappy by her passion for an all-consuming love, Dorothy must learn self-regulation. Within such a pedagogical narrative, Dorothy's impulse to murder Gaston after learning of his impending marriage is a sign of her improperly channeled femininity, evidence of the widely-held suspicion that the New Woman could easily become the femme fatale, the woman of threatening sexuality. Although Dorothy's judgements on the immoral sensuality of French naturalist painting establish the fundamental purity of her character, her desires—for travelling, dressing up, talking to strange men, and professing independence—are all evidence of the irregularity of conduct that must be left behind her in France. Upon Gaston's death, Dorothy is free to marry Harry and to begin a new life. Her story fits quite neatly into the typical sentimental pattern of the heroine's education, in which a journey of self-discovery takes the form of a journey from the wrong man to the right man. In the context of this idea of "education," it

---

28 1895 was also the year of the Oscar Wilde trials and the resulting public scrutiny of the figure of the male homosexual, whom many saw as the counterpart to the mannish New Woman.

29 Discourses on the New Woman during this period regularly represented her as both mannish in her rejection of conventional roles and also excessively feminine in her heightened sensitivity and emotional susceptibility. If we interpret Dorothy's actions through this discourse, then, Gaston and Dorothy together function both to expose the paradigmatic workings of the heterosexual order, as I initially argued, and as a twinned representation of sexual disorder.

30 Lovell (1987) has argued that New Woman fiction often went to great lengths to confirm the purity of its unconventional heroines, and Kerchiefs is certainly no exception in this regard.
is worth noting that, despite protestations of gender harmony in Canada, many Canadian men wrote of feminist activism with suggestions of the need for disciplinary measures to be taken by men. Reynell Upham, writing in the *Canadian Magazine* in 1895, comments acerbically that "a species of woman has burst the bonds that bound her to the sphere hitherto regarded as peculiarly her own—is arraying herself in new and startling colors, and challenges the world to fall and worship—the new divinity. I understand she has ordered a new Heaven and a new Earth. But has she figured on the New Man?... the day will come when he shall take the New Woman in hand and, while she is new, train her in the way she should go" (391).

This motif of male revenge was a structuring feature of many of the debates on the Woman Question in the pages of Canadian periodicals. Because the ideology of chivalry (the appeal to male benevolence for weaker women) underlay the arguments of both pro- and anti-feminist writers, anti-feminist commentators could warn powerfully, as if stating a fact of nature, that women who rejected their conventional social role and dependence on men must also forfeit male protection and love.31 The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Britain and Canada witnessed a culture-wide revival of courtly themes, rhetoric, and images. Codified in texts as diverse as conduct books and Boy Scout manuals, the medieval revival had strong nationalist-imperialist associations of pride in the imperial order, respect for authority, obedience, and self-sacrifice; knightly chivalry provided a blueprint for the conduct of gentlemen.32 Strange explains that "[j]ust as knights had been charged with the duty to protect their inferiors and to uphold honour, so nineteenth-century gentlemen affirmed their status by protecting the defenceless" (1992, 31, 32).

31 The heroine of Dougall's *The Madonna of a Day* is told that only through an ideal purity can women be saved "'from becoming the victim of man's selfishness, because he is stronger'" (1895, 65).

32 For a thorough overview of the impact of the medieval revival on art, literature, and social relations, see Girouard (1981). In Canada, chivalry had a crucial impact on bourgeois gender relations and also on the development of the Knights of Labor. Valverde particularly points to its role in shaping "not only the language but also the political response of the Knights to the problems of workplace sexual harassment and general sexual exploitation of working-class women" (1991, 97).
While feminist writers argued that chivalry demanded that men support women's calls for political, social, and economic rights and freedoms, anti-feminists countered that such freedoms would destroy chivalry itself. An item in The Week of February 17, 1887, predicted that "if women are going to demand political power and generally to alter their relations to men they must not be surprised if the sentiments of men are altered towards them and if their claims hereafter are discussed with a freedom which, while they were content to be under the protection of the male sex, chivalry and poetry forbade" (190). That a gross misogyny seemingly incompatible with chivalry was a regular feature of this same paper suggests that men's sentiments towards women were often other than protective.

Additionally, debates about chivalry functioned to deflect the feminist critique of patriarchal hegemony through nostalgia for an irretrievable golden age. The author of a series of articles in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review (1879) argued that, without chivalry, women's suffering would greatly increase. In "Some Newfangle

33 In "Wounded Womanhood and Dead Men," Strange examines two highly-publicized murder trials to demonstrate the extent to which the ideology of chivalry shaped and determined the structure and outcomes of the court proceedings in the cases of two women who had confessed to murdering men in defence of their honor. In both cases, defence lawyers successfully appealed to chivalry to acquit their clients. While it was a widely held view in the nineteenth century that women were treated leniently by the criminal justice system as a result of men's natural tenderness and reluctance to impose harsh sentences on the weaker sex, cases of such leniency were in fact rare. When they did occur, they tended to shore up the system of male power rather than to challenge it. The acquittal of two women, Strange argues, "did not send a signal that women had the right to be free from the threat of sexual assault; on the contrary, the verdicts confirmed men's prerogative to defend weaker beings" (178).

34 For an outline of the issues, see "Chivalrous Homage' to Women" (Feb. 1880) by O. S., who is critical of chivalry, and the defensive response by O. Yesse, "Chivalry Or Not Chivalry" (Apr. 1880) in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review. Because weakness and vulnerability were thought necessary to awaken sympathy, pro-feminists could not simply dispense with it, although many understood it as a justification of inequality. In "The New Ideal of Womanhood," Machar both dismisses chivalry and laments its absence. Observing that chivalry was a mere form that covered over a more fundamental contempt, equal to "maintaining a certain show of deference in conversation, to be too often exchanged for a very different tone in the freedom of the smoking room," Machar yet regrets the rarity of such "kindly help and sympathy along the thorny path of life" (1879, 675).

35 For example, an essay by F. Blake Crofton on colloquial terms for "to beat" or "to hit" ("Some Striking Terms") quotes the following rhyme without comment as an illustration of the use of the verb bash:

A woman, a whelp, and a walnut tree,
The more you bash 'em the better they be.

Far from criticizing violence, Crofton assesses such violent language as evidence that Britons are a fierce, independent, and manly people, "[f]or Britons have not been wont (and may they never become wont!) to bluster or threaten without acting" (1887, 464).
Notions," the author (A Woman of Newfangle) describes a failed attempt by a group of women to build a community without men; the disastrous consequences of their arrogance—they would all have died if not for the intervention of men—are detailed with undisguised relish, and the women in the narrative are not only defeated but also "righteously ashamed" of their feminism, having finally accepted their weakness (1879, 83). Perhaps the slipperiness of chivalry as a rhetorical basis for pro-feminist arguments illustrates the ephemerality of the sympathy evoked by scenes of suffering. As feminist writers found to their cost, the cultivation of sympathy required that the viewing subject not feel implicated in the suffering represented before him. The wealthy landowner or businessman might feel sympathy for the starving labourer because he could point to the vast, impersonal forces of the economy as the indomitable field of power relations in which both individuals were caught. Such a claim was more difficult in arguments about women's challenges to male privilege, although the frequency with which appeals to nature were made in anti-feminist argument suggests that men attempted a similar rhetorical manoeuvre. But because the relationship between bourgeois men and women was perceived to be personal and direct, responses of defensiveness rather than sympathy were often produced even when the catalogue of women's sufferings did not blame men directly.

In a conference paper entitled "Gender, Imperialism and the New Woman in Turn of the Century 'Mutiny Novels'" (1995), Karen McFarlane has identified in turn-of-the-

---

36 The passage describing the women's "rescue" presents dystopian suffering as a direct consequence of feminism:

They were found, by mere accident, perishing, by inches, by starvation from cold and hunger, one of their number already dead and lying unburied. Some of our men, on a distant hunting expedition, came upon them, huddled together in a wretched hovel, squalid, unclean, half-clothed, starving, shivering, and shuddering. The men had enough to do to supply their wants as well as their own and it was not without difficulty or danger that they were brought into our settlement. Never, my dears, can I forget the appearance of that mournful procession, as it filed slowly in among us, the men walking in front and carrying the frozen corpse, on a sort of litter, for Christian burial, and some of them, cold as it was, stripped of their coats to cover the poor creature's nakedness; the crestfallen women tottering behind, ashamed to be seen. Righteously ashamed of having ever applied the word tyrant to such men as had rescued them, with every kindness, consideration, and delicacy—they said so often enough while their hearts were full; righteously ashamed of ever having thought that the sex to which those men belonged was less pure or noble than their own. (1879, 83)
century British novels about the Indian rebellion of 1857, a sub-narrative of revenge on the New Woman. In these novels, the threat of rape functions as both a device of control and psychic punishment for English women who have stepped out of line. Such novels tell double narratives of rebellion quelled; not only the Indians but also the insubordinate white women precipitate the violence which is visited upon them. The New Woman's gender improprieties are decisively cured by being associated with Indian madness and disorder, quelled by the manly British officer. Similarly, in Fytche's novel, the New Woman is also subdued, and made ready for her marriage with the British-born Canadian. Here we can discern sentimental ideology's slippage into voyeurism and retributive violence: Dorothy's suffering is displayed in order not so much to evoke sympathy as to allay fear and anger, and to send a message of warning to other such women. The problem of women's suffering at the hands of men is placed outside the Anglo-Saxon bourgeois home, and Anglo-Saxon men are exempt from responsibility for cruelty and from the necessity of performing acts of discipline. In this way, the narrative participates in a larger cultural process of celebrating Canadian women's presumed privileges and extraordinary power, in opposition to other countries' barbarism and cruelty.

Such a story of discipline has a nationalist element as well. While excess, cruelty, and moral inadequacy are linked to the French aristocracy, feminine virtue and self-government are linked to the British-Canadian middle class. And in this context, Dorothy's education in her proper place and role is also an education in Canadianness. If Dorothy's independence and rejection of convention are symbolized in her decision to travel, then her desire for peace and domesticity is associated not only with an appropriate femininity, but specifically with an appropriate national femininity. Kröller has discussed the national element in Canadian disapproval of New Women in general, and travelling New Women in particular, noting that such women were associated with immodesty and lack of femininity: "[t]he question of female emancipation turned into a question of national identity; the American woman's rejection of her traditional role duplicated her nation's rebellion against
the mother country, whereas Canadian women were expected to prove their country's loyalty to the Crown with a demure manner and appropriate respect for their elders" (1987, 75). In his article on "The Canadian Girl," Charlesworth insists on the class dimensions of Canadian womanhood, stressing their combination of "practical independence" with "a demure regard for propriety and form, and partaking in no degree of the crude and vulgar revolt from restraint which begets the female stump orator" (1893, 187). The headstrong and independent single woman who makes feminist speeches to both Harry and Gaston is replaced at the end of the novel by a penitent young mother who cannot stop lamenting her earlier foolishness, which she blames for all of her suffering.

Other Canadian novels from this period similarly tell stories of the punishment of unconventional women or, less brutally, of their successful re-education. Duncan's *A Daughter of To-day* (1894) and Maud Petitt's *Beth Woodburn* (1897) are worthy of discussion here as examples of the cultural prevalence of the narrative patterns--and the race and class assumptions--that Fytche deploys. Also a novel about a New Woman (as its title suggests), *A Daughter of To-Day* is generally considered to be Duncan's most serious book and her only social problem novel.  

In this novel, Duncan employed the motif of the aspiring artist's trip to Paris. Like Fytche's novel, it illustrates how a young woman suffers as a result of her passions and her rejection of convention, suggesting that neither the world nor women themselves are ready for the kinds of social change some feminists advocated. Also, as in *Kerchiefs*, French culture and unconventional life-styles (painting and writing) symbolize the dangerous excess of decadent feminism and social degeneration. Elfrida Bell, a clever young American woman with fierce ambitions for independence and fame, escapes the dull provinciality of her home-town for a cosmopolitan European life of "artistic living," first studying painting in France and then living by her

---

37 Although *A Daughter of To-day* falls into the category of Duncan's international novels, those which explore "the influence of national culture upon character" in a comparative context, it is also more explicitly addressed to the problem of social barriers to women's emancipation than any of her other novels (Tausky 1980, 91).

38 For a discussion of journeys to Paris by real Canadian artists, see Kröller 1987, 54-57.
journalism in England. Her rejection of bourgeois morality is passionate and self-conscious; she believes that marriage is a degradation for women and attempts to create for herself a unique identity "not as a woman, but as an artist and a Bohemian" (46). Elfrida's admiration for all things French, her championing of Zola in particular and the Naturalist movement in general, and her unconventional views on marriage, stamp her as an ideologue for fin de siècle culture, an extreme New Woman. Her rejection of marriage is a rejection of the idea that women have a naturally-sanctioned destiny:

"But for women it is degrading--horrible! especially for women like you and me, to whom life may mean something else. Fancy being the author of babies, when one could be the author of books!" (157)

But, like Dorothy Pembroke, Elfrida discovers that neither nature nor the weight of social custom can be thrown off as easily as she would like. Throughout the course of the novel, her unforgiveable bravado is squelched by the feminine desire that she has attempted to deny, and by the power of the English bourgeois conventionality she despises.

Duncan's novel is more savage than Fytche's--perhaps because its heroine is more radical--in making clear that independence from men and personal ambition for fame destroy all that is valuable in a woman. Elfrida has no heart: she is a figure of "devouring egotism" most pointedly represented in her inability to love, the "personality of stone" that Kendall uncovers in his painting of her (202). Even worse, she enjoys playing with men's affections, considering her calculated cruelty a kind of feminist revenge, "a compensation vested in the few for the wrongs of the many" (160). The other two characters in the novel, the solidly respectable, English John Kendall and Janet Cardiff, find her repugnant, as indeed does the narrator: it soon becomes clear that the novel, like Kendall's drawing of her in the Halifax drawing-room, is an attempt to control, discipline, and ultimately to destroy her. Kendall, though attracted by Elfrida's beauty, finds her insistence on a relationship of equality unattractive: "[a]lready she had grown less amusing, and the real camaraderie which she constantly suggested her desire for, he could not, at the bottom of
his heart, truly tolerate with a woman" (96-97). Janet, the utterly correct Englishwoman, is morally repulsed by Elfrida's coarse unwomanliness in her attitude to men. She has "an instinct of helpless anger" when Elfrida belittles woman's duty to marry and bear children, and "the woman in her rose in protest, less on behalf of her sex than on behalf of Elfrida herself, who seemed so blind, so willing to revile, so anxious to reject" (154). Duncan is careful to demonstrate that the basis for Elfrida's rejection of marriage is not reasoned principle but heartless selfishness.

At the end of the novel, Elfrida's double crisis--her realization that she loves John Kendall and that her novel is not the piece of genius she believed--is understood by both Kendall and the narrator to be a fitting punishment for her arrogance in believing herself an uncommon woman. Like Dorothy, Elfrida realizes that all she wants is to be loved, but she realizes it too late. The restrained, decorous Janet is rewarded for her months of repressed suffering by Kendall's proposal of marriage, and Elfrida commits suicide by ingesting poison.

More gentle in its discipline, Petitt's Beth Woodburn is another novel about a "progressive girl" who learns how to direct her desires; like Kerchiefs, Beth Woodburn structures the heroine's moral journey in terms of her passage from the wrong to the right man. Beth Woodburn is a young woman who seeks fame and fortune in the world rather than marriage. She desires "to write stories and not have other cares" and wishes to be "the bright particular star of Canadian literature" (22, 12). The narrative comments that her dreams are "very exaggerated, perhaps, and a little selfish, too" (12).

Beth's journey to a more thoroughly Christian understanding of a useful life is governed by her relationships with two very different men, and in these men the novel presents two competing versions of Canadian masculinity. As in Kerchiefs, healthy masculinity is associated with phallic power, while erring masculinity is associated with feminine traits of inconstancy, feebleness, and irresolution. Clarence, the man Beth believes she loves at the beginning of the novel, also has literary pretensions. He is "a tall,
slender youth, with light curly hair, blue eyes and a fair, almost girlish face" (13). The other man, Arthur, is a family friend Beth has known since childhood; one of her earliest memories is of being rescued from the river by him. The two men are distinguished primarily through the novel's depiction of their virile passion. Appropriate to his paleness and slimness, Clarence is "not a very ardent lover" (43). Arthur, on the other hand, is a Canadian St. John Rivers. His "eyes of unfathomable tenderness and impenetrable fire" make Beth feel "that her very soul stood naked before him" when he proposes to her (51-52). And yet Beth initially fails to recognize Arthur's clear superiority. Although she admires and respects Arthur, who has decided to be a missionary in Palestine after his graduation from college, she believes that she could never love him. Marriage to Clarence appears to offer the better prospect of romantic love and fulfilling work, as Beth imagines the two of them, side by side, at work on their literary creations.

As the novel progresses, representations of false and true masculinity serve to order the novel's concerns with truth, constancy, faithfulness, and service. Clarence eventually proves unfaithful to Beth by his attraction to the orphaned daughter of a French aristocrat, Marie de Vere, a bohemian young woman who "pride[s] herself on a little tinge of scepticism" (59). This passing infidelity--and the failure of judgement in his preference for the sparkling French coquette over the steady, pure English-Canadian girl--demonstrates how "weak, emotional and changeable Clarence [is]" (74). Marie's French identity points up the manner in which a subtle racial subtext emphasizes the novel's gender constructions. At about this time, Beth begins to be conscious of a strong desire for a purpose outside of self: she wishes "to do something in this great, weary world--something to uplift, to ennoble men, to raise the lowly, to feed and to clothe the uncared for, to brighten the millions of homes" (63). This heightened consciousness of Christian duty corresponds to a juster valuation of both Clarence and Arthur. She recognizes Clarence as "a weak, wavering, fickle youth, with a great deal of fine sentiment, perhaps, but without firm, manly strength" (79). And she has a dream foreshadowing her coming union with the
manly Arthur, whose steps she follows out of a confusing wilderness. At the end of the dream, Arthur takes possession of her soul with an act of phallic mastery unmistakeable in its sexual violence:

He came toward her with such a beautiful smile, and there was something in his hand of bright gold--the brightest gold she had ever seen. It was a golden spear with a tiny ring on one end and a mass of chain hanging to it; but lo! when she looked around her she saw it had filled the place with a beautiful mystic light, a golden halo. Then he drew her nearer, nearer to his bosom, and in a moment she felt the spear point touch her heart! An instant of pain, then it pierced her with a deep, sweet thrill. She felt it even to her fingertips. (100)

After such a dream, who could resist Arthur? In the end, Beth chooses to join Arthur in his life's work as a missionary in Palestine, deciding to consecrate her writing to awakening enthusiasm for mission work through the sympathetic representation of foreign peoples. Her assumption of an appropriate feminine identity, then, coincides with her recognition of the centrality of the imperialist ideal, illustrating the novel's conception of the relationship between the gender order and the world order. As in Kerchiefs, the heroine leaves Canada, but she does so in order that the novel's message of Anglo-Saxon Christian mission can be strengthened.

No more "emotional love matches":

In its emphasis on French corruption and aristocratic decadence, Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls takes pains to delineate the Anglo-Saxon virtues that the narrative's happy ending promises to Dorothy. In this resolution, the Anglo-Saxon bourgeois home is the refuge from male sexual menace and psychological abuse. Unlike Gaston, Harry Alexander has always had

39 Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls 8.
a just sense of Dorothy's moral and domestic virtues. Before she leaves for the Continent, he attempts to express what she has meant to him during his time in Canada: "[m]y farm has been an occupation, but it is you who have kept me in touch with God and man, and prevented my losing all faith in womankind" (32). Here Harry acknowledges the power of the feminine embodied in Dorothy: she is both ideal woman and ideal companion. He imagines a life together in which Dorothy would continue to be the moral guide and ordering force of the family: "you say you want a life-work: here it is all cut out for you; let my child be your child, help me to bring her up to be a noble Christian woman" (33). The scene in which Harry serves dinner to Dorothy in her own home establishes Harry as a New Man, for whom companionship rather than dominion is the basis of marriage.

But he too has had to learn, the hard way, to value reason over passion. As he tells Dorothy, an over-hasty marriage to a woman far below him in station—his landlady's daughter, Maude—ends in misery. Plunged into poverty because of his family's anger at the marriage, the young couple discover that it is difficult to build a proper home on a base of sexual passion alone. Rather than focusing solely on their financial difficulties, however, the novel translates an economic problem into moral terms. Maude, we learn, "was very young and inexperienced; she knew nothing of housekeeping" (29). Although the daughter of a poor woman, Maude has not learned the virtues of thrift and self-denial; these personal inadequacies lead to a general domestic breakdown, with "poverty . . . creeping in at the door [and] love . . . flying out at the window" (29). Domestic disorder is most tellingly symbolized in Maude's alcoholism, which coincides with the birth of her daughter. Even the alleviation of the couple's economic difficulties, some years later, cannot repair their domestic trouble. Their third child, a son, is born "a hopeless idiot" and is confined to an asylum (31). Here, Fytche associates alcoholism with the moral panic about race degeneration we have seen at work in The Untempered Wind.  40  In case the

---

40 As Warsh notes, degeneration theorists posited a direct hereditary connection between "idiocy" and alcoholism: "[t]he degeneration theories of Cesare Lombroso and August Morel posited that drunkenness in one generation would produce idiocy, insanity, and criminality in future generations" (1993b, 84) The relation between female alcoholism and such inherited maladies was particularly stressed (90).
reader fails to make the connection between the cross-class marriage of passion and the child's infirmity, Harry comments that he "had married in haste" and was "indeed repenting at leisure" (31). The "last straw" occurs when Harry's daughter Hilda becomes ill. In rushing to obtain a doctor, Harry leaves the child in her mother's care, only to return to find that "mother and child were lying side by side on the bed in a drunken sleep" (32). This image, a corrupted mockery of domestic bliss, requires no commentary from Harry. Like the Reverend Chillingworth before him, he leaves his wife in England and flees to Canada with his daughter. The narrative attributes the failure of their marriage to moral and domestic incompatibility; whereas in eighteenth-century English domestic fiction, cross-class marriages had represented a form of political resistance to oppressive status distinctions, in Kerchiefs, such marriages pose a threat to familial and social order. As Harry's narrative makes clear, unions of passion without social compatibility are dangerous to more than an individual's happiness; the very well-being of the social organism depends on the regulation of desire.

The novel's insistent figuring of social disorder in terms of sexual impropriety is foregrounded in Harry's comments on the relationship between marriages founded on reason and the improvement of the "race." For Harry, mental and moral degeneration not only symbolize but are actually the result of a disordered sexual passion that ignores class and ethnic boundaries. His comment that "[i]t is to the emotional love-matches that we are indebted for the idiots, epileptics, and criminals" also links such irregular desire with the labouring class, associated in the popular imagination with crime and disease (8).41 Harry's words implicitly establish the link between ideas about class and ethnic hierarchies and the project of nation-building as a whole, with its concern to build a nation of morally upright as well as productive and prosperous people. On this model, a strong race is linked to the internal regulation of an individual's sexual passion. According to Valverde, "[t]hat

41 "Feeble-mindedness" was also regularly linked with the "foreign" poor in turn-of-the-century Canada. Valverde reports that "[f]rom 1911 to 1916, Dr. C.K. Clarke claimed, studies conducted in the psychiatric clinic for poor people at Toronto General Hospital showed that immigrants were overrepresented among the feeble-minded" (1991, 108).
the civilization Europeans believed they had brought to North America was built on sexual self-denial was taken almost for granted by most educated, middle-class Canadian Protestants during this period" (1991, 104). Sexual self-regulation thus provides an index to moral standing within a model of hierarchical development: when Harry comments that Dorothy's romantic thoughts "would not discredit a girl of sixteen" (9), his part-playful rebuke is also a condemnation of her stunted moral growth. The purging of sexual passion through suffering enables Dorothy's moral growth and legitimates her womanhood.

Self-control and its relationship to Anglo-Saxon middle-class identity was a crucial component in the discursive construction of Canada as a moral and democratic country, and the novel can be placed in the broader context of nationalist discourses concerned to produce for Canada a specific class identity. Valverde has demonstrated how various technologies of surveillance and discourses of self-regulation functioned to shape Canadian subjects: "[i]n the Canadian context, internalized control was seen as the best foundation for a social order envisioned as built primarily through consensus and genuine, internalized respect for authority, and only exceptionally through coercion and force" (1991, 105). In one sense, Harry Alexander is Canada, and Dorothy's spiritual journey the maturation of an English-Canadian subjectivity: "her thoughts went back to Canada, and to Harry Alexander, with his calm, noble face" (170-71). In an imperialist context, Harry might be read, more specifically, as the British heritage and political protection necessary for Canada's continued health and prosperity. Outlined schematically, Dorothy is young, restless Canada and Harry is stable, experienced England; Dorothy's/Canada's desire for independence is shown to be misguided. The novel's solution to her earnest search for her destiny is the vision of protected self-governance that many commentators thought was best for Canada and for women. Protected from without by British power, so this argument ran, Canada was free to tend to domestic issues. Similarly, Dorothy (like other middle-class women) will be freed by Harry's money and protection to do philanthropic work.

42 For a discussion of the shifting configurations of class and status in Canada in the late nineteenth century, see Woodcock 1989, 26-56.
Canadian nationalist discourses stressed the relationship between domestic ideology and national character. Much political commentary and literary criticism of the period 1875-95 concerned itself with constructing Canadian character as fundamentally domestic, bourgeois, Anglo-Saxon, and democratic, and with establishing these features as moral and wholesome. For example, a discussion of divorce law in Illinois and Indiana in the "Current Events" sections of the Canadian Monthly (Aug. 1874) presented an impassioned defence of Canadian domesticity through a series of rhetorical moves linking marriage, the home, national identity, and political institutions:

For assuredly no commercial obligation, no political institution can be more important to society, or more fundamental than the relation of husband and wife which carries with it that of parent and child. Compared with this, what are all the questions about which political parties contend? It happens that the same national character which produces good political institutions generally produces sound domestic morality also, while licentiousness dwells with despotism in Vienna and St. Petersburgh. (150)

In this passage, what looks at first to be a straightforward hierarchy, with domestic life as the root of national life, is actually a mutually supportive relationship. The home anchors social and political life, but "national character" itself produces sound domestic morality, the two dwelling together. National character is the transcendent term linking domestic morality and political institutions, both producer and product of the other two.

The passage also, of course, considers political institutions in the light of sexual morality, establishing a link between the bourgeois family and enlightened democracy. The proper government of sexual passion is not only rhetorically parallel to but also in some sense necessary for the proper government of society. Further on in the passage, the author laments the judgement of a Canadian lawyer that divorces by Canadian couples obtained in the United States are legal. Access by Canadians to American divorce is figured in terms of foreign contamination of the Canadian nation/home. The description
makes national borders and the exterior walls of the home to be one and the same: 
"[t]he postern door through which an alien morality may be possibly be introduced into the Canadian home ought at once to be effectually barred" (151). Here, Canada is home absolute, safe haven for women and children.

The home that was so central to such discussions was not merely an idea, but a material entity as well: filled with furniture and other objects, the arrangement of which spoke of the taste and good judgement of its domestic queen. For even before the advent of the Woman's Page, disseminating advice on domestic management, the pages of Canadian periodical literature were careful to mark out the special duties and prerogatives of the feminine sphere. A "Round the Table" (Aug. 1879) column on Canadian interior spaces spoke of the arrangement of the home as a matter deserving considerable thought and energy. In this discussion, the material qualities of the middle-class home take on moral dimensions, both reflecting and enhancing its occupants' solidity of character, and representing the presence or absence of a properly-channeled feminine influence. The author laments the "want of taste displayed by our ladies in the arrangement of their drawing-rooms," and proceeds to enumerate those elements necessary to achieve that "indescribable air of refinement and gentle culture" so salutary to the Canadian home (373). The very specific class dimensions of the structure--and the ideology it represents--become clear early on in the discussion. The author hastens to assure his lady readers that such a result "may be arrived at independently of costliness of ornamentation or richness of furniture" (373). Indeed, extravagance is rather a detraction than an addition, since the room is "intended not for show, but for daily use" (373). The primary feature of the ideal drawing-room is simplicity; necessary also is a certain harmoniousness (373). Here, taste is brought forward as the staple of middle-class identity, that inner quality that everyone can aspire to. The author regrets in poorly-appointed rooms "a crowding of ornament . . . and a total absence not only of artistic aptness and unity of design, but of any attempt even at harmonious arrangement" (373). In the author's detailed itemization of faults and
necessary acquirements, the drawing room becomes an extension of the woman whose domain it is, for the author regretfully notes that the poor taste above enumerated is "too often conspicuous in the dress of the ladies, as well as in the arrangement of their drawing room" (373).

In the context of such discussion, Kerchief's presentation of Dorothy as a woman of exquisite taste in domestic arrangements—we learn that "[i]t was not the trifles she scattered about the room that gave the home-like appearance, but the arrangement, the knowledge where to place them to the best advantage" (183)—says less about her personality than about her "character." That Dorothy finds Princess Nesvitsky's decorations "somewhat too loud and garish to suit [her] quiet taste" is an index of her moral purity (116). Dorothy's femininity is defined to a large degree in terms of her decorous consumerism and aesthetic propriety, as the novel makes the equation between good taste, moral rectitude, and women's "freedom." In "Feminine Trifles of Vast Importance" (1992), Cynthia Wright has analyzed the inculcation of the consumer ethic in turn of the century Canada as a process whereby women accepted their exclusion from fulfilling, remunerative work in return for control over the arena of consumption. Freedom from bondage for women came to be understood as freedom to consume, "the right to buy without interference from husbands and fathers" (236). In "An Estimate of Canadian Women," Blackburn promises material pleasures and consumer influence in exchange for women's acceptance of political powerlessness, commenting on the drawing-room's particular form of power: "women are alike the guardians of the social system, the mistresses of the home, the arbiters of manners and morals, the directors of fashions, and the queens of society. The drawing-room is woman's arena, and she decides all questions of etiquette and propriety, she establishes the modes and customs for her own sex, and determines the limitations of the other" (1895, 576). In the novel, Dorothy turns away from her dreams of independence, recognizing that she "'asked too much of life,'" to a
more conventional model of feminine philanthropy and domestic management, a form of power for which she has been shown to be suited (289).

The earliest reviewers of Kerchiefs commented on its depiction of national types; such a narrative technique had been popularized by Henry James and Canadianized by Duncan. Dorothy's journey on the ship and her experiences in France establish her English-Canadian, (middle-class) classless identity in opposition to American and Old World identities. The brief section concerning Dorothy's passage across the Atlantic employs the stock features of the travel narratives so popular with Canadian audiences, particularly the observation of classes of travellers. On board the ship, Dorothy is "accosted" by a young American woman, Miss Sally Le Baron-Brown, who reveals her family's superficiality and vulgar grasping after social distinction by launching into an extended description of their creation of an aristocratic lineage. "'Law! 'taint a title we have'" she responds to a question of Dorothy's about her name, "'we weren't always Le Baron-Brown, but when par made his pile, mar said we must have an aristocratic handle to our name. You know it's all the fashion in America now" (46, 49). Here the issue of title functions to dismiss both the English privileging of "blood" and the American celebration of vulgar self-creation. The adjectives that describe Dorothy during the exchange point to an implicit definition of national qualities: she is "modest" (47), speaks "quietly" (50), with "an amused smile" (50) and an unintentional "proud reserve" (52). In its representation of Dorothy, the novel demonstrates that aristocratic privilege and material wealth are both inadequate standards of judgement; they are replaced with a new ranking system, in which bourgeois manners and decorum function as a kind of universal gold standard.

Class distinctions also function to organize the relationships of the women in the novel. Dorothy's innocent fall is counterpointed to the stories of two fallen women, one associated with the aristocracy, one with the working class. Despite her humble origins,

43 A similar characterization was to appear in Duncan's Cousin Cinderella (1908), in which the American heiress Evelyn Dicey searches unabashedly for a titled man to whom she can connect herself.
the Princess Nesvitsky, with her "diamond earrings in the morning" and fingers "loaded with rings" is aligned with upper-class extravagance (113). Her glittering jewels are the conventional examples of the "finery" with which fallen women were so habitually associated. Even before we learn that she is a courtesan, we can identify the signs of moral taint. Her physical appearance signifies a voluptuousness too excessive to be virtuous; the novel lists the signs of her creeping physical decay as the consequences of sensual without moral beauty, for "[s]he once might have been beautiful, but she was now too golden-haired to be natural, too powdered to be kissable, and too fat to be healthy" (113). She is the embodiment of the city as corruption because she is not what she seems. Valverde discusses how two "contrasting but complementary" versions of the city in the nineteenth century were organized by gender categories: "[o]ne was Coke-town, hard-working, ugly, and functional; the other one was Babylon, the night-time city of lights and temptations, the city of leisure—and of sex. The former was clearly masculine while the latter was feminine" (1991, 79). Certainly the Princess' association with the typical upper-society vice of social gambling would have suggested loose morality as well as a whole range of illicit transactions that the novel alludes to but never names. After Dorothy overhears a compromising conversation between Gaston and one of the Princess' intimate acquaintances, her insistence that she must leave the Princess' house immediately without taking any of the money owed to her suggests not only that the Princess is herself a prostitute but that she makes money by procuring young women for the wealthy male friends she entertains. Thus she is worse than a fallen woman because she actively participates in the corruption of innocent women. At the very least, the Princess has employed Dorothy under false pretences, acting at the request of Count de Gallerand, whose intentions she knows to be dishonourable. Having been symbolically "widowed" (abandoned) many times rather than the once that she claims, the Princess Nesvitsky is a symbol of what Dorothy might have become had she lost herself to Gaston, or had she remained in Paris to be near him.
In its treatment of Alice Jeffreys, the novel provides a more complex representation of female sexual vulnerability. In one sense, Fytche's comparison of Dorothy's suffering with that of Alice Jeffreys, the young woman she meets in the Home, is intended to make explicit the link between the psychic, economic, and sexual oppression of women, to show how various mechanisms of domination and control intersect to ensure the continuance of male power over women. Both Alice and Dorothy are the adequately-educated daughters of decent though undistinguished families. They have come to Paris seeking work as governesses, but find to their dismay that so many other women have had the same idea that competition is harsh and their qualifications insufficient to guarantee good work. Both have the unpleasant experience of having their qualifications undervalued and are forced to take work and lodgings that they feel are beneath them. Fytche makes explicit the links between emotional and bodily enslavement in the parallels between the two women's "falls." Both encounter artist rakes who ultimately persuade them to model for them. The use of their bodies by men becomes a metaphor for prostitution, that "paradigmatic female working-class vice" (Valverde 1991, 78). Valverde explains the link between prostitution and women's corruption in the late Victorian "cosmology of vice" (78):

Working-class males were seen as potential alcoholics and criminals and acquired masculine virtue by being sober and honest; females of the working class were by contrast evaluated according to their perceived distance from... prostitution (78).

Symbolic prostitution functions in the novel in two ways. For Dorothy Pembroke, modelling signals not her sexual impurity, for she is married before she consents to model for her husband, but her psycho-sexual slavery, her relinquishing of body and self to her artist husband. In the case of Alice Jeffreys, the contiguity between her descent into the world of debased work and her sexual fall signals the perceived link between certain forms of female labour (shop work, for instance, where women are involved in commercial transactions) and the commodification of the female body in prostitution. Alice's comment
that modelling was easier work than standing on her feet all day reinforces the symbolic
link by suggesting also a causal link: her preference for a physically "easier" form of work. 
But if the comparison makes explicit the way in which a virtuous woman may be
prostituted in marriage, it also distinguishes the two women. The motif of prostitution, in
its use as critique, also betrays the novel's anxiety about the meaning of work for women.

In Alice Jeffreys' mouth is placed the harshest denunciation offered by the novel of
middle-class "benevolence" towards the poor. Alice testifies to the failure of middle-class
reform solutions, particularly in the condescension and intrusion of middle-class reformers
into the lives of the poor. Alice objects to the middle-class equation of poverty with
insensibility and carelessness: "if you are poor, they think you have no fine feelings, are
not sensitive, so patronize you, intrude upon your privacy, give you gratuitous advice upon
things you know much more about than they" (198-99). Her narrative (a kind of mini
sentimental tableau) identifies the connection between surveillance, control, and middle-
class recreation noted in the discussion of Roland Graeme: "[f]ancy our not having a key
to our bedroom doors here'' she objects, "but always at the mercy of any inquisitive
visitor who may like to see how "the inmates" live'' (199). Of the improving
entertainments organized by reformers for the girls of the Home, she connects the activities
of reformers with their own idleness and need for occupation:

"Parties! they are as much like parties as this is like a home. We are asked
to put on our best toggery and sit round a room like children, to be
entertained by some swells who have 'kindly volunteered their services.'
Grim amusement it is, and the only fun I find in it is when the entertainers
get taken down a peg, which is not an unusual occurrence, I am happy to
say. Such people mostly make fools of themselves when they play at being
benevolent. The poor all see through it, and know it is only to amuse
themselves they do it. Sometimes they want to see life, so visit the prisons,
and homes, and other institutions; sometimes they go in for sisterhoods, or
even do what they call 'slumming it;' but it is always in the way of amusement to kill time.

MacMillan has argued persuasively that Fytche's description of the English charitable home for women in Paris can be read as a thinly-veiled criticism of similar Canadian institutions (1980, xvi). It is certainly plausible that Fytche used the plot device of her heroine's journey to Europe to make what were safe but nevertheless pointed comments on unjust social institutions and practices in Canada. Yet such evidence is contradicted by other parts of the novel. For example, Alice's narrative to Dorothy, her sympathetic auditor, illustrates the heterogeneous mixture of class and gender politics espoused in the novel. Alice's narrative both prefigures and explains her subsequent moral fall, contradictorily locating the source of her suffering in her economic exploitation, her lack of moral discipline, a misplaced sense of class superiority, and an innate, "feminine" tendency to material self-indulgence. In this way, she blurs the boundaries between the unfortunate woman who falls because of hardships and the woman of lax morals who falls because of love of ease. Her account bears some striking similarities to the list of the causes of female immorality published by a Methodist moral-reform organization in Canada in 1911 which similarly jumbles moral and social inducements to sin:

(1) Lack of character, because of parental inefficiency in training and counsel.
(2) Attending theatres and amusements which pander to passion ....
(3) Too much liberty at nights on the streets.
(4) Insufficient wages in stores and factories
(5) Inordinate love of fine clothing and an unreasonable desire for an easy life. (qtd. in Valverde 1991, 98)

44 Valverde describes the conditions of YWCA boarding homes, where boarders were "subject to a thorough system of surveillance, as though their purity and probity were always in question," and includes an extract from a letter written to the Board of the Toronto YWCA Boarding Home by a young woman telling of the condescending treatment she received there (1991, 64).
As Gary Kinsman (1987) points out, middle-class concern for working women often focused on threats to their moral innocence rather than on their physical problems. Working women were assumed to be infinitely corruptible, fragile vessels insufficient to withstand the contaminating influence of the workplace, and made more vulnerable to temptation when removed from the domestic sphere (82-83).

Alice is an object lesson in the influences of environment and circumstances—and, perhaps, heredity—on vulnerable womanhood. Her good heart and simple longing for marriage and motherhood are not enough to protect her from the contaminating influences of material deprivation and competition among women, and the novel chronicles her descent from respectable poverty and struggling self-sufficiency into the loss of virtue. Clearly, all suffering does not ennoble, for Alice's sufferings are corrupting rather than purifying. Insufficient work, poor wages, and depressing conditions lead almost inevitably, the novel suggests, to moral breakdown. "The fact is," Alice announces to Dorothy, "'we are all jealous of each other; that is why every one's hand is against every other one's; it's the house and the life that make us so; worry and work, work and worry, week in, week out, and never a bit of pleasure'" (196). In Alice's account, common oppression does not lead to solidarity among women but to mutual suspicion and hostility (and thus to the need for guidance by a middle-class woman).

Despite Alice's defiance of pious reformers and her assertion of her own superiority to the uneducated servant class she refuses to join, her descent into hopelessness and vice is quick and certain. Within two years, she has changed utterly, has become the image of the working woman's immorality: slovenly, coarse, and given up to dissipation. In the following passage, the narrative displays Alice as a body to be read, for which every outward sign—details of clothing, skin tone and colour, body shape, hair style—has a finely calibrated moral correlation: "These two years had been anything but happy ones to the former; in them she had changed from a fresh, blooming young girl with flaxen locks, into a stout, red-faced, full-bosomed young woman, with bleached golden-red hair" (267). But
outward signs alone do not signal Alice's fall. Even more significant are those aspects of
demeanor and comportment which suggest the inner state. When Dorothy sees Alice, she
is shocked by a change that goes beyond the physical one, for "[n]ot only the change in
Alice's personal appearance shocked her, but the timbre of her voice affected her
unpleasantly; it had lost all the sweet Irish warmth of tone that it formerly had, and was
now, though low, harsh and bold, with a want of restraint about it that is characteristic of a
certain class of women" (271). That this "class" is both an economic and a sexual one is
made clear in Dorothy's moral repugnance. This is a strained moment in the narrative, as it
is hard to imagine how Alice's few words to Dorothy ("Mademoiselle Grimelund told me
to come right in; I hope I'm not intruding" [270]), uttered quietly and apologetically, could
possibly furnish material for the definitive interpretation Dorothy imposes upon them. It
would appear that the narrative wants immediately to establish both the absolute change in
Alice's appearance and self, and the difference between Alice and Dorothy. Whereas
before they had met as equals, now Dorothy is clearly the superior one, adopting the
position of benevolent comforter in relation to Alice, as she "silently drew Alice down
beside her, put her arm around her neck, and kissed her lovingly and tenderly with soft
kisses, such as a mother gives to a wayward child" (271). Although the scene is one of
mutual recognition of and sympathy with suffering, it is Dorothy's influence upon Alice
that the novel emphasizes: "[w]hen Alice took her leave shortly after, it was with a firm
resolve to lead henceforth another life--to live worthy of Dorothy's friendship, and to look
at things from her standpoint" (271). Dorothy's standpoint has always been, of course,
patience in suffering, in opposition to the lawless rebellion espoused by Alice. As Dorothy
tells Alice, "I know it is very hard to be generous and trusting when one is suffering from
what we imagine is the fault of others, but we are too apt to be on the alert to discover
wrong" (208). As in Machar's novel, the mere presence of the pure woman has a moral
influence on Alice, which suggests that the earlier condemnation by Alice of the actions of
reforming ladies was not so much a class analysis that recognized the inefficacy of
substituting moral for material improvements in the lives of the poor, as a judgement on the sham benevolence and goodness of the reformers. Backhouse has argued that the statement about reformers is an instance in which Fytche speaks through Alice's voice (1991, 279). While this assessment may be true, I find the counterpoint between Alice and Dorothy to be too slanted against Alice to read her words as in any simple sense representing a working-class critique of middle-class institutions.

At the root of the novel's concern with class-inflected forms of feminine suffering is an intense anxiety about the meanings of urbanization and women's movement, whether forced or voluntary, into the sphere of work. Commentators on this phenomenon posited a direct connection between women's work in cities and their moral corruption. Logsdail claimed that "[i]t is lamentably true that the moral degeneracy among the female portion of the human race is greater in all countries where the women have largely given up leading domestic and retired lives to enter into the various industrial occupations thrown open to them" (1893, 267). Charlesworth also worried that "the monotonous pleasures of the manufacturing towns are beginning to stale, and the girls have awakened to a desire to know what life is in the centres, where the fierce breath of the multitude parches that which is fresh and beautiful" (1893, 187-88). In the novel, women's economic and sexual exploitation are joined in the arena of the city, a concern suggested by Alice Jeffreys' expostulation about the "fearful traffic in white slaves" (212). Valverde has discussed how the discursive construct "white slavery" embraced a complex of ideas concerning gender, sexuality, and the city in late nineteenth-century Canada. Regardless of one's political orientation, she argues, white slavery was the nodal point around which were organized a constellation of inter-related, if often contradictory, ideas about women and urbanization. It was a "symbol or emblem of everything that was dangerous to single women in the new urban environment--and everything that was dangerous about such women" (1991, 95). Fears about women in the city centered on the effect on and of women who were "outside the protection and control of the patriarchal family" (97),
including the sexualization of public spaces and the invasion of commercial vices into the home, as enacted by Princess Nesvitsky.

The city's association with sexual passion and promiscuity—and their particular consequences for women—represents the other of the bourgeois home, in which companionate marriage provides the sole sexual expression. In ending on the Isle of Wight, the novel betrays a certain sentimental nostalgia, or more precisely, a nostalgia for sentimentalism, for a life divorced from the corruption, class permeability, racial heterogeneity, and breakdown of bourgeois codes of conduct that the city represents. Harry's offer of shelter for Dorothy, of a new name and a new identity, refigures woman's freedom, once again, as the protection of the home and the feminine self-fulfillment of philanthropy. Perhaps the novel's ending testifies to the difficulties of imagining for women a life outside of marriage. Certainly the novel's critique of women's subordination ends by consolidating a hegemonic vision of middle-class domesticity.

* * * * *

In moving from Paris to England, Dorothy moves from danger to safety, and from exploitation to appreciation. Her comments at the end of the novel—for example, that "nothing but sorrow and death will open women's eyes"—reflect her understanding of her experiences in Europe as a time of purifying trial that has prepared her, through humiliation and suffering, to accept a more limited version of freedom, choice, and fulfillment than she had initially envisioned (289). I have suggested in my reading of the novel that the decision to stage Dorothy's trial in Paris at the hands of a French artist-libertine both allows for a fundamental critique of women's economic and emotional exploitation and successfully projects that critique away from Anglo-Saxon, and particularly Canadian, institutions and national qualities. I have considered in some detail how nationalist representations of Canadian character and class morality make Dorothy's experiences intelligible within a xenophobic discourse of Parisian immorality and aristocratic carnality.
and self-indulgence. But I have not considered the narrative's French-English dynamic in the context of Anglo-Canadian representations of Canadian bi-culturality.

Whether *Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls* can be read as an allegory of Anglophone-Francophone relations within Canada is something of an open question; although anti-Catholic feeling was certainly present, especially as a result of the Manitoba Schools Question, the dominant image of the French-Canadian was that of ignorant peasant farmer rather than aristocratic rake. Yet certainly there were many English-speaking Protestants in Canada who felt that the union between Quebec and the Anglophone provinces, like that between Dorothy and Gaston, was an unholy and abusive alliance best dissolved by the death of a pernicious Catholic culture. Nativists advocated the elimination of Catholic schools in Ontario and Manitoba, in contravention of the British North America Act. As Cook has noted, many members of the Protestant clergy launched a vigorous crusade to defend Canada from "popery" in the last decade of the nineteenth century. These men saw Catholicism as "a persistent threat to civil liberty" and "a barrier to the progress of Anglo-Saxon Civilization" (Rev. B. F. Austin qtd. in Cook 1985, 70). Articles in *The Week* protested French domination of the nation, declaring it the basis of strained Anglo-French relations.\(^{45}\) Statistics showing a dramatic contrast in literacy levels between Anglo-Protestant and French-Catholic Canada reinforced associations linking Protestantism with progress and independence, and Catholicism with dependence and lack of initiative (Rutherford 1982, 25). Perhaps the novel can be read as an allegory of the triumph of Anglo-Saxon virtue over the weakness, ignorance, and petty tyranny of the French Catholic presence in Quebec. Certainly, the most positive comments by English-Canadians about the French were those that imagined a mixing of the two races, in which French racial qualities are distinctly subordinated to—and, again, feminized in relation to—Anglo-Saxon superiority. Bourinot, while insisting that French-Canadians were an essentially

\(^{45}\) A note in *The Week* for June 14, 1887 commented that "[s]o long as while nominally governing the French we are really subject to them and their Church, we cannot prophesy that any jot or title of this ill-will abate" (532).
Northern people, originating in "rugged Normandy and Brittany" rather than the more dissipated south, saw hope in a "union of the races" to invigorate the Canadian population, but Anglo-Saxon racial characteristics clearly dominate in his representation of this union: "the greater impulsiveness and vivacity of the French Canadian can brighten up, so to say, the stolidity and ruggedness of the Saxon. The strong common sense and energy of the Englishman can combine advantageously with the nervous, impetuous activity of the Gaul" (1880, 634). Kerchiefs to Hunt Souls reaffirms such declarations of Anglo-Saxon superiority within a gendered framework, celebrating Anglo-Saxon culture as beneficial for women and constructing Canada in the image of the middle-class home.

That the novel ends in England does not necessarily confuse or dilute its assertion of Canadianness. Rather, it is precisely the metaphysical nature of such a national ideal that the novel promotes. Canada as a thing of the spirit can be cultivated anywhere: the island home with its promise of refinement, grace, and philanthropy is the embodiment of that timeless and transcultural bourgeois ideal that nationalist writings claim for Canada. As the novel's class and race concerns make clear, however, though the ideal Canadian life was, in theory, open to anyone, certain people were more suited to take it up. As time went on, and greater numbers of immigrants from the less "desirable" races continued to pour like "a mighty stream" or invade like a "marching army" in Canada, feminist critique continued to show itself a willing ally of dominant ideology (Woodsworth 1909, 12). Concern shifted from the decadence and immorality of the French aristocrat to the cunning and lust of the opium-smoking Chinese white slaver, as in the work of leading feminist Emily Murphy. The pattern established in Victorian Canada was to continue well into the twentieth century, as feminist analysis of male exploitation of women was harnessed to the cause of establishing the inferiority of non-Anglo-Saxon men and the culpability of unruly New Women. In the process, a certain consensus about what it meant to be Canadian, a "certain indefinite something that at once unites us and distinguishes us from all the world" was being developed in the discourse of social reform (Woodsworth 1909, 16).
"Not a Spark of Genius"? The Question of Literary Value

Throughout this study, I have deliberately avoided engaging with the issue of literary value, and have self-consciously addressed the texts under consideration as cultural documents rather than literary masterpieces (or failures). It is thus worthwhile to say a few words now about the question of the literary in relation to the novels I have examined, and to suggest reasons why I believe the study of these novels to be an important part of literary and cultural criticism.

In discussing those questions about literary value invariably raised by her work on sentimental and sensational nineteenth-century American literature, Tompkins (1985) asserts that the accepted criteria of literariness—symbolic texture, psychological complexity, rich language, formal integrity—cannot be evoked as if they were value-free measures. Tompkins argues that the moment these supposedly universal standards of literary quality are summoned, an invocation of the partisan judgements Tompkins contests has already taken place. The very invocation decides the outcome of the debate it is supposed to mediate objectively. Tompkins supports this contention with a scholarly and extensively-researched history tracing the hard-won institutionalization of the values now appealed to as self-evident, neutral, and trans-historical, such that our very "modes of perception" are culturally constructed (189). She asserts that "[t]he general agreement about which writers are great and which are minor that exists at any particular moment in the culture creates the impression that these judgements are obvious and self-evident. But their obviousness is not a natural fact; it is constantly being produced and maintained by cultural activity" (193). One sometimes suspects that, lurking beneath Tompkins' evasions and deconstructive maneuvers is a certain disingenuousness, an unwillingness to admit her real assessment of the novels, which we all think we can guess. Why won't she admit that her novels, though

---

1 The reference is to Campbell's review of Roland Graeme (qtd. in Davies 1979, 195).
interesting, lack literary quality? At the same time, though, there is something exhilarating in her avowal of an explicitly political mandate: literary criticism as a struggle about how the nation represents itself. In her study, Tompkins attacks the received view of American literary history as that of the heroic (male) individual battling conventionality and stifling sentimentality in his quest for Truth, revealing instead an ambitious and extensive program engineered by a well-organized community of writing women, whose achievements have since been systematically written out of history. Although Tompkins' paradigm cannot simply be transferred to the Canadian context (Canadian women writers were not so organized and their audience was much smaller), my study is similarly an attempt to shift the study of nineteenth-century Canadian literature in the direction of greater accuracy, representation, and political engagement.

But to return to the vexed question of literary value. The issue of literariness seems to me to be a profoundly difficult one for feminist and post-colonial critics of non-canonical literatures, for it raises fundamental questions about how we read, how we judge, and to what extent it is possible to resist culturally-conditioned responses. Harris' "'But is it any good?" (1993), her title echoing Tompkins' last chapter, demonstrates the potential pitfalls of redefining literary merit. Harris recognizes that existing literary criteria are biased against sentimental literature, and attempts to construct evaluative measures for nineteenth-century women's novels that would take into account both the text's and the reader's historical and ideological positioning. One set of criteria is "functional and historical," identifying the needs served by the fiction for its intended audience, and assessing the power and emancipatory potential of those needs (1993, 270). Another level of analysis concerns itself with language, asking how successfully and persuasively the text employs certain figures of speech and sentimental images. The essay is an ambitious and stimulating argument because it attempts to address questions of literary artistry specifically applicable to the forms and techniques of (white) women writers. But as a working guide to nineteenth-century literature, it is full of critical problems. The evaluative categories it
puts forward (references to powerful language, for instance) are vague; moreover, the overall terms of judgement--self-consciousness, individuality, formal complexity--arguably remain those of the very canonical apparatus responsible for excluding sentimental women writers in the first place. Moreover, the implication that the more subversive a text can be shown to be, the higher its literary value, seems a shaky basis for judgements about literary quality, if only because "subversiveness" is notoriously difficult to establish. But most importantly, Harris' founding assumption that evaluation is the end of critical activity is never interrogated as itself value-laden and masculinist. Of course we do make judgements about value all of the time, in the texts we choose to read, discuss, write about, and teach, but that fact does not lead inevitably to the need to codify such judgements within an authoritative academic framework and establish them as relevant for all time. And in any event, arguing about literariness in relation to the social problem novel may well be beside the point. Machar's subtitling of Roland Graeme as A Novel Of Our Time--much as we might argue with the realism of her presentation--suggests her wish to disassociate her novel from both sensationalistic and artistic creations: her novel was not designed for escapism or aesthetic contemplation, but rather, quite clearly, to instruct and to move to action. As Amy Lang notes with reference to Uncle Tom's Cabin, "its claim to sincerity depended on its repudiation of the 'literary'" (1992, 136). The passages in Kerchiefs in which Dorothy and Gaston argue about the proper sphere of woman and Wood's exhortatory address to women readers point undeniably to pedagogical concerns that cannot easily be assimilated to modern conceptions of the literary. In asserting the historical or cultural as opposed to the literary value of such works as Machar's Roland Graeme, I ask why the literary should so unquestioningly be privileged over, or indeed separated from, the cultural and historical. As Pykett argues, such an understanding of literary criticism was produced by modernism and continues to operate in academic institutions, such that "a hegemonic version of literary history and value is first produced and then reproduced by a literary academy committed to working constantly over the same relatively small group of
texts" (1995, 11). In the end, then, I return to Tompkins' argument, unsatisfying as it may be. With her, I believe that narratives perform significant cultural work, and in the following discussion, I hope to clarify the urgency and the usefulness of critical attention to the work performed by representations of Canada and narratives of sympathetic community generally.

I have been fascinated in my research for this dissertation by the unexpected strangeness of late-Victorian Canada; the narrow range of texts available to scholars of nineteenth-century Canadian literature surely contributed to my misconception. Expecting conventionality, moderation, and a confused, quiet nationalism (the legacies, if you like, of the very national mythology imputed not to exist) I have found instead passion, prurience, and obsession with disease, cultural decay, and immorality. At the same time, I was startled by the many similarities between that period and our own, in terms both of the issues being debated and the rhetorical strategies employed. The issues over which late-Victorian Canadian writers argued are the ones that, by and large, remain the most painful and divisive controversies facing Canadians today: the meaning of education, the relative importance of environment versus heredity, the role of the state in regulating ethics and morality, the relation between the individual and the community, a combined fear of and faith in progress, and the contested meanings of gender, class, and race. And although the specific terminology has often changed (dominant discourses refer to ethnic minorities rather than unassimilable races, for instance), the rhetorical strategies have retained some fundamental similarities. Then as now, discussions of the poor, immigrants, and unruly women, as well as other socially peripheral groups, are linked to the nation through what Stallybrass and White call "a generalized economy of transgression," in which these deviant groups come to define the limits of national community (1986, 19). Though economically and politically marginalized, such groups are made central to the symbolic structures of the nation, to the terms by which it speaks about itself. In their desire to authorize themselves as reasonable and moderate, commentators on social problems
construct their appeals to sympathy and/or fear through a series of oppositions that
determine the sympathetic status of their objects. These discourses, then, are concerned
not only with discovering but actually with creating appropriate objects of philanthropic
intervention or cultural defence. How such representations and rhetorical strategies set the
limits of what it is possible to say about any subject remains of fundamental importance to
any textual critic interested in emancipatory politics.

We have seen how the depiction of Canada as a more benevolent, fair, and
egalitarian land, where suffering does not exist, limited the extent to which critiques of that
society could be articulated and imposed restrictions on how sufferers could be
represented. Canada as a particularly benevolent nation characterized by its moderation,
tolerance, and compassion for the weak is still the dominant national image. For example,
a 1995 Canada Day column in the Globe and Mail entitled "The Spirit of Canada" claimed
for Canadians a quasi-mystical apprehension of national truth founded on the traditional
virtues, transmitted across Canadian time and through Canadian space. Speaking of
Canadians' notorious reticence about their country's achievements and identity, the article
goes on to celebrate those achievements, employing a metaphor of discovery to represent
Canada as a nation of infinite explorability properly known only by patriotic citizens: "[i]n
our land, in our space, we need no map or compass to find our way; we navigate by the
dead reckoning of morality, history, and geography. Our guide is a sense of community, a
belief in democracy, a commitment to compassion, tolerance and moderation, a liberal
internationalism" (D6). Aside from the unintended double entendre of "dead" reckoning,
the passage is notable for its utter familiarity, reassuring an anxious Canadian public with
what it already knows. Canadians' misrecognition of ourselves and our national structures
as tolerant continues to impose a dead weight on our ability to recognize and respond to
Canadian social problems. Attempts to discuss class, gender, or racial oppression in
Canada are pre-empted by the self-congratulatory claim that no other nation has gone as far
along the path to justice as Canada has. Thus, for example, discussions by the mainstream
press of racism in Canada continually deflect the problem to the United States, such that the
U.S. becomes both an image of the evils from which our tolerance has saved us and,
paradoxically, a warning about the potential consequences of too much tolerance in the
form of continued non-white immigration, multiculturalism, or affirmative action. Claims
to greater tolerance, sympathy, and inclusiveness in turn become the basis for exclusionary
practices, as in the case of the Economic Council of Canada's 1991 recommendation to
restrict non-European immigration in order to protect visible minority communities, since
"with more visible minority members in a given area, the opportunities for expression of
prejudice grow even if the average level of prejudice is declining" (qtd. in Foster 1991,
12). Attention to this rhetorical process throughout history is a crucial step towards
fostering critical self-awareness about false claims of benevolence in the present and their
frequently conservative political function.

Throughout this study, I have approached with skepticism the appeal to sympathy
as persuasive strategy in social reform writing. Many of the texts I have examined depend
on the decorous presentation of undeserved suffering to generate responses of compassion,
indignation, and social commitment. In doing so, these essays and fictions reveal their
belief in the necessity of sympathetic feeling for political action in the service of social
transformation. As we have seen, though, the requirements for the production of
sympathetic feeling are fairly rigid. The sufferers in these narratives--women and the
poor--are worthy objects of compassion because their suffering is beyond their control,
because they sacrifice themselves for others, because their own desires and expectations are
humble, because they fulfill conventional gender and class expectations. Their presentation
reveals certain implicit rules about the generation of sympathy in narrative: that the sufferer
must be demonstrably innocent, that the object of benevolence must prove no threat to the
material, social, or psychic comfort of the viewer, and that the act of relieving the sufferer's
pain must provide emotional gratification to the observer, and must directly confirm his or
her sense of self-worth. These rules are faithfully followed in much social reform writing
then and now; such rules are considered necessary to the successful generation of compassion and righteous indignation. How often these feelings translate into action in real social situations, usually more complicated, overwhelming, and threatening than their fictional counterparts, is an open question. However, the textual creation of sufferers too sympathetic to live (Machar's Lizzie, Wood's Myron) suggests that sentimental treatments of social problems allow the audience a gratifying experience of benevolence without the need to take action in the world since appropriate objects of sympathy could never be found. There will always be that resentment in the poor person, that dissipation in the sex worker, that bitterness in the feminist, that puts them out of the range of our compassion.

This function of sentimental treatments of social problems addressed to a mass audience has largely been taken over by the Hollywood film industry and contemporary popular advertising. Although the medium has changed, the message is recognizably similar. As such, the function of the appeal to sympathy in representations of solutions to social injustice continues to deserve study, both as an historical phenomenon central to the origins of our nation's cultural discourse, and as a contemporary political and social practice. An example of this kind of critical investigation in the American context appeared in a recent issue of Harper's magazine. In "Put on a Happy Face," Benjamin DeMott argues that sentimental images of black-white friendship, "where whites are unafraid of blacks, where blacks ask for and need nothing from whites, and where the sameness of the races creates a common fund of sweet content" serve a conservative political agenda designed to cover over the material bases of black-white inequality and thus justify withdrawing support from affirmative action programs and other pro-active anti-racist initiatives (1995, 32). Countless feel-good films and popular images sell the message that racism can be solved through sympathetic one-on-one encounters, and are engaged in the process of rewriting African-Americans as sympathetic no-longer victims whose gratitude and cheerful acceptance of inequality enables white benevolence without guilt. Such films and advertisements carefully delimit the borders of the new, racially-harmonious American
community; in it belong those who acknowledge one another's common humanity, having let go of out-dated racial categories. The project of national regeneration becomes synonymous with the effort of self-regeneration: if whites and blacks can scrub away the vestiges of racial mistrust and misunderstanding, and if they can come to see each other as individuals rather than members of a racial group, then all will be well in America. Of course, whites and blacks participate asymmetrically in the process of bringing about this community of painless equality. Because America is always assumed to be white, whites need only to feel sympathy for their black neighbors. Blacks, however, must become both like whites (in order to be "American") and deserving of their helping hand, that is, accepting of a racialized status quo masking as equality, not angry about past or present injustices, and not assertively different.

Describing this 1990s solution to social disparity, DeMott could be defining the techniques of the sentimental reform novel: as he explains it, the feel-good strategy "miniaturizes, personalizes, and moralizes," convincing audiences "to see history as irrelevant and to regard feelings as decisive" (34). This vision of a sympathetic community is one in which "acts of private piety substitute for public policy" and thus enable the legacy of slavery to continue its invisible structuring of black-white relations (35). The aptness of DeMott's characterization of popular images of racial justice suggests that cultural and literary critics need to continue to look deeply into the political work that sentimental representations perform in their socio-historical context.

Efforts in social problem literature to construct the socially marginal in terms that will guarantee them sympathetic status and thus allow community inclusion of certain members of an abject social group--Machar's respectable poor, Wood's regenerative fallen woman, and Fytche's domesticated New Woman--can be traced to contemporary political rhetoric on both sides of the Left-Right divide. It is useful to note that such rhetorical strategies have no inherent political effect; they are neither essentially reactionary nor essentially progressive, but are rather flexible manoeuvres adaptable to a variety of political
ends. Such strategies deserve continued socio-cultural analysis, not least for what they show us about the inextricable relationship between dominant discourses and the formation of marginal or deviant subjectivities. This point is made by Anna Marie Smith in her article entitled "The Imaginary Inclusion of the Assimilable 'Good Homosexual'" (1994). In this article, Smith examines the Thatcherite government's deployment of the figure of the "good homosexual" to counter charges of homophobia and to prove its own tolerance. In the process, government rhetoric demonized those gays and lesbians who did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the reputedly inclusive community of Thatcherite Britain, and even contributed to rifts in the gay community over the perceived possibility and/or desirability of achieving such inclusion.

Such a homophobic discourse, masking as inclusion, has significant parallels with the new racism of the 1980s and 90s, Smith argues. Within the new racist discourse, discussions of race relations as naturalized encounters between members of equal but different national groups replace discussions of systemic injustice such that a "quite blatantly racist immigration law" can be defended as being "in the interests of the racial minorities themselves, for greater restrictions on racial immigration will by definition prepare the way for better 'race relations'" (62). Constructing normal white Britishness as an imaginary cultural space rather than a political and geographical entity created through legislation, this new racist discourse celebrates the assimilable immigrant as deserving of honorary inclusion in the Thatcherite social order. Similarly, this discourse constructs an imaginary "good homosexual" who is "self-limiting, closeted, desexualized, and invisible" (64). Such constructions, though impossible to live up to because nobody could fulfill all their criteria without disappearing, nonetheless hold out a promise of inclusion with divisive effects for the target communities, as members scramble for inclusion by denouncing and separating themselves from their unassimilable counterparts. In this context, Neil Bissoondath's (1994) defiantly anti-P.C. (actually unswervingly politically correct) self-construction as the ideal loyal and deserving immigrant creates an imaginary
Canadian multi-cultural community that rigidly polices the borders of acceptable ethnicity while ignoring the class and gender elements of such a construction. In Bissoondath's representation, the good immigrant/ethnic Canadian is self-reliant in protecting his or her cultural heritage and endlessly accommodating of white ignorance and hostility; only immigrants/ethnics adept at assimilation are truly Canadian and worthy of sympathetic protection against "prejudice," the de-politicized word that invariably replaces racism in such accounts. Bissoondath's clearly self-serving discursive practices are compelling evidence of the complex ways that appeals to sentimental nationhood are appropriated, internalized, and reformulated to serve varying political ends.

The critical project of attending to strategies for assimilation and exclusion in relation to the imaginary national body is an important part of political resistance because it enables an examination of the power politics of particular rhetorical moves, and also suggests possibilities for marginalized groups to identify the links between them and thus to mobilize for effective collective resistance. This line of study also suggests the effect of marginalized identities on the dominant, national self-construction, since these constructions work both ways (although with asymmetrical effects). In her book *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Toni Morrison attends to the effect of a black presence on white American writers, arguing that "a real or fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to their sense of Americanness" (1992, 6). She argues that "[f]or excellent reasons of state--because European sources of cultural hegemony were dispersed but not yet valorized in the new country--the process of organizing American coherence through a distancing Africanism became the operative mode of a new cultural hegemony" (8). Morrison examines how representations of blackness underwrite the project of imagining white, male Americanness throughout the nation's literary history, even when--perhaps most especially when--the narrative is not specifically about Africans or African-Americans. The African slave population "offered itself up as surrogate selves for meditation on problems of human freedom, its lure and its elusiveness" (37). In the
context of Morrison's insights, historically and culturally specific studies need to be done on the construction of a Canadian subjectivity through the creation of various non-Canadian figures who perform this crucial cultural work of "exorcism and reification and mirroring" (39). If Americans have had a single, over-riding non-American presence, as Morrison claims, Canadians have had rather a complex and often contradictory mixture of non-selves as a product of our colonial heritage. Yet the manner in which non-Canadianness was constructed to make possible the process of cultural self-definition is similarly important to understanding Canadian literary history. Such a mode of investigation makes Canadian literary history more accurate and also allows us to read these texts in more complex, interesting, and rewarding ways.

**Directions for Further Work**

In my dissertation, I have outlined a schema for the sentimental social problem text in which conventionally outcast or marginalized figures are shown to be deserving of benevolent recognition and are recast by the narrative as potential members of a sympathetic community. As I have shown, such narratives of inclusion also have their counterparts—often within the texts themselves—in narratives that identify and expunge those who fall outside the sympathetic community. In giving detailed attention to the broadly political function of such sympathetic narratives, I have attempted to chart one direction for further literary criticism of Victorian-Canadian writers, criticism which will take into account the complex interactions between literary text and socio-historical contexts. The defensive and apologetic stance that has been adopted by some Canadian critics of nineteenth-century literature can be discarded, as can the condescending judgements of critics who position themselves as benevolent but stern fathers evaluating the character and achievements of their daughter-writers.² I think there is more interesting work to be done to explore the

² I am thinking in particular of Tausky, who often refers to Sara Jeannette Duncan as Sara in his study of the author, and makes many condescending remarks about her abilities and understanding, such as his comment that he "cannot feel that Sara Jeannette Duncan really understood the drift towards a modern consciousness" (1980, 80).
various ways that Canada—as it was or as it should be—has been represented by novelists
and other writers. I am surprised at the small body of criticism existing on even critically
recognized nineteenth-century writers such as Ralph Connor, Duncan, and Rosanna
Leprohon. Women writers have, of course, been particularly underrepresented in studies
of the period. The Early Canadian Women Writers Series reprints by Tecumseh Press of
Ottawa promises the opportunity for greater attention to hitherto inaccessible texts if critics
will take the opportunity to pursue these potentially rewarding authors. For example,
Margaret Murray Robertson's project to establish Canada as a New World Scotland—with
Gaelic as unfallen language—is a fascinating instance of the complex national and political
dimensions of sentimental fiction. In this context, attention is similarly due to Lily
Dougall, whose vision of Canada as a place where Old World identities must be discarded,
with the new land a crucible for revealing one's essential self, has proven a powerful and
influential one. In the work of these and other writers such as Saunders, Anna
Leonowens, and Flora MacDonald Denison, we find a complex mixture of national
celebration, instruction, and self-examination that deserves further study as a part of
Canada's literary and social history. In focusing on constructions of Canada as
sympathetic and egalitarian, I do not mean to suggest that such is the only schema one
could construct or to rule out altogether different reading strategies. But if I have
succeeded in identifying a standard narrative pattern of such novels, it would be interesting
to investigate nineteenth-century Canadian novels further to discover whether there are
novels that reject such a rhetorical pattern, as is the case with the American novelist
Rebecca Harding Davis' Life In the Iron Mills (1861), which stages the middle class
narrator's inability to tell sympathetically of the life of the poor, emphasizing instead

---

3 See especially Robertson's Shenac's Work At Home (1866).
4 Here I am thinking of Dougall's What Necessity Knows (1893).
failures of narration, the insufficiency of sympathy, and the near impossibility of even imagining harmonious class relations.  

Further work could well be done on the formation of classed identities in nineteenth-century Canadian literature. When I first conceived the idea for this project, I expected that writings by women on the issues of poverty and gender inequality would be both more sensitive and more critical than those by men. If I did not exactly expect to be able to pronounce the feminine a space of pure resistance, I did expect to find evidence that middle-class women shared with the poor a privileged perspective on the workings of male supremacy and capitalist exploitation. As I began to read the novels, I revised this expectation. Although we are beginning to see in these texts a critique of capitalism and patriarchy as overlapping and mutually sustaining systems of domination, this critique is severely compromised by an uninterrogated understanding of class. All of the novels of the period that address class issues employ gender categories to bring about remedy and reconciliation. In appealing to the ideology of the home and family as the basis for critique and reform, the novels emphasize the inextricability of class and gender under patriarchy, but tend to reinforce such relations by naturalizing them. As Lovell (1987) has pointed out, most nineteenth-century white bourgeois feminists did not want to see the destruction of the class system: they merely wanted to improve the positions of bourgeois women within their class. But because bourgeois status defined itself—in opposition to "gentry decadence and working-class vulgarity"—through an idealized home and feminine virtue, women who wanted to maintain class status had to conform to gender ideology (Lovell 105). Although this linkage allows the novel to address the combined class and gender oppression of the working-class woman, it also means that the novel's feminism relies on an acceptance of class difference to realize the sympathetic plight of its heroine. Further attention to the intersection of class and gender issues in novels by early Canadian women is necessary to

---

5 For an interesting comparison of Davis' novel to Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, see Amy Lang's "Class and the Strategies of Sympathy" (1992).
expand feminist understandings of class as an operative category in the construction of Canada as a classless nation.

Some of the most interesting work in nineteenth-century American sentimental literature has addressed representations of the racial other; my study is limited in that the texts on which I focus contain no representations of people of colour. Indeed, during the period under consideration, non-white immigrants were pronounced to be unassimilable, and thus were not, properly speaking, a part of the "social" at all. Even less included in dominant conceptions of the nation, First Nations people were firmly marginalized on reserves and considered to be a dying race. That said, though, there is work to be done on representations of people of colour in nineteenth-century literature. Written by white, middle-class men and women, nineteenth-century narratives of the community and its problems are primarily but not exclusively about white people, and to write about them as if they were is to repeat the cultural exclusions they carry out. Further attention deserves to be paid to the cast of non-white characters who so frequently form the background to the main narrative in nineteenth-century novels. For example, a group of assorted comic and noble native and black characters function as setting in the romantic drama of Saunders' The House of Armour. Black servants and companions appear frequently in the novels of May Agnes Fleming. The little commentary that addresses these texts seems to ignore the representation of non-white characters as an embarrassing period anomaly. Attention needs to be paid to the ways that non-white bodies are represented, to non-white characters' plot functions, and to their relationships to white characters. Lora Romero has criticized Foucauldian narratives of the modernization of power by noting that the emphasis on the emergence of disciplinary power downplays the West's simultaneous "commitment to massive destruction of populations designated as 'other'" (1992, 127). In this context, white Canadian representations of native peoples deserve more attention than they have hitherto received. Images of native peoples and the idea of indigeneity are central to the work of writers such as G. Mercer Adam, Isabella Valancy Crawford, Samuel Hearne,
Joseph Howe, Douglas Huyghue, Pauline Johnson, Susanna Moodie, John Richardson, Duncan Campbell Scott, and Ethelwyn Wetherald, to name only a few. Romero distinguishes a genre in nineteenth-century American fiction that she designates the "cult of the Vanishing Americans," a narrative mode representing "the disappearance of the native not just as natural but as having already happened" (115). Given the real and perceived differences between native-white encounters in America and Canada, it is certainly worth examining whether these differences are manifested in representational strategies. Were James Fenimore Cooper's stories of sensational expiry imported wholesale to Canada, or were they appropriated in a nationalist context? Terry Goldie's analysis of the process of "indigenization," a word suggesting "the impossible necessity of becoming indigenous" in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand texts is a useful starting point (1989, 13); concerned as it is with points of similarity in representations across cultures and over a two-hundred-year time span, Goldie's study deserves more historically and nationally-specific elaboration and correction. Understanding the literary and cultural texts that have shaped our national consciousness is a crucial part of resistance to oppressive systems of representation.

* * * * * * * * *

If I have stressed the limitation of the appeal to sympathy, it is certainly not because I regard it as a silly and outmoded emancipatory strategy, but rather because of my sense of the difficulty of imagining other bases for social justice claims. If the democratic posture of sentimentality rests on the imperative for sameness, requiring the sympathetic victim to be just as moral, hard-working, health-producing, patriotic, and eager for acceptance as any disciplinarian could dream, then the need for rights advocates to continue to imagine different models of community remains pressing. The post-colonial emphasis on difference, useful for its fundamental critique of the ideology of sympathy, has largely failed to translate itself into mainstream popular discourse, perhaps partly because of the powerfully seductive appeal of humanism in relation to the relative emotional barrenness of
difference. I say this not to blame theorists of difference or to downplay the tremendous gains that feminist, anti-racist, and gay rights cultural and community activists have made in the last twenty years, but instead to recognize the considerable challenges of imagining workable models of social relations that do not reproduce past errors. If I have been suspicious of the appeal to sympathy as the basis for social justice claims and representations of community, I am also aware of the gathering strength of the contemporary (right wing) "reform" movement, which has given renewed respectability to non-sympathy as an approach to social issues. Claiming the social good of laissez-faire economics and a vindictive Protestant work ethic, Preston Manning and his band of budget bottom-liners and fundamentalist Christians threaten to return us to the very social conditions Machar, Fytche, and Wood tried to alleviate and accommodate with their reforms. Indeed, the (anti) Reformers' repeated demonization of the welfare bums and single, non-white mothers supposedly at the basis of all social ills suggests the longevity of Anglo-Canada's legacy from the Victorian era. As the political Centre moves increasingly to the Right, the kinds of narratives of inclusion and exclusion I have examined here continue to play a powerful role in this nation's self-representation.
Works Cited


- - - . 1990. *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.


Godard, Barbara. 1992. "'Petticoat Anarchist?': Joanna Wood, the Sex of Fiction, the Fictive Sex." Potvin and Williamson 95-123.


Item. May 15, 1884. The Week. 370.
Item. January 13, 1887. The Week. 110.
Item. February 10, 1887. The Week. 173.
Item. February 17, 1887. The Week. 190.
Item. May 12, 1887. The Week. 385.
Item. June 14, 1887. The Week. 532.
Item. August 11, 1887. The Week. 596.


"Our Library Table." 20 October 1887. The Week. 759-60.


"Round the Table." December 1877. Canadian Monthly and National Review. 639-47.

"Round the Table." December 1879. Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review. 373-79.


---. 1993b. "'Oh, Lord, pour a cordial in her wounded heart': The Drinking Woman in Victorian and Edwardian Canada." Warsh 70-91.


Wright, Cynthia. 1992. "'Feminine Trifles of Vast Importance': Writing Gender into the History of Consumption." Iacovetta and Valverde 229-60.
