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**The Empire is Woman's Sphere:
Organized Female Imperialism in Canada, 1880s-1920s**

by

Lisa Gaudet, B.A., M.A.

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of History
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August 2001**

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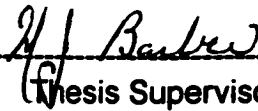
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Abstract

As a study of organized female imperialism within the IODE, the Girls' Friendly Society, and the Girl Guides between the 1880s and the 1920s, this dissertation contributes to both national history and the history of women in Canada. It challenges conventional narratives of a unitary national history by highlighting the operations of gender, class, and race in the process of nation-building. Through the gendered work of educating women and children and attending to the issues of reproduction and morality, organized female imperialists helped to install definitions of Canadian citizenship and informal systems of governance that served the interests of the Anglo-Saxon middle class.

A staunch commitment to British imperialism fueled this nation-building work. At a time when rapid immigration, urbanization, and secularization were transforming the character of the nation, the leading ladies of these organizations promoted the imperial ideals of selflessness, deference, and duty as the best hope for an orderly society. Long after the close of the First World War, they celebrated Canada's intimate affiliations with the history, traditions, and monarchism of the British empire as the core of the Canadian national identity. Their transatlantic connections and identification with a Britannic national family gave white, middle-class women a powerful public role as the "mothers of the race." These external connections both point to the porous nature of nation formation and complicate the assumption that Canadian imperialism was simply a form of Canadian nationalism.

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accessing the headquarters' extensive (but dismantled) archival collection he came through for me in grand style. I share his lament that such a rich part of Canada's national heritage now lies disintegrating in uncatalogued warehouse boxes. My colleagues, Leona Crabb, Janet Friskney, Joanna Dean, and Erica Smith shared the stresses of post-graduate life and offered me endless moral support over bottomless cups of coffee. For that I am grateful. I also thank my husband, Gareth, my parents, Emilier and Yvonne, and my in-laws, Ray and Hilary, for their patience and for their unstinting confidence in my ability to succeed. Last but not least, I am grateful for my son, Liam, who emptied many a drawer and cabinet while Mama sat at the computer doing her "work." The joy of mothering him sustained me through the completion of this lonely task.

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Introduction

Gender relations in modern Canada cannot be disentangled from Canadian nationalism and imperialism, just as Canadian nationalism and imperialism cannot be freed from gender relations.¹ Yet the current anxieties among traditionalist historians about the fragmentation of national history serve as a blunt reminder of days not long past when the essence of Canada was defined by the political, economic, and military heroics of a few great men.² Until recently, Canadian history texts featured a familiar cast of nation-builders: the intrepid architects of responsible government, the ennobled Fathers of Confederation, the champions of Canadian nationalism, along with a complement of businessmen and industrialists.³ Economic affairs—tariff debates, railways, industry, natural resource development, and western settlement—predominated.⁴ While three decades of feminist scholarship have

¹Philip N. Cohen. "Nationalism and Suffrage: Gender Struggle in Nation-Building America." *Signs* 21, 3 (1996): 707.

²Rosemary Gagan points out that until the 1970s "doing Canadian history meant monolithic explanations of Canada's path to nationhood. Women's history, like the history of social classes, was simply irrelevant." "Putting Humpty Together Again: The Challenge of Canadian Women's History." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 4, 2 (1989): 277. See Michael Bliss, "Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26, 4 (Winter 1991-92): 5-17 and Jack Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1998).

³Recent Canadian history texts have made important leaps in the inclusion of social history, women, and ethnic minorities. See Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel with Cornelius Jaenan, *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993).

⁴Sean Purdy makes this observation in "Building Homes, Building Citizens: Housing Reform and Nation Formation in Canada, 1900-20." *Canadian Historical Review* 79, 3 (September 1998): 492. An emphasis on economics is apparent in, for example, Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); and R.C. Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974). See also, Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Felman, "Introduction" in *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, 2d ed., ed. Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Felman (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991), p. 1.

provided a partial corrective to the male-centred historiographical tradition, historians of Canadian women have been slow to ponder the critical place of nation and empire in gender politics.⁵ Feminism and reform, two of the most consequential social movements of this period (1880s to 1920s), have generally been disengaged from “the national question.” This dissertation makes connections between these two fields of Canadian history.

Canada, like all nations, is an artificial construction. More than a set of institutions and governing arrangements, it is an *idea*, a fiction, or, in the words of Stuart Hall, “a system of cultural representation.”⁶ Benedict Anderson’s influential view of the nation as an “imagined community” has sparked a fruitful international discussion on the transparency of national identity.⁷ His work provides theoretical tools with which to unmask and unsettle the myths and representations that enable or disable national belonging. As Catherine Hall observes, “the narratives of national culture have the power to generate forms of identification and allegiance, the sense of

⁵The list has grown too long to include here. For reviews of this scholarship see Margaret Conrad, “The Rebirth of Canada’s Past: A Decade of Women’s History,” *Acadiensis* (Spring 1983): 140-62; Gagan, “Putting Humpty Together Again”: Gail Cuthbert Brandt, “Postmodern Patchwork: Some Recent Trends in the Writing of Women’s History in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 72, 4 (December 1991): 441-70; and Bettina Bradbury, “Women and the History of Their Work in Canada: Some Recent Books,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, 3 (Fall 1998): 159-178.

⁶Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity,” in *Modernity and its Futures*, ed. Stuart Hall, David Held, and Anthony McGrew (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), p. 92.

⁷Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2d ed. (London: Verso, 1997); E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991); H.K. Bhaba, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1991); and E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

'being at home' for some, of being excluded for others."⁸ We can better understand nationhood as an ongoing *process* whose meanings are historically specific and politically charged. Paradoxically, this process seeks a unity of interests, a national sense of community, while at the same time creating hierarchies of social difference. Social inequalities—manifested in immigration laws, social policies, access to political power, cultural practices, and definitions of citizenship—are nationally entrenched.⁹ Until recently, however, power relations have been absent from the study of national history in Canada and elsewhere.¹⁰ Gender difference, more specifically, is only just beginning to receive attention from scholars of nationalisms and national identity.¹¹

The jeremiads of traditionalist historians who mourn the loss of a unitary national history leave the impression that there is, indeed, a fixed, authentic *Canada* to be found beneath the layers of interpretation piled high by politically ensconced practitioners of the new social history.¹² Their confidence in their own objectivity as

⁸Catherine Hall. "From Greenland's Icy Mountains...to Africa's Golden Sand": Ethnicity, Race and Nation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England." *Gender & History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993): 215.

⁹Anne McClintock. "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family." *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61-80.

¹⁰Political power struggles, particularly the conflict between French and English Canada, have been a central theme in Canadian historical writing. The more subtle dynamics of power, along the lines of gender, class, and race, have been acknowledged only quite recently.

¹¹Catherine Hall et al., "Introduction." *Gender & History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993): 159-164; Eleni Varikas. "Gender and National Identity in *fin de siècle* Greece." *Gender & History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993): 269-283; McClintock. "Family Feuds"; Catherine Nash. "Remapping and Renaming: New Cartographies of Identity, Gender and Landscape in Ireland." *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 39-57; and D. Kandiyoti. "Identity and its Discontents: Women and the Nation." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, 3 (1991): 429-43.

¹²Some cultural theorists argue that Canada never really attained the true status of nationhood. Northrop Frye suggests that Canada "passed from a pre-national to a post-national phase without ever becoming a nation." Northrop Frye in *Mythologizing Canada: Essays on the Canadian Literary Imagination*,

detached observers of a retrievable past implies a superhuman ability to peel off their present-day point of reference. This dissertation is, in part, a contribution to the debates surrounding this issue of “national history.”¹³ It is a subtle unmasking of the “will to power” that lies behind the cultural arrangement of a vast and diverse population into a national community. All Canadians, including the Cree woman in Saskatchewan, the Chinese miner in British Columbia, and the Acadian farmer in Nova Scotia, imagined a unique and experientially based version of the nation they inhabited. In the words of Nietzsche: “In so far as the word ‘knowledge’ has any meaning at all, the world is knowable: but it can be interpreted differently; behind it lies no meaning but rather countless meanings—‘Perspectivism.’”¹⁴ But it was those white elites who wielded influence over education, government, and print culture whose national mythologies were privileged, centred, and passed on to future

ed. Branko Gorjup (Ottawa: LEGAS, 1997), p. 137.

¹³There has been a vigorous debate within our discipline over what constitutes national history. See, for example, Bliss, “Privatizing the Mind”; Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?*; Gregory S. Kealey, “Class in English-Canadian Historical Writing: Neither Privatizing, Nor Sundering,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27, 2 (Summer 1992): 123-129; Linda Kealey et al., “Teaching Canadian History in the 1990s: Whose ‘National’ History Are We Lamenting?” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27, 2 (Summer 1992): 129-131; Veronica Strong-Boag, “Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 5 (1994): 3-17; Gail Cuthbert Brandt, “National Unity and the Politics of Political History,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 3 (1992): 3-11. This issue is not unique to Canada. In the British context see, for example: J.C.D. Clark, “National Identity, State Formation and Patriotism: the Role of History in the Public Mind”; Janet L. Nelson, “A Place for Medieval History in the National Curriculum?”; Shula Marks, “History, the Nation and Empire: Sniping from the Periphery”; and Raphael Samuel, “Grand Narratives,” all in *History Workshop Journal* 29 (Spring 1990); and Paul Gilroy, “Nationalism, History and Ethnic Absolutism,” *History Workshop Journal*, 30 (Autumn 1990): 114-120. For Australia see Ann Curthoys, “Identity Crisis: Colonialism, Nation, and Gender in Australian History,” *Gender & History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993): 165-176. The debate in the United States is highlighted in Daniel Bell, “Into the 21st Century, Bleakly,” *New York Times*, 26 July 1992.

¹⁴Quoted in Jeffrey Weeks, “Foucault for Historians,” *History Workshop Journal* 14 (Autumn 1982): 109.

generations. Thus national narratives are implicitly exclusionary. They suppress knowledges that undermine the interests and ideals of ruling groups; they create the *illusion* of a national unity of interests.¹⁵

Women were both the agents and objects of these exclusionary practices. They participated in creating definitions of true Canadianness that reified hierarchies of “race” and class.¹⁶ But they did so from a position of national marginality. Their own citizenship was never taken for granted, but was rather a constant site of struggle. In the last decade, the intersection of gender issues and nation/nationalism has been the focus of considerable international interest. Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias, Anne McClintock, and others have identified some of the points of connection between these categories.¹⁷ Most obviously, although usually unacknowledged, women have been active agents in struggles for national independence. Also, men and women have had unequal access to the rights and privileges of national citizenship. And womanhood has served as an iconographic representation of national decline or

¹⁵Margaret Canovan, “Breathes there the man, with soul so dead...’: Reflections on patriotic poetry and liberal principles,” in *Literature and the Political Imagination*, ed. John Horton and Andrea T. Baumeister (London: Routledge, 1996); Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991); and Thomas Tausky, “The Intellectual Possibilities of a Mere Colony’: *The Week* in Search of a New Canadian Soul,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, 2 (Summer 1997): 116-133

¹⁶Throughout this dissertation “race” is taken to be an artificial construction, so heretofore I will omit the quotation marks. Whereas race denotes artificial biological boundaries that facilitated the categorization of groups of people, ethnicity refers to “forms of cultural belonging.” In the early twentieth century, however, race was an ambiguous concept which could refer to either distinct biological markers of difference or to cultural traits. Hall, “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains...to Africa’s Golden Sand.” p. 215.

¹⁷N. Yuval-Davis and F. Anthias, eds., *Women-Nation-State* (London: Macmillan, 1989) and Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

renewal, the female body as a map of the national landscape.¹⁸ In Canada, Barbara Roberts, Sean Purdy, and others have shown how women and men participated in the projects of nation-building in different ways.¹⁹ While men built the railways, roads, and canals that enabled the physical connection of Canadians from sea to sea, women helped to forge the crucial bond of a common national character. As mother-citizens, women were responsible for the cultural and human reproduction of the nation.

This dissertation represents an addition to the new and exciting scholarship on the construction of Canada. As a subtle blend of women's history and national history, it places women and gender at the centre of turn-of-the-century discourses of Canadian nationalism and imperialism. *Painting the Maple: Essays on Race, Gender and the Construction of Canada* is the most recent contribution to this field.²⁰ Building on almost three decades of insights garnered by Canadian historians on the left, it marks a fruitful turn in the way we "do" national history. It shakes the very foundations of our discipline by exposing the hegemonic practices that have made Canada what it is today. Its task is to "scrutinize the discursive formation of nation to see where, how, and why some discursive practices (stories, texts, voices) install themselves in a narrative of nation and others do not, why some discursive categories appear to be

¹⁸McClintock. *Imperial Leather* and Nash. "Remapping and Renaming."

¹⁹Barbara Roberts. "Ladies, Women and the State." in *Community Organization and the Canadian State*, ed. Roxana Ng et al. (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990), pp. 108-130 and Purdy. "Building Homes, Building Citizens."

²⁰Veronica Strong-Boag et al., eds., *Painting the Maple: Essays on Race, Gender and the Construction of Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).

left out altogether and others must fight from the margins for attention.”²¹ The compartmentalization of women’s history, national history, and imperialism into separate fields of study does poor service to our understanding of the mechanisms of power that affect this process. These fields are, as Roxana Ng points out, “in fact pieces of the same jigsaw puzzle.”²² By piecing them together we will be better able to locate the historical moments at which social inequalities were produced or reinforced. This will open our eyes to the ways in which biases and representations of gender, class, and race constitute the foundations of Canadian nationalism.

All of this is not to say that there is no use or need for national history, nor that Canadians should carry the shame of past wrong-doings. Our national heritage has bequeathed to us a legacy of constitutional democracy, ethnic pluralism, international humanitarianism, and general good sense that should be celebrated, continued, and further improved.²³ But the liberal version of national history, which traces the seemingly inevitable maturation of Canada from colony to nation, cannot be passed off as the “real McCoy.”²⁴ Progress is not a necessary by-product of the passing of time even though our arrogant presentism compels us to think so. The infinite untidiness of the past renders any attempt to capture it in a narrative or

²¹Sherrill Grace, Veronica Strong-Boag, Joan Anderson, and Avigail Eisenberg, “Constructing Canada: An Introduction.” in Strong-Boag et al., *Painting the Maple*, p. 8.

²²Roxana Ng, “Sexism, racism, and Canadian nationalism,” in *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, ed. Sneja Marina Gunew and Anna Yeatman (Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood, 1993), pp. 206-7.

²³These qualities, however, are also myths that are not above deconstructive analysis.

²⁴A.R.M. Lower’s *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1947) epitomizes this tradition.

analytical net problematic from the very outset. Thus any bid to do so must acknowledge this shortcoming. Nor is an understanding of our collective past adequately served by a male-centred view of Canadian history. If our scholarship makes the claim of representing the *collective* experience of a Canadian national identity, then it must seek to understand how that identity was constituted by the inescapable exigencies of gender, class, race, and ethnicity.²⁵

Through an examination of three national women's organizations—the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), the Girls' Friendly Society (GFS), and the Canadian Girl Guides—this dissertation represents a few small pieces of the “jigsaw puzzle” that is Canadian national history by raising questions about women's relationship to the nation-state during the years from the 1880s to the 1920s. These dates mark a critical transitional period in Canadian history, one that saw the culmination of a host of social forces—capitalism, feminism, nationalism, imperialism, and social reform—that had been gestating for several decades. During these years, as social life became routinized and as definitions of Canadian national belonging took hold, middle-class women were able to appropriate prevailing discourses of degeneracy and nation-building to create for themselves an influential role as “mothers of the race.” The mother-citizen persona was a means of entry into the realm of nation-building, where organized women used their race and class privilege to create exclusive ideals of citizenship. Their public power reached a high

²⁵Region should also be included in this list, although it will not be part of the central focus of this study.

point during the First World War when the inflation of fears and passions regarding the future of the empire stimulated a gust of women's voluntary activism, employment in war industries, and the suffrage victory.

The iconography of the imperial mother-citizen, however, began to dissolve in the 1920s. Racial pride, colonialism, and Anglo-Saxon moral authority, which had been key elements in the construction of a public identity for white, middle-class women, could not hold up against the emerging forces of cultural relativism and ethnic plurality. The language of nationalism and internationalism that gradually unfolded during the interwar period was ultimately less empowering for these women than the rhetoric of maternal imperialism that it replaced.²⁶ Any attempt to understand the decline of the women's club movement in the years following the First World War must acknowledge this ideological shift. This dissertation asks several questions that both clarify and problematize our understanding of these changes. In what way was Canadian citizenship gendered? What meaning did Canada and the British empire hold for women? How did this meaning affect the politics of gender, class, and ethnicity? In what ways were nation and empire implicated in the construction of gender identities? In what way did the inescapable context of British imperialism shape Canadian nationalism? How did middle-class women, highly organized and politicized by the end of the nineteenth century, influence this process? What role did they play in constructing Canada?

Canada's national identity, particularly its cultural and economic status

²⁶Roberts, "Ladies, Women and the State."

relative to Britain and the United States, has been the focus of heated, sometimes vitriolic, historiographical debates during the past century.²⁷ Historical writers in the late Victorian period emphasized culture over geography as the prime shaper of Canadian national identity. In the words of J.M.S. Careless, they represented Canada as “a declaration of independence from the United States, an attempt to build a second community outside the American republic, and one marked off from it, indeed, by the longer persistence of the imperial tie.”²⁸ From their early twentieth-century perspective, at the height of popular affection for the mother country, these practitioners highlighted the British empire connection as the most obvious facet of Canada’s national essence. After the First World War, however, various geographical and environmental interpretations of Canada’s nationhood came to dominate the historiographical landscape. Some used geography to explain the seemingly inescapable pull of North American continentalism,²⁹ while others used it to illustrate Canada’s “natural” east-west coordinates as determined by the economic and

²⁷Jack Granatstein’s *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996) is the most acrimonious example of this ideological warfare over the nature of Canadian/British/American relations. See Phillip Buckner, “How Canadian Historians Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Americans!,” *Acadiensis* 25, 2 (Spring 1996): 117-140 for an excellent and entertaining overview of this historiography.

²⁸J.M.S. Careless, “Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 35 (1954): 3.

²⁹This interpretation is represented by the writings of Frank Underhill and John W. Dafoe and by the 25 volume series on *The Relations of Canada and the United States*, published in the 1930s by Ryerson Press.

psychological predominance of the St. Lawrence.³⁰ Either way, the decline in Britain's international influence in the interwar period enabled the "forgetting" of Canada's imperial past and diverted scholarly attention towards Canada's national independence and its uncomfortable relations with the United States. The presumptuous teleology of the most recent spate of publications on North American continentalism, some of which openly ridicule the loyalist sympathies of the pre-First World War era for being anachronistic,³¹ further elides the meaningful place of British empire mythologies in the construction of a Canadian national identity. The unsettled partialness of historical reclamation means, in the words of Walter Benjamin, that "every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably."³²

The "peaceable kingdom" motif facilitates this amnesia regarding our imperial and, at times, violent past. Canada was not an inevitable or "natural" entity. It was, rather, acquired, organized, and stabilized (or in Foucauldian terms, rationalized) through conquest—beginning with exploitative fur trader-Native relations and the fall of New France in 1760 and continuing with the systematic takeover of aboriginal land—and through the production of national, unifying, regulatory, and exclusionary myths. The omnipresent *possibility* and reality of state-sanctioned force as well as a

³⁰Donald Creighton, *Empire of the St. Lawrence* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1937). Influenced by Harold Innis, Creighton was a staunch denunciator of the continental approach and saw the United States as a harmful imperial power.

³¹Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?*

³²Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 255.

persuasive rhetoric of national commonality were required to contain and stabilize Canada's widely dispersed and heterogeneous population.³³ The disregard for aboriginal entitlements that was embedded within the pursuit of a unitary nation, from "sea unto sea," meant that nation-building was fundamentally an imperialist enterprise.³⁴ Canada's imperial impulses were contained only by American continental expansion and the eventual demise of the British empire.³⁵ As Ged Martin explains:

In relations with non-Western societies, the late modern century operated on two clear principles: technological supremacy and cultural superiority. For Canada, this had two implications. One was minimal recognition of claims by Native peoples to prior rights: Canada bought the West from the Hudson's Bay Company, which had received it from Charles II, and that was that. The second was that Canada felt no qualms about refusing most non-whites permission to settle, and could count upon the protection of an imperial alliance, backed by American encouragement, to enforce its preferences.³⁶

Indeed, the ideological strands of colonialism entangle the ongoing crisis over Native land rights and continue to color selective immigration policies.³⁷ Genuine post-

³³Ged Martin defines force as "violence used or threatened by constituted authority." The Canadian government relied on a "covert element of force" that was symbolized by the red-uniformed mounted police. On a few occasions—namely, the Métis rebellion of 1885, the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919, and the Regina Riot of 1933—it mobilized military force to quash social disorder. "The Canadian Question and the Late Modern Century." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 7, 2 (1992): 222.

³⁴David Alan Long and Olive Patricia Dickason argue that Canadian colonialism, which was extended from European colonialism, was manifested as "an oppressive vision imposed on Aboriginal People living in Canada." *Visions of the Heart—Aboriginal Issues* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996), p. 1. Also quoted in Georgina Taylor, "Art Nouveau, Immigration Propaganda, and the Peoples of Saskatchewan." *Saskatchewan History* 50, 2 (Fall 1998): 40.

³⁵Buckner, "How Canadian Historians Stopped Worrying," pp. 135-36.

³⁶Martin, "The Canadian Question," p. 237.

³⁷I share with Chandra Mohanty the following definition of colonization: "However sophisticated or problematical its use as an explanatory construct, colonization almost invariably implies a relation of structural domination, and a suppression—often violent—of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question." Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial

coloniality is still far beyond our reality. As Ann Curthoys points out in the Australian context, “the process of colonial dispossession belongs to an ongoing present, not to a distant past.”³⁸

The current vogue of exposing imperialism’s negative impact on the peoples of Africa and Asia has diverted attention from the less dramatic implications of imperialism for the empire’s white settler colonies. And yet as Britain’s largest colony of settlement, Canada was firmly ensconced in the intellectual and sentimental milieu of the imperial project. The arrival of some 50,000 Loyalists after the American Revolution in 1776 and subsequent waves of British immigration after 1815 established a familial relationship between Canada and Great Britain.³⁹ People of British origin constituted 65 percent of Canada’s population at the time of Confederation in 1867.⁴⁰ A letter from Lord Dufferin, Governor General of Canada, to Lord Tennyson in 1873 provides evidence of the strength of the imperial tie between motherland and colony:

Since arriving here I have had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with the intimate convictions of the Canadians on this subject and with scarcely an individual exception I find they cling with fanatical tenacity to their birthright as Englishmen, and to their hereditary association in the past and future glories of their mother country. Though for two or three generations his family may have been established in this country, and he himself has never crossed the Atlantic, a Canadian seldom fails to allude to England as ‘home.’ They

Discourses.” in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 52.

³⁸Curthoys, “Identity Crisis,” p. 166.

³⁹Louis A. Delvoie, “Anglo-Canadian Relations in Historical Perspective.” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 2, 1 (June 1987): 124.

⁴⁰Ibid.

take the liveliest interest in her welfare, and entertain the strongest personal affection for their Sovereign....⁴¹

Along with the transatlantic migration of British settlers came a long-standing assortment of British institutions and structures of governance, including constitutional monarchy, a bicameral legislature, and (with the exception of Quebec) common law. A heavy dose of English literature and history in the schools and popular press sustained the imaginary connection to Britain as did the transatlantic exchange of travelers, scholars, clergy, politicians, and businessmen. In spite of a large and flourishing francophone minority, the character of Canada's institutions, ideals, and traditions was overwhelmingly British. Even a city like Winnipeg, known for its cosmopolitan character and labour radicalism, was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries an "imperial city."⁴² As a key entrepot in the nation's network of rail and immigration, Winnipeg served as the gateway to the western imperial frontier. It was from Winnipeg, Thomas Dickens has noted, "that western imperial boundaries could be rectified and indigenous peoples be pacified in typical imperialist

⁴¹Quoted in R.G. Moyles and Doug Owsram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities, British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 12. Such an avowal of imperial loyalty was not necessarily representative of mass sentiment. A fitting reference is provided by David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850* (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 136: "A rough Canadian...knows what loyalty to Canada means. He knows that in *Canada*, not in England, are his home, his possessions, his wife, his children.... Our loyalty commences and ends with our country." (*The North American*, 30 October 1850). These words were written, however, before the height of the new imperialism and prior to the period of this study. Affection for empire was often strained by a growing sense of Canadian nationalism, a sentiment strong enough to undermine ambitions for imperial federation. However, it is amply clear that the experiences derived from imperial connections were constitutive of Canadian nationhood.

⁴²Robert Wardhaugh, "'Gateway to Empire': Imperial Sentiment in Winnipeg, 1867-1917," in *Imperial Canada 1867-1917*, ed. Colin Coates (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Centre for Canadian Studies, 1997), p. 206.

fashion."⁴³ Winnipeg's Anglo character was confirmed in the census of 1901 when more than 70 percent of respondents claimed to be "British."⁴⁴

The British empire also served as a "psychological rampart" in the face of encroaching American interests.⁴⁵ Although attempts by the United States to invade Canada in 1775 and 1812 had receded to the dim corners of the late Victorian memory, bold proclamations of America's "manifest destiny" and the ascendancy of American commerce and print culture loomed as persistent reminders of the southern threat.⁴⁶ Canadians were comforted by the security of their alliance with "the greatest Empire the world had ever seen."⁴⁷

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, Canadian national

⁴³Thomas Dickens. "Winnipeg, Imperialism and the Queen Diamond Jubilee Celebration, 1897" (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1982), p. 134.

⁴⁴Alan Artibise. "Divided City: The Immigrant in Winnipeg Society, 1874-1921," in *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History*, ed. Gilbert A. Stelter and A.F. Artibise (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), pp. 304-5.

⁴⁵Garth Stevenson. *Ex Uno Plures: Federal-Provincial Relations in Canada, 1867-1896* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), quoted in Peter Burroughs, "State Formation and the Imperial Factor in Nineteenth-Century Canada," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24, 1 (January 1996): 131.

⁴⁶There has been considerable debate over the seriousness of this threat. Robert Bothwell, in *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), argues that Canadians' fear of American annexation was unfounded and bordering on irrational. Jack Granatstein and Norman Hillmer express a similar, if less provocative, view in *For Better or Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991). See also Reginald Stuart, *United States Expansionism and British North America, 1775-1871* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and Gordon Stewart, *The American Response to Canada since 1776* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992). For opposing interpretations see, for example, Buckner, "How Canadian Historians Stopped Worrying" and John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

⁴⁷This was a popular expression among Canadian imperialists. In this case the quotation was taken from Robert Page, *The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism*, Canadian Historical Association Historical Booklet No. 44 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1987), p. 6.

identity took form against the ever-present backdrop of British colonialism. English-speaking Canadians shared with their British compatriots a rich stock of heroes and symbols—Livingstone, Rhodes, Nelson, “Britannia,” the union jack, and the crown, for example—that affirmed and celebrated imperial exploits. The popularity of literary “voices of empire”—Kipling and Tennyson, especially—further naturalised imperialist ideology at a time when British expansionism was at its height.⁴⁸ Kipling’s popular phrases, “The white man’s burden,” “Lesser breeds without the Law,” and “What do they know of England who only England know?,” were common parlance in Canadian popular and intellectual circles.⁴⁹ His celebrated visit to Canada in 1907 coincided with a wave of intense racial ferment as Canadians struggled to sustain British dominance through exclusionary immigration policies. It also inspired passionate tributes to Kipling’s loyal imperialism:

On the two greatest questions upon which his counsel was sought, he has spoken with conviction and illumination; he has raised the Canadian conception of duty and responsibility by pointing to the inherent qualities of heart and mind which have given the Anglo-Saxon race its supremacy, and he has shown how building upon this sure foundation there can be no question of competition for dominion in the new world. ‘Bring in people of your own race; let them possess the land, and your immigration problem is solved.’⁵⁰

In this way, Canadians were influenced by and participated in the myth-making about racial superiority that made imperialism seem inevitable and acceptable. Anglo-

⁴⁸Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man’s World* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 195. This expansionism, also called the “new British imperialism” was characterized by the late-nineteenth century “scramble for Africa.”

⁴⁹Peter Jackson and Audrey Kobayashi, “Narratives of Empire: British and Canadian Readings of Kipling’s Colonial Fiction,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 2, 2 (1996): 301.

⁵⁰William Blakemore, *Westward Ho!* quoted in Jackson and Kobayashi, p. 303.

Saxonism provided English Canadians with ties to a larger imperial family.⁵¹ It also invigorated popular Canadian voluntary organizations, like the imperialist Orange Lodge, which boasted a membership that included “one third of all English-speaking adult Canadian males.”⁵² There was little doubt among its constituents that Anglo-Saxons topped the evolutionary scale and were destined to bring civilization to the “lesser peoples” of the world.

To be sure, Canada’s colonial status was ambiguous. As a white settler colony whose dominant values and ideals were British, Canada did not fit the mold of, for example, colonial Africa or India. But neither was it merely an extension of Great Britain.⁵³ For decades spanning the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Canadians passionately debated their relationship to the mother country, contemplating both independence and annexation to the United States as alternatives to an imperial federation. Liberal MP, Henri Bourassa, articulated the emotions of Quebec *nationalistes* when he condemned British imperialism as the worst expression of jingoistic chauvinism and capitalist profiteering. In English Canada these sentiments were echoed by Goldwin Smith, a vocal opponent of the “mindless

⁵¹ Anglo-Saxonism was the belief that the descendants of certain northern European blood lines possessed the superiority of intellect, character, and biology that suited them for rule over others.

⁵² Phillip Buckner, “Whatever happened to the British Empire?” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993): 27.

⁵³ Ruth Roach Pierson explains this ambiguous colonial status: “While itself a colonizer of the First Nations peoples within its claimed borders and a participant in the largely white, western cultural and economic hegemony exercised over the so-called third world, Canada still occupies a colonial status of its own vis-à-vis the cultural and academic/scholarly imperialism of both the former ‘Mother Country’ (Great Britain) and the U.S.A.” Ruth Roach Pierson, “Colonization and Canadian Women’s History,” *Journal of Women’s History* 4, 2 (Fall 1992): 135.

imperial enthusiasm” that allegedly diverted Canadians’ attention from the moral principles of true Gladstonian liberalism.⁵⁴ Such views held increasing weight in the post-First World War period when ideas of independence and internationalism began to take a firmer hold. French Canadians, organized farmers, and others who objected to a common imperial foreign policy found in William Lyon Mackenzie King a prime minister who made national, rather than imperial, unity his primary concern.

Despite the growing appeal of nationalism and isolationism that led to the Statute of Westminster in 1931, many Canadians still held fast to the imperial connection as part of a privileged heritage. The profoundly British nature of Canada’s population meant that the primary tenets of imperialism—“a loyalist view of Canada, a whig notion of Canadian politics, an agricultural ideal of rural life, a conservative antipathy to industrial society, an evident delight in militarism, and a moralist’s disdain for American and British decadence”—remained popular ideologies in some circles.⁵⁵ “Despite nationalists’ loud protestations of autonomy and the many claims that Canada had become a North American nation,” John Herd Thompson has noted, “it was English Canada’s sentimental attachment to the mother country that placed the country at Britain’s side in 1939, not a revulsion against international fascism.”⁵⁶ Carl Berger has argued that imperial and national loyalties were not

⁵⁴Page, *The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism*, p. 18.

⁵⁵Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, “Nationalism, Feminism, and Canadian Intellectual History,” *Canadian Literature* 83 (Winter 1979): 10. Although it was being transformed by immigration, Canada’s population was still more than 50 percent British. John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985), p. 43.

⁵⁶Thompson and Seager, p. 332.

mutually exclusive.⁵⁷ Many Canadians held fast to the belief that Canada's true destiny as a nation lay in its commitment to the imperial tie.

Scholars of imperial Canada are able to draw analytical inspiration from a rich body of writing on the impact of British imperialism in other contexts. Certainly, the study of British imperialism has gone through a series of dramatic changes since J.A. Hobson first called attention to the subject at the turn of the twentieth century. His important book, *Imperialism: A Study*, published in 1902, inspired a reassessment of British imperial expansion based on the Leninist view that imperialism was in fact the highest stage of capitalism.⁵⁸ In the 1950s and 60s, D.K. Fieldhouse, Ronald Robinson, and John Gallagher popularized the study of the British empire as a political and strategic enterprise in which Britain was drawn into the colonies by diplomatic necessity rather than by jingoistic territorialism.⁵⁹ Lance Davis and Robert Huttenback have even reduced the study of imperialism to cliometrics by examining a mass of quantitative data on British investment and expenditures in the colonies as another challenge to the economic determinism of Hobson and Lenin.⁶⁰

In the late 1970s, however, Edward Said's *Orientalism* initiated a major shift in the study of imperialism by examining the cultural context of the British empire.

⁵⁷Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

⁵⁸J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, 3d rev. ed. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1938, 1st pub. 1902).

⁵⁹D.K. Fieldhouse, *Economics and Empire 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973) and Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961).

⁶⁰Lance Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Said's critical analysis of orientalism—the attitudes and assumptions held by Euro-American scholars concerning the Islamic Near East—illustrates how the construction of Islam and the Orient as “Other” and as undifferentiated and unchanging reinforced simplistic racial and cultural hierarchies and provided justification for colonial rule.⁶¹ Said's work, including his more recent book, *Culture and Imperialism*, has drawn much-needed attention to the ideological and cultural milieu that normalized imperial domination and made racism a socially acceptable part of what it meant to be English.⁶²

Such an analysis has transformed the way historians conceptualize the British empire. Contributors to the Manchester series on imperialism, like J.A. Mangan and Ronald Hyam, argue that imperialism was about more than just political and commercial transactions, that it was also fundamentally about sexuality, education, the imagination, and the inculcation and negotiation of the values of empire. They promote the investigation of the cultural context of imperialism—the study of literature, ideas, religious issues, and political socialization—as opposed to the more tangible diplomatic and economic manifestations of empire. For the most part, however, this series considers only marginally issues of femininity and masculinity and sustains a western, white, male perspective on imperial relations, one that takes

⁶¹Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

⁶²Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

for granted that the British empire was “no place for a woman.”⁶³

This perspective has been increasingly challenged in the last ten years by feminist historians who argue that, as the resident wives of British colonial officers, as missionaries, nurses, and travel writers, British women played an important role in negotiating the discourses of imperialism. The collection of articles edited by Margaret Strobel and Nupur Chaudhuri, *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, and Clare Midgley’s *Gender and Imperialism* are notable examples of work being undertaken in this rapidly growing field.⁶⁴ They point out that, far from being marginal to the process of colonialism, these women produced ‘texts’ that contributed to the affirming and contesting knowledges about the empire. Julia Bush’s *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* is an important complement to this scholarship because it explores female imperial power from within the metropolis itself.⁶⁵

Despite these changes, however, the study of imperialism in Canada has remained relatively stagnant. Until 1970, interest in Canadian imperialism did not

⁶³Examples are J.A. Mangan, *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) and Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: the British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

⁶⁴Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds. *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992); Clare Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1998). See also Sarah Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991); Claudia Knapman, *White Women in Fiji 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire?* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986); Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (London: Macmillan, 1987); Margaret Macmillan, *Women of the Raj* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988); and C. Bulbeck, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea: Colonial Passages 1920-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶⁵Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* (New York: Leicester University Press, 2000).

stray beyond the study of politics and defense. Carl Berger's, *The Sense of Power*, was an important break with this historiographical tradition by shifting the focus to Canada's emotional and ideological connection to the British empire. His thesis, that Canadian imperialism was a form of Canadian nationalism, sparked a lively discussion among historians like Robert Page and Douglas Cole, who appreciated Berger's emphasis on the intellectual aspects of imperialism but questioned the representativeness of the men he chose to study. "In considering Berger's work," Page writes, "his men are important but they are not the whole story. They tend to be drawn from a social elite and removed from the milieu of politicians and businessmen."⁶⁶ It seems never to have occurred to these historians that Berger's exclusion of women was significant, that any study of imperialism that neglects gender as an analytical component, can only be distorted and incomplete. Similarly, Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook include only three sentences on women in their chapter, "Canada and the New Imperialism," in *Canada 1896-1921 A Nation Transformed*.⁶⁷ Although Colin Coates's collection, *Imperial Canada 1867-1917*, appeared nearly three decades after *The Sense of Power*, it makes few gains in the integration of women and gender into the study of Canada in the age of empire.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Robert Page, "Carl Berger and the Intellectual Origins of Canadian Imperialist Thought, 1867-1914." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5, 3 (August 1970): 40 and Douglas Cole. "Canada's 'nationalistic' imperialists," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5, 3 (August 1970): 44-49.

⁶⁷Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921. A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).

⁶⁸Lisa Gaudet, review of *Imperial Canada 1867-1917*, ed. Colin Coates, in *Canadian Historical Review* (March 1999): 145-7.

Slowly these gaps are being addressed. Recent scholarship on the colonisation of the Canadian western “frontier” in the mid-nineteenth century demonstrates how gender was a central component in the promotion of an “orderly white settler colony.”⁶⁹ Mixed race sexual relations, gambling, drinking, and other vices were explained by an absence of a white female influence. Colonial promoters recruited white women to draw marauding woodsmen and goldiggers from the backwoods into the civilizing sphere of the genteel pioneer home.⁷⁰ In turn, the appearance of the white female helpmate generated a negative shift in representations of aboriginal women, one that held lasting implications for the admission of aboriginal peoples to meaningful Canadian citizenship.⁷¹

The social reform movement is proving to be a particularly fertile subject for the study of these links between gender and imperialism in Canada. This is because the surge of social reform activity during the period from the 1880s to the 1920s coincided with the eruption of debates regarding the “woman question,” the condition of the Anglo-Saxon race, and Canada’s place within the British empire. Middle-class concerns about woman’s proper place and about the future of Canada as an imperial power were generated by the social dislocations of an era of rapid

⁶⁹ Adele Perry, “Fair Ones of a Purer Caste’: White Women and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia.” *Feminist Studies* 23, 3 (Fall 1997): 505.

⁷⁰ Adele Perry, “Oh I’m Just Sick of the Faces of Men’: Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality, and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia.” *BC Studies* 105-6 (Spring/Summer 1995): 27-44.

⁷¹ Jennifer Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada’s Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997); and Sylvia VanKirk, *Many Tender Ties’: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Dwyer & Watson, 1980).

economic change. Tariff protection and railway construction, the twin pillars of Macdonald's National Policy of 1879, bolstered Canada's manufacturing interests and encouraged the growth of cities.⁷² The "working woman," who appeared in the factories that were created by industrial capitalism, was a novelty that disrupted the bourgeois model of domestic life. Urban crowding brought a host of social ills, including sanitation overload, inadequate housing, prostitution, vagrancy, and alcoholism. The proliferation of an impoverished, landless, and potentially unruly working class posed a threat to a nascent middle-class value system founded on the ideals of domesticity and moral prudence. At the same time, an influx of immigrants along with the intermingling of social groups in increasingly congested urban environments led to a "growing awareness of the 'other.'"⁷³ As rail, steam, and print began to connect the scattered outposts of the dominion, local, church-based charity began to give way to a reform movement of national amplitude.

By the turn of the century, an extensive network of philanthropists, doctors, educators, and church people had launched a series of campaigns designed to regenerate society according to bourgeois standards of purity and respectability. Crime, prostitution, intemperance, and unsanitary urban slums were a few of the many vices they tackled. Typically well-educated, English-speaking, urban

⁷²Urban population growth proceeded at an astounding rate. Winnipeg surged from a population of 25,000 in 1891 to 136,000 in 1911. During the same period Toronto's population increased from 181,000 to 382,000. Montreal's from 219,000 to 490,000. J.M.S. Careless, *The Rise of Cities in Canada Before 1914*. Canadian Historical Association Booklet No. 32 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1978), pp. 20-4.

⁷³E. Jane Errington, "'And What About the Women?': Changing Ontario's History," *Ontario History*, 90, 2 (Autumn 1998): 149.

Protestants, the participants in this crusade for social betterment were inspired by a range of religious and intellectual convictions. Religious optimism and a belief in God's earthly immanence impelled social gospels to seek what Richard Allen describes as "the realization of the kingdom of God in the very fabric of society."⁷⁴ Others, influenced by the new social criticism arising from Darwinian evolutionary theory and Hegelian idealism, championed a new secular moral order based on scientific principle and materialism.⁷⁵ The inspiration for reform, however, cannot be easily categorized. Indeed, many social activists were motivated by ideologies that were at times complementary, at times contradictory, and at all times in a state of change as new ideas and influences poured in from parallel movements in the United States and Britain.

While class conflict, religious moral fervour, and social science provided grist for the mill of reform, the bourgeoisie's penchant for moral regulation must be understood within its larger national and imperial dimensions. The lofty ideals of civilization and progress that pervaded Canadian reform would have been meaningless without the imperial referents of barbarity and primitivism. As Bernard Semmel has demonstrated in the British context, imperialism and social reform were interdependent.⁷⁶ For what was at stake in the battle of morality, cleanliness, and

⁷⁴Richard Allen. *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

⁷⁵Ramsay Cook. *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

⁷⁶Bernard Semmel has made this connection in the British context. *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social Imperial Thought, 1895-1914* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960).

Godliness against the perversions of urban decadence was more than just individual or community welfare. The need for class harmony, municipal reform, and social purity was, at base, a matter affecting national and imperial unity and progress. Social reform was intimately connected to a national fantasy in which Canada, on the cusp of the new century, was poised to become a commanding force in the emerging world order.⁷⁷ As part of a larger Anglo-Saxon family that (supposedly) embodied the progressive characteristics of reason, democracy, and justice, English-Canadians took pride in the “achievements of the race.”⁷⁸ George R. Parkin, Principal of Upper Canada College, saw these “race characteristic[s]” as part of a “steady process of evolution” which entitled “the Anglo-Saxon people” to claim “a special capacity for political organization.” He believed Canada to be the ideal environment for bolstering the empire’s racial stock, its harsh northern climate both a deterrent to the allegedly inferior southern races and a purifying influence on Canada’s pioneers.⁷⁹

Between the 1880s and the 1920s, English-Canadian constructions of national identity were infused with the language and iconography of imperial expansionism and social purity.⁸⁰ For those who shared Parkin’s views, Canada’s vast empty spaces, the outflow of Canadians to the United States, rapid population growth south of the

⁷⁷The concept of “national fantasy” is explained in Lauren Berlant. *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁷⁸Page, *The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism*, p. 6.

⁷⁹Quoted in *ibid.*

⁸⁰Cecily Devereux. “‘And let them wash me from this clanging world’: Hugh and Ion. ‘The Last Best West’ and Purity Discourse in 1885.” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, 2 (Summer 1997): 101.

border, the immigration of “undesirables,” the French fact, Native unrest, and the problems of poverty, immorality, and poor health were matters of imperial concern.⁸¹ It is no incidental fact that the acceleration of reform activity in the late 1880s came in the wake of the Second Northwest Rebellion, which was constructed by the press as a threat to the colonization of the “last best west.”⁸² The arrest, trial, and execution of Métis leader Louis Riel was the leading story in English-Canadian newspapers in the summer and fall of 1885. The rebellion shared headline coverage with another urgent imperial crisis—London’s white slave trade, which was exposed by journalist W.T. Stead in a sensational series of articles called “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon.”⁸³ According to Cecily Devereux, Stead’s exposé was “an exceedingly hot item in English Canada.” Its lurid descriptions of sexual exploitation “in the ‘heart’ of the imperial organism” revealed “a pervasive crisis of degeneracy and disease in the Anglo-Saxon race” and “affected English Canadian perceptions of...the condition of the Empire.”⁸⁴ The white slavery panic escalated in Canada during the period from 1909 to 1914 when rapid urbanization and large-scale immigration from non-Anglo-Saxon countries fueled fears of sexual depravity and

⁸¹According to Ged Martin, “in 1900, the Canadian-born living south of the border equaled 22 per cent of the Dominion’s total population.” In 1871 Canada’s population rang in at a paltry 3.69 million. Martin, “The Canadian Question,” pp. 218-19, 238.

⁸²Devereux, p. 102.

⁸³Mariana Valverde points out that Canadian interest in social purity arose during the white slavery panic created by Stead’s “Maiden Tribute.” She writes that “the Methodist sects united in one church in 1885, the same year the Dominion WCTU was established; the Salvation Army had been established in 1884.” *The Age of Light, Soap and Water. Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), p. 92.

⁸⁴Devereux, pp. 101-105, 113.

racial miscegenation.⁸⁵ This backdrop of imperial expansion, rebellion, corruption, and immigration provided a vocabulary of race, nation, and social decay through which the social crises of the progressive era were articulated.

Gender lay at the centre of these discourses. The “fallen woman” of Stead’s sexual purity narrative became the iconographic repository for the vices that threatened to hasten the empire’s demise—sexual perversion, self-indulgence, immorality, and urban decadence. Working women symbolized the breakdown of the family, a transformation that surely would imperil the moral and physical health of the next generation of imperial citizens. In contrast, the colonization fantasy that was played out in Canadian social reform rhetoric and immigration propaganda represented a feminized “virgin” western frontier as a source of imperial redemption and pastoral renewal.⁸⁶ The female iniquity/female virtue dichotomy was a persistent theme in imperialist theory. As Anna Davin has explained in the British context, the new ideology of racial health and purity that was kindled by high infant mortality rates and the poor health of Boer War recruits trapped women in a “good mother”/“bad mother” frame of judgment. Women were placed at the centre of population panic narratives in which the future of the empire depended on the rearing of healthy children and, by extension, on the domesticated woman.⁸⁷ Indeed, the domestication of women has been, in the words of Cecily Devereux, an implicit

⁸⁵Valverde, p. 92.

⁸⁶Devereux.

⁸⁷Anna Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,” *History Workshop* 5 (Spring 1978): 9-64.

part of “British and Anglo-colonial representations of imperial stability.”⁸⁸ In Tennyson’s *The Princess* (1847), John Ruskin’s “Of Queens’ Gardens” (1865) and Stephen Leacock’s infamous opinions on “The Woman Question” (*Maclean’s* Oct. 1915: 7-9), female subordination was key to the success of the empire.⁸⁹

It was within this context of imperial anxiety that organized women emerged on a national scale in the late nineteenth century. As Linda Kealey notes, “just as public attention was focusing on a series of social problems which seemed to threaten the smooth path of ‘progress,’” the material gains of industrial capitalism created a class of leisured women who were ready and eager to organize for social change.⁹⁰ Greater access to education, smaller families, and the conveniences of an emerging consumer-oriented market enabled bourgeois women to engage in voluntary activities that touched many facets of Canada’s development. Temperance, urban reform, denominational missions, immigration, public health, and women’s rights were a few of the many interests that spawned a women’s club movement of extensive proportions.⁹¹ At its height during the First World War, the movement could claim a

⁸⁸Devereux, p. 106.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Linda Kealey, ed. *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada 1880s to 1920s* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1979), p. 1.

⁹¹For a list of the women’s organizations that appeared during this period, see, Veronica Strong-Boag, “Setting the Stage’: National Organization and the Women’s Movement in the Late 19th Century.” in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History*, ed. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), pp. 87-103.

following of at least half a million Canadian women.⁹² With few formal opportunities to exercise political authority, middle-class women saw the sphere of voluntary work as an acceptable avenue into civil society.⁹³ From this position on the “borderland” between public and private life, they were able to make a mark on public policy and on the nation Canada would become in the twentieth century.

The rise of women’s activism coincided with (and influenced) the expansion of governing bureaucracies during the late nineteenth century, which enabled the state’s unprecedented reach into the private sanctum of civil society.⁹⁴ State regulation expanded as finance, education, public works, and health care were gradually incorporated into the domain of elected governments, a process that was nearly complete by the end of the 1920s.⁹⁵ This administrative activity was enhanced and standardized through the systematic collection of statistics and the parlance of scientific expertise. Not least in importance, government authority was augmented by a growing brigade of urban constables and rural mounted police who helped to

⁹²Their personal connections with family, friends, and colleagues would have extended the influence of organized women to a substantial portion of the population. Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices. Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women’s Clubs, 1880-1920* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 5.

⁹³Kathleen McCarthy, “Parallel Power Structures: Women and the Voluntary Sphere,” in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power*, ed. Kathleen McCarthy (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 1-31; Estelle Freedman, “Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930,” *Feminist Studies* (1979): 512-29; and Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

⁹⁴Throughout this dissertation “the state” refers to institutional and governing structures, including the machinery of formal government and all the laws and social policies that fell within its domain. Ng, “Sexism, racism, and Canadian nationalism,” p. 199.

⁹⁵Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), particularly Ian Radforth’s essay on “Sydenham and Utilitarian Reform.”

“produce a smooth transition to a capitalist order.”⁹⁶

This study requires an understanding of the state as a site through which various class, gender, and ethnic interests operated. Laws that governed social behaviours were not arbitrarily designed and assigned by an omniscient ‘total’ state. The state does not exist outside of civil society, but rather operates as an instrument of social control by hegemonic groups. These groups assist state management of the relations of capitalism. Women’s organizations as well as professionals, businessmen, and reformers made demands on the state that reflected their own class, gender, and ethnic standpoint. They were able to capitalize on their own social privileges as well as on the spaces left open by a nascent welfare state to fashion the national polity in their own interests. By shaping, extending, and supplementing parliament’s educational and regulatory policies, they participated in the acts of governance—they helped to harness the will of the citizenry to the needs of the nation-state.⁹⁷ They influenced what Bruce Curtis calls the “non-rationalized” (moral/ideological) elements of governance, which relied on “the power of social classes and groups to define the moral, the culturally worthy, the proper, and the appropriate in the realms of behaviour and consciousness, and to endow these partial definitions with a general

⁹⁶Burroughs. “State Formation and the Imperial Factor.” p. 122.

⁹⁷Peter Burroughs points out that “All too often, governance has been studied chiefly as a parliamentary phenomenon, a focus which leaves out of account the practical operations of political rule, its structures and personnel, and neglects the analysis of social classes and political culture so essential to explaining the extension of governance beyond the hothouses of provincial legislatures.” Burroughs, “State Formation and the Imperial Factor.” p. 119.

prestige.”⁹⁸

Among the women’s denominational missionary societies, suffrage associations, business clubs, and social reform organizations that attained national stature in the late nineteenth century there were influential circles of imperialist women who cultivated ideological elements of governance that were rooted in an imperial moral framework.⁹⁹ They were complicit in naturalizing patterns of order that excluded, repressed, or marginalized particular modes of expression and thought that went against the grain of the white, middle-class, British value system.¹⁰⁰ Like their well-to-do husbands and brothers, who expressed their imperial affinities at meetings of the Empire Club, the Orange Lodge, or United Empire Loyalist associations, these women were motivated primarily by a staunch commitment to “God, King, and Country.” Barbara Roberts explains how Canadian women reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries orchestrated a system of imperial female immigration that was designed to guarantee the British character of Canadian homes.¹⁰¹ Likewise, R.G. Moyles and Doug Ovrarn argue that women emigrationists

⁹⁸Bruce Curtis. *True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 175-76.

⁹⁹Recent scholarship on state formation in nineteenth-century Canada emphasises the imperial factor in issues of social reform and governance. Greer and Radforth. *Colonial Leviathan* and Ged Martin. *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation, 1837-67* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

¹⁰⁰Kari Delhi. “They rule by sympathy: the feminization of pedagogy.” *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* 19. 2 (1994): 195-216 and Mariana Valverde and Lorna Weir. “The struggle of the immoral: Preliminary remarks on moral regulation.” *Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation sur la recherche féministe* 17. 3 (September 1988): 31-34.

¹⁰¹Barbara Roberts. “‘A Work of Empire’: Canadian Reformers and British Female Immigration.” in Kealey. *A Not Unreasonable*. pp. 185-201.

nurtured the imperial idea in their quest for middle-class domestic servants, women who “would soften and sweeten life in the Wild West.”¹⁰² This kind of work suggests that the myths of empire and the connections between imperialism and nation-building were constructed as much by women as they were by men.

Imperialist club women expressed their patriotism through literacy and reform practices that influenced popular constructions of Canadian identity as the new Canadian nation took shape. As Donald Wright observes, “Imperialism was not just about securing Canada a prominent future position in the British Empire, it was about the invention of a national, unifying mythology.”¹⁰³ Coming together in the social space between public and domestic life, club women grappled with the national issues that preoccupied Canadians in the progressive era. Their subaltern political position did not deter them from utilizing powerful literacy practices to resist the limitations of “separate spheres” and to engage in the making of meaning on a national scale. Literacy was such a constant, underlying practice in women’s organizations that its significance as a political tool is often overlooked. The gathering of information, reading, writing, reporting, and the dissemination of texts, which preoccupied club women at all levels, created knowledge about the most perplexing issues of the day. By circulating texts on womanhood, mothering, citizenship, nation, and empire, they engaged with dominant discourses in a

¹⁰²Moyles and Owram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities*. But Moyles and Owram’s consideration of women is confined, for the most part, to one chapter and to one small group of women.

¹⁰³Donald Wright, “W.D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English-Canadian Imperialism, 1880s-1918,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, 2 (Summer 1997): 141.

dialectical exchange. Yearbooks, annual reports, periodicals, newspaper columns, club histories, petitions, resolutions, pamphlets, pageants, rituals, correspondence, and verbal exchanges—all of these “texts” were shaped by and shaped the larger cultural practices of the time.¹⁰⁴

They also served as an imaginative bond in the construction of the nation. Organized women connected the scattered populations of the dominion through literacy, “helping to forge those little links, so necessary for that great chain of Canadian nationalism.”¹⁰⁵ During the closing years of the nineteenth century, the Aberdeen Association, a veteran affiliate of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), sent reading material to outpost settlements with the purpose of uniting the nation’s inhabitants through literary consumption. Through baby clinics and health fairs women’s clubs dispensed standardized information on child-rearing, morality, and hygiene. Traveling book displays and donated school libraries circulated “wholesome” literature and provided approved knowledge about Canada and the British empire. Reform practices such as moral surveillance and the regulation of immigration and mental deviance set up parameters for citizenship. Girded by the privileges of their class and race, club women were engaging in the hegemonic processes that naturalized specific notions of what it meant to be Canadian.

¹⁰⁴Anne Ruggles Gere provides a brilliant analysis of the literacy practices of American club women. Her work has informed my understanding of the significance of literacy practices in the creation of an imagined national community. See Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices*.

¹⁰⁵A. Pauline Raymond, *Gathered Sheaves from the National Council of Women, Calgary* (St. John. N.B.: J. & A. McMillan, 1921), p. 14.

The proliferation of women's philanthropic, patriotic, and reform activities in the late nineteenth century coincided with the fermentation of debates regarding Canada's status as both a budding nation and a colony of the British empire. This dual identity—captured in Kipling's oft-repeated phrase, "daughter in my mother's house but mistress in my own"—sat well, as Carl Berger has aptly explained, with those who saw nationalism and imperialism as two sides of the same coin. The imperialist men featured in Berger's *The Sense of Power* foresaw a comfortable marriage between Canadian autonomy and imperial unity. According to the central argument, their imperialism was not a product of external affiliations. It emerged rather from an indigenous celebration of Canada's Loyalist past and a vision of Canada's future as a great nation under the protection and tutelage of Britain.

For all of its merits as a pioneering piece of Canadian historical scholarship, *The Sense of Power* has not been immune to criticism.¹⁰⁶ Berger's interpretation of imperialism as one variety of Canadian nationalism, which became a convenient aphorism for intellectual historians, has proved to be more fragile than was first thought. Douglas Cole, Terry Cook, and others have argued that the views of Berger's imperialist "nationalists" were not home grown; they were, rather, part of a

¹⁰⁶*The Sense of Power* was pioneering in the sense that it marked an important departure from the whig tradition of "colony to nation" history by pointing to the centrality of imperialism in Victorian and Edwardian Canada. In his book on trends in Canadian historical writing Berger notes: "One of the most persistent strands in Canadian historical literature since the First World War has been the concentration on Canadian national history and nationality." Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing, 1900-1970* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 259. By emphasizing the indigenous origins of Canadian imperialism, he revised the accepted view of imperialists as "nothing more than Englishmen overseas, ready to sacrifice Canada for a mess of Colonial Office pottage." Cole, "Canada's 'nationalistic' imperialists," p. 48.

Britannic nationalism that arose from the shared perception of a distinct Anglo-Saxon history, culture, and racial destiny.¹⁰⁷ In his haste to uncover evidence of an imperialism that was distinctively Canadian, Berger focused on groups like Canada First and the United Empire Loyalist Association at the expense of more influential groups, like the Orange Lodge, which had stronger British connections. This is despite the fact that the UELA had an Ontario membership of only 165 members in 1898,¹⁰⁸ while, as Phillip Buckner has noted, “one third of all English-speaking adult males” were Orangemen.¹⁰⁹

Graham Carr has suggested that Berger’s analysis suffers from a narrow approach—“a tendency to be oblivious of historical perspectives which transcend the boundaries of the nation-state, and of methodological techniques which are in any way theoretical, or even inter-disciplinary.”¹¹⁰ After all, Berger’s subject group, which consists primarily of three men of means and letters—George Parkin, George Denison, and George Grant—is hardly representative of Canadian imperialist thought. In his attempts to rescue these men from the condescension of posterity by proving that they were really “nationalists” at heart, Berger is not really breaking free

¹⁰⁷Cole, “Canada’s ‘nationalistic’ imperialists;” Terry Cook, “George R. Parkin and the Concept of Britannic Idealism,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 10, 3 (August 1975): 15-31; and Page, “Carl Berger and the Intellectual Origins of Canadian Imperialist Thought,” pp. 39-43.

¹⁰⁸UELA membership was still small, at 508, in 1905. Berger, *Sense of Power*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁹Buckner, “Whatever happened to the British Empire?,” p. 27.

¹¹⁰Graham Carr, “Imperialism and Nationalism in Revisionist Historiography: A Critique of Some Recent Trends,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17, 2 (Summer 1982): 92.

of the whig mould at all.¹¹¹ At base, and perhaps unintentionally, his work reinforces the pejorative connotations of imperialism and the stubborn assumption that nationalism was honourable and good.¹¹² Thus, we are still left without an understanding of imperialism as a singular force within Canadian society, in its own right and in terms that were meaningful to its proponents.

Women and gender do not figure into Berger's analysis at all. Nor do they form any part of the revisionist critiques of his work. Imperialist women like the Daughters of the Empire, the women of the Girls' Friendly Society, and the leadership of the Girl Guides have been obscured by the triple veil of feminist, nationalist, and male-centred biases. The majority of critical work on Canadian women in this period has focused on their feminism, leaving largely unacknowledged the part middle-class women played in reinforcing a conservative, patriarchal, imperialist intellectual ethos.¹¹³ Historical scholarship elsewhere has only recently begun to regard women as agents within the imperial context and to challenge earlier work that treated women as objects of either the male gaze or male protection.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹For an explanation of whiggery see Terry Copp, "The Whig Interpretation of Canadian History," *Canadian Dimension* 6, 1 (April-May 1969): 23-4, 33.

¹¹²Carr, p. 95.

¹¹³Exceptions include Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*; Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri, eds., *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998); and Strong-Boag et al., *Painting the Maple*. Imperialism, however, does not play a central part in Valverde's analysis.

¹¹⁴For good overviews of some of this scholarship see James Buzard, "Victorian Women and the Implications of Empire," *Victorian Studies* (Summer 1993): 443-453 and Jane Haggis, "Gendering colonialism or colonizing gender? Recent women's studies approaches to white women and the history of British colonialism," *Women's Studies International Forum* 13 (1990): 105-115. Even revisionist, cultural

And yet as front line imperialists who were far removed from the ivory towers of Parkin, Denison, and Grant, organized imperialist women were perhaps even more appropriate as subjects for the study of imperialism in Canada than were Berger's intellectual elites. The all-male Imperial Federation League, which later became the British Empire League, numbered in the hundreds. By the First World War, Canadian women who were organized for imperialistic causes numbered in the tens of thousands. Berger's handful of imperialists seems to have had little real impact on relations between Canada and the empire. Their pet project, Imperial Federation, failed. Nor were they influential beyond their own intellectual coterie in propagating the principles of an imperialist nationalism.¹¹⁵ Moreover, as Robert Page has pointed out, "none of [Berger's] imperialists produced a coherent reform program; they seemed to be inhibited by contradictory progressive and conservative elements in their own thought. They tended to be social critics, not social reformers."¹¹⁶

As the following chapters will demonstrate, imperialist women, by contrast, were involved in the cultural and regulatory work of nation building at the level of

interpretations of imperialism are short on women and gender. See, for example, John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Hyam, *The Empire and Sexuality*; and Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.

¹¹⁵The Imperial Federation League, of which Denison and Parkin were members (Denison was the League's last president), was moderately successful in creating dialogue on imperial issues. It began publishing a monthly newsletter, *Imperial Federation*, in 1886. It was also an organizing force behind the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 and the Colonial Conferences that were initiated in 1887. George Parkin also published books on the empire and lectured on imperial matters. But the League only held a membership of 2,000 at its height in the 1890s, whereas patriotic women's organizations like the IODE numbered in the tens of thousands. See John L. Gordon Jr., "Canada and the Imperial Federation Movement," in Coates, *Imperial Canada*, pp. 43-61.

¹¹⁶Page, "Carl Berger and the Intellectual Origins of Canadian Imperialist Thought," p. 41.

home, church, and community. Through their work in the areas of education, public health, immigration, moral regulation, and citizenship, the women of the IODE, the GFS, and the Girl Guides were actively constructing the nation in accordance with a broader imperialist agenda. This agenda did not drop off suddenly in the 1920s. Rather, many patriotic women saw the ideals of imperialism as the best bet for reconstruction in the post-war years. This point refutes the pervasive assumption that the First World War “killed” the appeal of imperialism in Canada. These groups demonstrate that organized imperialist women struggled to maintain Canada’s ideological connections to Britain even as the last vestiges of their formal ties were disintegrating.

This study, then, introduces subtle changes to our understanding of Canadian imperialism by broadening the imperialist subject group. As Robert Page has argued, imperialism meant different things to different people, and for different reasons.¹¹⁷ There were, perhaps, a multiplicity of imperialisms, all with a common assumption of Anglo-Saxon superiority. The idea of a Britannic nationalism based on a shared racial instinct held great currency for the imperialist women in this study. *Pace* Berger, Canadian nationalism ranked second in their hearts. In fact, they used the word “nation” ambiguously. At times it meant Canada alone, but more often it was used in reference to a broader, transatlantic, British cultural entity. In their understanding, Canada, with its northern, pioneering, agrarian environment, was a chrysalis for the

¹¹⁷Robert Page, *Imperialism and Canada, 1895-1903* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972) and *The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism*. See also, Colin M. Coates, “From Parliament Hill to Vimy Ridge: Imperial Canada, 1867-1917,” in Coates, *Imperial Canada*, pp. i-ix.

best traits of the Anglo-Saxon race. The British empire, however, was their “imagined community.”¹¹⁸

This dissertation brings the discourses of gender, nation, and empire into sharper focus by spotlighting the patriotic elements within the women’s club movement during the social reform period. Feminist and evangelical organizations like the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, the NCWC, and the Young Women’s Christian Association have received generous analytical attention elsewhere. While Anglo-Saxonism was a prominent thrust in many national women’s organizations, those that expressed a more explicit patriotic imperialism have been largely neglected.

As Canada’s largest imperialist women’s organization, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire merits the attention of the three opening chapters. Chapters one and two show evidence of the operations of class, race, and ethnicity in the IODE’s exclusive membership and in the organization’s conceptualization of Canada as an imperial nation. They position the IODE as an influential force in the perpetuation of empire mythologies even in the face of an emerging, post-war Canadian nationalism. IODE women drew these empire mythologies from external texts that helped to shape Canadian imperialism as a form of Britannic nationalism. Chapter three shows how these patriotic sentiments were translated into social reform policies. During a period when state welfare was still in its infancy and Canadian nationalism was taking hold, the IODE was able to give expression to its

¹¹⁸Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

imperialistic impulses through campaigns for “better babies,” public health, mental hygiene, and the Canadianization of immigrants. In this way, imperialism—and the hierarchies of race and class that went along with it—became embedded in public policy.

The Girls’ Friendly Society of Canada was one of the smallest of the national women’s organizations of this period.¹¹⁹ Its important imperial connections and its unique role in moral prevention (as opposed to rescue) work, however, make it a worthy subject for chapters four and five. As a religious organization that operated within the Church of England, the GFS also presents a valuable opportunity to study the connections between religious and civilizing missions in a settler society. The principles of “noblesse oblige,” Christian morality, and “the white man’s burden” came together in the GFS to produce a vigorous program of moral regulation among working girls. Taking the lead from a flourishing English parent organization, which had strong connections throughout the British empire, the GFSC was a modest but influential imperialist force among Canadian women. Its strong identification with an extended imperial family indicates the influence of external discourses in the construction of Canada.

Chapter six’s comparison of the Canadian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts (1909-1930) demonstrates how those concerned about the ideals of morality and progress

¹¹⁹The Canadian GFS had a membership of about 2,000 girls at its height in 1918. This number did not include associates. At the same time, the GFS in England and Wales boasted a roll of 200,000 members and associates. National Archives of Canada, reel A-1191, file 16. Miss Ethel Campbell, “The Girls Friendly Society,” September 1918, p. 5. Archives of the Ottawa Diocese of the Anglican Church, GFS, Edith Marion Welch, *The Girls’ Friendly Society What it is and What it does*, 1907, p. 7.

looked to the next generation of citizens for the fulfilment of their imperial vision. At a time when sectarian youth groups like the CGIT and Trail Rangers were gaining popularity, the IODE and GFSC saw in Guiding and Scouting the best outlet for their nation-building designs. The sexual division of roles and skills within the two organizations indicates that the *experience* of nation, empire, and citizenship was gendered. Scouts were trained in the arts of chivalry and woodsmanship, while Guides practiced the craft of good mothering. This chapter shows how, among Canadian girls, organized women became vehicles for the prescriptions of imperial motherhood.

Chapter One

“For the good of this British Dominion and the British Empire”:¹ The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and Britannic Nationalism, 1900-1930

Imperial patriotism must be bred in the bone of the coming generation, if our Empire is to be maintained; it must be nurtured with the mother's milk, taught at the mother's knee, and it depends upon the women of this country to do it—to build a strong and virile nationhood able to maintain the Liberty for which we have paid so dear.²

Margaret Polson Murray, a Scottish philanthropist and wife of a McGill professor, founded the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in 1900 as a patriotic response to the Boer War. At the time of its incorporation in 1901, the IODE established headquarters in Toronto and a structural hierarchy of local, municipal, provincial, and national chapters.³ Henceforth, it became marked by the executive dominance of its central Canadian leadership. The IODE grew quickly, establishing chapters in every Canadian province as well as in India, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and Newfoundland. Junior IODE chapters, mostly in connection with schools, sprang up all across the country.⁴ The Order even attracted the interest of leading American philanthropists, who formed a national branch called the Imperial Order Daughters

¹Marjorie MacMurchy. “Citizenship.” *Echoes of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and Children of the Empire*. October 1922. p. 23.

²*Echoes*. October 1916. p. 39.

³The IODE's national executive began with five sub-committees: South African Graves, Children of the Empire and Schools, Comrades' Correspondence, Ladies' Branch of the Navy League, and Work in India.

⁴*Echoes*. December 1914. p. 9 reported, for example, that junior chapters were operating in all of the public schools in Halifax.

of the British empire.⁵ Although Polson Murray had envisioned a vast, empire-wide association, difficulties of distance and inefficient communication, and competition with the Victoria League, an imperialist organization in England, limited the breadth of its reach in other colonies. Unlike the Canadian Girls' Friendly Society, however, which attracted only a small band of loyal Canadian followers, the IODE claimed to be the largest group of organized women in Canada and the empire.⁶ Its membership swelled from 75 chapters with 4,000 members in 1903 to a peak of 750 chapters with about 50,000 members in 1918.⁷

The IODE's spectacular growth indicates that it captured a niche in the women's club movement by drawing on the energy and enthusiasm of patriotic women. Whereas men could express their fealty to king and country through political office, academic debate, and military service, women, at the time of the Order's founding, had no formal outlet for their patriotic impulses. In both popular and official texts, the empire was portrayed as the product of male exploration and statesmanship. By forming the IODE as an authoritative channel for imperialistic sentiment, belief, and practice, Polson Murray provided a potent means for middle- and upper-class women to participate in a public discourse of Canadian imperialism

⁵By 1930 the Imperial Order Daughters of the British Empire in the United States had 140 chapters in 17 states and a membership of 4,000. Mrs. J.M.C. Muir. "Report on Child Welfare." *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 9.

⁶"President's Address." *Echoes*, October 1916, p. 13.

⁷Marcel Dirk, "Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and the First World War" (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1988), pp. 38, 52. National Archives of Canada [Hereafter NAC], MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 13, *Facts Concerning the Work of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and Children of the Empire (Junior Branch)*, comp. Rebecca M. Church (n.p., 1929), p. 3.

that had been hitherto reserved for men. Their literacy practices—the production of pamphlets, reports, papers, lectures, resolutions, amendments, minutes, correspondence and the exchange of information in the Order's quarterly magazine, *Echoes*—enabled IODE women to engage in the production of dominant knowledges.⁸ Unlike the GFSC and the Girl Guides of Canada, the Daughters of the Empire left behind a substantial array of documents from which we can glean the workings of their organization and their imperialist mind set.

The next two chapters will examine the IODE's role in creating an imperial Canadian identity. During the three decades following its inception in 1900, the IODE participated in a grand project of imperial "subject"-making among its members, in the schools, and through its role as an ideological watchdog in the context of an evolving Canadian nationalism. Barred through law and convention from formal conduits of political power, Daughters of the Empire found in a discourse of an outward-looking, racialized imperial motherhood an acceptable way into authority and influence. Through the mothering acts of reproduction, nurture, and moral guidance, middle-class women could preserve and strengthen the "finest race it is possible to produce."⁹ This discourse of imperial motherhood, for all its race and class specificity, provided a potent justification for the public work of white, middle-class women. It poses a challenge to the body of scholarship that separates the

⁸Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices. Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

⁹*Echoes*, March 1911, p. 19.

politics of public and private. It affirms the centrality of gender and domestic space in nation-building and in the imperial process. It problematizes the tidy theory of imperialism as a form of Canadian nationalism. And it also signifies the complex interplay of class, race, gender, and nation in the construction of both women's public identity and definitions of Canadianness in the early twentieth century.

During the years before 1918, the widespread acceptance of British imperialism sustained the idea of women as the moral guardians of the empire's future citizens. The IODE grew and flourished with this wave of imperial sentiment. Through the 1920s, however, the Order struggled to inspire its membership and to sustain its credibility in the face of rising interest in Canadian autonomy and the transfer of power from voluntary organizations to the welfare state. Over time, the IODE accommodated rising nationalist preferences by attending to matters that were of Canadian interest. Adaptability was the key to its remarkable longevity.¹⁰ The empire, however, remained its foremost concern throughout the 1920s and beyond. As the majority of work on imperialism ends with the close of the First World War and texts dealing with the 1920s are quick to shift the focus to the quest for Canadian autonomy, we have little understanding of the extension of imperialist sympathies into this period.

Until at least the signing of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, arguably until after the Second World War, many Canadians would have joined the IODE in

¹⁰Remarkably, given the evolution of Canadian nationalism and the decline of imperialism's appeal in the post-colonial era, as of the year 2001 the IODE still exists.

regarding the British empire as their “imagined community.”¹¹ The development of the Canadian state, marked, of course, by Confederation in 1867 and Sir John A. Macdonald’s National Policy in 1879, did not bring with it the accoutrements of independent nationhood. Substantial British investment into Canada’s post-Confederation infrastructure, the industrial and intellectual prominence of Anglophiles like Donald Alexander Smith (better known as Lord Strathcona), George Parkin, and Vincent Massey, and the importation of British aristocracy as Canadian governors-general meant that the British empire remained an integral part of the Canadian social imagination. The zestful celebrations marking Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, the patriotism roused by the Boer War in South Africa, and the threat posed to the cultural dominance of Anglo-Canadians by a virtual flood of immigrants incited strong imperialistic feelings.¹² Canadians extracted their culture, in great part, from British literature, monarchical traditions, and heroic legends. The Union Jack, esteemed as a symbol of the British principles of liberty, justice, and freedom, flew as their national flag and inspired Canadians to sacrifice over 10,000 of their sons at Vimy Ridge in May 1917.¹³ Recalling his youth in Barrie, Ontario, a

¹¹David Cannadine. “Imperial Canada: Old History, New Problems,” in *Imperial Canada 1867-1917*, ed. Colin M. Coates (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Centre for Canadian Studies), p. 7.

¹²Nancy Sheehan. “The IODE, the Schools and World War I,” *History of Education Review* 13, 1 (1984): 29. R. Cupido points out that imperialistic sentiments also ran high as late as the 1927 celebration of the jubilee anniversary of Confederation. “Empire, Nation and the Ambiguities of Commemoration: British Canada and the 1927 Jubilee,” paper presented at the Nationalism, Citizenship, and National Identity Conference, Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University, 1999.

¹³Colin M. Coates. “From Parliament Hill to Vimy Ridge: Imperial Canada, 1867-1917,” in Coates, *Imperial Canada*, pp. i-viii.

community of distinct Anglo-Saxon character, Arthur Lower writes:

A child growing up in such surroundings and in such an atmosphere could hardly fail to be anything but purely 'British.' The term 'Canadian' was shadowy. Two outside events brought it into my range of concept: the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, which I remember quite vividly, and, a few years later, the Boer War. I remember this war very clearly indeed. If such a thing could have been possible, it made me more British than before. The same would apply to the community in general.¹⁴

This British supremacy, however, was not stable or inevitable. Foreign immigration, an American cultural invasion, and Bolshevism, French-Canadian nationalism, and other contesting ideologies were constant threats, especially in the years following the First World War, to the social pulse of the imperial elite. In the view of those who valued the British connection as a medium for cultural unification, fidelity to the motherland could only be secured through the continual production and repetition of narratives that subverted pacifism, Americanism, and parochialism, and made the empire appear to be a fact of nature. This project involved the suppression of individual interests and the assimilation of difference into a unifying narrative of British cultural belonging. The celebration of imperial expansion and the representation of empire as the product of the progressive unfolding of history reinforced differences between East and West and allowed imperialism to continue as a legitimate form of governance. More specifically, it reinforced the cultural hegemony of the British middle class. As Raymond Williams explains, hegemony "does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be

¹⁴Arthur R.M. Lower. "Nationalism and the Canadian Historian." *Canadian Historical Review* 66, 4 (1985): 542.

renewed, recreated, defended, and modified.”¹⁵ In this sense, imperialism was about more than preferential tariffs and colonial exploits. As an unstable and dynamic process, it took place and took shape as well at a popular level—in schools, voluntary organizations, and public debate—as the *idea* of empire was formed and naturalized in the collective psyche. In this sphere of nation formation, as a 1912 *Echoes* article explains, women could and did play a part:

The work of a man as Empire builder is more aggressive than that of woman, but her place is none the less assured and honoured. Rightly do we place our wreaths of rose and laurel on the graves of the soldiers who have fallen in their country's defence, on the statesmen who have given their maturest wisdom and finest energies to their country's service; nor should we pay less heartfelt homage to the women who have, in home and in patriotic organization, upheld those principles which have made our Empire great, and which must never be forgotten if that Empire is to endure.¹⁶

This process was neither entirely deliberate nor entirely successful. More than just meddling dictators of moral and patriotic codes, imperialist women were influenced by a range of motivational factors, including social control, benevolence, recognition, prestige, and self-improvement. On the receiving end, the nationalisms, labour unrest, and regional dissent of the interwar period were a clear indication that, for many Canadians, ethnic, class, and regional loyalties held greater meaning than any foggy notion of a far-flung, imperial family. But while social control was incomplete in both conveyance and reception, it is nonetheless an important focus for study. The faithful adherence to the ideals of empire and attempts to draw the

¹⁵Raymond Williams. “Selections from Marxism and Literature.” in *Culture/ Power/ History*, ed. N.B. Dirks, G. Eley, and S.B. Ortner (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁶“A Great Philanthropist.” *Echoes*, December 1912, pp. 5-6.

nation together under the imperial banner gave expression to the hopes and fears of a vocal and influential minority.¹⁷ Moreover, it helps to explain the affection between Canada and Britain, which has endured long after the severance of formal imperial ties. As late as the Second World War, as Louis Delvoie explains, the alliance between Canada and Britain was fueled by a feeling of “common heritage and a common purpose.”¹⁸ Canada retained a British governor-general until 1952 and waited until the 1960s to replace the British flag and anthem with “O’ Canada” and the maple leaf.¹⁹ These lingering sentiments and connections were in large part residual products of the myths of nation and empire that were propagated in the early part of the century.

After mobilizing thousands of women to provide comforts for British forces fighting the Boers and to memorialize Canadian graves in South Africa, the IODE began attending to the larger aims that had inspired its inception. The “Holy Trinity” of citizenship, empire, and patriotism was at the heart of all the IODE’s activities throughout the first thirty years of its existence.²⁰ The Order was not a charitable or philanthropic organization, but rather prided itself on seeking higher aims than mere community work or the relief of suffering or poverty. “We are organized not for

¹⁷While proponents of imperialism were in the majority in terms of their ethnic status, they were a minority in terms of their wealth and access to formal lines of power.

¹⁸Louis A. Delvoie, “Anglo-Canadian Relations in Historical Perspective,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 2, 1 (June 1987): 126.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰The “Holy Trinity” was coined by John O. Springhall, in “Lord Meath, youth, and empire,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 5 (1970): 103.

social things, not for tea parties, but for the welfare of our country," Mrs. Spence reminded IODE members at their Annual Meeting in 1914. IODE women expressed a strong sense of being part of a transitional, fractured historical moment when the fate of Canada and the empire would be determined through an ideological battle between the forces of self and community, materialism and moralism, and nationalism and imperialism. The Daughters regarded themselves as vital agents in the cultivation of selfless, moral, imperial citizenship and therefore as navigators on the Canadian historical path.

Imperialism for the IODE embodied a constellation of ideologies that emerged during the late nineteenth century. It involved a celebration of agrarian, moralistic, militaristic, and anti-modern ideals, the worship of royalty and national heroes, a resounding faith in Britain's racial and cultural supremacy, an almost blind acceptance of the benevolence and inevitability of colonial expansion, and a firm belief in Canada's destiny as the "brightest jewel in the British crown."²¹ These ideologies and practices were channeled into three general objectives. In all the chaos of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration, the IODE saw the imperial connection as a way to recapture the romanticized social order of the empire's halcyon days. As a regenerative force, it would create in Canada a population that was loyal, industrious, and resistant to socialist overtures. It would control class conflict by appealing to a common (and mythical given the ethnic diversity of

²¹"Report of the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting IODE—Presidential Address," *Echoes*, June 1922, p. 12; "Report of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting IODE," *Echoes*, October 1927, p. 6; *Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 29 May 1922, p. 15; *Echoes*, June 1924, p. 5.

Canada even during this period) racial and cultural heritage and destiny. In this regard, the IODE fit in with the general movement for national efficiency that was sweeping the nation in the early part of the century.²² Secondly, it meant renewing and strengthening Canada's ties to Great Britain. The security and privileges bestowed upon Canada by the mother country were, in their opinion, far too great to relinquish. Lastly and more broadly, the IODE envisioned the sentimental unification of Britain's vast empire, which in their view was the world's greatest hope for peace, order, and progress. Their patriotism, therefore, involved a commitment to both imperial unity and capitalism.

This combination of objectives set the IODE apart from other women's organizations of the period. While the IODE, the YWCA, the WCTU, and the NCWC shared an interest in a loose cluster of social issues—temperance, child welfare, public health, and immigration, for example—the IODE placed more of an emphasis on patriotic education, militarism, and the preservation of imperial ties.

This emphasis was expressed in the IODE's "official" statement of purpose:

To encourage and develop the spirit of patriotism. To furnish a bond of union amongst the women and children of the Empire. To strengthen ties between the Dominion and the Motherland. To provide an organization ready for national emergencies. To care for the dependents of our soldiers and sailors. To keep alive the memory of brave and heroic deeds. To promote a higher citizenship amongst all our citizens—British and foreign-born.²³

²²Mariana Valverde. *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); Sean Purdy, "Building Homes, Building Citizens: Housing Reform and Nation Formation in Canada, 1900-20," *Canadian Historical Review* 79, 3 (September 1998): 492-523; and Cynthia Commachio, "Mechanomorphy: Science, Management, and 'Human Machinery' in Industrial Canada, 1900-45," *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 35-67.

²³NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 33, doc. 25. *Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire What it is and What it Does* (n.p., n.d.).

While contemporary organizations also tackled social problems as part of a larger national mission, their transnational alliances could be characterized as international rather than imperial. Also, the IODE did not share their more feminist, evangelical outlook. Unlike the GFS, which was specifically Anglican in its structure and orientation, the IODE was non-denominational.²⁴

A high level of cross membership, however, ensured that imperialist interests were not confined to the IODE. Likewise, social gospel, feminist, temperance, and reform influences would have infiltrated the Order in this manner. Hence IODE ideology would not have been completely homogeneous. Emily Murphy, for example, a prominent Alberta feminist, eugenicist, and member of the National Council of Women took “a very lively interest in the Order.”²⁵ IODE organizing secretary, Clementina Fessenden, an “ardent imperialist,” and the originator of Empire Day, was also an active member of the NCWC. Mrs. Sutherland, Regent of Hamilton’s Caxton Chapter and a member of the IODE’s National Executive, was typical of the Order’s leading women in her high level of involvement with other organizations. She served as the first president of St. Mark’s Women’s Auxiliary in Hamilton and as Vice President of the WA of Niagara. She was also Dorcas secretary for fifteen years,

²⁴See Diana Pedersen, “‘Building Today for the Womanhood of Tomorrow’: Businessmen, Boosters, and the YWCA, 1890-1930,” *Urban History Review* 15, 3 (February 1987): 225-245 and Nancy Sheehan, “‘Women Helping Women’: the WCTU and the Foreign Population in the West, 1905-1930,” *International Journal of Women’s Studies* (November-December 1983): 71-86.

²⁵“Janey Canuck Honoured,” *Echoes*, October 1914, p. 12.

during which time she was a leading member of the Central WCTU, the Local Council of Women, the Women's Patriotic League, and the boards of Hamilton's Day Nursery and Aged Women's Home.²⁶

Charlotte Whitton exemplified the changing face of organized women in the 1920s. She combined patriotic and reform work with a career in the budding profession of social service. Throughout the decade following the First World War, Whitton quickly climbed the ranks of the IODE to become convenor of both the (newly created) child welfare and immigration committees. Despite her involvement as a member and often executive officer of the National Council of Women, the Canadian Women's Press Club, the Women's Institutes, and the Social Service Council of Canada, she managed to participate in League of Nations sessions, supervise provincial surveys on immigration, and begin what was to become a long and distinguished career in child and family welfare.²⁷

Notwithstanding their varied concerns and commitments, as a group the Daughters of the Empire were not interested in effecting any dramatic change in Canadian society. Their avoidance of controversial issues, like woman suffrage, and their support for status quo ideologies ensured the endorsement of the male political-economic establishment. Business, political, industrial, and military leaders all

²⁶"Death of Mrs. Sutherland." *Echoes*, March 1916, p. 10.

²⁷P.T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell. *No Bleeding Heart: Charlotte Whitton, a Feminist on the Right* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), chapters 2 and 3. For an explanation of Whitton's involvement in child reform see Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada (1800-1950)* (London: University Press of America, 1983) and "Making the Way More Comfortable": Charlotte Whitton's Child Welfare Career, 1920-1948," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 (Winter 1982-83): 33-45.

benefited from the imperialist connection the IODE was promoting. Unlike other women's organizations that were more explicitly maternal feminist in philosophy, the IODE had little difficulty garnering a supportive audience for their views. Honourary members and patrons included prime ministers, premiers, lieutenant governors, corporate executives, and members of the royal family. Working *with* the ideological grain of the ruling class was key to the Order's immediate and long-term success. While claiming to be non-partisan in its approach, and while acting as a thorn in the side of government on imperial issues, the IODE was clearly an ally of the state. Indeed, the Daughters of the Empire represented themselves as *essential* to the smooth exercise of state rule. In the words of the Order's national organizing secretary, "Women, to a larger extent than we sometimes realize, educate and develop national sentiment. The state must have the co-operation of the women."²⁸ As Max Weber has theorized, the very existence of the state depends on the willingness of "the dominated" to accept and obey the arbitrary powers of the ruling elite.²⁹ In Gramscian terms, political government was complemented by "social hegemony," the "spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group."³⁰ This consent was "'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the

²⁸*Echoes*, October 1915, p. 37.

²⁹Max Weber. "Politics as Vocation." in *Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 78.

³⁰Antonio Gramsci. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers 1971), p. 12.

dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.”³¹ In promoting obedience, order, self-regulation, and duty as part of their imperialism, the IODE was participating in the informal acts of governance. In the words of one IODE member: “The best security for the permanence of our rule is an increased sense of duty and responsibility on the part of every one of us.”³²

The IODE’s class and ethnic status was reflected in its membership. For the most part, Daughters of the Empire were Anglo-Protestant social elites—the wives of men who were pillars of their communities. Minnie Julia Beatrice Campbell, regent of the Fort Garry Chapter, was the daughter of a doctor and the wife of Colin H. Campbell, a prominent lawyer and statesman. Besides holding the position of Attorney General, her husband served on the Winnipeg City Council, held a seat in the Manitoba Government, and acted as president of various organizations including the YMCA.³³ Likewise, Catharine Welland Merritt, who was for several years an outstanding figure in the councils of the IODE as National Organizing Secretary, married Major General Sir Henry Pellatt, CVO. Of United Empire Loyalist stock, she was the granddaughter of the Honourable William Hamilton Merritt who built the Welland Canal and to whose memory a monument was erected in St. Catharines.³⁴

³¹Ibid.

³²“The British Empire.” *Echoes*, March 1904, pp. 1-2.

³³“Campbell, Colin H.,” in *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2d ed., ed. Henry James Morgan (Toronto, 1912), p. 190.

³⁴“William Hamilton Merritt.” in *National Encyclopedia of Canadian Biography*, ed. Jesse Elgar Middleton and W. Scott Downs (Toronto, 1935), pp. 151-52.

Mary Gooderham, who served as the Order's national president during the war, was the wife of Englishman Lt. Col. Albert Edward Gooderham, a director of the Bank of Toronto, President of the Dominion of Canada Guarantee and Accident Insurance Company, and rated as a millionaire by *Saturday Night*.³⁵ The IODE's president in the early 1920s, Mrs. P.E. Doolittle, was married to a prestigious physician who assisted in the formation of the Toronto Automobile Club and the Canadian Wheelman's Association.³⁶ Social status was not monopolized by the IODE's national executive, however. Even the Sir Robert Borden Chapter of the small village of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, for example, represented the business and political elite. Among its founding members were the wives of the mayor, the president of Acadia University, the owner of the local newspaper, the Presbyterian minister, the school principal, along with prominent physicians, businessmen, and industrialists.³⁷

While IODE membership was not formally restricted by income or social status, the closed process of member selection and the ambience of IODE social gatherings ensured that rank and file membership was drawn from the leisured class.

³⁵"Gooderham, A.E.." *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, p. 453.

³⁶"Doolittle, P.E.." *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, p. 336.

³⁷Lorraine Coops, "So Long as the British Empire Lives': Patterns of Continuity and Change Within the Sir Robert Borden Chapter Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, 1915-1965" (Honours Thesis, Acadia University, 1991), pp. 33-34. Similarly, Nadine Small writes that local chapters in Saskatchewan were composed of "well-known, well-respected women who were active in the community and whose husbands were the civic and business leaders in their respective towns and cities." "The 'Lady Imperialists' and the Great War." in *Other Voices: Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women*, ed. David De Brou and Aileen Moffatt (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1995), p. 79. Small's detailed examination of the IODE's prairie membership indicates that the organization included few wives of common farmers or labourers. Nadine Small, "Stand by the Union Jack: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in the Prairie Provinces During the Great War, 1914-1918" (M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1988), chapter 1 and Appendix A.

The Order was officially open to all women who were loyal British subjects, but the requirement of nomination by a member in good standing limited the admission of newcomers to the Daughters' established social circle. Membership also required the leisure and means to participate in IODE meetings, fundraisers, and elaborate social functions. Mrs. Helen Yeo of the Charlottetown chapter recalled: "It was a pleasant era of social life for the Daughters, afternoon teas, the tables decorated with the symbolic violets; "At Homes" for naval officers; bridge parties at Government House, guests of the Chatelaine; a Fancy Calico and Dress Ball; entertainments in the opera house...." A social writer for a Hamilton newspaper described the scene at one of the Municipal Chapter's monthly twilight knitting at-homes:

The ladies were scattered in groups around small tables, chatting, knitting, or doing other work. Afternoon tea was being served from a long table decorated with yellow daffodils.... These afternoons furnish a trio of treats of the arts: music from the Victrola, three rooms hung with fine paintings, and a delightful talk by Mrs. Crerar, who brings a beautiful thought each time to leave with the audience.³⁸

Another columnist observed that IODE women were always suitably "hatted and gloved" for such social appearances.³⁹

The IODE's class status went hand in hand with its ethnic homogeneity. By and large, Daughters of the Empire came from British stock and circulated comfortably in British social circles: many had homes and relatives in England and some even held membership in London clubs. Their husbands were often notable

³⁸*Echoes*. March 1915, p. 22.

³⁹Fred Edge, "The marvelous members of Canada's IODE." *Liberty*, October 1955, p. 59, quoted in Sheehan, "The IODE, the Schools and World War I," p. 31.

patrons of the Orange Order, the Empire Club, and the Association of United Empire Loyalists. Marcel Dirk discovered that, during the patriotic mood of service during the First World War, French, Icelandic, Jewish, and working-class women formed IODE chapters.⁴⁰ However, most of these chapters dissolved at the close of the war, and the IODE maintained its predominantly elite Anglo-Saxon character and make-up through the 1920s and beyond.⁴¹ The handful of chapters composed of non-Anglo-Saxon members sat on the fringes of the organization, tolerated but detached from the inner workings of the executive. For example, the Native women of Alert Bay's Nimpkish Chapter were oblivious of the larger purpose of their fund raising efforts on behalf of the IODE's War Memorial Scheme. At the 1920 annual meeting of the IODE's provincial chapter in British Columbia, the Nimpkish Chapter's representative, Mrs. Cooke, was asked the opinion of "our Indian sisters" on the project. "Our members do not understand it," she replied. "They have sent me here to learn about it, but we said if the Provincial Chapter passed it, it must be all right and we will support it."⁴² Clearly, the power of decision-making rested with the organization's white, upper crust, central Canadian leadership. The IODE's ethnic consciousness was so acute that even women of British birth who married "foreign"

⁴⁰Dirk, pp. 58-60.

⁴¹Many of the chapters with French-Canadian membership, however, continued to function. The level of interest in Quebec even warranted the formation of a Quebec provincial chapter in 1924. Apart from a penchant for service, there is little indication in the national chapter records of the motivation of francophone women in their commitment to an imperialist organization.

⁴²*Echoes*, October-November 1920, p. 53.

men were barred from membership.⁴³ Debates about the possibility of forming chapters composed of “colored women” were continually deferred and remained unresolved during the period of this study.⁴⁴

Given the IODE’s penchant for imperialism, the exclusivity of its membership is hardly surprising. Daughters of the Empire were committed to upholding a capitalist, hierarchical social order that served the interests of their families and friends. Their vision of Canada was based on a preference for Anglo-conformity and a fear of socio-ethnic multiplicity. The imperial connection they sought to maintain meant, for them, the normalization of the values of the British middle class—piety, domesticity, industry, duty, chivalry, and self-control—and an adherence to British cultural and political traditions. It also meant the entrenchment of their own superiority as elite, white women. They expected immigrants and the working class to conform to their standards of morality and family life. Moved by a sharp sense of “noblesse oblige,” they felt it was their moral duty to socialize, uplift, and redeem the lower ranks of society.⁴⁵ Even beyond the motivations of service and duty, in their view the very future of the nation and empire depended on their willingness to take on this work. At the IODE annual meeting in 1914, President Gooderham’s opening

⁴³There is a very interesting exchange on this issue in NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 1915, p. 12.

⁴⁴*Minutes*. Executive Meeting, IODE, March 1920, p. 219.

⁴⁵MacMurchy, “Citizenship,” p. 23. Kathleen McCarthy explains the concept of “noblesse oblige” in women’s philanthropic organizations in *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). See also, by the same author, “Parallel Power Structure: Women and the Voluntary Sphere,” in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power*, ed. Kathleen McCarthy (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 1-31.

address illustrated the hierarchical and custodial relationship of the Daughters of the Empire with those they sought to reform:

But Daughters of the Empire have other responsibilities to face.... [With] little except our own enthusiasm to inspire us, we must look after the lonely, provide means of education for the ignorant, open the doors of culture and opportunity for those in less fortunate circumstances than our own, tend the sick, and do all that lies within our power to make the life of the city or town in which we live healthier, sweeter, nobler and better worth living for even the most humble citizen.... [It] is the essence of Imperialism.... Because we are Daughters of the Empire, we recognize the place that courtesy and consideration must have in the lives of good citizens. We realize perhaps more fully our relative worth as compared to other human beings.⁴⁶

The open admittance of non-Anglo-Saxon members would have complicated the particular rhetoric of sisterhood used by the Order to spur its members into action. From the outset, the IODE aimed to cultivate a bond of union among daughters of the mother country, whose personal allegiance to their race and heritage would ensure the feelings of patriotism and love of empire that were needed to fuel the Order's agenda. The IODE's reports, papers, and periodicals were saturated with the symbolism of female solidarity. They spoke of a "great assembly of women united in a common cause," moved by a "sense of kinship" and "inspired by a common mission...upheld by the selfsame ideals."⁴⁷ But the Order's notion of female unity was not intended to spark a feminist consciousness, nor did it extend across lines of class and ethnicity.⁴⁸ Its function, rather, was to unite women of a particular class and race

⁴⁶*Echoes*. June 1914. pp. 8-9. 12.

⁴⁷Rosa Shaw. "An Account of the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire." *Echoes*. June 1930. p. 6.

⁴⁸The concept of sisterhood and women's culture is explored in Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1979); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in

whose ideals and interests were suited to the imperialistic cause for which the IODE was created.

Daughters of the Empire even viewed the winning of the federal franchise less as a feminist political victory than as a means to further their patriotic agenda. For them, "votes for women" was both a logical extension of what they perceived to be the free, merciful, and democratic spirit of the empire and a powerful instrument through which that empire could be preserved. While individual members may have supported women's suffrage, as an organization the IODE recognized the splintering potential of such a controversial matter. They abstained from providing public comment on the "woman question" during the heated debates leading up to 1918. In their own papers, however, they occasionally aired their views. Clearly, Daughters of the Empire regarded woman suffrage primarily as a class issue. While they often celebrated the democratic traditions of English-speaking peoples, their commitment to democracy was limited by their class loyalties. The very thought of sharing the political franchise with their servants made them willing to hold out on suffrage altogether. Catherine Welland Merritt, of St. Catherines, drew her line in the sand: "If a woman of property is given a vote, I naturally approve, because she has a stake in the country, but to let servants and shop girls vote on questions of vital importance will only complicate matters.... Will it benefit [woman] to have a vote

Nineteenth Century America." *Signs* 1, 1 (Fall 1975): 1-29; and Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

and give one also to each maid-servant in her establishment?”⁴⁹ In their view, only the upper ranks of society possessed the character and ethics required for effective governance; mob rule would pose a serious threat to social order and progress.

It was, of course, a gender issue as well. Men, they believed, met the full requirements of formal citizenship by living with the possibility that they may be called to sacrifice their lives for the protection of the empire. Lord Rosebery, quoted in *Echoes*, summed up this sentiment: “I do not ask [the girls] to fight any more than I ask them to vote.”⁵⁰ Because of their commitment to the preservation of the empire above all else, militarism was a central component of their understanding of citizenship. That men would bear arms and women would bear children was a deeply ingrained assumption that they never thought to question. Chivalry required the maintenance of sexual difference. Daughters of the Empire feared that equality with men would lead to the masculinization of women. It would thus strip them of their primary source of power—their superior moral authority. Enfranchised or not, women, in their view, had at their disposal an avenue of agency that could profoundly affect the future direction of the nation: “While some of us are waiting for the vote, don’t let us neglect to use the great power we already possess—a power much older than the vote, so old that it antedates all organized society—the power of moulding and shaping and educating public opinion, upon which in the final analysis

⁴⁹*Echoes*, December 1908, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁰*Echoes*, June 1908, p. 5.

must rest the enforcement of the law.”⁵¹

After the fact, the IODE applauded the inclusion of women in the political process as a demonstration of the superiority of Anglo-Saxon, Christian nations over anachronistic regimes that thrived on the subjection of women. With ballot in hand, Daughters of the Empire believed they were better equipped to support measures in line with their imperial beliefs. IODE president, Mrs. Gooderham, explained the Order’s position: “We did not discuss women’s suffrage while it was still a subject of debate but now that it has become an accomplished fact in so many of the Provinces, the Daughters of the Empire must not fail to make use of the vote whenever it can be used to advance the objects for which we stand.”⁵² In keeping with the Order’s claim of non-partisanship, Daughters of the Empire were asked to study social questions carefully and to vote on imperial issues rather than on party loyalty.⁵³ In an article entitled “Citizenship,” printed in *Echoes* in 1922, Marjorie MacMurphy admonished her readers to “vote patriotically, intelligently, and with a single mind and heart for the good of this British Dominion and the British Empire.”⁵⁴

The Daughters’ official nonpartisanship and their language of femininity were expedient to their public credibility as an organization of women. In a world that was

⁵¹*Echoes*. December 1915, p. 58.

⁵² *Echoes*. October 1917, p. 11.

⁵³By non-partisanship, the IODE meant that the organization did not officially endorse a specific political party. They recognized the divisiveness that such a policy would incur among IODE members. The Order did not take an official stand for either party, for example, during the important election of 1917 even though they were vocal in their support for conscription and the support of Great Britain.

⁵⁴MacMurphy, “Citizenship,” p. 23.

slow to accept the involvement of women in politics, the Order's discourse of loyalty, service, selflessness, and national welfare gave its members an authoritative (and acceptable) position from which to speak and be heard:

An organization such as ours, which is non-political and concerned with national well-being, occupies a position of unusual strength; our strength is our loyalty, and desire for service. No government, no matter what its political complexion, could afford to ignore or treat lightly, the massed demand of sincere women, backing an obviously good cause, intent on righting glaring and obvious wrongs. There is strength in non-partisanship which even the narrowest type of politician cannot afford to ignore. There in the social field woman can do her true work, and certainly the reward is great and immediate.⁵⁵

The IODE fully expected that through their "natural" qualities of sympathy, compassion, and moral fortitude, like-minded women could transcend the befouled practices of party politics. They could band together, as voters, as club women, as mothers, and as educators, to effect change on the issues of clear importance to the home, country, and empire. They saw this as a position of tremendous power and influence.

While class and ethnic loyalties superceded any feminist sympathies, gender was indeed a central component of the IODE's public identity. The Order's adherence to Victorian ideals of true womanhood aided their quest for credibility. As women in a male-dominated world, the Daughters' public vocabulary was restricted; the depiction of their imperial role was carefully tailored to suit the ideological climate in which they lived. While, by the turn of the century, women were gaining access to higher education and the professions and were exercising more control over

⁵⁵*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, May-June 1928, p. 98.

their fertility, prescriptive literature, popular sentiment, and public policy emphasized domesticity and motherhood as their primary function.⁵⁶ Even the most ardent feminists of the day were required to disguise any radical sympathies in a cloak of maternalism.⁵⁷ IODE women situated themselves in the empire through familial metaphors: they were members of a great imperial family bound together through ties of blood, and part of one historical household, the British race, headed by old mother England. These metaphors gave women access to the empire as a domestic project. In turn, domestic space was infused with national significance. Indeed, it was through their own imperial motherhood that Daughters of the Empire derived their principal source of power and authority. Women's part in nation and empire building, as opposed to the "male" domain of party politics and military enterprise, was constructed in relation to their reproductive and familial function and their supposedly natural role as spiritual and moral educators. Daughters of the

⁵⁶Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 2d ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1996), chapter 6. According to Beth Light and Joy Parr, household size dropped from 5.7 to 4.9 persons in rural areas and from 5.1 to 4.6 in urban areas between 1871 and 1921. *Canadian Women on the Move, 1867-1920* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press & OISE, 1983), p. 5. Women were living longer and having fewer children. Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 151.

⁵⁷See, for example, Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Linda Kealey, *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1979); Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 3-26. The concept of maternalism as a power strategy has been the focus of a large body of writing in recent years. The following is a sample: Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920," *American Historical Review* 95, 4 (October 1990): 1076-1108; Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Toward Defining Maternalism in U.S. History," *Journal of Women's History* 5, 2 (Fall 1993): 110-113; Jane Lewis, "Women's Agency, Maternalism and Welfare," *Gender & History* 6, 1 (April 1994): 117-123; and Lynn Y. Weiner, "Maternalism as Paradigm: Defining the Issues," *Journal of Women's History* 5, 2 (Fall 1993): 96-98.

Empire proudly claimed to represent the “organized motherhood of Canada.”⁵⁸ In their view of gender relations, the real power of women lay, not in any formal political clout, but in their influence over their husbands and children. As one observer explained: “The greatest responsibility in the national life rested upon the women. The genius in art, in war or in statesmanship had his mother to thank for his success. He owed three quarters of his greatness to her. Men of faith and men of chivalry were needed in Canada, and it devolved upon the women to make them so.”⁵⁹ Home life was regarded as a microcosmic indicator of the character and welfare of the national community, for “patriotism, loyalty, and love of country begin in the home.”⁶⁰

We have heard, and indeed, the pages of our history are covered with the records of men who have given their lives to the Empire, men who are designated Empire-builders, but I believe that our greatest Empire-builders are found rather in our homes. The mothers and wives who stay at home, who spend their lives bringing up their children, training them and teaching them the proper ideals, and living before them the ideal patriotism, they are the real Empire-builders.⁶¹

Women who possessed the virtues of gentle breeding and Anglo-Saxon lineage, they believed, had a moral duty to extend this influence into the wider sphere of community and nation. The “social field” of club work and education held great potential for the civilizing and patriotic work of exemplary women. In their

⁵⁸“Educational Report.” *Echoes*, October 1915, p. 25.

⁵⁹*Echoes*, March 1914, p. 33.

⁶⁰One IODE member asked: “[Who] will attempt to refute the assertion that the home is the beginning of the State?” *Echoes*, June 1914, pp. 8-9. See also, *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE. “Report of the Committee for India,” 24-9 May 1920, p. 62.

⁶¹*Echoes*, March 1909, p. 9.

view, producing knowledge about the empire and propagating norms for citizenship was a critical contribution to empire-building that lay within the accepted realm of feminine activity. The IODE president explained, at the annual meeting in 1914, that women had an important role to play in “strengthening the silken cords of patriotism that bind us not only to our dear Motherland, but to every part of the Empire where the British message of freedom and enlightenment has gone; so that, silken though those cords may be, they may become strong as steel for the integrity and lasting unity of the Empire.”⁶²

As the “silken cord” allegory illustrates, rather than concentrating on diplomatic issues or on imperial trade policy, the Daughters spoke in terms of a spirit of empire, a Christian sense of service, and the affectionate bond between Canada and the mother country. “The Empire is not held together by force,” they argued, “but largely by self interest, pride and affection.”⁶³ The IODE was not unique in deploying this emotive language of imperial unity. Since the eighteenth-century days of Edmund Burke, imperialists had argued that the intangible, affective bonds of empire had greater unifying potential than any formal constitutional arrangements.⁶⁴ Burke had impressed upon his Parliamentary colleagues that the ties of reciprocal

⁶²NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 2, Report of the Annual Meeting, IODE, May 1914, p. 2.

⁶³“Our Empire.” *Echoes*, December 1917, p. 50.

⁶⁴James G. Greenlee, *Education and Imperial Unity, 1901-1926* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), pp. xiv-xv.

affection and a common heritage were “light as air... [but] strong as links of iron.”⁶⁵ Many years later, William Ewart Gladstone expressed similar sentiments. In his view, the “silken ties of love and affection” would ensure the free and voluntary affiliation of colonial peoples.⁶⁶ Even Goldwin Smith, renowned for his vocal resistance to formal imperial federation and his support for Canadian autonomy, was not immune to imperialist sympathies.⁶⁷ Indeed he insisted that the colonial connection “which is really a part of our greatness—the connection of blood, sympathy, and ideas— will not be affected by political separation.”⁶⁸ He even went so far as to predict that “when our colonies are nations, something in the nature of a great Anglo-Saxon federation may, in substance if not in form, spontaneously arise out of affinity and mutual affection.”⁶⁹

As the late-nineteenth century zeal for colonial expansion gave way to the desire for imperial consolidation, this notion of an empire bonded by common ideals began to take a firmer hold.⁷⁰ Increased commercial competition from other nations,

⁶⁵E. Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke*, II (Boston: Beaconfield edition, 1901), p. 181 quoted in Greenlee, p. xv. The IODE was familiar with this phrase. See, for example, “A Great Imperialist,” *Echoes*, December 1912, p. 5.

⁶⁶In P. Knaplund, *Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1927), p. 96, cited in Greenlee, p. xvi.

⁶⁷It is interesting to note that Mrs. Goldwin Smith was one of the IODE's honorary members.

⁶⁸Goldwin Smith, *The Empire* (London: J. Henry and J. Parker, 1863), cited in G. Bennett, *The Concept of Empire Burke to Attlee 1774-1947* (London: Black, 1967), p. 218.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 219. See also Goldwin Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1891), pp. 265-6.

⁷⁰By 1900, more than a quarter of the world's land and population were held by the British Empire. Greenlee, p. 1.

mounting potential for international conflict, and the escalation of colonial nationalism directed attention to the need for a stronger internal union. Constitutional solutions, pushed by the Imperial Federation League and through a series of Imperial Conferences, proved to be futile. Proponents of a united empire began to pay heed to Sir John Seeley, W.E. Forster, Joseph Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and other late Victorians who saw education, belief, and feeling as the means to co-ordinate Britain's scattered holdings.⁷¹ The turn of the twentieth century saw the establishment of several English organizations committed to this approach to empire-building. The most prominent among them were the Victoria League (VL), the League of Empire (L of E), and the Royal Colonial Institute (RCI). These private, non-partisan societies established branches in other parts of the empire, including Canada. They shared a common goal of promoting imperial unity through both formal education and informal propaganda.

Clearly the IODE was drawing upon the discursive tradition that inspired the creation of these "Education and Empire" societies. The tradition's emphasis on emotion, understanding, and sentiment made empire-building an acceptable endeavour for patriotic women.

It may be that Imperialism needs more definite ties, the ties of united commerce, and mutual concessions in tariff, but I do not think the work of the Daughters of the Empire lies in that sphere. It is I think more in the moulding of thought and influencing of sentiment, not the preaching of trade doctrine of a quid pro quo.... We can then, each in our own sphere, convince all whom we come across that Imperialism and the British Empire stands in the making of nation for the highest moral and intellectual development, for progress, for fair

⁷¹Greenlee, p. xii.

play, for breadth of view and for liberty, "the chartered right of Englishmen."⁷²

Unlike the United Empire Loyalist Association, which for Berger represented an indigenous well-spring of imperialist activity in Canada, the IODE's ideological affiliations lay outside the dominion. Through their intimate connections with the VL, L of E, and RCI, which became important sources for the IODE's propaganda, the Daughters of the Empire developed an understanding of imperialism that was distinctly external in orientation.⁷³ The L of E and the IODE's allied society, the VL, both requested permission to use the IODE's badge.⁷⁴ Daughters of the Empire were also closely affiliated with the Guild of Loyal Women in South Africa (1900-1912), to whom the IODE first suggested the scheme of caring for soldiers' graves.⁷⁵ They exchanged reports and information with chapters in other parts of the empire and in the United States. Through donations to schools and support of the *zenana* bible mission in Bombay and Calcutta, they were involved in the political socialization of Indian women and children. Chapters reported subscribing to such magazines as *The Federal Leaflet*, published by South Africa's Guild of Loyal Women; *The Victorian League Leaflet*; *The United Empire*, *The Round Table*, the *Primrose League Gazette*, a London monthly; and *Young Imperialist*, which was produced for junior Primrose

⁷²*Echoes*, October 1904, pp. 4-5.

⁷³The influence of these organizations in Canada went beyond the IODE. Donald Alexander Smith (Lord Strathcona) was the L of E's first president. The Duke of Connaught and the Fourth Earl Grey, both governors-general of Canada, served as RCI presidents. In 1917 the RCI had over 1,000 non-resident members of the RCI in Canada. Greenlee, pp. 7, 109, 110, 158-59.

⁷⁴"President's Annual Address," *Echoes*, June 1910, p. 6.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

League members to promote the “three great principles [of]...loyalty to religion, loyalty to King and constitution, and loyalty to the Empire.”⁷⁶ Under the influence of L of E and RCI men like H.E. Egerton and A.P. Newton and the writings of Froude and Seeley, the IODE promoted the idea of an empire founded not on military aggression or capitalist greed, but on racial instinct and a Providential destiny.⁷⁷ The privileged configuration of their race and class and their espousal of imperial motherhood enabled Daughters of the Empire to participate in the cultural processes by which a specific national fantasy, based on these external ideals of imperialism, was given wider currency. Chapter two will examine those processes.

⁷⁶See, for example, “Patriotic Exchanges,” *Echoes*, October 1910, p. 4; “Military Chapter, Saskatoon,” *Echoes*, June 1912, p. 41.

⁷⁷Hugh Egerton was appointed in 1905 as the first Beit Professor Colonial History at Oxford. A.P. Newton became the first Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at the University of London in 1919. Along with Sir Charles Lucas, who was Chair of the Royal Colonial Institute from 1915, they orchestrated an “Education and Empire” campaign to promote the idea of imperial unity. John Robert Seeley was Regius Professor of History at Cambridge from 1869 until his death in 1895. He is most noted for his book, *The Expansion of England*, published in 1893, which popularised and justified imperialism as England’s natural destiny. Richard Aldrich, “Imperialism in the study and teaching of history,” in *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, ed. J.A. Mangan (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 25-7.

Chapter Two

Constructing Imperial “Subjects”: The IODE and “Education for Empire”

Mere greatness of territory, or commercial achievement, or numerical strength of population are insufficient to make us great or permanent as a nation. The foundations of our institutions have been laid in accordance with the ideals of the British race, and those ideals must prevail or the very purpose for which this nation was founded will be defeated.¹

The study of organized patriotic women confirms that gender as an analytical category poses a challenge to traditional interpretations of imperialism and nationalism in Canada just as nation as an analytical category enriches our understanding of gender relations. Contrary to persistent notions of nation-building as a public enterprise, the discourse of imperial motherhood placed women and domestic space at the heart of the nation and empire. This chapter will explain how the deployment of potent literacy and symbolic practices, the promotion of patriotism in public schools, the transmission of historical memory, and a role as ideological gatekeeper enabled the IODE to participate in the installation of a Britannic national identity among Canadians. This identity, based as it was on a vocabulary of kinship, organic growth, and racial instinct, legitimized the public work of patriotic women.

IODE parlour meetings radiated the intensity of the Daughters’ passion for all things imperial. They gathered once a month for a programme of patriotic songs and recitations—“The Colours of the Flag,” “Thank God We Kept the Flag Flying,” “At

¹*Echoes of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and Children of the Empire*, December 1914, p. 49.

the Thought of Britain's Glory," and "Rule Britannia."² They gave and heard lectures on "The Origin of Imperialism," "How we got our Navy," and "Canada's Footprints in the Path of Empire," and papers on imperial "heroes," like Nelson, Livingstone, and Rhodes.³ Many chapters established courses of readings on such subjects as the "methods and progress of European colonization," "a comparison between the success of the colonies belonging to Great Britain and other countries," "Expansion of the British Empire," "the relation of the Motherland to her colonies," and "Imperial Unity: Is it Possible?"⁴ No IODE meeting was complete, of course, without the singing of "God Save the King," and the saluting of the Union Jack. The IODE's quarterly periodical, *Echoes*, reported the ceremonial details of royal coronations, weddings, funerals, and tours. These literacy practices kept before the Order's membership a feeling of familiarity with an empire that was, by all accounts, mighty, progressive, beneficent, and fair. They reinforced a concept of nation that extended beyond the geographical borders of Canada to include a broader, Anglo-Saxon, transatlantic community. They incited the feelings of just cause and enthusiasm that were necessary for the successful orchestration of the Order's patriotic work.

The IODE also cultivated and sustained the idea of empire among members and onlookers through patriotic symbols and imagery. "We learn more through the

²National Archives of Canada [Hereafter NAC], MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, Secretary's Report, IODE, 4 May 1903, p. 30; *Echoes*, June 1907, p. 13.

³NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 1913, p. 9; IODE Annual Report, 1901-2, p. 4; IODE Annual Report, 1903, p. 22; *Echoes*, June 1912, pp. 35-7.

⁴NAC MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 1901-2, p. 4; IODE Annual Report, 1903, p. 22; "Military Chapter, Saskatoon," *Echoes*, June 1912, p. 41.

eye than through the ear," a member noted, "and things seen remain longer on the mental retina than things heard."⁵ The Order's proudly worn badge displayed the Union Jack fixed upon a star with seven points, each representing the seven chief divisions of the empire. The crown that surmounted it signified the wearer's fealty to the monarchy and her membership in the "greatest Empire the world has ever seen."⁶ Upon taking their imperial oath, members were urged to wear their badges "as the soldiers wear their khaki."⁷ Daughters of the Empire likened themselves to a great army of women dedicated to Britain's defence, not through the bearing of arms but through the power of word and deed. The prominence of violets as a symbol honouring their beloved Queen Victoria was illustrated in a report from the Port Arthur Chapter in 1907, which described its Violet Day festivities: "The hall was prettily decorated. A large Union Jack was draped across the piano and upon this rested a bust of Queen Victoria. Opposite was placed a purple-draped table supporting a photo of the late Queen. The tea tables were nicely decorated with violets and violet colored ribbons. Music and readings were provided and the many visitors enjoyed the afternoon."⁸ Chapter names—for example, the Lord Nelson Chapter, the King Arthur Chapter, and the Prince Edward of York

⁵*Echoes*, October 1905, p. 9.

⁶This phrase is repeated throughout the IODE's papers. See, for example, *Echoes*, February 1902, p. 1.

⁷NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file. 2, IODE Annual Report, May 1915, p. 35.

⁸*Echoes*, March 1907, p. 17.

Chapter—symbolized the Christian and heroic legends of the British Isles.⁹ Chapter mottos, like “True to the Old Flag,” “England expects that every man will do his duty,” and “Not for one, but for all,” succinctly reminded members of the larger purpose of their work.¹⁰ And, of course, the Union Jack waved conspicuously at every IODE gathering as a reminder of what they perceived to be an honourable heritage.

A patriotic celebration at the close of the Boer War exhibited all the pomp, splendour, and symbolism that came to be associated with the IODE. Union Jacks and transparencies of the King and Queen adorned the walls and stage of the hall where an enthusiastic audience kept their flags in continual motion. Flowing garlands, in red, white, and blue, hung from the chandeliers. Two soldiers and seven Daughters of the Empire surrounded Britannia and the British Lion in the opening tableau, “For the Empire,” and the audience joined the well-known chorus for “Rule Britannia.” Loud cheers greeted the Prince Edward Chapter Children of the Empire, who sang “Hurrah for the Fighting Lads of England.” A series of patriotic songs and a moving recitation of Tennyson’s “The Revenge” led into the *piece de resistance*: an army and navy flag drill carried out by sixteen young Daughters dressed as soldiers and sailors, their smart Zouave uniforms and their performance of intricate military evolutions stirring the crowd into a patriotic frenzy.¹¹

⁹Katie Pickles. “Forgotten Colonizers: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) and the Canadian North.” *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien* 42, 2 (1998): 195.

¹⁰NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 1903-4, p. 46; IODE Annual Report, 1901-2, p. 25; IODE Annual Report, 1915, p. 4.

¹¹*Echoes*, February 1902, p. 6.

These ritualistic exercises helped to load simple, broadly accessible material objects with imperial meaning. “In itself the Flag is nothing,” one Daughter wrote, “yet there is everything in its significance.”¹² Patriotic fetish objects had the potential to draw people together across classes and to create a feeling of being part of a universal cultural heritage. In their emblematic displays, the IODE was drawing upon the British tradition of patriotic spectacle that emerged in the late nineteenth century as a vehicle for national unification. By then, a taste for military pageantry, public ceremonials, and visual ostentation and an increasingly jingoistic imperialism came together in the popular theatrics of the music hall, the cinema, and the public exhibition.¹³ The combined insights of Benedict Anderson and Anne McClintock suggest that national identity is constituted through both print capital and spectacle. While print capital has, in the past, been accessible to only a small coterie of elites, the spectacle of patriotic rituals made national belonging available to the masses.¹⁴ In the words of McClintock:

More often than not, nationalism takes shape through the visible, ritual organization of fetish objects: flags, uniforms, airplane logos, maps, anthems, national flowers, national cuisines and architectures, as well as through the organization of collective fetish spectacle—in team sports, military displays, mass rallies, the myriad forms of popular culture, and so on.¹⁵

¹²“The Supremacy of the Flag,” *Echoes*, June 1913, p. 25.

¹³John MacKenzie. *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 40-63.

¹⁴Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2d ed. (London: Verso, 1997); Anne McClintock. “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family.” *Feminist Review* (1992): 61-80.

¹⁵McClintock. “Family Feuds.” p. 71.

In Gramscian terms, those who “controlled the means of mental production” were able to install their own version of the national fantasy into the public psyche through the repeated appearance of these selected symbols of national identity.¹⁶ For the IODE, its credibility as an association for the well-to-do gave an air of confidence and legitimacy to its ritualistic patriotic practices.

There are various class-based interpretations of the significance of this kind of public spectacle media. Followers of J.A. Hobson, who in 1902 launched an attack on imperialism as the most insidious manifestation of capitalist greed, see spectacle as a primary vehicle for the transmission of a chauvinistic imperialism.¹⁷ It was a tool used by the middle class to infuse the lower ranks of society with Establishment ideas. Lawrence Senelick argues, for example, that “[music] halls were so much out of tune with popular sympathies that they might be regarded as pernicious instruments of propaganda.”¹⁸ Others see mass participation in these events as an authentic expression of working-class views. This is all part of the larger debate about the nature of popular culture and leisure: Were they “class-conciliatory” or did they provide a means for genuine “class expression?”¹⁹ As an extension of these debates,

¹⁶S. Humphries. “Hurrah for England’: schooling and the working class in Bristol, 1870-1914.” *Southern History* 1 (1979): 172 quoted in MacKenzie. *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 8.

¹⁷J.A. Hobson. *Imperialism: A Study*, 3d rev. ed. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1938, 1st pub. 1902).

¹⁸Lawrence Senelick. “Politics as Entertainment: Victorian music hall songs.” *Victorian Studies*. 19 (1975): 150.

¹⁹MacKenzie. *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 8; Gareth Stedman Jones, “Class expression versus social control? a critique of recent trends in the social history of ‘leisure.’” *History Workshop* 4 (1977): 163; and Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-85* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

some writers have contended that imperialism was entirely a middle-class interest, a high-brow, intellectual phenomenon that had little impact on the general population.²⁰ Those who show more faith in the power of social control argue that the “manipulation of culturally shared symbols” resulted in the widespread acceptance of a “programme of imperial life.”²¹ In their view, the emotive power of ritual and symbolism led to the absorption of the dominant message.²²

IODE records give little indication of the “consumer” response to their imperialistic commodities. Reports of large crowds gathered at patriotic assemblies demonstrated at least an intermittent regard for the IODE’s patriotic line. Not surprisingly, however, attendance swelled during wartime and waned in times of peace. Patriotic holidays, like Empire Day and Armistice Day, enabled the masses to give token observance to their larger national and imperial debts and duties. As late as 1927, thousands of enthusiastic onlookers participated in Toronto’s celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, which exhibited an *esprit de corps* that was both nationalistic and imperialistic.²³ But it is difficult to discern the level of patriotism felt during the long stretches of time between such official, quasi-

²⁰H. Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1968) and Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class* (London: Routledge, 1972).

²¹H.J. Field, *Toward a Programme of Imperial Life: The British Empire at the Turn of the Century* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 230-40.

²²E.J. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*.

²³R. Cupido, “Empire, Nation and the Ambiguities of Commemoration: British Canada and the 1927 Jubilee.” paper presented at the Nationalism, Citizenship, and National Identity Conference, Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University, November 1999.

obligatory public gatherings. It is even more difficult to determine the source and object (Canada or the empire or both) of that patriotic feeling and the extent to which it represented a genuine working-class view of the world. If the vast assortment of popular imperialistic songs, verses, poems, textbooks, periodicals, novels, and commercial objects in circulation during this period is any indication, Canadians at all levels of society would have at least *received* a healthy dose of imperialistic propaganda. Kipling, for example, was, according to Peter Jackson and Audrey Kobayashi, “immensely popular..., widely read and admired” in Canada.²⁴ Familiarity with his catch-phrase poetry—“The white man’s burden,” “Lesser breeds without the Law,” “What do they know of England who only England know?”—no doubt inspired the “rhapsodic reception” that he received during his 1907 visit.²⁵

For their own part, it appears that the Daughters’ patriotic displays were fueled by a complicated mixture of genuine belief and enthusiasm and a desire to draw in and influence a wider audience. Whatever their effect on the population in general, the emotional and symbolic displays of fealty that were common at IODE assemblies did inspire the Daughters’ own imperial service in the years leading up to the First World War. Indeed, their practical patriotism touched many areas of Canadian social life: chapters across the country reported organizing public lectures on imperial topics, caring for military graveyards, forming children’s chapters in schools, furnishing hospitals, distributing flags to schools, public buildings, and

²⁴Peter Jackson and Audrey Kobayashi. “Narratives of Empire: British and Canadian Readings of Kipling’s Colonial Fiction.” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 2, 2 (1996): 302.

²⁵*Ibid.*

outlying districts, visiting the sick, erecting statues to the King and Queen, presenting rifles to cadets, supporting veterans, holding made-in-Canada exhibitions, promoting the navy, donating libraries to schools, and welcoming immigrants.²⁶

Notwithstanding the breadth and variety of the Daughters' practical efforts in support of a strong and united empire, the dissemination of selected knowledge and the cultivation of homogeneous citizenship remained their primary mission. "The Canadian State will only be powerful and effective," they believed, "when our citizens are willing to subordinate their private interests, and fall in with the general will for the common weal."²⁷ By far the most effective tool for conveying the IODE's patriotic message to a wider audience was Canada's young system of public education. Indeed, according to neo-Marxian analysis, public schools had originated in the desire for a widespread means of political socialization.²⁸ As Bruce Curtis has explained, the revolution in formal governance and the expansion of state bureaucracies in the mid-nineteenth century required a system of education that would inculcate in the general population the "good moral character" that would

²⁶*Echoes*, June 1907, p. 7.

²⁷"Canadian Citizenship," *Echoes*, October 1919, p. 53.

²⁸J.A. Mangan's definition of socialization is useful here. He writes that socialization is the "total process by which the culture of a community, or section of a community, is passed on from one generation and assimilated, in whole or part, by the next." Political socialization, he explains, is the "tuition, formal and informal, planned and unplanned, explicit and implicit, involved in the adoption of appropriate political perceptions, the acquisition of associated cultural beliefs and the learning of related social attitudes." See "Imperialism, history, and education," in *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, ed. J.A. Mangan (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 5.

allow the smooth functioning of the new liberal democratic social order.²⁹ Public education institutions helped to define the reciprocal relationship between the masses and the state by outlining the rights and duties of a functioning citizen. Their standards for “appropriate” behaviour encouraged self-regulation among the potentially unruly. They established boundaries for national character that were in line with the values of the ruling class. The panopticism of modern governance—the processes by which modes of thought and action were regulated—was undoubtedly facilitated by universal public education.³⁰ “Public education,” Curtis argues, “was the leading instance of public discipline.”³¹ Curtis describes how political ideology was assimilated into the domain of public education to serve the interests of “respectable,” propertied men.

By the early twentieth century, an elaborate network of public administration and surveillance was at least loosely in place. Prisons and reformatories, lunatic asylums, state inspectors, statistics bureaus, public health infrastructure, local governmental bodies, and financial institutions ensured that everyone was classified and accounted for. The public school system, still a key site for political socialization, was opening up to the influences of a new interest group: middle-class, reform-minded women. The WCTU, the Women’s Institutes, the NCWC, and the IODE

²⁹Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 6.

³⁰Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1979).

³¹Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West 1836-1871* (London Ont.: Althouse Press, 1988). Quotation from Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men?*, p. 18.

saw public education as an important vehicle for the widespread transmission of their message, whether it was anti-tobacco and anti-alcohol propaganda, domestic sanitation, or imperial citizenship. Their social position in relation to production, that is, their class status, enabled them to use public education to promote their own agenda.

For the IODE this meant the dissemination of specific knowledge about the empire and the inculcation of discipline, obedience, and loyalty. Like the Earl of Meath and other imperialist propagandists, Daughters of the Empire saw education as the key to unlocking the physical and mental potential of the empire's future citizens. Meath explained the importance of this task:

In former ages the burdens of Empire or of the State fell on the shoulders of a few; now the humblest child to be found on the benches of a primary school will in a few years be called on to influence the destinies not only of fifty-four millions of white, but of three hundred and fifty millions of coloured men and women, his fellow subjects, scattered throughout the five continents of the world.³²

The history, traditions, privileges, and responsibilities of British citizenship were calibrated to inspire a patriotism that would unite British subjects of all classes and creeds. It was the key to tempering the industrial, urban, and ideological chaos that, from the IODE's perspective, threatened to shred the very fabric of Canadian society.

The Daughters felt comfortable in the sphere of education, for women were properly suited, they believed, for the instruction of young children: "Upon the mothers of Canada more than any other body depends the enthusiasm for education

³²The Rt Hon the Earl of Meath. "Duty and discipline in the training of children." Essay No. 6 in *Essays on Duty and Discipline* (London, 1911), p. 59. quoted in Pamela Horn. "English elementary education and the growth of the imperial ideal: 1880-1914." in Mangan, *Benefits Bestowed?*, p. 40.

which is the chief factor in national progress.”³³ They believed that, through education, women possessed more transformative power than any legislator. For the seeds of imperial greatness were best planted in the minds of the young.

In the hand of woman principally lies the instruction of the children of the Empire, both in the home and in the school, and it is on the education of the children that this great Empire must rely for her future glory and greatness. How very careful the mothers should be to teach their children that they are heirs of the priceless privilege of British nationality and citizenship.³⁴

For the IODE, this instruction in citizenship was orchestrated through their national educational department, which filled orders by provincial secretaries for books, calendars, pictures, and other patriotic materials, distributed samples of flag folders, new catalogues of library and prize books, information about rules and regulations for essay competitions, along with various circular letters providing news and suggestions for further work. The national educational secretary produced an extensive amount of additional correspondence with schools, local and provincial chapters, publishers, as well as judges of school competitions.³⁵

The IODE's patriotic message, class connections, and educational advisory board—which included university professors, ministers of education, and public school administrators—ensured that the school system readily embraced the programmes disseminated by the department. Arthur Lower and Robert Stamp have argued that Canadian schools during this period were interested in “turning out

³³*Echoes*, June 1914, p. 42.

³⁴“The Supremacy of the Flag,” *Echoes*, June 1913, p. 25.

³⁵In 1927 alone, the department yielded almost 1,500 letters relating to educational matters. “Annual Report of the National Educational Secretary,” *Echoes*, October 1927, p. 34.

young Englishmen rather than young Canadians."³⁶ From the early days of public education in Canada, Ryerson and other education officials saw the political value of free schooling to lay in its function of indoctrinating students with an appreciation for British traditions and institutions.³⁷ Jean Barman, writing about private boys' schools in British Columbia, emphasized the importance of schooling in the preservation of the empire. She argues that

given the role played by little more than half hundred boys' schools in one isolated corner of Empire, then that of perhaps three thousand institutions of this kind across the Empire—and even beyond—may well have been critical to the maintenance of British influence in these societies, both before and after the demise of formal political authority.³⁸

Well into the 1920s, Canadian students received a heavy dose of British literature and history. School readers were replete with verses and exercises designed to inspire loyalty to the mother country. Selections included Kipling's "Oh Motherland, we pledge to thee/Head, heart and hand through years to be;" F.G. Scott's "Strong are we? Make us stronger yet;/Great? Make us greater far;" Campbell's "Ye Mariners of England"; and Thompson's "Rule Britannia."³⁹ Speaking from his own experiences as a school boy in Barrie, Ontario at the end of the century, Arthur Lower remarked:

³⁶Nancy Sheehan, "Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Practice: The IODE and the Schools in Canada, 1900-1945." *History of Education Review* 2. 2 (1990): 311; Arthur Lower, *Canadians in the Making* (Toronto: Longmans, 1958), pp. 349-53; and Robert M. Stamp, "Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario: the Training of Young Imperialists." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 7. 3 (August 1973): 32-42.

³⁷Robert M. Stamp, "Canadian Education and the National Identity." in *Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity*, ed. Alf Chaiton and Neil Gerard McDonald (Toronto: Gage Educational Pub., 1977), p. 31 and Donald Harman Akenson, "The Historiography of English-Speaking Canada and the Concept of Diaspora: A Skeptical Appreciation." *Canadian Historical Review* 76. 3 (September 1995): 403.

³⁸Jean Barman, *Growing Up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private Schools* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), p. 173.

³⁹Stamp, "Canadian Education." p. 33.

“The wonder is that the tender plant of Canadian nationalism survived at all, for all little Canadian boys and girls have been subjected from the day on which they start school to an unending steeping in the liquid of imperialism.”⁴⁰

Conditions during the early decades of the twentieth century provided increasingly fertile soil for the IODE’s efforts to “[sow] the seeds of allegiance, unity, and service” through the field of education. Progressive education philosophies along with increased attendance in the schools meant that the IODE could influence larger numbers of students while taking advantage of new, more child-centred methods of teaching. Compared with the late nineteenth century, a larger percentage of children were going to school, attending regularly, and completing more grades.⁴¹ Those who attended could expect to be taught by teachers—increasingly female—who were better educated and better trained than their predecessors.⁴² Provincial governments opened more schools in rural areas, thus reaching a larger proportion of immigrant children.

⁴⁰Lower, *Canadians in the Making*, p. 350.

⁴¹The number of students enrolled in secondary grades in Ontario, for example, increased from 22,523 in 1901 to 32,612 in 1910, to 38,162 in 1920, to 66,953 in 1929. Taken from *Canada Year Book*, 1931. Provincially Controlled Schools in Canada: Comparative Numbers of Boys and Girls Doing Work of Secondary Grade in each of Seven Provinces, 1901-1929, p. 968. Alison Prentice et al. point out that by 1905 “all provinces except Quebec had laws requiring young children (initially those between the ages of seven and twelve) to attend school for certain minimum periods.” *Canadian Women: A History*, 2d ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996), p. 169.

⁴²For example, while the number of teachers in Ontario grew from 8,394 to 14,829 between 1890 and 1920, the proportion of those who had not completed junior matriculation dropped from over half to less than 10%. At the same time, those with junior matriculation and a year of professional training rose from under 10% to over 80% of the teaching force. Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 167. The increase in female elementary school teachers is discussed in Alison Prentice, “The Feminization of Teaching,” in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History*, vol. 1, ed. Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), pp. 49-65.

They put more effort into enforcing school attendance legislation.⁴³ The increased regulation of the employment of children on farms and in mines, shops, and factories created more time for education.⁴⁴ For many families, a rising standard of living diminished the need for their children's labour at home, and a more general positive attitude towards education in Canada influenced many parents to make a more serious commitment to the education of their children. The IODE took advantage of the availability of this captive audience.

One of the first educational initiatives undertaken by the IODE was a scheme of school linking and comrades' correspondence. Under the auspices of the League of Empire, schools in Britain, Canada, and other colonies were linked through the exchange of letters, essays, and photographs, and through "friendly competition."⁴⁵ Within three years more than 100 Canadian schools were linked with overseas counterparts.⁴⁶ Comrades' Correspondence complemented this project by connecting individual students throughout the empire as pen pals. The first project of the League of Empire, Comrades' Correspondence was given a boost by the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, who promoted the scheme through the despatch of a

⁴³F. Henry Johnson discusses legislative efforts to enforce school attendance in British Columbia in *A History of Public Education in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1964), pp. 55-6. For more information on this subject and on other aspects of increasing enrolment in Canadian schools see C.E. Phillips, *The Development of Education in Canada* (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1957), pp. 179-90.

⁴⁴In 1891, 13.8% of all Canadian children between the ages of 10 and 14 were gainfully employed. By 1921, this percentage had dropped to 3.2. Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, p. 165.

⁴⁵NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 4 May 1903, p. 33.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

circular letter to all the colonies in 1903.⁴⁷ By 1916, the scheme could boast more than 16,000 registered correspondents.⁴⁸ The IODE responded to Chamberlain's recommendation in full force. In a short time, children across the dominion were exchanging letters, photos, souvenirs, and postcards with "comrades" in the British Isles, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and India.⁴⁹ Winnipeg's Fort Garry Chapter alone linked some 200 children with pen pals overseas.⁵⁰ The IODE shared the League's opinion that the "imperial value of this work is hardly to be estimated."⁵¹ They were optimistic that the outcome of such personal exchanges would be mutual sympathy, an increased knowledge of imperial affairs, and the stimulation of loyalty. While school linking was first described as a "most patriotic and magnificent idea," it received little attention after 1920 because teachers had difficulty sustaining interest and contact.⁵² Correspondence continued in the post-war years, however, under the administration of the Victoria League. As late as 1929, there were some 600 students participating in the letter writing programme in New Brunswick alone.⁵³

⁴⁷Greenlee, p. 13.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 4 May 1903, pp. 33, 51, 52.

⁵⁰Nancy Sheehan, "The IODE, the Schools and World War I." *History of Education Review* 13 (1984): 34.

⁵¹Greenlee, p. 14.

⁵²Sheehan, "The IODE, the Schools and World War I." pp. 33-4.

⁵³NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 13, *Facts Concerning the Work of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and Children of the Empire (Junior Branch)*, comp. Rebecca M. Church (n.p., 1929), p. 5.

In the schools themselves, the IODE's educational work was calculated to add a flavour of imperialism to the school curriculum. The Daughters gave books of British history, literature, and poetry and small Union Jacks as awards for proficiency in school work. They gave prizes for drawing and colouring the Union Jack and for essays on the geography, history, and heroes of the empire.⁵⁴ They encouraged students to sing the national anthem reverently, "with uncovered head and uplifted heart" so that "God's blessing" would be called down "upon our beloved King and Sovereign."⁵⁵ In 1913 Toronto's Department of Education, upon request from the IODE, distributed 6,600 pictures of the royal family to the rural schools of Ontario.⁵⁶ A year later Regina's Clementina Fessenden Chapter did the same in Saskatchewan.⁵⁷ The Order's education secretary reported in 1916 that 218 illustrations depicting British historical scenes had been distributed to "strategic places"—schools and education departments—from Halifax to Napanee.⁵⁸ By 1918 they were circulating in schools as far west as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.⁵⁹ Gifts of flags, flag poles, flag charts, placards on "How to Honour the Flag," Canadian and British magazines, libraries, gramophones, and records provided teachers with the supplies necessary to carry on their patriotic education and to keep the empire visible in the

⁵⁴*Echoes*, October 1915, p. 44; and *Echoes*, March 1920, p. 51.

⁵⁵*Echoes*, June 1914, p. 42.

⁵⁶*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, May 1913, p. 41.

⁵⁷NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, May 1914, p. 21.

⁵⁸*Echoes*, October 1916, p. 23.

⁵⁹*Echoes*, June 1919, p. 19.

classroom.⁶⁰

This emphasis on learning through body, spirit, and intellect placed the IODE's work in the schools directly in line with the new education movement.⁶¹ Influenced in large measure by progressive ideas that were gaining popularity throughout the western world, particularly in the United States, teachers, school inspectors, and school trustees tried throughout the 1910s and 20s to improve the effectiveness of schools through the creation of a stimulating learning environment. Along with the traditional subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic, students were increasingly given the opportunity to pursue their interests and to develop social and artistic skills in programmes of domestic science, music, art, nature study, and physical education.⁶² This "whole child" emphasis was well suited to the IODE's patriotic programming.

By patriotic exercises, by flag drills, by song, by story, by lessons in geography, literature and history the teacher can, directly and indirectly teach that it is a glorious thing—nay, a solemn thing—to be a citizen of the world-wide Empire; that the stability of the land of their adoption rests solely upon the character of its citizens; that the State is a divine institution, and it is a sacred thing to discharge the duties of citizenship.⁶³

⁶⁰*Echoes*, October 1915, p. 25. The IODE's *Catalogue of Gramophone Records*, from which selections were made for donations to schools, included patriotic songs, regimental music, British carols, songs, and dances, speeches, and lectures on the empire. Sheehan, "Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Practice," p. 313.

⁶¹Sheehan, "Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Practice," pp. 307-21.

⁶²The "new education movement" is explained in R.S. Patterson, "The Canadian Experience With Progressive Education," in *Canadian Education: Historical Themes and Contemporary Issues*, ed. E. Brian Titley (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1990), pp. 95-110; Nancy Sheehan, "Women's Organizations and Educational Issues, 1900-1930," *Women's Studies* 7, 3 (Fall 1986): 90-94; Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*; and George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1986).

⁶³*Echoes*, June 1914, p. 42.

Ritualistic drills, pageantry, and recitations etched the beliefs and feelings associated with imperialism into the bodies and minds of Canada's youngest and newest citizens. Even the IODE's definition of education—"the act or art of developing and cultivating the physical, intellectual, aesthetic and moral faculties"—had a "new education" ring.⁶⁴ The variety of resources and approaches used by the Order for instruction in citizenship were readily accepted by teachers who were receptive to this philosophy of education and to the idea of the school as an instrument for social efficiency.⁶⁵

"New education" approaches fit in particularly well with Empire Day, an annual celebration initiated by a Daughter of the Empire, Clementina Fessenden, and quickly endorsed by the provincial ministers of education. Robert Stamp has argued that "the importance of Empire Day as both a school and civic festivity...cannot be overemphasized."⁶⁶ The IODE rendered its services enthusiastically each year, designing patriotic programmes, donating supplies and prizes, and delivering addresses on imperial topics. Empire Day activities in the schools focused on the Union Jack. Students saluted the flag and declared in unison: "Emblem of Liberty, Truth and Justice, Flag of my Country, to thee I bow." Teachers tested them on their knowledge of the flag and its crosses and gave geography and history lessons on the

⁶⁴NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 10, *Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Brief Outline of History, 1900-1960* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 6-7.

⁶⁵In May 1914 the teachers of Toronto formed a chapter of the IODE, whose motto was "An Educated Democracy." "A Teacher's Chapter." *Echoes*, December 1914, p. 9. By 1917 this chapter had a roll of over 600 members. NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 1917, p. 10.

⁶⁶Stamp, "Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario," p. 37. Empire Day was held annually on May 24th.

empire. Colouring the empire in red on mimeographed maps was also a popular activity as it impressed upon children the magnitude of imperial growth. Patriotic assemblies were the highlight of the day. August military officers often attended the ceremonies, inspecting uniformed cadets, and lending an air of solemnity to the occasion. Students gave recitations, such as "Children of the Empire" and "Britons Beyond the Seas," and received prizes of empire pins or history books for various patriotic contests. The National Anthem and other patriotic songs, like "Rule Britannia" and "Land of our Birth," were usually followed by stirring speeches, which touched on the meaning of the day and encouraged those present to value their citizenship and to think imperially.⁶⁷ They were potent in their descriptions of British gallantry, giving a strong impression that the British empire was guided by divinity to be the central force of progress and humanity in the world. British people were enlightened, virile, and civilized, qualities that suited them to bear the burden of empire.

The IODE designed Patriotic Programmes to continue these lessons throughout the year. They were approved by the minister of education in Ontario for use in schools on the last Friday of every month.⁶⁸ The programmes contained mottos, like "The fleet of England is her all in all"; exercises like "Sketch the lives of three great British writers"; and questions for discussion, such as "In what way are

⁶⁷Sheehan. "Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Practice." pp. 311-12. For a description of an Empire Day celebration see *Echoes*. June 1913. p. 40.

⁶⁸While patriotic programmes were distributed in other provinces, there is no evidence to indicate that it was done with the formal approval of the ministers of education.

patriotic songs a strength to the Empire?," "What circumstances led up to the South African War?," and "In what way does British rule differ in India from that in other possessions?" They suggested "Life of Nelson" and Tennyson's "To the Queen" as readings, and musical selections like "Soldiers of the Queen" and "The British Grenadiers."⁶⁹

Patriotic programmes were complemented by periodic essay contests on imperial subjects. Many IODE chapters used essay contests as their primary means of entry into the public schools. In 1911 Winnipeg's Fort Garry Chapter gave twenty-eight framed copies of Queen Alexandra's message to her people as prizes for the best essays, province-wide, on "King Edward VII, His Life and Times."⁷⁰ In 1912 the IODE in Vancouver awarded medals to students writing on "Canada's Place in the Empire in Case of War."⁷¹ Sets of Mafeking Stamps were awarded each year to the winners of an essay contest on "The Union Jack," which was sponsored by the Victoria League and administered by the IODE.⁷² The South African Women's Guild, an IODE affiliate, gave prizes to Canadian children for essays on South Africa.⁷³ Likewise, Daughters of the Empire gave awards to children throughout the

⁶⁹*Echoes*, March 1908, p. 4 and Sheehan, "Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Practice," p. 312. These programmes caught on in other provinces after the First World War.

⁷⁰*Echoes Special Number*, 1913, p. 116.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁷²Sheehan, "The IODE, the Schools and World War I," pp. 35-6.

⁷³*Echoes*, October 1905, pp. 15-17.

empire writing on subjects relating to Canada.⁷⁴

Essay contests were an ideal means to draw out “appropriate” responses to imperial questions. The winning entries in a “British Empire” essay contest sponsored by the Toronto IODE in 1905, for example, emphasized Britain’s moral greatness in contrast with the shallow materialism of the United States. Fred Dent, of Ryerson School, wrote: “Britain is a truer democracy than the United States.... In Britain there is a King, governing in his own right according to the will of the people.... In the United States, the power is in the hands of the moneyed people and the ‘boss’ politicians of Tammany Hall.... In Britain the voice of the King is the voice of the people.”⁷⁵ The selection of judges from the ranks of the IODE and the educational, church, and political establishment ensured that students were rewarded for adopting the Order’s view of empire.⁷⁶

Books were one of the most significant tools for political socialization in the schools. They were the prize of choice for patriotic essays, for penmanship, and for exemplary behaviour in the classroom. Prize books were regarded as a “better investment than their equivalent in money for the prizewinner’s mind can be turned, for example, towards British and Canadian history or to the travel and adventure which has gone into the making of the Empire.”⁷⁷ The IODE did not, however, begin

⁷⁴*Echoes*, February 1905, p. 10.

⁷⁵“Our Empire.” *Echoes*, October 1905, p. 17.

⁷⁶The IODE stipulated that “the judges of essay competitions should be careful that the prizes are awarded only to compositions that express the ideas to which the workers of the Order are endeavouring to give effect.” *Echoes*, December 1914, p. 41.

⁷⁷“Report of the IODE National Education Secretary,” *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 19.

any systematic distribution of literature in the schools until about 1914. In that year Regina chapters were dismayed to learn in an interview with their minister of education that school books were being chosen haphazardly. The minister agreed to accept their list of “patriotic British books.”⁷⁸ They also ordered from the Victoria League four libraries of fifty “good historical, patriotic, British books” for distribution in outlying, rural schools.⁷⁹ Following Regina’s lead, IODE chapters across the country began donating libraries to schools and sponsoring library caravans. By 1920, for example, the IODE had donated 255 libraries (15,000 books) to rural schools throughout the province of Saskatchewan.⁸⁰

The IODE was particularly attentive to the literacy needs of western schools where “foreign-born” children were in attendance.⁸¹ The Canadianizing function of education was always a foremost rationale for the IODE’s involvement in the schools. In their assimilation philosophy, the best way to soften ethnic and cultural difference was to “educate them to our view-point, put them through our mill and roll them out Canadians.”⁸² They understood that the making of loyal Canadians could not be achieved through laws or acts of parliament; it would have to be done through gradual and persistent influence. “This is a solemn responsibility,” they asserted, “and

⁷⁸NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, p. 21.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰*Echoes*, June 1920, p. 21.

⁸¹The issue of immigration and the problem of the “foreigner” will be addressed in chapter three.

⁸²“The Education of the New Canadian.” *Echoes*, March 1920, p. 29.

rests largely upon the women of Canada, and especially upon large and powerful organizations such as the IODE.⁸³ To this end, the IODE focused many of its pedagogical efforts on rural schools in the west. Chapters across the country adopted New Canadian schools, furnishing them with the books and patriotic supplies—flag and crest folders, flag charts, calendars, and British pictures—that were necessary to inspire loyalty among Canada’s newest citizens.⁸⁴

From the IODE’s perspective, the random selection of reading material for public schools meant that students were receiving knowledge about their world that lacked coherence and greater meaning. Creating a population that was homogeneous in thought and predictable in behaviour required the unifying power of a discourse of citizenship and cultural belonging. This discourse would need to be invested with the authority and legitimacy of an absolute truth, through repetition and through the submersion of alternative discourses. One IODE member explained: “There is prevalent in our time a perverted idea of fairness which would train young people to know both sides of all questions—as if truth were ever debatable—and make their choice when they grow up. This dangerous sophistry the Order does well to combat.”⁸⁵ The goal of producing good citizens, “who shall cherish a sincere attachment to the country, respect its laws, and defend its existence against an enemy,” was as much the duty of the schools as to teach the students to read or

⁸³“Canadians in the Making,” *Echoes*, March 1918, p. 45.

⁸⁴In 1929 the Fort Garry Chapter, for example, reported donating 100 libraries of 5,000 books to New Canadian schools in Manitoba. “Chapter Notes,” *Echoes*, December 1929, p. 27.

⁸⁵“Patriotism in Canadian Schools,” *Echoes*, February 1905, p. 3.

write.⁸⁶ More than just the act of voting, citizenship involved, as Stephen Heathorn explains, the “social-cultural...relationship of the individual to the national collectivity.”⁸⁷ It encompassed the values, beliefs and behaviours that indicated and inspired a connection with a shared national identity.

This socio-cultural connection with the nation was often signified by gendered and familial references to the “mother country” or to the empire as a “family” of nations, “sister colonies,” presided over by the mother Queen, “known all over the world as the...guardian angel of the home.”⁸⁸ The song, “England, Mother England,” written by Edward Booth and printed in *Echoes*, is a clear example of the representation of empire through the language of kinship. It warrants repeating here in full:

Little lonely woman, watching o'er the waters,
 Tell me what you look for with your wistful eyes of grey.
 “Far beyond the ocean I have sons and daughters;
 What a mother's heart can love her eyes can see alway.
 Day by day I see them—day by day I hear them—
 Hear the murmur of their voices ever in the sea,
 And my heart is yearning, yearning to be near them,
 Children, I your mother am; cry ‘Mother’ back to me.
 Make me proud, my children; that one word my heart shall fill.
 Grey-hair'd England is your mother, call her ‘Mother’ still.

Little lonely woman, watching o'er the waters,
 Let your bosom swell with pride, your mother's heart rejoice.
 Far beyond the ocean you have sons and daughters,
 Sons and daughters swift as flame to leap up at your voice.
 Whisper but a summons, sigh to them in need,

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Stephen Heathorn, “‘For Home, Country and Race’: The Gendered Ideals of Citizenship in English Elementary and Evening Continuation Schools, 1885-1914,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 7 (1996): 107.

⁸⁸“President's Annual Report.” *Echoes*, June 1905, p. 2; *Echoes*, June 1911, p. 4.

East and West and North and South sound back the answ'ring hum,
 Stir of children marching; beat of hearts that bleed;
 Thunder of ten thousand lips; "O mother! here we come.
 England, Mother England, all our brood cries back to thee,
 Blood of kinship beats to blood like waves that seek the shore.
 Bind us close, O mother, let us gather at thy knee;
 Hand in hand there let us stand, thy children evermore.⁸⁹

The IODE also often invoked the classical image of Britannia as an icon for the nation as a socio-cultural (as opposed to political) entity. Britannia represented the timeless, inert "authentic 'body' of national tradition" in contrast with the "forward thrusting, potent and historic" political signifiers of John Bull or Uncle Sam.⁹⁰ In turn, the metaphor of the national family legitimized social hierarchies and acted as a disciplinary tool. Individual family members would need to surrender their will and take on their assigned roles and duties for the good of the household. The IODE deployed these familial and gendered images of nationhood as a way of asserting their authority as women in the cultivation of good citizenship. These images, so prevalent in their scholastic materials, also served to draw students into the imaginary realm of the British empire through a frame of reference that invoked feelings of familiarity, security, and affection.

A respect for the rights and obligations of democracy lay at the centre of the Order's conception of citizenship. The fear of fascism and communism, a common undercurrent in IODE propaganda, reinforced the need for education in creating a responsible, ordered democracy.⁹¹ IODE books and scholastic materials emphasized

⁸⁹*Echoes*, March 1908, p. 3.

⁹⁰McClintock, "Family Feuds," pp. 61-7.

⁹¹Patterson, "The Canadian Experience with Progressive Education," p. 105.

the value of liberty, a respect for British institutions, and the importance of voting intelligently. Through pictures, illustrated lectures, pageantry, and stories, the Order hoped to impress upon young minds the value and obligations of citizenship in a democratic society:

In a democracy, the entire fabric of the national well-being is dependent almost entirely upon the intelligence and honesty of the great mass of the electorate and there is little work in which the Order can more directly serve Canada and the Empire than by assuring to those who might otherwise be deprived of it, the elements of a sound education. For democracy, deprived of an intelligent electorate, will run into mob rule. Every boy and girl advanced by our efforts to intelligent citizenship, becomes a guardian of our traditions or ordered methods of constitutional government.⁹²

Reference to the potential for “mob rule” highlighted the Daughters’ class consciousness. Their desire to extend the liberties ostensibly associated with empire and their distrust of the uneducated commoner produced tensions and contradictions in their writings. They believed in political and industrial freedom, but feared the chaos and self-interestedness that would arise from an individualistic, egalitarian, American-style democratic system. Hence they championed a disciplined, regulated, conformist form of democracy, insisting that “there is no true patriotism, no true love of country, without this unity of spirit.” At the IODE annual meeting in 1917 Mrs. A.W. McDougald echoed these sentiments. “The fundamental principle of all beauty is harmony,” she said, “and the mission of the leaders among women to-day is to bring about a harmony and conformity to the changed and changing conditions of

⁹²Mrs. Stewart. “An Account of the Thirtieth Annual Meeting Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire.” *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 6.

social and industrial life.”⁹³ Imperialism, with its aura of hierarchy, honour, duty, and deference, was the ideal counterbalance, a restraining and unifying force that would be the best hope for order and discipline among the masses.

The IODE’s imperialism was paradoxical in this regard. Its patriotic—“daughters of the empire”—rhetoric was designed to draw into the organization women of a particular class and race. Class and ethnic difference was a necessary component of its public credibility and status. So they did not intend to erase ethnic and class barriers. Rather, they wanted to maintain the structures of a hierarchical society while promoting order, conformity, and loyalty through the propagation of common ideals. Likewise, the IODE’s persistent emphasis on Anglo-Saxon superiority would have likely detracted from the consolidating potential of their discourse of imperial unity. Surely, it would have contributed to ethnic stratification and the cultural alienation of immigrant groups within Canada. In their view, ethnic minorities could not lay claim to the grand racial heritage of Anglo-Saxons. They could, however, be drawn into the national community through a cultivated appreciation for the fruits—democracy, freedom, justice—this heritage had bestowed upon them.

Despite its widespread emotive appeal, imperialism needed continual propping up as criticism and doubt began to creep into the discourse of empire after the turn of the century. In Canada, the Boer War polarized French-English opinions about the dominion’s obligations to Great Britain. Liberal critics of empire pointed to the

⁹³*Echoes*, October 1917, p. 56.

barbarity of the war, as demonstrated by the deaths of 20,000 Afrikaners (mostly women and children) in concentration camps.⁹⁴ Anti-imperialist Henri Bourassa wrote in *Le Devoir*: “English and African soldiers fell on the veldt for the glory of Chamberlain; women and children died of shame and misery for the grandeur of Laurier; children’s entrails were cut out in the Concentration camps for the honour of the Empire.”⁹⁵ The awkward contradictions between the rhetoric of imperial benevolence and the stark brutality of imperial conquest drew even greater attention after J.A. Hobson published his infamous attack on imperialist greed and exploitation in 1902.⁹⁶

In the face of these challenges, the Daughters of the Empire represented the empire as part of the natural and inevitable unfolding of English history. It was, in their view, acquired, not through aggression or deliberate exploitation, but, to quote Seeley, “in a fit of absence of mind.”⁹⁷ The empire was not an artificial arrangement of disparate nations. Rather, it was a natural outgrowth of England, an imperial organism that had taken on a life of its own. “England has been led into her Empire,”

⁹⁴Robert Page, *The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism*. Canadian Historical Association Booklet No. 44 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1987), p. 15.

⁹⁵Henri Bourassa, *Le Devoir*. 13 July 1911, quoted in Carl Berger, *Imperialism and Nationalism, 1884-1914: A Conflict in Canadian Thought* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969), p. 4.

⁹⁶Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*. V.I. Lenin’s influential 1917 publication, *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, drew heavily upon Hobson’s analysis.

⁹⁷Sir John Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 8, quoted in Richard Aldrich, “Imperialism in the study and teaching of history,” in Mangan, *Benefits Bestowed?*, p. 25. Unlike Newton, Egerton, and Lucas, Seeley did not subscribe to the view of empire development as the product of racial instinct or providential destiny. He focused on the political expansion of the English state. The IODE did not seem to have a clearly defined explanation for the imperial process. Rather they adopted from various sources the kind of sentimental language that best suited their purpose.

the IODE insisted. "She has not taken it by her own designs."⁹⁸ Daughters of the Empire interpreted this natural growth as the product of Providential design. The Union Jack was, in their view, "an emblem of active Christianity."⁹⁹ A 1917 article in *Echoes* explained: "For there is a Divinity which doth shape the end of nations...and God for His own great purposes has used the English peoples, giving them their great Empires because they have more largely than other peoples carried out His wishes and His plans and given evidence that they can bear the burden of Empire."¹⁰⁰

The Froudeian view of the empire as an organic entity and the emphasis on a connection between God and imperialism had distinct advantages for women who sought to position themselves as actors in the imperial project.¹⁰¹ Benign, evolutionary, eleemosynary growth as an explanation for the expansion of empire accommodated the "feminine" qualities of peaceful benevolence. Patriotic women were less inclined to associate themselves with an enterprise that was brutal, murderous, and harmful to children. This explanation also lessened the importance of political and militaristic ingredients in the imperial mix. Instead it highlighted the softer, socio-cultural, and biological side of imperialism. As a living organism, the

⁹⁸"Our Empire," *Echoes*, December 1917, p. 52.

⁹⁹"Hamilton Notes," *Echoes*, March 1915, p. 22.

¹⁰⁰"Our Empire," *Echoes*, December 1917, p. 50.

¹⁰¹This theory of organic imperialism originated with J.A. Froude. He saw the West Indies, for example, as "a small limb in the great body corporate of the British Empire, but there is no great and small in the life of nations. The avoidable decay of the smallest member is an injury to the whole." *The English in the West Indies* (London: Longmans, Green, 1888), p. 153, quoted in Greenlee, p. 228. His views were later echoed by Milner and the men of the "Education and Empire" leagues—Egerton, Lucas, and Newton.

“national body” of the British empire, with all its far-flung appendages, could grow and flourish with the nurturing, humanitarian, God-loving, and healing powers of women.¹⁰² At the IODE’s annual meeting in 1910 the organizing secretary accentuated this special role in empire-building:

Women take so much interest nowadays in works of charity and philanthropy, and how closely allied are love of God and love of country, to train the children in pride of the flag, loyalty to the best traditions of the Empire, and a determination to pass on unblemished the splendid which we possess, surely this is a woman’s part in the world!¹⁰³

This rationale for empire was closely allied with the view of imperialism as an instrument of liberty. As the years wore on, and jingoistic patriotism became less palatable alongside the emergence of cultural relativism and colonial nationalism, the IODE increasingly emphasized the empire’s libertarian as opposed to authoritarian character. Pomp, ceremony, and militarism still pervaded their expression of imperialist nationalism even in the 1920s. Gradually, however, they drew more attention to the empire as a humanitarian endeavour. Like many people in the mainstream of British politics in the interwar period, they preached an imperialism, “based not on power but on ideals.”¹⁰⁴ In this mode of comprehension, the empire expanded as the “natural,” progressive impulses of Christianity, commerce, and civilization triumphed over the ill-fated forces of savage tribalism. “Our Empire stands for all that is best for mankind,” the IODE president told her audience in

¹⁰²“A New Empire Movement.” *Echoes*, March 1914, p. 44.

¹⁰³“Miss Merritt’s Organizing Address.” *Echoes*, December 1910, p. 14.

¹⁰⁴Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 313, quoted in P.J. Marshall, “Imperial Britain.” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23, 3 (1995): 390.

1910. "Where our flag is unfurled every man may worship as his heart dictates; every slave looks for freedom; every prisoner for justice; every poverty-stricken creature is searched out and strenuous efforts put forth to relieve, be it from disease, hunger or crime."¹⁰⁵ In an article entitled, "The British Empire as Young Eyes See It," the IODE pronounced the importance of representing imperialism as a just cause: "British influence has done a great deal for her dependencies. Noble men and women, having gone out to Christianize and civilize the natives, have wrought wonderful changes in the lives of these savages."¹⁰⁶

As this quotation illustrates, the libertarian rationale for empire required an assumption that non-white, colonial peoples were impotent receptacles of British material and ideological relief. In contrast with an enlightened, virile Britain, non-white colonial peoples were constructed as despotic, "superstitious," "physically degenerate," and retrogressive.¹⁰⁷ The Malays of Singapore, for example, were noted for their extravagant affinity for finery and gambling. A member of the General Brock Chapter in Brockville described the Malay as one who "is very lazy, is without method of any kind, knows no regularity, even in the hours of his meals and considers time as no importance. His house is untidy, even dirty, but he bathes twice a day, and is very fond of personal adornment."¹⁰⁸ Such a person, in their view, could

¹⁰⁵"President's Annual Address." *Echoes*, June 1910, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶"The Empire as Young Eyes See It." *Echoes*, October 1913, pp. 47-8.

¹⁰⁷*Echoes*, November 1902, p. 2; "Prospects in India." *Echoes*, October 1909, p. 9.

¹⁰⁸"Life in Singapore." *Echoes*, December 1907, p. 3.

only benefit from the imposition of the British virtues of industry, modesty, domestic order, punctuality, selflessness, and thrift.

The Daughters of the Empire often focused on the absence of respect for women and the peculiarities of colonial domestic arrangements as signifiers of an inferior civilization. Their assessment of the IODE's contribution to Indian women in equipping a room in Bombay for domestic science instruction reflected their firm assumptions about the superiority of the west and the connection between enlightened civilization and gendered domesticity:

Gladly do we, Daughters of an Empire, founded on the love of liberty and truth, and sheltered under the safe protection of the British flag in our favoured country, welcome the chance to contribute towards the equipment of this room in Bombay, which by its teaching of Domestic Science may help to enlighten our sister fellow subjects in that dark land, where in spite of the beneficent rule of our beloved Sovereign, misery, tyranny and superstition are still rife.¹⁰⁹

In their view, the unfortunate trappings of imperialism were outweighed by an obligation to heal the "sufferings of our Sisters of the Empire."¹¹⁰ The IODE's work in India included the maintenance of hospital beds and the donation of financial aid to nurses, doctors, and teachers. They also supported the *zenana* bible and medical mission as a way of reaching the inner sanctum of the Indian household where women were kept in "seclusion and ignorance."¹¹¹ These acts of benevolence, helpful though they were in bringing material and medical aid to Indian people, reinforced

¹⁰⁹*Echoes*, October 1904, p. 11.

¹¹⁰*Echoes*, June 1913, p. 6.

¹¹¹"President's Address." *Echoes*, June 1913, p. 6.

the conceptualization of eastern peoples as helpless anachronisms, incapable of sorting out their own affairs. Their western benefactors appeared, as always, to be harbingers of progress and absolute truth. The IODE's focus on domesticity and "appropriate" gender roles as indicators of civilization had the ambiguous effect of strengthening gender difference while simultaneously creating an imperial role for white women as exemplars of the feminine ideal.

Indeed the empire was a central component of their identity as white, middle-class women. The past historiographical emphasis on Britain's impact on the colonies has drawn attention from the centripetal implications of empire. Recently, Catherine Hall, Antoinette Burton, John MacKenzie, and others have shown how vague but pervasive perceptions of the empire "out there" were key to the construction of the British identity at home. The feelings of superiority associated with imperial status permeated many aspects of social life in Britain and in the settler colonies. While *Daughters of the Empire* and other Canadian exponents of imperialism may not have concerned themselves with the diplomatic and economic mechanics of colonial rule, the grand connotations of empire were, as John MacKenzie explains in the British context, "central to their perceptions of themselves."¹¹² For patriotic women, like the *Daughters of the Empire*, this was a gendered identity, based on a celebration of women as transmitters of cultural knowledge and the power of a racialized imperial motherhood.

At variance with the fictions perpetuated by the IODE, the British empire was

¹¹²MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 2.

a diverse and complicated entity. It included white settler colonies, India, a “string of islands and staging posts” that were prizes of war with rival nations, and “dependent” territories procured during the late nineteenth century scramble for Africa.¹¹³ Indeed, the vast majority of the empire’s peoples—some eighty-five percent—were of non-European origin. Hinduism and Islam, not Christianity, were the empire’s dominant religions.¹¹⁴ Daughters of the Empire followed the prevalent custom of assimilating the depth and complexity of colonial differences into generalized narratives. These narratives emphasized the tyranny and helplessness of non-white colonial peoples and their gratitude for the benefits of imperial rule. The colonies were falsely represented as a “fellowship of free peoples, joint heirs with England in the glorious traditions of England’s Imperial history.”¹¹⁵

This appeal to England’s “glorious” past was frequently deployed as justification for the continuation of empire. The past became an excuse for the present. In the dominant memory, as Jonathan Vance has explained, the status quo was ordained, or willed into being, by history. “Individuals who do not subscribe to the dominant memory,” he writes, “who refuse to forget or remember what it prescribes, become subversives. Their private memories are driven underground, to exist as a potentially threatening undercurrent to the social order.”¹¹⁶ The IODE

¹¹³Ibid., p. 1.

¹¹⁴D. Judd and P. Slinn. *The Evolution of the Modern Commonwealth, 1902-80* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 4.

¹¹⁵*Echoes*, March 1904, p. 4.

¹¹⁶Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), p. 9.

reinforced the dominant memory of a noble and compassionate empire as a means to unify its peoples. An emphasis on the grand themes of adventure, liberty, and progress rather than on localized difference created memories that suited the designs of the present. In the words of one Daughter: “A nation’s memories—that is, its history—is its dearest prize; and the history of England...is the best that humanity knows.”¹¹⁷ In their selection of books, themes, and projects for schools, Daughters of the Empire played a role in shaping the collective memory of Canada’s youth. Their honoured heroes—Nelson of Trafalgar, Wellington of Waterloo, Clive of Calcutta, Gordon of Khartoum, and Livingstone, who “opened to the world the ‘dark continent’”—taught by example the virtues of courage, duty, loyalty.¹¹⁸ Their suggested readings—*Stories from British History*, *Heroes in British History*, *My First Book of British History*, and *Rulers Then and Now*, among others—extolled the nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race, described the heroic deeds of explorers and statesmen, and helped to recreate the English historical past as a story of progress and inevitable ascendancy.

It was common understanding among imperialists that the status of Anglo-Saxons as a “ruling race” was confirmed through this splendid past.¹¹⁹ According to one IODE writer: “In the life of every nation there is a spiritual quality that is usually spoken of as the genius of the people. We have inherited the genius of the Anglo-

¹¹⁷*Echoes*, October 1910, p. 9.

¹¹⁸“Why Canada is Proud to be a Daughter of the British Empire.” *Echoes*, March 1916, p. 51.

¹¹⁹“Prospects in India.” *Echoes*, October 1909, p. 9.

Saxon race, a genius that is the product of the thought and toil of a thousand years."¹²⁰ In this way, history was used to justify claims to racial superiority. The intermingling of Roman, Danish, Saxon, and Norman blood over the centuries, it was argued, created a race that was instinctively drawn to adventures of conquest, discovery, and maritime enterprise.¹²¹ Hence the empire was the product not of shrewd calculation but of a deep-rooted racial instinct. Berger's emphasis on Loyalism as a point of historical origin for Canadian narratives of imperialism draws attention away from the significance of the Elizabethan era in the Canadian imperialist psyche. Like Froude and the British exponents of "Education and Empire," the IODE often harkened back to Elizabethan exploits as the first great manifestation of the race's libertarian impulses:

The expansion of the Empire has gone hand in hand with the growth of liberty. The spacious times of Queen Elizabeth were as remarkable for the impetus they gave to the intellectual faculties as for the material benefits that established modern England. The courage and genius of Nelson were as fruitful in ensuring the freedom of the world at large as they were in securing the unity and preservation of the British Empire.¹²²

Within this larger narrative of Anglo-Saxon ascendancy the IODE "remembered" the history of Canada as the fulfilment of the ultimate test for British expansion. Canada's formidable geography required all the fortitude and ingenuity that its conquerors could muster. In the Order's depiction, Canadian history represented the gradual triumph of unity, domesticity, and good old-fashioned pluck

¹²⁰"The Perils of Immigration." *Echoes*, March 1906, p. 18.

¹²¹An IODE member commented: "We are a strenuous people of Northern breed. We have a heritage of the best blood of the British Isles and Europe." *Echoes*, November 1902, p. 3.

¹²²"Patriotism in Canadian Schools." *Echoes*, February 1905, p. 3.

over the forces of barbarity, nature, and factionalism. The “gallant deeds” and “heroic sacrifices” of Canada’s pioneers and forefathers—Champlain, La Salle, Wolfe, and Brock, among others—carved a nation out of the savage, northern wilderness.¹²³ The new nation was, in their minds, a “greater Britain beyond the seas, with the same traditions, the same language, the same religion, and the same government.”¹²⁴

Comments made by a member of the Lord Simcoe Chapter in 1908 about the colonization of Australia illustrated the view that white settler colonies were virtually “uninhabited” and open for the taking:¹²⁵ “In 1768 Captain Cook planted the English flag in Australia and thus opened new colonies in the Pacific for the expansion of the British race. Here, as in America, England found a continent almost unpeopled, for the natives were so few and of so low a type that they need not be reckoned with.”¹²⁶

Clutching the torch of their trail-blazing predecessors, Canada’s Victorian statesmen—Baldwin, Lafontaine, McGee, Howe, Tilly, Mackenzie, Brown, and Macdonald—ushered in the institutions of democracy that made Canada “the brightest jewel in the crown of the Empire.”¹²⁷ An *Echoes* entry in March 1911 summed up this whig view of Canadian history: “By the blood and sweat of the hardy pioneers of old, by the faith, foresight and energy of their descendants and of

¹²³“Monuments as Educators.” *Echoes*, June 1907, p. 39.

¹²⁴“The Beginnings of Imperialism.” *Echoes*, March 1908, p. 10.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*

¹²⁶*Ibid.*

¹²⁷“Monuments as Educators.” *Echoes*, June 1907, p. 39.

those who have learned to love this land, by wise, progressive and evolutionary measures, Canada has attained her present standing."¹²⁸

Those who intruded upon or digressed from this linear path—aboriginal peoples and the French, for example—were constructed as doomed remnants of backward-looking civilizations. The early history of Canada, they wrote, was “crimson with [the] blood...of the aborigine in his hopeless struggle against the white man.”¹²⁹ At the IODE annual meeting in Winnipeg in May 1913, Mrs. G.H. Smith described aboriginals encountered by English and French explorers as “petty, migratory tribes of Indians, unconnected and scattered, who were in a continual deadlock of tribal warfare.... The history of Canada,” she continued, “presents the unique spectacle of a conquered people quietly submitting to the conquering race.”¹³⁰ At the Galt Made-in-Canada Fair in 1905, the Waterloo Chapter set up a booth that represented a binaristic and sensationalistic view of pioneer life in the Canadian west.

From the Indian village wild, bloodthirsty braves rushed forth uttering fierce war cries, dancing war dances, and tomahawking all who crossed their path. In the white washed cabin relics of early days were gathered, while before a log fire a quaint old fashioned mother rocked a clumsy wooden cradle. One night a scene very true of Pioneer times was enacted, when the Indians raided the cabin and carried off the baby.¹³¹

In a single image this display encapsulated the perennial struggle between savagery—represented by the nomadic, murderous brave—and settled, gendered,

¹²⁸A quotation from the *Quebec Chronicle*, printed in *Echoes*, March 1911, p. 3.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*

¹³⁰“Some Historic Spots: Marked and Unmarked,” *Echoes*, December 1913, pp. 38-9.

¹³¹“The Galt Made-in-Canada Fair,” *Echoes*, October 1905, p. 10.

domestic civilization, symbolized here by the “white washed cabin” and the “old fashioned mother” and her babe. As Sarah Carter has explained, these contemptuous portrayals of aboriginal peoples were necessary for the construction of a homogeneous national identity. She writes that “efforts to create a spirit of national unity, to create an imagined community, were built on a series of negative assumptions about the indigenous people of the West, who were depicted as a cruel, treacherous, subhuman enemy.”¹³²

In this sweeping narrative, the French—a people governed by “impulse” and “corruption”—were saved from their “desolation and misery” by the “strong iron hand of mighty, just British rule.”¹³³ The two peoples united in war to protect the “meteor flag of England.”¹³⁴ They were “no longer French and English but united Canadians.”¹³⁵ Although it made for an appealing story and was utilitarian for its lessons about English supremacy, this fiction glossed over the persistent historical differences between French and English. It ignored the contemporary issues that plagued the quest for Canadian national unity—separate schools, Quebec nationalism, the Boer War, and divided opinions on Canada’s obligations to Britain.

In contrast with contemporary accounts of Canadian and British history, women were not completely left out of the IODE’s celebratory narratives. While it is

¹³²Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada’s Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), p. 22.

¹³³“The Early Government and Former French Rule,” *Echoes*, June 1909, pp. 46-7.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

¹³⁵*Ibid.*

true, as Nancy Sheehan points out, that selections in the IODE's book catalogue were sexist in their view of empire as a male enterprise. *Daughters of the Empire* made frequent attempts to write women into imperial and Canadian history.¹³⁶ They represented Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale as fine examples not only of womanly virtue but of compassionate leadership. New France's Marie de l'Incarnation, who instructed the young, nursed the sick, and Christianized the "pagan Indians," and Laura Secord, whose quiet bravery saved the Canadian army from an attack during the War of 1812, were among the many women celebrated as Canada's courageous foremothers.¹³⁷ The *Daughters of the Empire* helped to redefine historical agency and heroism to include the unacclaimed acts of selflessness performed by Canada's women pioneers, educators, and Loyalists. They organized a yearly contest in the public schools for essays on "heroism" as a memorial to Sara Maxwell, a school teacher who displayed all the honourable qualities of courage, loyalty, and selflessness when she sacrificed her life to save 100 children in the Hochelaga School fire in Montreal. In the usual manner, female heroism was gauged in accordance with its function in conquering the obstacles in the way of progress: women built homes and reared and educated children—and thus helped to build the country—despite the "perils and trials" of Canada's "untilled fields, untamed animals, and uncivilized inhabitants."¹³⁸ Again, "raids of wild beasts and savages" were a foil

¹³⁶Sheehan, "Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Practice," p. 313.

¹³⁷"Our Own Canadian Women." *Echoes*, March 1912, p. 14.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 13-17.

against which the civility of domestic, pioneer life could be accentuated: “They came in the night, they came when the men of the family were away from home and they never lost an opportunity of wrecking their terrible cruelties on unprotected females. Many a brave woman has fallen a victim to their dread weapon, the tomahawk, and has been carried away for future torture.”¹³⁹ An emphasis on the small, vulnerable, and “delicate” stature of pioneer women made their attempts to create civilization in a “barbarous country” appear to be all the more heroic.¹⁴⁰ It also connoted the perennial fear of the sexual violation of white women at the hands of over-sexed and unprincipled non-white men.

These appeals to a whig-inspired history, a racial instinct for liberty, a sense of mutual obligation between King and citizen, and noble womanly instincts were central themes in the IODE’s instruction in citizenship. Before presenting student Mabel Senior with an Empire Day prize in 1907, the IODE president invoked the magnificence of English history and tradition to impress upon the recipient the serious obligation to honour her privileged heritage through noble thoughts and deeds. To be a “Daughter of the Empire,” she remarked, “means that you are born to the great inheritance of a child of the British Empire so renowned for its great victories on land and sea; for its poets, historians, writers of fiction and makers of laws; also for the wonderful capability its people have shown as Empire builders as

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 13-17.

well as home builders.”¹⁴¹ As always, the privileges of citizenship under the Union Jack were tied to expectations and responsibilities through which that citizenship could be justified:

I pray you to use your powers for good, always remembering to stand fast for what is right, honourable, pure and truthful.... Remain always a true and loyal subject to your King, a staunch patriot of your own flag, that glorious Union Jack, within whose folds every Briton is sheltered from lawlessness, no matter where he may be. Be strong in your faith in your God and your country and may you, in the years that are to come, prove a daughter of whom the Empire may be proud.¹⁴²

She went on to explain empire-building in a way that would draw girls into a sphere of thought and action conventionally assumed to be the preserve of men:

Much of the work of Empire building as well as nearly the whole work of home building depends on the woman of the nation—therefore the aim of the girls and women of a nation should be to set high ideals for themselves to realize that life is not intended for play only, but for serious work... for the benefit of your fellow-beings, remembering, my dear child, that every woman has an enormous power which she is to wield for good or evil.¹⁴³

This perception of women’s “enormous power” was related to the IODE’s belief in the vulnerability of the empire as a product of the forces of time and history. Daughters of the Empire expressed an acute awareness of the fragility of the present moment as the crossroads of imperial history. They were convinced that the disconnectedness, immorality, and selfish individualism of industrial, urban society threatened to defile the honourable qualities that had fueled the expansion of the race. In their view, the success of their contemporaries in identifying and cultivating

¹⁴¹*Echoes*, June 1907, p. 44.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*

¹⁴³*Ibid.*

those traits that had built the empire would be of decisive importance in aligning the past with the future and preserving the “chain of progress.”¹⁴⁴ They were motivated by a persistent belief that they were working not just for the present but “for the whole future of mankind.”¹⁴⁵ Ged Martin explains that the “gravitational pulls...between past and future [were] exercised on a series of presents which were always provisional and therefore all the more fragile.”¹⁴⁶ This provisional location in linear time provided discursive opportunities for white, middle-class women, who claimed to be the arbiters of morality, duty, and service. They argued that the duties best performed by women—education in citizenship, raising vigorous, obedient children, and moral regulation—would determine the survival of the empire. “We can maintain this Empire in all its glory so long as our men and women possess and are actuated by the same self-sacrificing energy, courage and devotion to the Flag as were those who bequeathed to us our great inheritance.”¹⁴⁷ In their belief, their mission was of far greater consequence than the gerrymandering of partisan politics or what they regarded as selfish feminist demands. As self-designated exemplars of the more noble characteristics of the race, they saw themselves as key players in the ideological battles that would determine the future of the empire and by extension

¹⁴⁴“The Girl Guide Movement,” *Echoes*, June 1920, p. 21.

¹⁴⁵“The Order in War-Time,” *Echoes*, March 1915, p. 52. One writer noted: “These days are, perhaps, the most important for the future of the human race that the world has yet known.” “Our Nation,” *Echoes*, June 1920, p. 14.

¹⁴⁶Ged Martin. “The Canadian Question and the Late Modern Century,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 7, 2 (1992): 233.

¹⁴⁷“The Supremacy of the Flag,” *Echoes*, June 1913, p. 25.

the world. The language of affection, kinship, organic unity, Christian stewardship, and racial instinct, drawn from a rich, external source of “Education and Empire” propaganda, placed them firmly in that role.

At no time did this vocabulary hold greater potency than during the First World War. Unlike the Boer War that preceded it and the Second World War that followed it, the Great War was conceptualized as a historical departure, as the passing of civilization from the old world into the new. It was regarded as an apocalyptic moment that would result in the triumph of either barbaric tyranny or universal cooperation, freedom, and everlasting peace.¹⁴⁸ An atmosphere rife with patriotism, the tremendous need for material aid, and a fervent belief in Britain’s role as the protector of humanity served as a powerful impetus for the Order’s growth and morale during the years from 1914 to 1918.¹⁴⁹ Their patriotic machinery, unsurpassed by any other women’s organization in the empire, gave the IODE a unique position in extending the war effort to all parts of the dominion.¹⁵⁰ Plugging into a war relief network formed by the Canadian Red Cross Society, the Canadian War Contingent Association, the Canadian Field Comforts Commission, and the National Committee of Women for Patriotic Service enabled the IODE to put its

¹⁴⁸The atomic technology and genocide of the Second World War had a profound effect on this optimistic idealism.

¹⁴⁹In 1912 IODE membership stood at 12,000. Between 1914 and 1918, the rolls grew from 25,000 to over 40,000. The number of chapters increased during this time from 300 to 700. Nadine Small, “The ‘Lady Imperialists’ and the Great War,” in *Other Voices: Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women*, ed David DeBrou and Aileen Moffatt (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1995), p. 82.

¹⁵⁰NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 33, file 26. *The IODE in Wartime: A Record of Women’s Work for King and Empire* (Toronto: Bryant Press, 1920), p. 4.

years of experience and preparation into action. In the *Canadian Annual Review* for 1916, J. Castell Hopkins gave tribute to the Order's dedication to the cause: "The greatest of these organizations, as far as war-work was concerned, was the [Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire]. It's (sic) 500 branches or chapters were in closer cooperation, its policy more precise and clear, its practical effort better co-ordinated, than in other cases."¹⁵¹

It was a bustling, social time for the ladies of the Order, who enjoyed the activity and comradery of their fund-raising events and knitting at-homes. Countless teas, balls, bake sales, concerts, and pageants, the maintenance of overseas hospitals and clubs, the production of hospital supplies and comforts, the support of wartime funds, and the assistance of mothers, wives, and children of soldiers constituted the focus of their lives from 1914 until 1918.¹⁵² By the war's end the IODE had raised more than \$4,000,000 for the cause.¹⁵³ Daughters of the Empire gave women generous credit for their tremendous response to the needs of the fighting soldier: "Two weapons of the Anglo-Saxon race are doing tremendous work to win the war for freedom—the bayonet of our soldiers and the needle of our loyal women. The knitting, sewing, and the unparalleled helpfulness of women in all lines of activity

¹⁵¹Quoted in Small, "Lady Imperialists," p. 91.

¹⁵²See Marcel Dirk, "Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and the First World War" (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1988), chapters 2, 3, and 4; Ira Beattie, "The IODE in Canada, 1900-1964," *Atlantic Advocate*, May 1964, pp. 64-66; W.A. Craik, "A Noble Order—and the War," *Macleans Magazine*, June 1915, pp. 28-30, 78-79; NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 9. *Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, 1900-1925* (Toronto: Warwick Bros. and Rutter, 1925); and *IODE in Wartime*.

¹⁵³"Provincial and Annual Reports," *Echoes*, June 1919, p. 43. In other instances the estimate was over \$5,000,000. *IODE in Wartime*, p. 13.

have doubled the effectiveness of our men in the field."¹⁵⁴

While war is often constructed and remembered as an undertaking of male design and concern, Daughters of the Empire declared the work of women to be of critical importance in winning the war. In the words of one member, "Yes, Britannia can nurse the wounded as well as rule the waves!"¹⁵⁵ Women could not fight, but they could call forth all the powers of duty and sacrifice that would ultimately determine the strength of the allied forces. For, in their view, this was a war not of technology and tactics but of ideals. Daughters of the Empire took every opportunity to proclaim that "patriotism, resource, generosity, and sacrifice belong not alone to those who bear arms unflinchingly unto the jaws of death."¹⁵⁶ Women were, they argued, "showing that duty is to them the same impelling power that it is to men; the supreme and imperative call to self-sacrifice for the upholding of their country's honour and ideals."¹⁵⁷ Women's war service, in their judgment, was all the more remarkable given the quiet tedium of their duties. While men had the "thrill of the drum" to inspire them, women were required to call upon their "natural" instinct for service to fuel the day-to-day tasks of practical relief and support that were just as necessary for a war victory as the work on the front line.¹⁵⁸ IODE minutes, lectures,

¹⁵⁴*Echoes*. December 1917. p. 8.

¹⁵⁵"Women in War Time." *Echoes*. December 1915. p. 45.

¹⁵⁶*Ibid*.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid*.

¹⁵⁸"The Order in Wartime." *Echoes*. March 1915. p. 52.

articles, and war histories honoured this quiet role. They placed women at the front and centre of a war chronicle that was otherwise controlled by men. These literacy practices asserted their agency as women in determining the outcome of an occasion of historic magnitude.

An emphasis on the power of ideals in determining the outcome of the war opened up discursive opportunities for the Daughters of the Empire to do what they did best: mould public opinion. Their public lectures lent support to conscription, celebrated the allied cause, inflamed the Saxon spirit, and glorified the grand old flag. At a social gathering in Hamilton in December 1914, Mrs. Crerar invoked the popular connection between Christianity and the Union Jack. She reminded her listeners that Great Britain was the “only nation in the world fighting under a cross.”¹⁵⁹ The educational work of women was heralded as the lifeforce of the western front: “the country will not forget the share taken by the schools—and this means by the women—in preparing the young in mind and character to meet and sustain the severe tests of the war.”¹⁶⁰ The mothering acts of providing soldiers with clothes, food, and medical aid and visiting soldiers’ families, practical though they were, also functioned to “bring comfort and encouragement..., thus strengthening the bonds of Empire.”¹⁶¹ Daughters of the Empire deployed the power of disapproval to mobilize shirkers into service for their country. “Kitchener’s Question,” a song written by long-

¹⁵⁹*Echoes*, December 1914, p. 22.

¹⁶⁰“The Place of Women in the Education of Ontario Youth—Elementary Schools,” *Echoes*, December 1918, p. 18.

¹⁶¹“A Club for Soldiers,” *Echoes*, March 1916, p. 62.

time IODE member, Muriel Bruce, was used to stimulate recruitment through blunt confrontation:

Why aren't you in khaki?" says Kitchener. This means you! "Why aren't you in khaki?" says Kitchener. Any old excuse won't do. There are men in dear old England who've lost a leg or two; There are men who'll live in darkness, And men who won't pull through. Now who will take their places? There is much work yet to do. Canadians! Men of the Empire! Now don't you think that this means you?¹⁶²

Although women were not able to give their lives in support of the war cause, they emphasized the sacrificial acts they were performing at home. The IODE believed that women possessed unique capacities for the kind of self denial that was required to win the war. They renounced all extravagance by paring down their adornments and levying fines for ostentatious attire.¹⁶³ They encouraged the practice of prayer, thrift, and food conservation.¹⁶⁴ Through self-abnegation, they believed they were in spiritual communion with the soldiers and civilians whose sacrifices were a daily part of life in war-torn Europe. "[Could] not every woman and child," they asked, "deny themselves for those weakened infants, the rickety child and tubercular youth of Belgium...?"¹⁶⁵ Appeals to the female mothering instinct, they believed, would inspire women to see the war not as a faraway military engagement but as a battle for the safety of homes and children.

¹⁶²*Echoes*, October 1915, p. 60.

¹⁶³*Echoes*, June 1918, p. 41.

¹⁶⁴Nadine Small, "Stand by the Union Jack: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in the Prairie Provinces During the Great War, 1914-1918" (M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1988), chapter 5.

¹⁶⁵"Fifth Annual Report, Winnipeg Municipal Chapter IODE, 1916," quoted in Small, "Lady Imperialists," p. 83.

The supreme act of altruism, of course, was the sacrifice of their sons. When Rilla, of L.M. Montgomery's post-war novel, *Rilla of Ingleside*, sees her second brother enlist for the war she tells her mother "Our sacrifice is greater than his.... Our boys give only *themselves*. We give them."¹⁶⁶ Similarly, the IODE honoured war wives and mothers as if they were as courageous and selfless as the men on the battlefield. "While we exalt the brave soldier in the ranks, let us not forget the braver wife at home. The son may carelessly shoulder his rifle and march to the front, but who can weigh the love and sacrifice of that loyal mother who gave that son to her country?"¹⁶⁷ This gendered image of women's role in the war was eventually enshrined in the Vimy Memorial, which featured a veiled and grief-stricken Mother Canada, weeping for her lost sons.¹⁶⁸

Ultimately, Daughters of the Empire believed that men responded to the allied call because of their mother's noble influence. The loyalty, honour, and courage that would win the war for humanity was born of the mother's loving and faithful guidance. They explained:

Canada owes much to the men who have fought her battles and borne the burdens of state, but she owes as much, yea, more, to the noble women who instilled the principles of loyalty and devotion in the breasts of their sons and were never found wanting when the call came to them to sacrifice their loved

¹⁶⁶Quoted in Erika Rothwell, "Knitting Up the World: L.M. Montgomery and Maternal Feminism in Canada." in *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, ed. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 137.

¹⁶⁷"Women in War Time." *Echoes*, December 1915, p. 45.

¹⁶⁸David Pierce Beatty, *The Vimy Pilgrimage, July 1936: from the diary of Florence Murdock*, Amherst, Nova Scotia (Amherst, NS: Acadian Printing, 1987), p. 25.

ones, and even their own lives, for the country they loved so well....¹⁶⁹

As a large band of mothers dedicated to the advancement of British might and glory, the IODE gave itself ample credit for the breeding of sons who were ready for war:

It is because the best of the womanhood of Canada banded themselves together...to be the Daughters of the Empire that our boys grew up to be what they are today. They saw always on their mother's breast the emblem of the Daughters of the Empire, and little fingers, leaning against our knees, traced the seven points of the star, "What does it mean, mother?" "It means, my son, that this is your Empire, and your mother has vowed allegiance to it, and that you must do all you can for that Empire when you grow a big man." And the little fingers traced it around again, and little brains remembered, and the flag became more dear to these boys who were growing up at our knees, and when the great war came they had already got the inspiration from the Daughters of the Empire...and they all went as one man.¹⁷⁰

This sacred relationship between mother and son was often used as a metaphor for the familial attachment of the nation to the mother country.¹⁷¹ The devotion of the youthful son to his wise and munificent mother was a model for the bond between Canada and Britain. In this discourse, the mother-son bond did not symbolize, as Graham Dawson argues, male protection of the defenceless female.¹⁷² Rather, the war mother became an icon of strength and stability, a beacon of inspiration, and a sentinel of the values for which the war was being fought. Like Britannia, the war mother who appeared in IODE texts represented those traditions of the past that would mark the way to a glorious future. The IODE exploited these

¹⁶⁹"Women in War Time." *Echoes*, December 1915. p. 45.

¹⁷⁰NAC. MG 28. I 17. vol. 11. file 2. IODE Annual Report. May 1918. pp. 244-6.

¹⁷¹Vance. pp. 136, 147.

¹⁷²Graham Dawson. *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imaginings of Masculinities* (London: Routledge. 1994), pp. 2-3.

images in their construction of women as repositories of ideal citizenship. Through the long hours of fund raising, knitting, preparing shipments, munitions work, and worry over loved ones overseas, woman had proved herself to be a “worthy citizen of the grandest Empire that ever existed.”¹⁷³

The Daughters of the Empire were able to reconcile their claim to feminine moral authority with their endorsement of the allied cause by asserting that war was an inevitable part of social evolution and military preparedness a matter of national and human interest. Just as war was the ultimate test of the survival of the fittest, the martial spirit was a measure of a nation’s virility, fortitude, and order. “It is the law of Nature, over and over exemplified in history, that the rich, ease-loving mammon-hunting people must go down before the poor but military race.”¹⁷⁴ This belief in the necessity of military preparedness was demonstrated in the IODE’s promotion of military drill in the schools. While pacifist groups like the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) viewed cadet training as “the most insidious example of the perpetuation of the war spirit in Canadian society,”¹⁷⁵ the IODE saw it as serving the purpose of both encouraging discipline in the classroom and creating a population of young Canadians who would be psychologically and physically prepared for any future military threat. Even as late as 1930 the IODE continued to endorse cadet training in the schools as “one of the finest movements for training in

¹⁷³“On Work After War.” *Echoes*, June 1919, p. 27.

¹⁷⁴“The Duty of Imperial Defence.” *Echoes*, June 1911, p. 5.

¹⁷⁵Beverly Boutilier. “Educating for Peace and Co-operation: The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom in Canada, 1919-1929 (M.A. Thesis. Carleton University, 1988), p. 68.

citizenship."¹⁷⁶ Discipline, obedience, punctuality, neatness, self-control, and respect for authority—qualities that were developed by marching, drill, and marksmanship—were, as Mrs. Ralph Smith commented, the “first necessity and the first requisite of national life.”¹⁷⁷ The Order also promoted national defence by giving considerable support to the Navy League. Its national Navy League Committee contributed articles for the League’s *Sailor* magazine, provided summer camps, awards, prizes, and military equipment for its sea cadets, and cared for wounded sailors and their dependents with the purpose of raising a sea conscious spirit among Canadians.¹⁷⁸

The IODE’s promotion of a martial spirit, however, was not entirely synonymous with the promotion of war. They argued, rather, that arms were necessary for the protection of peace. “Militarism,” asserted Mrs. Ralph Smith, “in the hearts of our women is far removed from that as the heavens above them.”¹⁷⁹ The Daughters consistently used the rhetoric of peace throughout the 1920s, and the IODE’s membership in the League of Nations Society was a tangible demonstration of its commitment to “international good will.”¹⁸⁰ Peace at any price, however, was

¹⁷⁶See the resolution pertaining to this matter in “An Account of the Thirtieth Annual Meeting Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire,” *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 6.

¹⁷⁷*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 16, 17, 18 May 1916, p. 129.

¹⁷⁸Mention of the IODE’s connection to the Navy League is made in *Echoes*, June 1922, p. 14; *Echoes*, June 1924, p. 5; and *Echoes*, October 1926, p. 4.

¹⁷⁹*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, May 1916, p. 29.

¹⁸⁰In 1925 the League of Nations convenor reported that 25 chapters had become corporate members of the Society, but the number of chapters that joined subsequently is not clearly indicated. Associate membership in the Society, which cost \$1 per year, brought a monthly pamphlet.

rejected as a utopian abstraction. War was not an expression of belligerence, in their view, but an instrument of progress. Ultimately, the IODE's belief in the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race combined with a sense of Christian idealism to create a civilizing mission which rationalized the use of force. Thus while the IODE advocated international peace in the years following the war, it viewed pacifism, or total disarmament, as idealistic. The IODE was convinced that the pacifist movement, led by WILPF, was advocating the overthrow of the government, the promotion of "red" doctrines, and the conversion of America into a nation of "slackers."¹⁸¹ Unlike the WILPF, whose fusion of radical democratic socialism and feminist pacifism distinguished itself from the general movement for peace,¹⁸² the IODE was not concerned about the removal of the root causes of war. While the WILPF promoted the concept of freedom and liberty through the elimination of exploitive social and economic conditions, including imperialism, the Daughters of the Empire adhered to the view that freedom—which for them was embodied in British democratic institutions—must at times be imposed by force on "inferior" peoples for the benefit of human progress. This contradiction was consistent throughout the IODE's ideology. Its emphasis on freedom and liberty, which it associated with the extension of the British empire, was, of course, at odds with the

Interdependence, which summarized the most significant efforts of the League of Nations. *Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 29 May 1922, p. 15; *Echoes*, June 1925, p. 5; Church, *Facts Concerning Work*, p. 12.

¹⁸¹"Misled Women Again Imperil Land by Pacifism: Investigators show how the so-called Peace Societies are Serving Moscow Today as they Aided German Cause During War." *Echoes*, June 1924, p. 10.

¹⁸²Boutilier, "Educating for Peace and Co-operation," p. 154.

fundamental nature of imperialism which abrogated human rights and exploited supposedly-inferior races.

Critics, like pacifists Agnes MacPhail and J.S. Woodsworth and historians O.D. Skelton and Arthur Lower, who saw the futility and horror of armed conflict, were outnumbered by those who celebrated the war as a just cause, as a humanitarian necessity, as a war to end all wars.¹⁸³ “There is righteous war and wrongful war,” the IODE’s Miss Boulton remarked, “and ours is a righteous war.”¹⁸⁴ In parliament, legion halls, newspapers, propaganda films, and the meetings of hundreds of voluntary societies, this dominant version of the war took shape. It was a version that served establishment interests. It was deployed as a bulwark against the subversive forces that threatened to splinter Canadian society in the interwar period. Immigrants, pacifists, francophone nationalists, organized labour—they could all be drawn into the national consciousness, it was believed, through a powerful myth of a glorious and righteous war. The war myth brought clarity and purpose to a world plagued by confusion and modern excess. The comfort derived from its emphasis on the old-fashioned principles of honour, truth, selflessness, and mercy confirmed the virtues of continuity and the burdens of change. “Myth does not deny things,” Roland Barthes has explained,

¹⁸³It is interesting to contrast this representation with revisionist accounts of the war. Sandra Gwyn, for example, writes that the Great War was “the most monumentally stupid of all wars, achieving nothing more than to make certain that another ‘great war’ would succeed it.” It was a “monstrous and futile Valley of Death....” *Tapestry of War: A Private View of Canadians and the Great War* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1992), p. xxii.

¹⁸⁴*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, May 1916, p. 134.

it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact...it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essence...it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves.¹⁸⁵

Indeed the dominant memory of the events from 1914 to 1918 that evolved during the 1920s was a selective, diluted, simplistic version of the complicated, muddy, brutal ordeal that took the lives of 60,000 Canadians and wounded 170,000 others.

Historians who analyze the construction of this collective memory of the Great War—Jonathan Vance and Denise Thomson, for example—give short shrift to the patriotic work of women.¹⁸⁶ And yet the IODE, some 50,000 strong by the war's end, was indeed a key player in creating and articulating the meaning of the war. Through patriotic pageantry, prose, verse, paintings, text, and song, the IODE memorialized an image of the war that suited its imperialistic purposes. Victory—not meaningless death and destruction—dominated their commemorative vocabulary. In their war narrative, the atrocities of battle paled in comparison with success at Ypres and Vimy and the glories of the final Hundred Days of the war.¹⁸⁷ Victory was all the more sweet given the consequences of defeat. The triumph of imperial Germany, they were certain, would have meant a descent into barbarism, the undoing of centuries of progressive evolution. Put simply, the Hun had been vanquished.

¹⁸⁵Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. L.A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 102.

¹⁸⁶Vance, *Death So Noble* and Denise Thomson, "National Sorrow, National Pride: Commemoration of War in Canada, 1918-1945," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30, 4 (Winter 1995-96): 5-27.

¹⁸⁷"Miss Boulton's Lectures." *Echoes*, March 1919, p. 21.

Civilization had been restored. Anglo-Saxon gallantry and pluck had saved the day. The Christ-like fallen soldier had not lost his life; he had *given* it so that humankind would not live in darkness. In the body of the soldier, the past and future of the race—the Anglo-Saxon race and the human race—converged in a glorious test of moral conviction:

Our Country must ever cherish the memory which will never grow old, of the shining army of youths who at the call of a cause and under the ancient banner of the race, on the fields of France and Flanders, poured out the red sweet wine of youth, gave up the years to be of hope and joy. They have fallen and are still falling, fighting for all that has made our nation great in the past, for this, the mandate of destiny to our race in the future.¹⁸⁸

This use of what Paul Fussell has termed the vocabulary of High Diction reduced the war to an exercise in glory and nostalgia.¹⁸⁹ In the collective memory, to which this High Diction contributed, the war was not about territory, jingoism, or hard economics. It was about the principles of liberty, truth, justice, and honour through which the British empire had risen to greatness:

England, our England, had fought many battles for liberty and had given of her best in all the ages for freedom, and we knew that she was still ready to gird on her sword to aid the oppressed. In the horror of the hour when the modern Huns, convinced of their power to terrorize and put the brand of serfdom on the whole world, loosened their legions, there was confidence in all our hearts that Great Britain would prove true to the great traditions of the past.¹⁹⁰

This commemorative language, which diverted the imagination from the

¹⁸⁸“Loyalty to Empire.” *Echoes*, October 1917, p. 43.

¹⁸⁹Paul Fussell. *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 21-2. The IODE was surely exposed to the High Diction of war prose and poetry circulating at this time. Their reference to the soldiers’ blood as the “red sweet wine of youth” likely came from Rupert Brooke, whose poetic lines, “These laid the world away: poured out the red / Sweet wine of youth.” were inscribed on many Canadian war memorials. Vance, p. 98.

¹⁹⁰“President’s Address.” *Echoes*, May 1915, pp. 12-3.

blood and mud of the battlefield to the ethereal realm of nostalgia, morality, and history, gave women access to the war as a public project. In their speeches and papers, the IODE spoke of the war as a moral obligation:

nations and individuals are moral failures if they refuse to draw their swords in defence of the rights of the weak and for the principles of honour and liberty.... The soul of any nation is the value that it places upon the defence of the weak, the freedom of the many and the keeping of its plighted word. It is to preserve our soul as an Empire that we are at war.¹⁹¹

References to German atrocities, to the weak and battered women and children of Belgium and France, "the most tragic figures in this great catastrophe,"¹⁹² were common parlance at IODE meetings. Their belief that the war had saved their own homes and children from the tyranny of the German flag rationalized their celebration of the war.¹⁹³ Surrendering to European militarism would have meant, in their understanding of it, "[leaving] to our children a dreadful legacy of hate and uncertainty."¹⁹⁴ While pacifist women used the concept of a universal, compassionate maternalism to support disarmament, the IODE claimed that good mothers would fight to protect their children from the German evil.¹⁹⁵ As Vance explains, "[there]

¹⁹¹"Annual Meeting," *Echoes*, October 1915, p. 15.

¹⁹²"The Order in War-Time," *Echoes*, March 1915, p. 52.

¹⁹³During the late part of the war, the women of Canada presented the Navy with a building at Portsmouth, England. Its tablet inscription read: "The gift of this building is the expression of our love and loyalty to our King and Empire, and of our undying gratitude to the brave men who are fighting for the vindication of our honour among nations, for the advancement of civilization, for the freedom of the our Empire and the safety of our homes."Church, *Facts Concerning Work*, p. 10.

¹⁹⁴"Peace Movements," *Echoes*, December 1915, p. 7.

¹⁹⁵This dichotomy is addressed in Susan Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise Her Boy To Be A Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription and the Culture of the First World War." *Feminist Studies* 22. 1 (Spring 1996): 7-39.

was no point in searching the nineteenth-century alliance structure, imperial expansion, or the rise of industrial competition for the causes of war.”¹⁹⁶ The full weight of blame and anger came down on the beastly Hun.

After 1914 the principal focus of the IODE’s national education committee was to make this narrative the dominant memory of the war. They saw it as their “solemn duty” to ensure that “the responsibility of this awful world war shall be clearly defined and fixed on Germany in the School Histories and that her crimes be not allowed to be glossed over or minimized.”¹⁹⁷ In 1919 the Order reported success in ridding Quebec schools of their pro-German textbooks.¹⁹⁸ Thousands of books conveying a more acceptable story of the war—*Canada and the Great War* and *The Truth About the War*, among others—were donated to schools across the country.¹⁹⁹ The Order’s public school lectures and Armistice Day addresses dehumanized the enemy as a “ruthless tyrant.”²⁰⁰ Detached, mechanical, merciless German militarism was often contrasted with the compassionate, noble, principled heart of the allied soldier. Mother Goose’s message on the *Echoes* Children’s Page for March 1918 urged

¹⁹⁶Vance, p. 22.

¹⁹⁷“On Work After War,” *Echoes*, June 1919, p. 29.

¹⁹⁸*Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 3 January 1919, p. 171.

¹⁹⁹In 1918, the IODE demonstrated the seriousness of their anti-German convictions by severing their affiliation with the NCWC. The Council was, in their opinion, contaminated by its German, Austrian, and Bulgarian membership. Instead, the IODE became an affiliate of the Anti-German League, an organization pledged to boycott German or Austrian made goods. They supported the government’s temporary ban on the immigration of enemy aliens. “The Anti-German League,” *Echoes*, March 1917, p. 8; “Provincial Chapter—Nova Scotia,” *Echoes*, December 1929, p. 16.

²⁰⁰“The Hospital Ship Fund,” *Echoes*, October 1914, p. 7.

children to do their part by growing a garden and saving food. “So, children, do all you can in your gardens this season, and we shall beat the two cruel tyrants, Hun and hunger, who are creeping up on us to capture our Empire, Liberty and Homes.”²⁰¹

At the war’s end, IODE educational secretary Constance Boulton reinforced these Great War myths in 78 lectures given to some 30,000 children in 35 towns throughout western Ontario. The innocent, eager minds of children were a fertile ground for the inculcation of the IODE’s “truths” about “Britain’s Part in the War.”²⁰² “[The] joy of it,” Boulton remarked, “is that the truth has gone home to those wondering little souls fresh and eager to receive. No reservations, no carping criticism to mar the pure, innocent belief in the nobility of purpose—in self-sacrifice, with no string of self interest attached to it.”²⁰³ Boulton deliberately emphasized “eternal truths” and “great ideals” and mentioned little of the cruelties of modern warfare. “The children saw with mind’s eye,” an observer commented, “the gathering of the world’s mightiest fleet—the tramp, tramp, tramp, of millions in khaki—marching for the cause of liberty and freedom, for truth, honor, and justice.” Photographs of King George (which elicited a “fine burst of applause”), British leaders, and “English crowds pressing round His Majesty eager for a hand-shake” reminded the young audience of the appropriate objects of allegiance. Scenes depicting Canadian troops reviewed by the King on Salisbury Plains, “laughing,

²⁰¹“The Children’s Page,” *Echoes*, March 1918, p. 19.

²⁰²“Teaching our Children Citizenship,” *Echoes*, October 1919, p. 56.

²⁰³*Ibid.*

joking Johnny Canucks” serving on the front lines and “our equally lighthearted Tommy Atkins” gave duty and service an air of noble merriment. Boulton appealed to children’s love for adventure and gallantry in her lively tales of heroic deeds. Stories of Canadian boys marching stoically to the front and the “reckless daring of the air-men” were broken up by “a hurricane of applause.” Her final tribute to Boy Scout “little Jack Cromwell..., midly on His Majesty’s good ship ‘Chester’, who after showing the most indomitable bravery gave his life for his King and Country” demonstrated that even Canada’s youngest of citizens could do their bit for the empire. This official war narrative, in all its splendour of unity, loyalty, and common cause, was designed to serve as a locus of harmonious belonging. It would, in the Daughters’ words, “remove any taint of Bolshevism, or other ‘ism’ brought by Aliens to the hospitable shores of Canada.”²⁰⁴

Such lectures had the dual function of commemorating the valour of Canadian soldiers and serving as lessons in citizenship. For the most lasting memorial to the “glorious dead” would be to inspire in the succeeding generation the principles for which they had fought.²⁰⁵ A right-minded education was all the more urgent given the IODE’s belief that “this awful war was the result of wrong education and false ideals, taught to the children and youth of Germany....”²⁰⁶ Henceforth all of the IODE’s educational activities were regarded as war memorial work. Local chapters

²⁰⁴“Miss Boulton’s Lectures.” *Echoes*, March 1919, p. 21.

²⁰⁵*Echoes*, March 1920, p. 61.

²⁰⁶NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 5, Resolutions Notice of Motion for National Annual Meeting, IODE, 1919, p. 6.

helped widows of fallen soldiers send promising children to secondary schools, colleges, and academic institutes.²⁰⁷ They organized school presentations on such topics as “Life in Roman Britain,” “the League of Nations,” and “The Importance of Teaching the Greatness of our Empire.”²⁰⁸ In 1925 the IODE’s national educational committee put together a patriotic calendar with pictures of the Union Jack, patriotic quotations, and patriotic anniversaries marked in red.²⁰⁹ Hundreds of these calendars were placed in schools, banks, hospitals, post offices, and railway stations.²¹⁰ The Navy League Chapter even sent 45 calendars to every lighthouse on the coast of Nova Scotia.²¹¹ They intensified their pre-war efforts to supply schools with historical pictures and approved libraries.²¹² Complete sets of historical pictures were placed in Normal Schools from coast to coast by war’s end.²¹³ A collection of “Empire slides” depicting the history and geography of the empire were widely distributed.²¹⁴ By 1919 the IODE had donated libraries totaling more than 25,000 volumes to nearly

²⁰⁷“History of the Order in Ontario,” *Echoes*, June 1925, p. 11; “Annual Report of the National Educational Secretary,” *Echoes*, October 1927, p. 34; “Report of the IODE National Secretary, 1929-30,” *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 18.

²⁰⁸“Report of the IODE National Educational Secretary,” *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 18.

²⁰⁹“Notes on the Educational Work of the Order,” *Echoes*, October 1925, p. 6.

²¹⁰“Report of the IODE National Educational Secretary, 1929-30,” *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 18.

²¹¹*Ibid.*

²¹²See Lisa Gaudet, “Nation’s Mothers, Empire’s Daughters: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, 1920-1930” (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1993), pp. 120-22.

²¹³“The Canadianization of Aliens,” *Echoes*, March 1919, pp. 31-2.

²¹⁴Sheehan, “The IODE, the Schools and World War I,” p. 39.

500 schools.²¹⁵ These donations continued throughout the following decade. The Order donated 154 libraries in 1921 alone.²¹⁶ By the end of the 1920s these permanent collections were complemented by twenty IODE traveling libraries, which circulated in the west and in the maritime provinces: four in Alberta, four in British Columbia, four in New Brunswick, six in Nova Scotia, and two on Prince Edward Island.²¹⁷ Library inscriptions drew attention to the larger purpose of the IODE's educational work: "That the children of this school may remember the men and women who gave their lives in defence of the Empire, and may learn more of the British ideals and institutions for which they died."²¹⁸

The IODE's most ambitious project along these lines was the War Memorial Fund, launched in 1919. As an educational scheme, the WMF was intended to create a living memorial to the Canadian men and women who sacrificed their lives in defence of the empire during the Great War. Again, education was a means through which the present could communicate with both the past and the future:

There are crises in history when it is not merely fitting to remember the dead. Their deeds live with us continually, and are not so much things remembered as integral parts of our life, moulding the thought of every hour. In such crises a senate of the dead were the truest counsellors of the living, for they alone could, with convincing eloquence plead the cause of the past and of the generations that are not yet. Warriors, crusaders, patriots, statesmen-soldiers, or statesmen-martyrs, it was for things which are not yet that they died, and to an end which, though strongly trusting, they but dimly discerned that they laid the foundation of this Empire.... And this great inheritance of fame and valour

²¹⁵"The Canadianization of Aliens." *Echoes*, March 1919, pp. 31-2.

²¹⁶"Educational Report." *Echoes*, June 1922, p. 20.

²¹⁷"Report of the IODE National Educational Secretary, 1929-30." *Echoes*, June 1930, p. 18.

²¹⁸*Echoes*, March 1920, p. 61.

is but ours on trust, the fief inalienable of the dead and of the generations to come....²¹⁹

The IODE's plans for defending this sacred trust were threefold: to provide post-graduate overseas scholarships valued at \$1,400 each which would allow Canadian students the opportunity to study in the mother country at Oxford, London, or Edinburgh; to grant bursaries of \$1,200 each to Canadian university students;²²⁰ and to distribute War Memorial pictures, books, calendars, and other patriotic material throughout every school in the dominion.²²¹ Eligibility was limited to sons and daughters of Canadian soldiers, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-seven years so long as they were unmarried. Overseas scholars were required to return to Canada upon the completion of their degree. Their talents, skills, and patriotic bond with the mother country were just the qualities that Canada would require in its future leadership. One overseas scholar, Mrs. Campbell, demonstrated her understanding of the scheme's purpose when she wrote that all recipients would

[not] only do all they can to advance the course and prominence of the Order, but in whatever line of work they may hear the call to serve their country and humanity, will feel the responsibility laid upon them by these opportunities and endeavour to the best of their abilities to keep before them the highest and noblest in British thought and tradition and thus do their part in making and keeping Canada true to British ideals and British connection.²²²

In this way, the scheme fulfilled the most vital principles of the Order: the veneration

²¹⁹"Loyalty to Empire." *Echoes*, October 1917, p. 43.

²²⁰This sum was divided into 4 yearly instalments of \$300 each.

²²¹Constance Laing, "Report of the National War Memorial Committee," *Echoes*, June 1922, p. 31.

²²²*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, War Memorial Report, June 1923, p. 72.

of heroic deeds, the cultivation of empire loyalty, and the creation of an electorate educated in the ideals that would lead the dominion and empire to further greatness.

The War Memorial pictures were a central part of this project. The Order hoped that a visual record of Canada's war effort would arouse national pride and stimulate national service. In 1919 the committee allotted \$40,000 for the purchase of pictures that had been commissioned by Lord Beaverbrook as part of the Canadian War Memorials Fund.²²³ By the end of 1922 a collection of eighteen pictures had been distributed to one thousand schools throughout the country.²²⁴ As Jonathan Vance explains, art was used as a "handmaiden of history."²²⁵ It captured on canvas the moments that were selected for remembrance. The War Memorial Pictures were meant to be hung together in sequence. Scenes such as "Canada's Great Armada Leaving Gaspé Bay," "Canadians Arriving on the Rhine," and "Canadians in Paris After the Armistice" transformed the chaotic realities of Canada's war effort into a comprehensible story. By the IODE's own admission, they depicted little of the horrors of war:²²⁶

In the plastic mind of childhood it is well to surround it with pictures that elevate rather than debase and coarsen, and scenes depicting valor, endurance,

²²³Constance Laing, "Report of the National War Memorial Committee," *Echoes*, June 1922, p. 3.

²²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 105. The sets of pictures were distributed as follows: Ontario, 315; Quebec, 250; Manitoba, 75; Saskatchewan, 95; Alberta, 80; New Brunswick, 45; Nova Scotia, 65; British Columbia, 60; Prince Edward Island, 10; Yukon, 3. See "Notes on the Educational Work of the Order," *Echoes*, December 1926, p. 9.

²²⁵Vance, p. 102.

²²⁶Constance B. Laing, "Notes on the Educational Work of the Order—A Valuable National Possession," *Echoes*, December 1926, p. 9.

discipline, will have a compelling and abiding influence, and in the historic and artistic pictures of the War Memorial Scheme, which have now been distributed to the Provinces, the Sacrifice of the men of Canada, the cream of its youth, will be perpetuated for all time."²²⁷

Like their commemorative services, lectures, and scholarships, the pictures became a means to inspire in all children, but especially foreign-born children, a feeling of national pride and belonging. The trustee of a New Canadian school reported: "Those pictures are making the children fonder of their home. They say that if those men could fight like that to defend Canada it must be pretty well worth fighting for."²²⁸

A central component of the conventional Great War narrative is the image of Canada rising to nationhood. This is a persistent memory that even revisionist historians are loathe to upset. Sandra Gwyn's comment that "the Great War...marks the birth of Canada" and David Pierce Beatty's assertion that Canada "entered the war a colony" and by war's end had achieved the status of a "sovereign nation" are the most recent of a long line of rhetoric about the sudden discovery of a Canadian national identity in the brilliant victories of Ypres, Vimy, and Passchendaele.²²⁹ Denise Thomson's analysis of the commemoration of war in Canada from 1918 to 1945 accepts the unyielding view that the remembrance of the Great War, as symbolized in the Vimy Memorial of 1936, was dominated by the defining of

²²⁷*Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, 1900-1925*, p. 22.

²²⁸*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, War Memorial Report, June 1925, p. 103.

²²⁹Beatty, p. 282.

Canada as a nation separate from Great Britain.²³⁰

Indeed the IODE's War Memorial Scheme, with its provisions for Canadian and external scholarships and its pictorial depiction of Canada's role within the empire, exemplified the tensions between national and imperial loyalty that plagued the IODE in the interwar period. Given the political and ideological transformations of the 1920s, it is hardly surprising that the IODE saw a decline in its morale and membership in the years following the war.²³¹ The defeat of the Union Government in December 1921 was one of the first political expressions of changing attitudes toward imperial ties to Great Britain. The new prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, asserted the primacy of national over imperial interests. He reduced military expenditures. The Royal Canadian Navy, which for the IODE represented Canada's contribution to the empire's control of the seas, suffered the most severe cuts.²³² King also demonstrated a diminished military commitment to Great Britain in his non-committal response to Turkey's threats to attack a British garrison at Chanak in 1922.²³³ The collapse of the British empire was further induced

²³⁰Thomson, pp. 5-27.

²³¹By 1925 the number of chapters dropped from a high of 750 to 685; by 1929 total membership plummeted to 20,355. *Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, 1900-1925*, p. 6; Church, *Facts Concerning Work*, p. 3.

²³²Once the reductions were made, Canada was disbursing \$1.46 per capita which was one-fifth of the military expenditures in the United States. The navy, with most of its ships having been sold, was reduced to "a reserve nucleus, upon which a navy could be constructed if war made one necessary." John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985), p. 42.

²³³David J. Bercuson and J.L. Granatstein, *The Collins Dictionary of Canadian History, 1867 to the Present* (Toronto: Collins, 1988), p. 41.

by the Imperial Conferences of 1923 and 1926, at which King was persistent in his demand for Canadian autonomy. It was sealed in 1931 by the Statute of Westminster. Effectively, what had transpired throughout the 1920s was the transfiguration of the empire into a looser commonwealth of nations. The dominions' achievement of autonomy in external policies and the right to establish diplomatic legations abroad were merely the outward signs of an emotional separation that had begun more than a decade earlier.²³⁴

This separation, however, was by no means sudden nor complete. While historians have generally assumed that the First World War effectively "killed" the appeal of imperialism in Canada,²³⁵ the IODE gave evidence that the waning of imperialist sentiment in Canada was a far more complex and gradual process. Daughters of the Empire regarded "Canada First" as a "mischievous theory of Canadianism" promoted by "a few narrow and prejudiced men."²³⁶ In their opinion, Canadian independence propaganda was an ideological force even more insidious than Bolshevism. It represented the narrowness and selfishness the IODE had fought so hard to combat. It negated the broad ideals for which Canadian soldiers had given

²³⁴Thompson and Seager, especially pp. 38-49.

²³⁵Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 264. See also, Douglas Cole, "Canada's 'nationalistic' imperialists," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5, 3 (August 1970): 44-49; "Page, "Canada and the imperial idea in the Boer years," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5, 1 (February 1970): 33-49; Robert Craig Brown, "Sir Robert Borden, the Great War, and Anglo-Canadian Relations," in *Character and Circumstance: Essays in Honour of Donald Creighton*, ed. John S. Moir (Toronto: MacMillan, 1970), pp. 201-274; Robert Page, "Carl Berger and the intellectual origins of Canadian imperialist thought, 1867-1914," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5, 3 (August 1970): 39-43; and Robert Page, *Imperialism and Canada, 1895-1903* (Toronto: Holt, 1972).

²³⁶*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 24-29 May 1920, p. 37.

their lives. For them, “genuine national loyalty” lay in fostering “the ideal of Imperial Unity.”²³⁷ “Shall it be, though a narrow nationalism, through faltering faith, through unworthy suspicion, through restricted horizon,” the IODE president warned in 1926, “we shall go on magnifying technicalities, accentuating difficulties to the end that we shall destroy cooperation, place ourselves in futile isolation, and pull down the mightiest fabric in history?”²³⁸

Notwithstanding the ethnic, regional, and national lines that were drawn during the war, the IODE represented the “battle for civilization” as a reflection of imperial unity, not as a sign of dominion independence. Contrary to the dominant interpretation of the war as a crucible for the metamorphosis of colony into nation, the IODE insisted that “this great struggle on behalf of the higher ideals of civilization has drawn the Empire more closely together.”²³⁹ In their educational propaganda they often used the popular image of little cubs running to a roaring mother lion as a metaphor for the colonies’ response to Britain in 1914.²⁴⁰ The IODE was optimistic enough about the prospects for imperial unity in 1920 to predict that the British empire was “the first step towards the unification of the world.”²⁴¹ Through their Victorian, High Diction, conceptualization of the war as the ultimate

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ “Report of the Annual Meeting Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire.” *Echoes*, October 1926, p. 4.

²³⁹ “The Made-in-Canada Movement.” *Echoes*, December 1914, p. 32.

²⁴⁰ “Miss Boulton’s Lectures.” *Echoes*, March 1919, p. 21 and “Teaching our Children Citizenship.” *Echoes*, October 1919, p. 56.

²⁴¹ *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 24-29 May 1920, p. 37.

test of the ideals of empire, British imperialism, not a home-grown Canadian nationalism, remained the IODE's primary point of reference.²⁴²

In keeping with their overarching view of history, Daughters of the Empire did not view the war as a break with Canada's imperial past. Rather, the Great War's fallen soldiers were often commemorated alongside other martyrs in the historical battles for empire. On Empire Day, St. George's Day, Trafalgar Day, and Armistice Day, the IODE flocked to the schools, supervising patriotic programmes, giving lectures, and awarding prizes for patriotism. They held services at the cenotaph, laying wreaths and delivering emotional addresses.²⁴³ In their remembrance, Ypres and Vimy were historical extensions of Trafalgar and Khartoum. Even the "martyred heroes" of the 1885 Riel rebellion were memorialized for "sacrific[ing] their lives in the making of the Great West..."²⁴⁴ Their acts of loyalty placed them in the company of imperial heroes of the past and future.

To be sure, the Daughters of the Empire were not blind to the evolution of Canadian nationalism in the interwar period. They celebrated Canada's status as the empire's senior dominion. They were proud of Canada's contributions to the war effort and of her newfound prestige on the international stage. Close connections with the governing elite and the increasingly multicultural make-up of Canada forced the IODE to accommodate these changes. In 1920 the Order amended an article of

²⁴²Ibid.

²⁴³"Editorial," *Echoes*, March 1927, p. 6.

²⁴⁴*Echoes*, December 1914, p. 10.

its constitution to eliminate the word “colonies,” a reference which the IODE thought many Canadians would find objectionable in the new era of Canadian nationhood.²⁴⁵ They encouraged the advancement of Canadian artistic enterprises through short story, one-act play and Christmas card design competitions on Canadian themes.²⁴⁶ They urged the daily press to provide more Canadian news.²⁴⁷ The Daughters of the Empire also adopted more of a Canadian emphasis in their educational work in the schools and with immigrants. Essay contests included Canadian themes such as “The Canadian Pacific Railway and its effect on the growth and development of Canada.”²⁴⁸ A well-publicized IODE Confederation Essay Competition commemorated the Diamond Jubilee in 1927.²⁴⁹ Daughters of the Empire were vocal proponents of the “made in Canada” movement, and they were tireless advocates of improved Canadian military and naval forces.²⁵⁰

Although the IODE expressed a fervent devotion to Canada, they did not promote Canadian nationalism because of a desire for Canadian autonomy within the empire. Rather, they saw a strong Canada as a bulwark against the cultural,

²⁴⁵NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 11, file 1, IODE Annual Report, 1920, p. 11.

²⁴⁶“Conditions for the IODE Competitions.” *Echoes*, December 1925, p. 25; “Notes on the Educational Work of the Order.” *Echoes*, October 1925, p. 6; and *Echoes*, June 1930, pp. 5, 18.

²⁴⁷Sheehan, “The IODE, the Schools and World War I,” p. 40.

²⁴⁸*Ibid.*

²⁴⁹“Notes on the Educational Work of the Order,” *Echoes*, June 1927, p. 6 and “Annual Report of the National Educational Secretary,” *Echoes*, October 1927, p. 34.

²⁵⁰See, for example, *Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 29 May 1922, p. 15; “National Executive Committee Report,” *Echoes*, December 1924, p. 41; and “Report of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire,” *Echoes*, October 1927, p. 6.

commercial, and moral encroachments of the United States. American materialism, moral laxity, and sensationalistic media were, in their view, an affront to the British values the IODE sought to instil in Canadians. Similarly, the IODE cited imperialistic, not nationalistic, reasons for pressing the government for increased military expenditures. Whereas before the war the IODE argued for a strong empire connection because of Canada's need for Britain's protection, after the war they advocated an increase in Canadian naval and military forces—not as an expression of independence, however, but in fulfilment of the obligations of senior membership in the empire. Providence had chosen Canada to be part of a Christian civilization that spread “the Gospel” and, along with it, “liberty” and “progress.” As the beneficiary of a mighty destiny, Canada had an obligation to remain true to its ideals, its traditions, and its history.²⁵¹ The emphasis was subtle but significant. The former view was reflected in a prize-winning essay submitted in 1915, entitled “Canada's Duty to the Empire”:

Canada has no fleet or army of her own large enough to protect her...and in this one respect she owes a great deal of duty to the Empire for the protection it offers her. Did Great Britain not save Canada from being taken by the United States in the War of 1812...? Has not she helped Canada out of every struggle she has got into? Even Canada's very laws are modelled on those of England.²⁵²

A prize-winning essay by Harold Morrey Smith expressed the latter view, more prevalent in the 1920s:

²⁵¹These ideas pervade many of the reports and papers of the IODE. See, for example, “Report of the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting IODE—Presidential Address,” *Echoes*, June 1922, p. 12; “Report of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting IODE,” *Echoes* (October 1927), p. 6; *Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 29 May 1922, p. 15; and *Echoes*, June 1924, p. 5.

²⁵²“Canada's Duty to Empire,” *Echoes*, March 1915, pp. 41-2.

Of all the colonies Canada is probably the most indebted to the Motherland. Ever since the year 1759 we have been receiving aid of one kind or another. Britain's law has become the basis of Canadian law; Britain's sons have been the explorers and settlers of our vast country; Britain's capital has developed our magnificent natural resources. Having received so much from the Motherland, and having during recent years entered upon an era of prosperity which has given to our Government a growing revenue, Canada is now well able to assume some of the responsibility for the security of the Empire....²⁵³

Thus, in their view of Canadian-imperial relations, their concern, *pace* Berger, was not that a united empire was the most secure environment for the growth of Canadian nationalism. Rather, they believed that, as inextricable appendages of Great Britain, strong dominions would mean a more formidable empire.

Surely, opinions within the organization varied. The strongest commitment to Canadian-British ties could be found in the central Canadian and eastern provinces. Western representatives on the national executive were less apprehensive about the implications of Canadian national growth. Indeed, Mrs. Hannington of Victoria was bold enough to proclaim that "at the Coast we get fed up on Rule Britannia and what we want is "O Canada we stand on guard for thee."²⁵⁴ However, her opinion that "[we] are not going to wander from our Mother over the Seas by thinking this way" did not sit well with the majority.²⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the rare dissenting voice, the IODE as a whole firmly resisted the symbolic disentanglement of Canada from the mother country. Edith Nordheimer's final words as IODE president resonated well into the interwar period: "Let Canada be for British people and those who stand for

²⁵³"Canada's Duty to the Empire." *Echoes*, December 1914, p. 37.

²⁵⁴*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, May 1913, p. 48.

²⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 49.

and adopt British rule. Canada for a united Empire, and a united Empire even before Canada's interests, if such must be."²⁵⁶

Continually, the IODE reasserted its commitment to imperial over national interests. The 49th Edmonton Regiment Chapter asked that the Order's constitution be amended to reflect this preference. At a time of "much doubt and misunderstanding in our Order as to what country our loyalty is due and owing, whether it is to England and the Empire or only Canada, and whereas it is most expedient and desirable and in the interest and for the welfare of the Order that all such doubt and misunderstanding be removed" they requested the insertion of "our" before "King" and the replacement of the word "country" with "Empire."²⁵⁷

Daughters of the Empire expressed their outrage at the government's preference for a native Canadian as governor-general and their disapproval of the Department of Defense's decision to drop "Rule Britannia" as the song of the Royal Canadian Navy.²⁵⁸ They objected to the sitting of the Federal Government on Victoria Day. They fought to save "British" and "Royal" titles. An IODE resolution passed in 1925 protested the removal of the letters G.R. (Georgius Rex) from mail wagons and requested the replacement of "Canada's Mail" with "His Majesty's Mail" in the Revised Post Office Act. The IODE's Film Committee established a fund for the showing of British films, such as "The Royal Tour of South Africa" and "The Royal

²⁵⁶*Echoes*, December 1911, p. 7.

²⁵⁷NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 5, Amendments to 1918 Constitution, 1920 and Resolutions 1920, Amendments to 1920 Constitution, 1921 and Resolutions, 1921, IODE, p. 3.

²⁵⁸Sheehan, "The IODE, the Schools and World War I," p. 32.

Wedding.”²⁵⁹ Several resolutions voiced their preference for “God Save the King” over the increasingly popular “O’ Canada.”²⁶⁰ A similar reaction was invoked by proposals for a distinct Canadian flag: “Our motto calls for one flag,” the IODE’s national president insisted in 1921, “and that flag is the Union Jack.”²⁶¹ An *Echoes* article, entitled “Another Flag Incident,” explained the reasoning behind the IODE’s unwillingness to back down on this matter: “We are not an independent nation, and therefore, cannot have any other flag. The Canadian Red Ensign is purely a marine flag, for use only upon Canadian boats and vessels and not upon land. It cannot be called our national flag for the above reason, as we are not a separate nation.”²⁶²

Asserting the primacy of the British connection also involved the suppression of competing discourses. Anti-British publications were the IODE’s main targets, especially in the early 1920s when the animosities of the war were still strong. Fearing German propaganda, the Daughters of the Empire urged the government to take an adamant stand against such literature and to inundate Canadian schools and universities with convincing British propaganda to counteract these “corrupt influences.”²⁶³ They argued that duties should be imposed on magazines from the

²⁵⁹*Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Brief Outline of History, 1900-1960.*

²⁶⁰*Echoes*, March 1924, p. 30.

²⁶¹*Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, December 1921, p. 165; *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, May 1929, p. 130.

²⁶²“Another Flag Incident,” *Echoes*, March 1914, p. 34.

²⁶³See, for example, *Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 4 May 1921, pp. 261-63.

United States and lifted on publications originating in Britain.²⁶⁴ They protested the display of American and foreign flags in theatres and other public places.²⁶⁵

The Daughters' determination to strengthen the bonds of imperialism even as the dominions were asserting their autonomy made sense within their understanding of the place of empire in relation to history and progress. The following declaration, submitted to the prime minister prior to the Imperial Conference of 1923, outlined the Order's perception of the vast implications of a weakened empire:

That the Order is of the opinion that the future of western civilization depends on the continued unity and power of Great Britain and her overseas Dominions, and that no time in her history have the special interests of Canada pointed more directly to the necessity of making strong and secure the bonds that unite her to the British sisterhood of nations. That the Order is of the opinion minor considerations of so-called Canadian autonomy are entirely subordinate to the supreme object of making the British Empire a powerful working unit in the order of world affairs.²⁶⁶

In their conservative mindset, the British empire, with all of its mythical connotations of unity, conformity, domesticity, and morality, was the most meaningful framework for reconstruction after the devastation of the war. Also at stake was a powerful discourse of imperial motherhood, drawn from these connotations of empire, which had done well to place the IODE in a position of public prominence. The rhetoric of a more narrow, national self-interest did not

²⁶⁴See, for example, the resolution made by the IODE in Manitoba to petition the government in this matter. "Report of the Annual Meeting Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire." *Echoes*, October 1926, p. 4. The IODE chapter in St. Catharines, Ontario organized a theatre night in their community which had an all-British programme. *Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 5 January 1921, p. 271.

²⁶⁵"Municipal Chapter, Vancouver." *Echoes*, June 1911, p. 7.

²⁶⁶*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE. Report of the Resolutions Committee, May-June 1921, p. 87.

resonate with the claims to selfless moralism made by middle-class reform minded women.

While Canadian women have generally been excluded from the late twentieth century memory of early twentieth century Canadian imperialism, the IODE is a clear reminder that women of privileged social and ethnic status voiced their minds on Canada's relationship with Britain and the empire. If the national culture is transferred to the local, as Lauren Berlant explains, through the "images, narratives, monuments and sites that circulate through personal collective consciousness," then the IODE was a key actor in creating the nation.²⁶⁷ By linking the individual with the nation state through an imperialist national fantasy they were involved in the work of regulation on a wide scale. Obedience, loyalty, industry, thrift—these were the prerequisites for full citizenship. A central part of the Order's work was the denigration of the self, of localism, and of materialism for the greater good, and for national and imperial unity. They hoped to replace this razed self with a new, constructed identity based on deference to authority, service to others, and loyalty to the nation and empire. In this way, imperialism was, for the IODE, an instrument of social control.

Clearly, the IODE was not entirely successful. Ultimately, the climate of nationalism, cultural relativism, and professionalism that emerged in the interwar period signaled the futility of the IODE's voluntaristic imperialist patriotism. For a

²⁶⁷Lauren Berlant. *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 5.

time, however, the IODE's patriotic symbolism and repetition of imperialistic narratives would have left a mark on the Canadian social imaginary. Those who were touched by its propaganda—in drawing-room meetings, patriotic assemblies, and school classrooms—would have received vivid impressions of a beneficent, progressive, and civilized empire.

The inclusion of women and gender in the study of imperialist nationalism enriches our understanding of the meaning of empire among Canadians. For the IODE, imperialism meant a great deal more than love of mother country or security for a budding Canadian nationalism. It was the moral foundation for a world-wide community of Anglo-Saxons, a community that was destined to lead the world through darkness and barbarity to the light of a civilized Kingdom of God on earth. "When we work for our Order, when we work for Canada, and when we work for the Empire," an executive IODE member explained in 1920, "we are also working for all humanity in all the ages yet unborn."²⁶⁸

This interpretation of the IODE's imperialism as a Britannic nationalism helps to explain the appeal of the IODE in the United States. If Canadian imperialism was, as Berger argues, an indigenous phenomenon, then it would not have resonated among Americans. And yet the IODE drew a small but significant following among American women.²⁶⁹ In 1909 the President of the Imperial Order

²⁶⁸ *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 24-29 May 1920, p. 37.

²⁶⁹ Anne Ruggles Gere explains that most white, middle-class American club women maintained a close connection with Great Britain and with the traditions associated with Anglo-Saxons. They studied British history and literature and were influenced by the racism of British colonialism. Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920* (Urbana:

Daughters of the British Empire in the United States characterized their imperialism as “an intense attachment to the Motherland, a pride in the Empire to which we belong, and above all, a pride in our allegiance to the British Crown; the Imperial ideal an ultimate confederation of the Anglo-Celtic race under the British flag.”²⁷⁰

The IODE saw their role as no less than the securing “of the moral union of the Anglo-Saxon race, and, through it, the security of the world.”

While the Daughters of the Empire no doubt believed in the righteousness of their cause, they also reinforced this construction of the British empire to authorize their own public power as an organization of women. The language of empire drawn from British imperialist counterparts, such as the Victoria League and the League of Empire, represented the empire as a family of nations bound together by ties of affection and kinship. This language made empire-building a suitable and even obligatory mission for women of the right sort. The IODE was able to make imperialism an acceptable pursuit for women by highlighting this softer side of patriotism and colonialism. They focused on children as the empire’s future citizens, they cared for soldiers, veterans, and orphans, they worked in the “woman-centred” areas of health and education, and they emphasized the libertarian aspects of empire—benevolence, justice, democracy, compassion— within a familial framework that elevated the importance of imperial motherhood. They believed that the “feminine” qualities of compassion, morality, service, and selflessness would be the

University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 80.

²⁷⁰*Echoes*, March 1909, p. 51.

key to unlock the empire's Providential destiny to make the world a better place.

"The future of this great Empire," one remarked, "lies in the hands of its women."²⁷¹

²⁷¹*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IOE, 24-9 May 1920, p. 37.

Chapter Three

“Saving the...citizens of the Empire”:¹ The IODE, Child Welfare, and Immigration in the 1920s

The heart of this vast Empire will be sound, and strong, and capable of its great destiny, only as its weakest, poorest, humblest, youngest citizens are made strong in mind, body and soul for the burden of Empire that is theirs.²

At the IODE annual meeting in 1925 a member proudly declared that Daughters of the Empire “labour long, earnestly, consistently, in the protection of national life from the forces that endanger its survival from within, as surely as they dedicate themselves to its service when enemies threaten it from without.”³ During wartime, Daughters of the Empire had focused their energies on bolstering imperial defenses against the enemies of democracy. When peace came they transferred their concern to domestic matters. Education in citizenship was only one prong of an ambitious program of nation-building that was designed to purify the lifeblood of the dominion. Believing that the empire was only as strong as its weakest link, the IODE began to focus on reproduction and immigration as the foundation of post-war reconstruction. At a time when colonial nationalism, American influences, and an increased acceptance of cultural relativism began to temper Canada’s imperial loyalties, Daughters of the Empire were able to maintain their commitment to the empire through a more subtle program of social reform along imperial lines.

Mary Poovey has argued that the consolidation of national identity takes

¹*Echoes of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and Children of the Empire*, March 1919, p. 17.

²“Annual Report of the Child Welfare Committee, 1925-26.” *Echoes*, October 1926, p. 13.

³*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 1-6 June 1925, p. 69.

place in an uneven process that is intensified during historical periods of unusual national stress or ambition. It is characterized by a preoccupation with classificatory systems of citizenship. These systems set up divisions between the unfit and the unworthy on the one hand, and the national "us" on the other.⁴ Indeed, Canadians in the 1920s witnessed social transmutations of unprecedented magnitude. The psychological dislocation of the war, an influx of immigrants of non-preferred origin, industrial unrest, the threat of Bolshevism, and the increasing consumerism, secularism, and poverty of urban life heightened fears about the national condition.⁵ Those who were alarmed by the pace of change in the post-war period would have given a nod to L.M. Montgomery's words, penned in her journal on 30 October 1925:

It is my misfortune to be a born conservative, hater of change, and to live my life in a period when everything has been, or is being turned topsy turvey, from the old religions down. My aunts and grandmothers lived practically their whole lives in an unchanged world. Changes came to them in the natural course of life but never were the foundations of their lives torn away from beneath their feet. For myself I have my own foundation and I stand firmly on it.⁶

These anxieties coexisted with a general feeling of optimism, a perception of the dawning of a new day, the opening of a fresh chapter in Canadian history following

⁴Mary Poovey, "Curing the 'Social Body' in 1832: James Phillips Kay and the Irish in Manchester." *Gender & History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993): 196.

⁵In 1921 Canada reached a rural/urban balance in population. Immigration transformed the country's ethnic and racial mix: Canada's British population fell from 60.6 percent in 1871 to 55.4 percent in 1921. Beth Light and Ruth Roach Pierson, eds., *No Easy Road: Women in Canada 1920s to 1960s* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1990), p. 82.

⁶*The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, vol. 3, 1921-1929*, ed. Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 259.

the paroxysms of the Great War. The tension between the chaotic realities of the first years of peace and the possibility of creating a nation worthy of a prominent place in imperial and world affairs fueled government and voluntarist campaigns to reconstruct the nation.

As previous chapters have explained, the moral framework of imperialism served as the IODE's "foundation" in times of social uncertainty. While historians have been inclined to equate Canadian imperialism with the quest for stronger ties with Britain, imperialism was also a cultural force that shaped social policies and practices. The women of the IODE (and the GFS) did indeed promote a deeper appreciation for British institutions and traditions. They also interpolated imperialist social hierarchies into the work of social reform. As Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, and Jane Haggis have explained, "even where texts of the past were not overtly about empire, the power dynamics of imperialism form an underlying structure of reference, forming an essential, take-for-granted part of the fabric of metropolitan life and its imaginative constructions."⁷ The IODE's imperialism was as much about who was worthy of inclusion in the nation as it was about external relations with the empire. Their imperialism, as chapters one and two explained, involved displacing alternative interests and normalizing the dominant cultural consciousness through formal and informal political socialization. This chapter will suggest that it also involved the regulation of Canada's population and the installation of exclusionary parameters for

⁷Jane Haggis, "White women and colonialism: towards a non-recuperative history," in *Gender and Imperialism*, ed. Clare Midgley (New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 49-50; G. Chakravorty Spivak, "Three women's texts and a critique of imperialism," *Critical Inquiry* 12, 1 (1985): 243-61; and Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

citizenship. Through the IODE's child welfare and immigration practices the imperial operations of gender, class, and race were embedded in the process of nation formation.

The Daughters of the Empire continued, in the interwar period, to rationalize their public interests through the language of maternalism. While the 1920s ushered in the popular image of the bold and independent "flapper," society still regarded women as inferior to men in the home, the classroom, and the workplace. Married women were subject to the authority of their husbands, especially in Quebec where women had few legal rights until the 1960s. Post-secondary institutions directed women into "feminine" pursuits like nursing and domestic science. Employed women received lower pay for performing the same work as men. Despite women's increased visibility in municipal politics, voluntary organizations, and paid employment, rising standards of home management and child-rearing consolidated women's primary role as mother and housewife.⁸ The IODE enlarged women's sphere of influence by claiming that their housekeeping and mothering skills were needed in the community. "Municipal government, after all," wrote Ethel Small in *Echoes*, "is only a huge house keeping proposition, and the Council but a committee of citizens elected to supervise the household."⁹

At a deeper level, a vocabulary of degeneration and race reproduction, drawn from imperial discourses, authorized IODE women to speak about the national

⁸Lisa Gaudet, "Women's Reform and Activism," in *Canada: Confederation to Present*, ed. Rod Macleod et al. (Chinook Multimedia, in press). See the section on the period from 1918-1945.

⁹Ethel Small, "Municipal Housekeeping," *Echoes*, June 1921, p. 33.

condition. The fear of racial decline transcended the boundaries between public and private, male and female, nation and empire. For the IODE, the nation was not merely a political entity; it was a living organism, with a body and a soul. In this conceptualization of the nation as an organic entity the decay of one part of the national body would threaten the health of the organism as a whole. Daughters of the Empire saw the maternal figure as a key participant in national and imperial renewal through the planting and harvesting of human seeds and the reproduction of the race. They often evoked the cycle of life—of birth, growth, decay, and death—to represent the organic essence of the nation. A strong, youthful, and innocent Canada suffering the ravages of social disease was a common image in IODE literature. Canada was given life by the mother empire, and her body was being contaminated by germs that a woman's healing touch could render innocuous. In this way, national life was not a separate, disjunctive entity. It was entangled in everyday thoughts and behaviours and was therefore open to the influence of women reformers and imperialists.

This view of the nation was also class-based. The locus of national degeneracy was the working-class household where all too often the pattern of domestic life had been broken by the need for mothers and children to work outside the home. The result was a lack of proper socialization and formal education, high rates of infant mortality, unhealthy children, and the erosion of a gendered division of labour.¹⁰ By articulating the problems of the poor in terms of a diseased national body the IODE

¹⁰Poovey, p. 202.

made working-class ills an issue of interest and concern for the middle class. Individual moral and physiological problems—for example, intemperance, laziness, self-indulgence, feeble-mindedness, and ill health—were enlarged to become signs of national disorder and decay. This extrapolation justified a collective solution. In this way, social reform was linked to nation-building. The national body metaphor, and its connection with domestic order and regulated reproduction, organized the IODE's activities and legitimized its participation in public projects. Like many middle-class women reformers of the day, Daughters of the Empire claimed access to public discourses through their position as moral regulators and as mothers of the race. Hence they were extending the public power of white, middle-class women while reinforcing old assumptions about class, race, and domesticity.

The child was at the centre of the IODE's efforts to cultivate a healthy national body. Daughters of the Empire believed that infant mortality, tuberculosis, and feeble-mindedness threatened to cripple the empire and to deprive its offspring of their proper heritage. At the IODE annual meeting in 1928 the child welfare convenor explained:

If we are to build up a great, safe and free commonwealth under the flag we adore in Canada; if Britain is to continue as a great Empire, founded on faith and freedom, then, those in whose hands lies the future of our race must receive what is their due—clean and beautiful surroundings, sound bodies, educated minds and the widest opportunity to better their material condition.¹¹

A central mission of the IODE from its genesis during the Boer War was the

¹¹*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, Report of the Child Welfare Committee, 28 May -2 June 1928, p. 94.

protection of children from disease and from the evils of an increasingly industrialized and urbanized society. While the IODE expressed concern for the interests and rights of the child, their work in child welfare was always linked to the larger mission of safeguarding the future of the British empire. The value of Canadian children did not lie merely in their familial role. They were regarded as no less than the seeds of continued imperial dominance.

The IODE's involvement in child welfare for the purpose of fortifying the imperial race would have blended well with the popular interest in eugenics, racial purity, and nation-building. War casualties and unhealthy military recruits, along with rampant infant mortality, mental deficiency, and an influx of immigrants enkindled middle-class anxieties about the status of the nation and empire. The social hygiene movement stimulated the growth of a nation-wide public health infrastructure that included municipal and provincial health boards and eventually a federal department of health. In 1920 the Canadian Council on Child Welfare took on the role of centralizing research and reform in the areas of child health and labour, juvenile immigration, and feeble-mindedness. Spurred on by advances in medical science, professional public health workers—doctors, researchers, sanitary inspectors, and public health nurses—were mobilized to carry out carefully designed programmes of school inspection, sanitary reform, and health education.¹² Traveling nurses, mobile wellness clinics, and a steady stream of public health literature extended the

¹²P.T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell. *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada (1800-1950)* (London: University Press of America, 1983) and Neil Sutherland. *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976).

“medical gaze” into rural areas.¹³ These initiatives standardized codes of health and behaviour as the new nation took shape.

As the “nation’s greatest asset,”¹⁴ the Canadian child became, in the post-war period, the target of ambitious health campaigns. Women’s groups assisted government agencies in the establishment of pure milk dispensaries, baby clinics, and programmes of prenatal care. As Neil Sutherland describes, these programmes made large gains in controlling communicable diseases like diphtheria, tuberculosis, and scarlet fever, in raising public awareness about nutrition and hygiene, and in elevating standards of child health.¹⁵ Much of the success of the child welfare lobby in the early twentieth century can be attributed to the efforts of women’s organizations. The National Council of Women of Canada, the YWCA, the Canadian Women’s Club, the Women’s Institutes, the WCTU, along with the IODE, actively pursued matters regarding the dissemination of impure literature, infant mortality, and legislation for the protection of women and children.¹⁶ Led by the energetic Charlotte Whitton, who served as the convenor of the Order’s child welfare and immigration committees after the First World War, the IODE had, by the early 1920s, turned scattered efforts to fight tuberculosis into an organized crusade for child health and welfare.

¹³Cynthia Comacchio. “Mechanomorhosis: Science, Management and Human Machinery in Industrial Canada, 1900-45.” *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 47.

¹⁴*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. Child Welfare Report, 29 May-3 June 1922. p. 17.

¹⁵Sutherland. *Children in English-Canadian Society*.

¹⁶Suzann Buckley. “Efforts to Reduce Infant and Maternal Mortality in Canada Between the Two World Wars.” *Atlantis* (Spring 1979): 76-84.

Healthy babies were necessary for the stability and growth of the empire; hence the IODE focused on infant mortality as a national and economic issue. War had skimmed the “cream” off Canada’s population, leaving a growing apprehension about national decline, racial degeneration, and the falling birthrate. Capitalist productivity depended on the continual reproduction of healthy workers, and the IODE often expressed the consequences of infant mortality in economic terms: “Productive human lives are the assets of society and the dividends of progress depend upon the sum total of years spent in useful service. The heavy economic loss resulting from a high infant mortality can be but vaguely expressed in figures of mortality and longevity.”¹⁷ As imperialists, Daughters of the Empire were most concerned about how the death of infants would threaten the continued military strength of the empire and ultimately the forward march of the Anglo-Saxon race. The *Minutes* of the 1923 annual meeting explained: “It is maturity’s responsibility to grant, nay to guarantee, to its own little torch carriers in the race’s onward pilgrimage, that in so far as human ingenuity, and human inspiration can provide, they shall not be deprived of life’s fullest opportunity in development for their task.”¹⁸

For the IODE, “race” was a fluid category denoting not only biological features, like skin colour, but also vague notions of character, morality, and social status. Racist assumptions were implicit, and often explicit, in IODE literature on the

¹⁷Jessie Johnson, “Infant Mortality,” *Echoes*, October 1921, p. 14.

¹⁸*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 11-16 June 1923, p. 44.

rearing of babies. White skin represented civility, industry, and sexual self-control, qualities that supposedly suited Anglo-Saxons for leadership and social dominance. So white babies, especially Anglo-Saxons, were called upon to be little torch carriers who would continue the empire's vibrant legacy. But "the race" also at times meant "the human race," and middle-class public health workers tried to raise every child to their standard of well-being for the collective good. Thus all Canadian babies, white and non-white, fell under the IODE's campaign to address the issues of infant mortality and child welfare.

Women's organizations spoke of child mortality in terms of a death blow to the state. Dr. Helen MacMurchy, chief of child welfare in the Federal Department of Health, often drew a direct link between infant mortality and the welfare of the nation: "The State cannot survive without the baby. All those who love their country love the baby, for the baby is the hope of the country."¹⁹ Early statistics are scanty, but Neil Sutherland estimates infant mortality among Canadian babies at the turn of the century (under the age of two) to have been one out of every five to seven.²⁰ The Dominion Bureau of Statistics, established in 1918, published its first national report in 1921, confirming the fear that Canada was losing the battle against infant death. Notwithstanding vigorous private and public prenatal education campaigns and increasing standards for maternity care, Canada continued to lose babies at an alarming rate. In 1925 there were 1,196 maternal deaths in childbirth and a loss of

¹⁹*Echoes*, March 1920, p. 10.

²⁰Sutherland, pp. 56-7.

22,310 babies—30,353 babies including stillbirths.²¹

In “Imperialism and Motherhood,” Anna Davin argues that child welfare reformers in Britain ignored the underlying socio-economic problems that affected child health. Instead they placed blame and pressure on mothers who were held culpable regardless of their circumstances.²² Likewise, the Daughters of the Empire cited a “lack of home control” and “bad home management” as the cause of many of the ailments and troubles of infancy and childhood.²³ They were reluctant to explore the stark reality of working women’s lives; nor did they acknowledge the social ramifications of their own privileged status. They felt it was their duty to transform working-class women into a “closer approximation of middle-class femininity.”²⁴ In Charlotte Whitton’s 1923 report on child health at the IODE’s annual meeting, ignorance and poor health habits came first on the list of causes of infant death. While she did cite low wages and poor living conditions as contributing factors, she emphasized parents’ responsibility and agency in changing their circumstances. She spoke about the need for parents to be taught to accept the principles of a decent living wage and respectable living conditions, as if they were *choosing* a squalid way of

²¹“Canada’s Loss in Mothers and Babies.” *Echoes*, March 1927, p. 27. After tuberculosis, maternity was the leading cause of death among adult women. Nanci Langford, “Childbirth on the Canadian Prairies,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 8 (September 1995): 280. For an examination of the acute shortage of nursing services and high maternal morality in the Prairie provinces see Sharon Richardson, “Frontier Health Care: Alberta’s District and Municipal Nursing Services, 1919-1976,” *Alberta History* 46, 1 (Winter 1998): 2-9.

²²Anna Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,” *History Workshop* 5 (Spring 1978): 11-65.

²³*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, Child Welfare Report, 29 May-3 June 1922, p. 17.

²⁴Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women’s Clubs, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 78.

life. No suggestions were made for structural or social improvements, but rather the education of mothers was regarded as the best means of improving child health: "After all, home life is the basis of all national life, and home life is a poor affair without the right sort of woman."²⁵ Jessie Johnson's 1921 report on infant mortality, printed in *Echoes*, reinforced the prevailing emphasis on maternal blame: "It must be the duty of the Nation to see that the new born babe does not suffer from the ignorance, the poverty, or the ill health of the mother."²⁶

To this end, beginning in the early 1920s, the IODE joined the NCWC, the YWCA, and other women's organizations in an educational campaign for "better babies." Their message that breastfeeding, periodic health examinations, and a sanitary environment would improve a child's start in life reached hundreds of mothers who visited IODE baby clinics, milk depots, and health fairs across the country. Many chapters gave awards for the "best baby" at country fairs and social fêtes. Manitoba's provincial chapter organized a Baby Show on Fair Day where a "Baby Specialist" judged the health and appearance of tiny tots and provided mothers with information on infant care.²⁷ Even the small chapter of St. Ronauld, Quebec, established a reputable baby clinic in 1926 which had a marked effect on infant mortality in the surrounding area. Mothers came for pure milk, violet ray treatment, and diphtheria inoculations, and received advice about hygiene, preparing

²⁵*Echoes*, October 1925, p. 9.

²⁶Jessie Johnson. "Infant Mortality." *Echoes*, October 1921, p. 13.

²⁷*Echoes*, December 1920, p. 74.

layettes, and caring for sick children.²⁸

Daughters of the Empire also acted as auxiliary support for existing child welfare institutions. They donated thousands of dollars to children's hospitals and infant homes and distributed hundreds of Helen MacMurchy's "Little Blue Books," pamphlets on home and family life that were considered an indispensable part of a new mother's kit.²⁹ Blue Book titles included "How to Take Care of the Mother" and "How to Take Care of the Father and the Family."³⁰ The IODE also cooperated with local Boards of Health and Boards of Education, offering their services for classes on health and hygiene for New Canadian mothers. Many chapters supplied layettes, milk, and cod liver oil for baby clinics established by the VON and other agencies. And, in most provinces, the IODE supported VON and public health nurses who carried their message of child health to expectant and nursing mothers through home visits.

Given the IODE's gendered view of the family, it is not surprising that much of its educational work targeted young girls. Daughters of the Empire in Quebec, for example, secured a lecturer from Macdonald College to run a domestic science course for junior IODE members. Instruction in nutrition, housekeeping, and cooking helped to shape these future homemakers into domestic experts.³¹ IODE Girl Guide

²⁸*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE. Annual Report of the Committee on Child Welfare, May 1930, p. 92; and *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, May 1931, p. 55.

²⁹Diane Dodd, "Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-1934." *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 8, 2 (1991): 203-30.

³⁰Comacchio, "Mechanomorphosis." p. 47.

³¹*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE. Child Welfare Report, May-June 1922, p. 21.

Companies, which appeared after 1923, also became an important training ground for potential mothers. The objects of the Girl Guide movement—"to uplift the character among girls of the 'teen age in our country and to make better homes"—complemented the IODE's interest in teaching mothercraft:

Mothers who were at first inclined to be suspicious that Guiding would turn their girls into tomboys...and 'spoil them as girls,' soon realize that the Guide training is essentially womanly.... A girl of fourteen is not always pleased at being asked to wash the dishes...but if she is a guide, washing the dishes takes on an entirely new meaning as...part of the training for her domestic service badge; minding a baby is a privilege to a guide who is working for a child nurse badge. A small child who might ordinarily grumble at having to set the table, is proud to demonstrate her skill if she has learned at her Brownie Pack meeting just how it is done correctly.³²

Through Guiding, lower-middle class girls developed their mental, physical, spiritual, and domestic capacities through instruction in woodcraft, citizenship, and the care of the home. Daughters believed that the combination of fresh air, physical exercise, and lessons in patriotism offered to Guides would help to create better homes and ultimately a finer race of people.

The Daughters' vision of the family, complete with a male breadwinner and a domesticated female, informed their efforts to transfigure working-class women into the consummate producers of the new citizenry. Daughters of the Empire feared that conditions in the urban slum foreshadowed the future of the nation. Inner-city mothers, therefore, were special targets for instruction in child-rearing. IODE propaganda constructed the slum as a breeding ground for anarchists and hooligans who, "imbibed from the fierce envy and hatred of class distinction," were inclined to

³²"Girl Guides," *Echoes*, December 1923, p. 11.

collect their dues with “a sand-bag and a jimmy.” Slum girls, assumed to be daughters of immigrants, were destined for a life of squalid prostitution: “And the little girls! But one’s heart almost fails one to speak of the little girls! Can we, without a pang, mark their grace and beauty which even slum filth and rags can not always hide, when we know that it may but prove an added snare, the earlier to drag them along the path, the end of which is shame?”³³ As Sarah Carter explains, “the moral reformers’ attitude towards the inhabitants of the cities’ slums was similar to the categorization of Aboriginal people as ‘savages’ who were improvident, filthy, and morally depraved.”³⁴

Daughters of the Empire saw the education of mothers as the only real hope for saving the next generation of inner-city children from a life of crime and promiscuity. Practical efforts like prenatal clinics, baby fairs, and the support of settlement houses were complemented by propaganda designed to elevate the status of motherhood. The conceptualization of “mother” could be altered positively, Daughters believed, by representing beauty, holiness, modesty, and sacrifice as the apotheosis of motherhood. Their use of the popular metaphor of planting seeds indicated that the Daughters were conscious of their participation in the construction of maternal discourses: “These ideas and ideals must be implanted and carefully watched, tended and nourished. They will not grow without sowing or planting any

³³*Echoes*, October 1916, p.42.

³⁴Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada’s Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), p. 191.

more than wheat or roses.”³⁵ Rhapsodizing about sanctified motherhood deflected attention from the socio-economic realities of working-class life and made conforming to an ideal of the good mother an obligatory service to the state. The IODE’s vision of women as homemakers and childbearers, however, was increasingly at odds with the changing realities of women’s lives in interwar Canada.

The Child Welfare Circle of the Sir Henry Pellatt Chapter presented its philosophy on motherhood in a publication called *The Canadian Child*. Its pages were filled with advice for young mothers on all topics related to infant and child care, from clothing and feeding to bathing and bowel movements. Its detailed instructions and disregard for class circumstances warrants a lengthy quotation:

If I want him to be strong, alert, wise and good I must begin at the beginning and ‘carry on’; I must learn from the best authorities how to care for his precious body; I must take counsel with experts in child training for the sake of his opening mind; I must talk to him, walk with him, play with him, read to him; I must provide for him place in which to play as well as to eat and sleep; I must see that he has playmates; I must teach him to play alone; to entertain himself; he must learn to love to work, first by helping me and later by having set tasks; I must know where he is and what he is doing all the times and we two must be loving, sympathetic, intimate friends.³⁶

These guidelines presented an idealized, class-specific image of home life. They also reflected a growing respect for child care experts who saw childhood as a distinct and significant stage of life. No longer regarded as “little adults,” children were to be nurtured and stimulated and sheltered from the dangers of the world outside the home. This shift in thinking coincided with the advent of child welfare agencies and

³⁵*Echoes*, March 1920, p. 2.

³⁶MG 28, I 17, vol. 33, doc. 12. *The Canadian Child Published in the Interests of Child Welfare* (IODE, Child Welfare Circle of the Sir Henry Pellatt Chapter, n.d.), n.p.

family case workers. It reflected the growing confidence of social reformers in their ability to influence human mores and behaviour. In turn, pressure was placed on women to practice new psychological theories on child rearing and, in spite of circumstantial obstacles, to perfect the art of mothering. In contrast with the domesticated mother, an article in *Echoes* described "Fathercraft" as "how to mend the pump handle, drive a nail and wipe his muddy boots before crossing the 'Welcome' on the door mat," illustrating the polarization of gender roles in the Order's view of the family.

Like the *Canadian Child* excerpt, much of the IODE's literature on child welfare assumed that the object of all this expert mothering was a male child. The IODE regarded replenishing the workforce, and ultimately the virility of the empire, through the rearing of healthy boys as an important public service. Mary Bollert wrote in *Echoes*: "The Cradle and the Hearth are mightier than either the pen or the sword in the ultimate creation of nationality, for from them alone do wise and courageous men descend and on them alone can greatness be built."³⁷ This quotation is also significant, however, in its representation of the female, through the mothering role, as having the greatest bearing on the national destiny.

Middle-class convention dictated that the appropriate environment for the rearing of these male children, as the cradle and hearth metaphor indicates, was the home and family. A tier of doctors, public health nurses, and middle-class home

³⁷Mary Bollert. "A General Review of the Child Welfare Work of the IODE." *Echoes*. March 1921, p. 12.

visitors, wielding their claims to superior knowledge, defined the parameters of domestic life in the 1920s. Professionalized medicine and middle-class child-rearing preferences took precedence over traditional, non-institutional methods of child care. The comment made by one IODE member that “many of these mothers cannot read English and are in the hands of midwives as ignorant as themselves”³⁸ indicated this bias. It also showed that the poor, uneducated, immigrant woman often lay at the bottom rung of this hierarchy of authority.

Notwithstanding the socio-economic complexities of working-class family life, mothers were expected to remain in the home. Revered as the cornerstone of the empire, the family unit was supposed to enjoy enough self-sufficiency to allow the mother to make child-rearing her one and only occupation. A comfortable, stimulating, and nurturing home environment would increase the chances of producing healthy and happy babies who would survive to adulthood. Daughters of the Empire supported legislation that reinforced this concept of the family. They viewed state aid for single or widowed mothers, in the form of mothers' pensions, as a legitimate substitute for the primary family income. Between 1920 and 1930 British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia implemented mothers' pensions in one form or another. As Megan Davies has noted in her study of mothers' pensions in British Columbia, the payment of women to raise their children at home recognized the important service mothers were rendering

³⁸*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. Report of the Child Welfare Committee, 28 May-2 June 1928, p. 94.

to the nation. However, it also initiated the greater participation of the state “in the private domain of the home and family” and reinforced the traditional role of women in capitalist society.³⁹ Since the pensions enabled mothers to care for children who would otherwise have been institutionalized as wards of the state, this scheme also made good economic sense.⁴⁰

According to Davies, the IODE was vociferous in its promotion of mothers’ pensions in British Columbia throughout the legislative hearings. She suggests that other patriotic groups were supportive of the bill because they believed that many of the beneficiaries would be war widows, that the pensions would in fact recognize the sacrifices these families had made for the empire.⁴¹ This would have been a likely motivation for the IODE as well, although its records are vague in regards to this issue. It is clear though that the IODE viewed state welfare of this kind more as a national safeguard than as a tribute to women’s unpaid work in the home. The organization was explicit in its view of these allowances as “a modern method of protecting the fountain head of the nation.”⁴² Charlotte Whitton, for example, applauded Ontario’s 1920 Mother’s Allowance Act for enabling 10,500 children to

³⁹Megan Davies. “Services Rendered. Rearing Children for the State’: Mothers’ Pensions in British Columbia, 1919-1931.” in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women’s Work in British Columbia*. ed. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta Pazdro (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984). pp. 249-63.

⁴⁰Charlotte Whitton. “The Social Background in Canada.” *Social Welfare* 7, 4 (January 1925): 73.

⁴¹Davies. p. 250.

⁴²*Echoes*. May 1918, p. 19.

live “in the environment in which God meant them to be—the home.”⁴³ The purpose of the legislation was to allow the state to cooperate with the mother “in training her boys and girls to worthy citizenship.”⁴⁴ Again, the family and the nation were intertwined.

Similarly, the Order’s endorsement of measures to protect working women appeared to be quite simply a matter of preserving the race. As women entered the business and industrial world in increasing numbers, Daughters of the Empire were concerned that such physical and mental exertion would be detrimental to their reproductive health. In an article in *Echoes*, Edna Poole argued that women were physically weaker than men and exhibited “less resistance to the strain of industrial work.” “Motherhood,” she insisted,

is still the highest function of woman and there are certain types of work she should not attempt for the sake of the race. With the present day cry of ‘equal opportunities for women’ even the most ardent advocate realizes that long hours, unhealthy working conditions and certain types of work have a more serious effect on women workers than men.⁴⁵

If women were going to continue in industrial employment, then Daughters of the Empire insisted on state intervention to protect them during pregnancy. They supported recommendations by the International Labour Conferences for the payment of maternity benefits to women during a mandatory leave from work six

⁴³*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. Child Welfare Report, 11-16 June 1923, p. 55.

⁴⁴*Echoes*, November 1920, p. 54.

⁴⁵Edna Poole. “What Canada Has Done for the Health of Her Women and Children.” *Echoes*, March 1927, p. 11.

weeks before and after childbirth.⁴⁶

While the good mother archetype lay at the centre of the Daughters' ideology of child-rearing and nation-building, it was also a key credential for their own position as respected public servants. By virtue of their class and race, Daughters of the Empire were able to lay claim to the privileges of "true womanhood." In their understanding, they represented the essentials of good breeding that were necessary for national growth. From their position as mothers of the race they set an example for the working-class and immigrant women they served and earned an influential voice in matters of national significance. If poor, diseased, and defective children were being mothered inadequately, and were being left to their own devices to infect the nation with social poisons, then Daughters of the Empire would be their redeemers. They mothered these children through programmes of tuberculosis treatment, care for the feeble-minded, and health education and prevention.

Indeed the IODE was a highly esteemed force in the crusade for child and public health, and yet much of the scholarship on this subject neglects their part in the movement.⁴⁷ Daughters of the Empire claimed partial credit for the establishment in 1920 of the Child Welfare Division of the federal Department of Health, insisting that their appeals to the Dominion Government led to the division's creation.⁴⁸ A

⁴⁶"Recommendations and Conventions of the International Labour Conferences which have been popularly phrased the 'Child Welfare Conventions.'" *Echoes*. December 1926. p. 12.

⁴⁷For example, Cynthia Comacchio, *"Nations are Built of Babies": Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993) and Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*.

⁴⁸*Echoes*, March 1921. p. 58.

prominent Daughter of the Empire, Mrs. C.H. Campbell, was one the founders of the Manitoba Social Hygiene Association and represented the provincial chapter of the Order on its board.⁴⁹ An IODE delegate, Mary Bollert, participated in the important Dominion Conference on Child Welfare in Ottawa in October 1920, which resulted in the formation of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare.⁵⁰

To a large extent, the IODE derived its influence in these matters from its connection with the indomitable Charlotte Whitton. Throughout the interwar period, Whitton enjoyed a distinguished career as Canada's chief proponent of child and family welfare. She left the Social Service Council of Canada in 1920 to occupy the highest executive positions in the newly-created Canadian Council on Child Welfare. Her goal for the council was to create uniform standards for child care in Canada. To this end, Whitton conducted surveys of child care practices across the country, reformed welfare policy, designed child-care programmes, and produced a vast quantity of literature on the subjects of child labour, hygiene, education, and the care of dependent children. As an active member and often executive officer of several women's groups, including the IODE, the NCWC, the WI, and the Canadian Women's Club, Whitton undoubtedly wielded considerable power in shaping the social concerns of middle-class reformers.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰"Report of Dominion Conference on Child Welfare." *Echoes*, December 1920, p. 48.

⁵¹For complete biographical information on Charlotte Whitton, including her social welfare career see P.T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, *No Bleeding Heart: Charlotte Whitton A Feminist on the Right* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987). By the same authors, *Discarding the Asylum* places Whitton effectively within the context of child reform in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. See also their article, "'Making the Way More Comfortable': Charlotte Whitton's Child Welfare Career, 1920-48."

Under Whitton's convenorship, the IODE's child welfare committee steered the work of local chapters in the 1920s by circulating questionnaires, statistics, and reports relating to the status of children. It encouraged members to reach into all areas of child health and development for the good of the race. The *Minutes* of the 1926 annual meeting explained: "The child's training...must be full-orbed, and vital, spiritual, mental, moral and physical, cultural as well as technical—all the aspects of life must lend their strength to the training and development of the children of the race."⁵²

Local and municipal chapters across the country heeded the call with enthusiasm. By 1923 every province except for Prince Edward Island and Quebec boasted an IODE child welfare convenor and a flourishing program of relief, health education, and support for existing organizations dedicated to the child. In one year alone, the IODE in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia spent over \$40,000 in this field of work.⁵³ They donated money to a number of organizations, including the Children's Aid Society, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, the Red Cross Society, and the Save the Children's Fund.⁵⁴ They financed surgical operations for "defective" children, funded children's wards in hospitals, provided impoverished families with milk, eggs, clothing, and infant layettes, set up baby wellness clinics, and supported public health

Journal of Canadian Studies 17 (Winter 1982-3): 33-45.

⁵²*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. 1-6 June 1925, p. 73.

⁵³NAC. MG 28. I 17, vol. 19, doc. 13, *Facts Concerning the Work of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (Junior Branch)* comp. Rebecca M. Church. 1929, p. 6.

⁵⁴*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. Child Welfare Report, 11-16 June 1923, pp. 54-55.

nurses. In connection with the Children's Aid Society, one IODE chapter provided a school with an instructor in physical drill, folk dancing, and calisthenics. Another chapter donated a yearly subscription to a school sports fund, declaring its belief in "good clean sport, which helps to build a healthy body and mind."⁵⁵ Many New Brunswick chapters helped to support dental, tonsil, and adenoid clinics. In Ontario the IODE donated or maintained playgrounds, tennis courts, and rinks, supported summer camps, supplied school children with toothbrushes, and provided Christmas hampers to needy families.⁵⁶ One chapter paid a housekeeper to assist a family of eight children while their mother was in the hospital. Another raised \$2,000 for the purchase of X-ray equipment for a local hospital.⁵⁷ Another adopted as "Little Sisters" all the daughters of deceased soldiers in their town.⁵⁸ The Robert Valentine Harvey Chapter of Victoria, British Columbia placed collection boxes, in the form of miniature milk cans, in banks, offices, and restaurants. The boxes' motto, "by building up the children, we build up the Empire," was a clear reminder of the motivation behind the IODE's work for child health.⁵⁹ While the Daughters hoped to brighten the lives of the children they helped, their primary aim was to make a lasting contribution to the empire by mothering the next generation of citizens.

⁵⁵J.A. Dale. "Editorial—Child Welfare." *Echoes*, March 1921, p. 12.

⁵⁶*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, 6-11 June 1927, p. 113.

⁵⁷*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, 2-7 June 1924, p. 30.

⁵⁸"Retrospection—Being a Brief History of the Work of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire sent in by the Provincial Chapters," *Echoes*, June 1925, p. 11.

⁵⁹"Chapter Notes," *Echoes*, March 1920, p. 63.

While relief, material aid, and the support of child welfare institutions occupied much of the IODE's energy and attention in the post-war years, disease prevention was the central focus of the Order's work with children. With permission from school authorities, IODE chapters in Montreal organized a week long health campaign in the schools in 1921. The "Health Fairy" and the "Jolly Jester" presented lessons on proper hygiene and nutrition, and students submitted health posters to an IODE-sponsored contest. Other chapters held child welfare exhibitions where mothers received advice from doctors and nurses on proper nutrition and infant care.⁶⁰ Several chapters established and maintained children's hostels in memory of Canadian soldiers who gave their lives in the Great War. There children learned housekeeping skills in a wholesome environment, and summer vacations in the country provided a healthy dose of fresh air, fun, and exercise.⁶¹

Sending children to the country became an oft-prescribed elixir for the ailments that plagued congested urban environments. The growth of Canada's urban population from 1.1 million in 1881 to 4.3 million in 1921 induced fears about the evils of city life: prostitution, tuberculosis, crime, and poor health created a panic about the shifting population.⁶² In IODE literature, dark, disease-infested, urban slums contrasted starkly with the fresh air and idyllicism of the country. The

⁶⁰*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, 30 May-4 June 1921, pp. 96-97.

⁶¹Mary Bollert. "A General Review of the Child Welfare Work of the IODE." *Echoes*, March 1921, p. 12.

⁶²Mariana Valverde. *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), p. 131.

narratives of healthy country life conveniently disguised intervention motivated by anxieties over child care among the working class. A Fresh Air Fund established by Quebec City chapters brought underprivileged children to a rural clinic where they were schooled in the principles of wholesome living. Instruction in proper hygiene through toothbrush brigades and lessons in washing, making beds, cleaning dishes, and mopping floors gave children the motherly advice that was supposedly absent in their own homes.⁶³ Similarly, the Calgary municipal chapter consolidated its summer camps by purchasing a cottage and grounds at Sylvan Lake, about one hundred miles from the city. During the summer months each year, members of local IODE chapters hosted over one hundred children, who received the benefits of wholesome meals, pure milk, fresh air, and lessons in loyalty to God, King, and country.⁶⁴

The mythology of rural purity was employed most explicitly in the IODE's work in the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis. Here assumptions of class and race and a disdain for urban decadence coalesced in a campaign to take poor, mostly immigrant, children to country clinics and fresh air preventoria. Employing the popular binarism of light and darkness, IODE literature often contrasted the "Shadow of Tuberculosis" and the pall of the urban slum with the clean, healthful, incandescence of the rural out-of-doors. The IODE's preventorium in Toronto, established by its wartime president in 1913, brought a slice of rural goodness to the bowels of the city. Children between the ages of 4 and 14, rescued from "homes

⁶³"Provincial Reports." *Minutes*. Annual Meeting, May 29-June 3, 1922, p. 21.

⁶⁴*Echoes*. December 1923, p. 42.

smitten by the dreaded scourge of tuberculosis.” enjoyed a daily quart of milk, a nutritious diet, room for play, gardening, and sleeping in the open air.⁶⁵ Even bedridden patients were able to bask in the healing power of sunshine brought by special lamps. In 1920 the chapter added a Babies’ Pavilion where young children could be “scientifically cared for” by a staff of nurses and given a healthy start in life. The Order was pleased to report in 1919 that 123 children passed through the preventorium that year, “all departing in excellent condition, physically and mentally.”⁶⁶

President Gooderham’s opening remarks at the launching of an IODE sanatorium at Union-on-the-Lake, Ontario in 1913 illustrated the patriotic motivation behind the fight against the “white plague”:

This hospital, ideally situated amidst these picturesque surroundings on the borders of the lake, with the Union Jack, our Empire’s Flag, floating in the breeze, as we pray it may ever do, as the symbol of our cherished British traditions, and observed from land and sea, will be an evidence that the Daughters as well as the sons of the Empire in the city of Windsor and Essex county are doing their part as best they may, to uphold these ideals.⁶⁷

The Union Jack, representing the ideals of purity and racial health, was kept afloat by the fresh country breeze as a reminder of the lofty purpose of “saving the little citizens of the Empire.”⁶⁸

If potential “white plague” victims were constructed as poorly mothered inner-

⁶⁵*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. 7.6.8 May 1914. pp. 5-6.

⁶⁶*Echoes*. March 1919. p. 17.

⁶⁷*Echoes*. December 1913. p. 20.

⁶⁸*Echoes*. March 1919. p. 17.

city waifs, they were also supposedly either non-white or foreign-born. In 1914 *Echoes* reported that nearly seventy-five percent of tuberculosis cases were “traceable to newcomers to this country.”⁶⁹ IODE literature often implied that immigrants were like animals “herding together in tenements” and spreading diseases. “Children brought up under such conditions,” one member reported, “cannot be healthy or normal.”⁷⁰ An *Echoes* article on the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides was optimistic that the example set by white, middle-class youth would help to stamp out the disease:

When the Scouts are thoroughly imbued with the idea that they must shun a close atmosphere, must keep the mind pure, the body and clothing clean, breathe properly, exercise freely and eat wisely, being, as a corps, a strong virile set of boys, they will imbue others with the same idea, and gradually the idea will become the thing with the larger number of boys of the respectable Canadian families and gradually filter down to the sons of the foreigners so rapidly populating this country.⁷¹

Respectability was assumed to be the preserve of the white, middle-class family, and no one was held more responsible for creating this image than the bourgeois mother. The IODE looked to the Girl Guides as a movement that would direct future mothers into a pattern of “right living.” Lessons on the importance of wholesome cooking, and clean, ventilated homes would result, the Order believed, in a “sane, sturdy, healthy population” and “Death to the Great White Plague.”⁷² Again, a vision of ordered domesticity and male/virile female/domestic constructions were key to the IODE's conceptualization of good national health.

⁶⁹*Echoes*, May 1914, p. 61.

⁷⁰*Echoes*, December 1914, p. 5.

⁷¹*Echoes*, March 1911, p. 16.

⁷²*Ibid.*

IODE concerns about infant mortality, disease, poor health, and moral degeneracy were influenced, to some degree, by the popular movement of eugenics. The product of various patriotic, scientific, and humanitarian interests, eugenics arguments applied a pseudo-scientific veneer to long-held assumptions about class and race. Laws of heredity were used to explain behavioural, moral, and social problems and to advocate genetically regulated reproduction. A national preoccupation with racial degeneration and eugenics led health researchers to identify feeble-mindedness as the root cause of delinquency, pauperism, prostitution, and the spread of disease. The Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene—formed in 1918 and headed by Dr. C.K. Clarke, Dean of Medicine at the University of Toronto—developed a policy of segregation and genetic control that reached the heart of the child welfare movement. Helen MacMurchy, Charlotte Whitton and other public health reformers adopted the CNCMH's florid rhetoric of racial degeneration and drew attention to the procreation of "hordes of the unfit."⁷³ They warned that cancerous urban growth, declining fertility among Anglo-Saxons, and prolific reproduction among immigrant populations and the feeble-minded would inevitably result in the leveling down of the race. As Carl Berger and Suzanne Zeller have shown, by the turn of the century, Darwinian evolutionary theory and the Spencerian notion of "the survival of the fittest" were firmly entrenched in university curricula, in industrial psychology, and in a growing social movement to control the

⁷³ Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 46.

proliferation of undesirables.⁷⁴

As the IODE's child welfare convenor in the 1920s, Charlotte Whitton inspired the Order's interest in mental hygiene as a patriotic issue. Keeping Canada and the empire "strong, virile, healthy and moral," she insisted, would require the careful investigation, segregation, and control of undesirables. As an executive officer of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare, Whitton had access to an arsenal of statistics from asylums, reformatories, and rescue homes to raise alarm over the "menace" of the feeble-minded. She urged IODE chapters at all levels to inform the public and to advocate legislation restricting the marriage and reproduction of this unfortunate class of citizens.

The IODE's perception of the feeble mind was based on ideas about both heredity and the environment. While its mental hygiene work was organized through a vocabulary of genetics and heredity, behavioural characteristics like morality and sexuality became the actual criteria for assessing "normalcy." An address on feeble-mindedness by Miss Creuse of the Victoria Chapter exemplified the equation of mental deficiency with anti-social acts: "Also, one can never forget that in the first instance their lack of moral sense, reasoning power and self control is a consequence of sin, but not their sin, and yet the nation must go down if we allow the unprincipled, the chronic kleptomaniac, the uncontrolled, to increase as they are

⁷⁴Suzanne Zeller. *Land of Promise, Promised Land: The Culture of Victorian Science in Canada*. Canadian Historical Association Historical Booklet No. 56 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1996), p. 18.

doing."⁷⁵

A deep-seated fear of the "sins" of abnormal sexuality and unwanted reproduction lay at the heart of the IODE's work in child welfare and immigration. A 1922 *Echoes* editorial explained: "The social evil is as old as the viciousness of human nature itself and as young as the depravity of yesterday's offender. It may be impossible to eradicate, but it can be minimized by your energetic suppression."⁷⁶ Moral strength often meant the ability to control one's sexual desires, and morality, they believed, formed the core of Anglo-Saxon civilization. As a liberal democratic state, Canada was inherently committed to freedoms and rights for all citizens. Instead of enacting laws of coercion, the state relied on sexual and moral self-regulation under a network of subtle yet pervasive social controls. A number of impalpable mechanisms were constantly at work to control sexual behaviours: social, religious, and legal sanctions against promiscuity limited the possibilities for sexual expression and strengthened puritan standards of respectability.

Voluntary reform organizations, like the IODE, had an important role to play in preserving the boundaries of propriety, normalcy, and respectability and in keeping newcomers to the system in check. Social order was best achieved through the cultivation of intellectual homogeneity, consensus, and an internalized respect for authority. Self-policing was more peaceful, and more in line with liberal ideologies, than external coercion. But those for whom the controls of shame and propriety held

⁷⁵*Echoes*. October 1917, p. 38.

⁷⁶"Editorial." *Echoes*. June 1922, p. 9.

no meaning needed to be restrained by force. To this end, many IODE chapters were in favour of compulsory health examinations before marriage and the prohibition of wedding people deemed to be mentally unfit. Most urgent was the need for segregating feeble-minded females of child-bearing age. More than any other group, feeble-minded girls and women possessed the potential to commit the darkest of sins. Poor judgment coupled with the absence of morality and sexual discipline led, it was believed, to a multitude of disastrous consequences including the spread of diseases, illegitimacy, and the continued reproduction of “their kind.” The IODE’s Emily Doolittle explained:

Possessed of the physique, appetite, and passions of adults without the mental power enabling them to foresee (sic) the consequences of their actions or conduct and without the moral power or self-control of their appetites and passions, they become the source at once of gross immorality, of the spread of venereal disease, and of the multiplying of their kind, ordinarily twice as fast as normal people, and quite regardless of whether they are married or unmarried. The economic loss to the community through these conditions is enormous, and it is to be hoped, that the women will urge their provincial governments to go into the situation and assume their responsibility in this matter for the whole province.⁷⁷

The IODE was confident that the removal of such temptations could be achieved through the segregation of the feeble-minded in cottage homes and other quasi-institutional settings. Miss Creuse told Daughters of the Empire in Victoria that, under the watchful and sympathetic eye of trained professionals, “mentally dwarfed” children and adolescents could learn self-respect through basket weaving, carpentering, and knitting. With the repression of sexual temptations and the occupation of hands and minds with menial tasks, she explained, “they spend their

⁷⁷*Minutes. Annual Meeting, IODE. Child Welfare Report. 29 May-3 June 1922. p. 20.*

perpetual childhood in a way that is eminently pleasant to themselves and good for the upbuilding of the nation." The seclusion of the feeble-minded also made good economic sense to the Daughters of the Empire. Their association of mental deficiency with crime led them to believe that investing in homes for the feeble-minded would save the state thousands of dollars in penal care.⁷⁸

After the Halifax explosion of 1917, the Halifax Municipal Chapter of the IODE used part of a relief fund to establish such a home for feeble-minded adolescents. The general belief was that the explosion created or aggravated abnormal mental conditions in children, and the crowded post-disaster conditions aroused fears about sexual activity among feeble-minded girls. The IODE created the home in consultation with social workers, incorporating modern approaches to institutional care: its superintendent was a medical doctor and specialist in the study of the "mentally deficient" and the arts and crafts teacher was a graduate nurse with special training in this field. The residents, ranging in age from ten to nineteen years, learned the three Rs and simple housekeeping tasks. They received sensory training including buttoning, braiding, sewing, and raffia work. The Daughters were pleased to report that "the children not only showed marked improvement in health, neatness and deportment, and the quality of work they are able to do, but they are happy and contented." Due to a lack of funding, the Home for the Feeble-minded closed in 1926. The Order proudly declared, however, that its pioneer efforts in this field led to the founding of the Provincial Training School for the Feeble-minded and the "enactment

⁷⁸*Echoes*. October 1917, pp. 38-40.

of Nova Scotia's new measures in this field of care."⁷⁹

The IODE was not alone in its quest for national efficiency through physical and mental hygiene. The National Council of Women rigorously investigated the problem of feeble-minded women.⁸⁰ Likewise, Canada's largest feminist organization at the turn of the century, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), boasted an active "Heredity and Hygiene" department as early as 1889. Female temperance activists feared that "race suicide" would result from the multiplication of "the outcast, the feeble-minded and the criminal" population at the expense of the less prolific Anglo-Saxon middle classes. The fusion of ideas about genetic inheritance with what Mariana Valverde described as "optimistic evangelism" produced a WCTU campaign to "uplift the race." The WCTU publicized the determinist ideas of Helen MacMurphy and called for compulsory medical examinations before marriage. Temperance, pure milk, dress reform, and the education of mothers, however, took precedence over eugenic concerns about the reproduction of the unfit. WCTU reformers left biological strategies to medical and state-sponsored hygienists and focused on building a white (as in clean but also racially pure) Christian nation. Their renowned white ribbon campaign to promote temperance was steeped in claims of racial superiority. Old religious ideas about darkness and light constructed people of colour as morally and culturally inferior and privileged white middle-class women as

⁷⁹*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. 6-11 June 1927. p. 113.

⁸⁰Veronica Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976) and N.E.S. Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision: Centennial History of the National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1993* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993).

“mothers of the race.”⁸¹

In the same way that racist assumptions directed the WCTU's white ribbon campaign, ideas about race contributed to the IODE's social hygiene panic. Daughters of the Empire not only associated mental, physical, and moral purity with whiteness as a term for cleanliness—purity was equated with white skin. Records from hospitals, courts, asylums, and charitable institutions were shored up to link social deviance of all kinds with the “foreigner.” Mental hygienists like Dr. C.K. Clarke raised alarm in the IODE about the selection and inspection of immigrants. He claimed that 75.3 percent of mentally defective children in Canada had come from immigrant stock, 27.9 percent having been born outside Canada and the remaining 47.4 percent born of recent immigrants.⁸² *Echoes* reported Rev. W.D. Reig's statement at the Presbyterian Congress in 1914 that “the foreigners in Canada furnish twice as many criminals, two and one-third times as many insane, and three times as many paupers as the native element.”⁸³ Charlotte Whitton's claim that “the welfare of the nation is seriously threatened by the influx of undesirables” was convincing. In her 1924 child welfare report, Whitton told members gathered for the IODE annual meeting that defectives, delinquents, and illegitimacy were disproportionately high among the “imported classes.” She explained that in

⁸¹Mariana Valverde, “‘When the Mother of the Race is Free’: Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism,” in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 15-21.

⁸²*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 2-7 June 1924, p. 58.

⁸³*Echoes*, December 1914, p. 46.

Manitoba, while the foreign-born population outnumbered Manitobans of native birth by only three percent, only twenty-three percent of Manitoba's jail inmates were Canadian born. The remainder comprised mostly Austrians and Russians. Her statistics indicated that even British immigrants were often of poor quality: out of the 269 unwed mothers at two large hospitals, British women accounted for 44.23 percent while Canadian women represented only a quarter of those surveyed. Frequent references to the national body being ravaged by immigration attributed a parasitical quality to New Canadians and gave a sense of urgency to the mental hygiene movement as a racial problem. Charlotte Whitton used the language of the body, poison, and reproduction to describe the mental hygiene panic. Her words illustrated the perceived connection between race and mental deficiency:

Canada is making a determined effort to rid her youthful blood of this poison of mental deficiency with its attendant social evils, and to this end is making every precaution against its national reproduction. Consequently, she is enforcing a stringent immigration regulation to guard as far as possible against the influx from other shores of the racial poison that she is combatting at home.⁸⁴

The "influx from other shores" was almost unabated from the late nineteenth century through the 1920s. Prior to the First World War, Canadian immigration policy adhered only to the dictates of a capitalist economy hungry for industrial and agricultural labour. Between 1901 and 1913, Canada received over two and a half million immigrants: 990,860 from Britain, 892,529 from the United States, and 637,755 from "other" countries.⁸⁵ War, recession, and the Red Scare fueled anti-

⁸⁴Whitton, "The Social Background in Canada," p. 72.

⁸⁵*Echoes*, November 1915, p. 42.

foreign sentiments and led to restrictions on immigration from Europe, Asia, and enemy countries. The Empire Settlement Act of 1923 placated nativists by attracting British settlers with assisted passage. The controversial Railways Agreement, however, brought in 369,905 immigrants from continental Europe in the years from 1925 to 1931.⁸⁶ Daughters of the Empire watched with anxiety as thousands of non-English-speaking immigrants flooded into the western provinces. In 1925 the small population of Saskatchewan was overwhelmed with 12,347 newcomers. Almost 10,000 of them were non-British and represented over twenty-eight nationalities.⁸⁷ More than 157 religious sects and 60 different languages were represented in Canada by the end of the 1920s. The IODE reported fearfully that a young population of under 8 million was faced with attempting to assimilate 400,000 immigrants every year.⁸⁸ IODE literature represented Canada as a youthful nation whose innocence was being trampled by hordes of disinterested newcomers: "Canada is the child among the nations," one Daughter commented, "and through her gates have poured people of all classes and kinds, a vast procession of varied humanity."⁸⁹

The IODE regarded a certain degree of immigration to be an inevitable part of national growth: an increase in population was necessary to increase railway traffic, to settle the west, to provide domestic help, and to develop Canada's natural

⁸⁶Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), p. 91.

⁸⁷Mrs. C.C. Hearn, "Report on the Committee of Immigration, 1925-1926." *Echoes*, December 1926, p. 29.

⁸⁸NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 5, Resolutions Notice, IODE, 1919, p. 7.

⁸⁹*Echoes*, October 1918, p. 37.

resources. But Daughters of the Empire petitioned the government on many occasions to maintain a strictly selective immigration policy, one that favoured British settlers over the “riff-raff” of other countries. Bishop Pencier of New Westminster, whose speech on Canadianization at the meeting of the Associated Canadian Clubs in Hamilton in 1922 was printed in *Echoes*, summed up the prevailing opinion on immigration: “those permitted to settle in Canada should be white; they should be Christian; and they should be British.”⁹⁰ Daughters of the Empire believed that an emphasis on “British stock” would purify Canada’s blood stream and invigorate the national body.

Frequent references to the “stranger within our gates” in IODE immigration reports indicated a familiarity with J.S. Woodsworth, whose book with this title provided a taxonomy of racial desirability. A Methodist reformer and social purity activist, Woodsworth became well-known after 1899 for his work with immigrants at Winnipeg’s All People’s Mission. His writings bolstered Anglo-Protestant hegemony by reinforcing age-old perceptions of race as an indicator of morality, intelligence, and civility.⁹¹ IODE executives adopted the vocabulary of racial ranking popularized by *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909). They spoke freely of the cultural and racial superiority of Anglo-Saxons, the “racial poison” of eastern and central Europeans, and the “menace” of Blacks and Asians. For them, race was not a purely biological category: their criteria for desirability had as much to do with character and cultural

⁹⁰“Editorial—Indiscriminate Immigration.” *Echoes*. October 1922. p. 9.

⁹¹Valverde. *Age of Light, Soap and Water*. pp. 110-11.

traditions as it did with skin colour. Less emphasis was placed on hereditary traits than on British dominance through the traditions of constitutional democracy, sexual restraint, and fair play. They accepted as truth the popular notions that British people were farthest from the state of nature, were the paragon of the human race, and were divinely ordained to rule “others.” In short, they were thought to possess *character*.

The IODE saw good character as the most crucial qualification for admission to Canada. They wanted “men of thought, men of vision, of lofty aims....men that possess qualities of ideals.”⁹² Their immigration reports betrayed an implicit fear of the sexual and reproductive chaos that would result from the indiscriminate selection of immigrants of poor character. Character and self-control went hand in hand: in Whitton’s words, the “regulation and control of instinct and emotion [was] the basis of civilization.”⁹³ A host of the most dreaded social problems—promiscuity, feeble-mindedness, crime, the spread of disease, and the reproduction of the physically and mentally “unfit”—was linked to sexual and moral deviance. In turn, the timeworn allegory equating northern countries with light/morality/rationality/sexual self-control and southern countries with darkness/sin/sexual decadence constructed Asians, Blacks, and Southern Europeans as most likely to contribute to the social ills the Daughters were trying to combat. From the Daughters’ perspective, the sexual restraint of Anglo-Saxons coupled with the

⁹²NAC. MG 28. I 17, vol. 19, doc. 5, Resolutions Notice of Motion for National Annual Meeting, IODE, 1919, p. 7.

⁹³Rooke and Schnell. *No Bleeding Heart*, p. 25.

unbridled sexual activity among persons of colour was creating an imbalance in the populations of white and non-white. They saw India, Africa, Japan, and China as “bowls brimming over with humanity”—horde populations that were reaping the benefits of British science, technology, and education and threatening world order by demanding autonomy. Claims that four children were born of foreign parents for the birth of every British child reinforced the belief that a lack of sexual self-control was a characteristic of the “lower races.” The immigrant woman with babe in arms and children tugging at her skirts became a common image in the IODE’s immigration-panic narratives. The preoccupation with a racialized notion of sexual purity was also played out in laws, passed in Ontario and the western provinces between 1912 and 1919, that prohibited the employment of white women by Asian men. The National Council of Women, the YWCA, the IODE, and other women’s organizations supported such prohibitions as necessary for the “protection of white girls” against the sexual advances of Asian employers.⁹⁴

Geographical and cultural distance from Britain was a primary factor in the IODE’s calculation of racial character. It was commonly believed that the challenges of terrain and climate in a northern environment produced a superior racial stock. In the case of Canada, Sir George Parkin wrote in 1909:

A stern nature takes hold of this type of man when he comes to Canada and imposes upon him a relentless discipline. It either develops in him the virtues of energy, prudence, and foresight which he lacks, or it kills him.... Apply that process for a century to a country and you will have a survival of the fit which

⁹⁴Constance Backhouse. “White Female Help and Chinese-Canadian Employers: Race, Class, Gender, and Law in the Case of Yee Clun, 1924.” in *Canadian Women: A Reader*. ed. Wendy Mitchinson et al. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996), p. 288.

ensures to it...the traditional strength of the northern races.⁹⁵

Daughters of the Empire favoured northern countries, like Sweden, Norway, and Iceland, for producing hard-working settlers who were eager to assimilate. Immigrants from eastern and southern Europe ranked much lower on the racial scale because of their unfamiliar cultural traditions, religious peculiarities, and foreign parlance. Like the Irish, they were constructed as non-white despite the whiteness of their skin in a process that Etienne Balibar calls racism without race.⁹⁶ As Anne Ruggles Gere has commented, these immigrants “worked, voted and struggled their way into whiteness.”⁹⁷ Asians and Blacks were regarded as absolutely unassimilable, a “peril to white civilization,” and potential breeders of a “mongrel race.” Anti-Asian propaganda played a central part in the IODE’s immigration panic narratives. The Order’s judgments of Asian immigrants were consolidated through the popular myth of the “Oriental,” who was over-civilized to the point of degeneration. Daughters of the Empire supported exclusionary measures for Asian immigration, lest Canada be besieged by “hordes of illiterate people” who “have no appearance to keep up, crowd in lodging houses under unsanitary conditions, with few ideas of decency, and are a menace to the health of the community.”⁹⁸ The image of a “fair Dominion” being sullied by “yellow men and women” drew a contrast of both colour and character.

⁹⁵Quoted in Zeller. *Land of Promise, Promised Land*. pp. 20-1.

⁹⁶Etienne Balibar. “Is there a Neo-Racism?” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein. trans. Chris Turner (New York: Verso. 1991), p. 21.

⁹⁷Ruggles Gere. *Intimate Practices*. p. 79.

⁹⁸Mrs. W.D. Spence. “The Assimilation of the Foreign Born.” *Echoes*, October 1914, pp. 21-2.

White workers were being displaced, they believed, by conniving, cowardly, and effeminate Asian immigrants, who undercut wages and refused to integrate into the Canadian way of life.⁹⁹

Since integration or Canadianization was the IODE's principal objective, immigrants who settled *en bloc*, in "Little Russia's" or "Little Italys," followed Asians on the list of threats to national unity. Daughters of the Empire feared that segregated groups would retain their native characteristics and would remain uninfluenced by the institutions and values of their new home. They accused self-sufficient "colonies" formed by Doukhobours and Mennonites of maintaining a low standard of living and undercutting local merchants with "unfair competition."¹⁰⁰ IODE reports criticized their communal lifestyle, their "backward" private schools, their "strange" religious customs, and their unwillingness to perform military service. Homogeneous immigrant enclaves also hindered the Canadianization of women who saw little need to learn the language and customs beyond the borders of their communities. Most important, the Order believed that remote immigrant settlements were easy prey for agitators and Bolsheviks, "ready soil for the insidious planting of seeds of sedition and anarchy."¹⁰¹

The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 piqued already simmering fears of industrial unrest and social revolution. Believing

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, 2-7 June 1924, pp. 63-68.

¹⁰¹*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, 1-6 June 1925, p. 117.

that the “red contagion” of Bolshevism had penetrated mining, lumber, and construction camps across the country, the IODE applauded the efforts of Frontier College instructors, who lived and worked alongside these labourers, counteracting revolutionary propaganda through their teachings and personal influence.¹⁰² At the IODE annual meeting in 1925, members were “visibly shocked” at the “blasphemous nature” of samples of “red” literature submitted by concerned members.¹⁰³ They were uncompromising in their attacks on “traitorous” literature, arguing that perpetrators of sedition should be deported under the Immigration Act. Their democratic beliefs were left intact through their reasoning that foreign-born readers of such propaganda were “less fortified by knowledge and the British spirit to resist such appeals.” For their own sake and for the greater national good they needed to be sheltered from discourses that countervailed the forces of capitalism, nationalism, and homogeneity.¹⁰⁴ The IODE condemned any form of socialism as an attack on the most valued principles of the Protestant middle class: loyalty to the state, a belief in God and the sanctity of the family through marriage, and faith in the rewards of earnestness and industry. In her annual meeting address in 1926, IODE vice-president, Joan Arnoldi, targeted Finns and eastern Europeans as the most likely sources of revolutionary threats. She declared that the “British spirit was the rock

¹⁰²Ethel D. Crow. “Is Naturalization the Remedy?,” *Echoes*, November 1920, p. 44.

¹⁰³“Report of the Silver Anniversary of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Held in Ottawa. June 1-6.” *Echoes*. June 1925, p. 48.

¹⁰⁴The Manitoba provincial chapter sent a resolution to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Immigration and Colonization which asserted their hard line against persons uttering or disseminating treasonable sentiments. *Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. Report of the Resolutions Committee. 11-16 June 1923, pp. 91-92.

against which red propaganda must break."¹⁰⁵

The IODE's vocal contributions to the immigration panic were not unique. Indeed such a racist classification of immigrant groups directed the official debate over Canada's immigration policy. Fueled by post-war unemployment and economic recession, it was employed to justify revisions to the immigration act in 1919. The revisions prohibited the entry of certain European immigrant groups, including enemy aliens, Doukhobours, Mennonites, and Hutterites.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, anti-Asian racism manufactured the "need" for a head tax on Chinese immigrants in 1901. It rationalized a policy prohibiting Chinese labourers from establishing permanent residence in Canada, and led to their complete exclusion in 1923.¹⁰⁷ During a debate about immigration policy in the House of Commons in 1925, a member of parliament gave a lengthy warning about the dangers of miscegenation. "We have quite enough people of our own to run this country," he concluded, "and when the good Lord made the orientals and the white race he put the Pacific Ocean between them to keep them apart."¹⁰⁸ Blacks were to be excluded at all costs. Immigration Superintendent W.D. Scott bluntly stated his position on Black immigrants in 1914:

The government does not encourage the immigration of coloured people.
There are certain countries from which immigration is encouraged and certain

¹⁰⁵"Report of the Annual Meeting, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Saint John, New Brunswick, June 1926." *Echoes*, October 1926, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1990* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992), pp. 97-100. See also by Knowles, *Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2000).

¹⁰⁷Valverde, *Age of Light, Soap and Water*, p. 111.

¹⁰⁸Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, vol. 166, 4th sess., 14th parl., 2 April 1925, p. 1815.

racess of people considered as suited to this [country] and its conditions, but Africans, no matter where they come from are not among the races sought, and hence, Africans no matter from what country they come are in common with the uninvited races, not admitted to Canada.¹⁰⁹

Further restrictions on immigration from eastern and central Europe in 1921 and 1922 and the Empire Settlement Act of 1923, which recruited British settlers, placated women's, veterans, and labour organizations concerned about protecting jobs and preserving Canada's Anglo-Saxon character.¹¹⁰

The state's racialized, patriarchal, and class-oriented immigration policies did not exist in a social vacuum. The success of their implementation was contingent upon the sway of public sentiment. Even Scott admitted that the immigration department "has always depended on the national spirit of our people to assist in keeping this country for the classes best-suited and most wanted here." The IODE's construction of the ideal citizen as Christian, white, and middle-class simultaneously, albeit passively, constructed non-Christian, non-white immigrants and prospective immigrants as "undesireables," as non-citizens. These assumptions fueled discriminatory immigration practices. Sarah Carter explains how the possibility of Black immigration to Canada from Oklahoma in 1910 and 1911 aroused fears about the threat of Black males to the purity of white females. These fears, articulated through fabricated stories involving sexual danger posed by Black men, gave an

¹⁰⁹Quoted in Agnes Calliste, "Race, Gender and Canadian Immigration Policy: Blacks from the Caribbean, 1900-1932," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, 4 (Winter 1993-94): 74.

¹¹⁰The Order-in-Council of 1921 stipulated that any immigrant arriving in Canada was required to have at least \$250. The second Order-in-Council allowed the entry of only those immigrants who were agriculturalists with sufficient means, farm labourers with assured employment, or British subjects with adequate means to live until employment was secured. Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners*, p. 94.

appearance of legitimacy to policies which restricted immigration from this source.¹¹¹

The scope and direction of the IODE's immigration work fluctuated with changes in official policy and popular sentiment. In its early years, when the need for foreign labour eclipsed nativist concerns about race degeneration, the IODE combined its immigration efforts with work in education and child welfare. It was not until 1920, during the height of the nativist panic, that the Order deemed the problem of immigration worthy of the formation of a committee. The IODE joined the chorus of demands for a federal immigration policy that emphasized "quality over quantity" and the protection of the "mental, moral, and physical fibre" of the nation.¹¹² They called for more stringent medical inspection of potential immigrants, the continued preponderance of "basic stocks" in population, politics, and tradition, the rejection of immigrants who did "not fit in mentally with the Anglo-Saxon stock," and higher standards for citizenship and the franchise.¹¹³ In 1923 the IODE forwarded a strong note of protest to the government regarding its repeal of the ban against ex-enemy aliens who were being admitted to the country as farmers, farm labourers, and domestics.¹¹⁴ The national chapter urged that there be "no indiscriminate wholesale encouragement of immigration, no wide open door policy,

¹¹¹Carter, *Capturing Women*, pp. 195-98.

¹¹²Charlotte Whitton, "Report on Child Welfare," *Echoes*, October 1924, p. 7.

¹¹³*Echoes*, March 1926, p. 25.

¹¹⁴*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, Resolutions Report, 11-16 June 1923, p. 81.

until there is a re-adjustment of economic conditions."¹¹⁵

Such an economic revival was beginning to occur by 1924. Along with it came renewed encouragement from railways, business, and mining companies for an open-door immigration policy to bring farmers, farm labourers, skilled and unskilled workers to Canada as replacements for those who were heading south to the United States. The King government responded to pressure from business and commercial interests by gradually repealing restrictions against large-scale European immigration.¹¹⁶ The Railways Agreement of 1925 gave the Canadian National Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway control over the recruitment of agriculturalists and permission to recruit them from countries hitherto regarded as non-preferred. By 1931 at least 369,905 continental Europeans had entered the country under this agreement.¹¹⁷

From the IODE's perspective, if immigrants from non-preferred countries could not be turned away they would have to be Canadianized. IODE literature constructed these most-feared of newcomers as the antithesis of Britishness: illiterate, revolutionary, diseased slum-dwellers who needed to be saved from their plight of poverty and oppression. All of the panic narratives—fear of working-class values,

¹¹⁵*Minutes*. Annual Meeting. IODE. Report of the Committee on Immigration. May-June 1922. p. 85.

¹¹⁶By 1923 the Dominion Government repealed restrictions on German immigrants and their wartime allies. In 1924 it engaged in several agreements with the railway companies to recruit immigrants from this source. Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners*. p. 99.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 91.

“physical and moral uncleanness,”¹¹⁸ and a disdain for urban life—could be located in the “undesirable” New Canadian. Promoting among immigrants the British ideals of democracy, honour, industry, fair play, and reverence for authority would produce, they believed, peace, order, and an organic unity of interest. And a few lessons in personal hygiene and good housekeeping would make “decent” homes for the upbringing of New Canadian children. The IODE expected foreign-born Canadians to adopt British values and behaviours, to “absorb the spirit of our institutions,” in return for the privileges of economic prosperity and civil liberties.¹¹⁹ It was not sufficient for immigrants merely to conform to the laws of the nation; they were required to internalize the beliefs and values associated with good citizenship. IODE women represented their own gendered, racial, ethnic, and class experiences as a normative standard that others were expected to emulate.

By making “strangers” into neighbours, by working primarily with women and children, and by teaching immigrants a mixture of patriotism and respectable domesticity, Daughters of the Empire approached immigration in a way that was suitable for their sex. They believed their own example of true British womanhood to be the most powerful influence in the creation of good citizenship:

To win the ultimate goal of a peaceful, industrious, loyal citizenship in the Empire, will not be in armaments nor exports, neither in yellow wheat nor yellow gold, but it is in understanding one's own shortcomings and correcting them, in thinking aright, in speaking justly, in living uprightly, and when you

¹¹⁸“Address of the National Organizing Secretary—Report of the Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, June 2-7, 1924,” *Echoes*, June 1924, p. 29.

¹¹⁹*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE, Report of the Resolutions Committee, 11-16 June 1923, pp. 91-92.

are doing your part, those not stronger than yourself will respect and follow you—and the nation will discover one morning that it has awakened to the consciousness of good, which is God.¹²⁰

From 1900 through the 1920s Daughters of the Empire tried to infuse New Canadians with this “consciousness of good” through a program of welcome, remedial assistance, and education in British principles. Their Canadianization work was highly regarded at the government level as making a lasting mark on national life. An MP made a tribute to the IODE in the House of Commons in 1920: “Perhaps no organization in the country has made a greater and more genuine effort to do something for the Canadian foreign born than the IODE.”¹²¹

Daughters of the Empire hoped that neighbourly gestures would prevent the immigrant from retreating into “resentful isolation.”¹²² IODE chapters in the ocean provinces assisted women and children at the ports of entry, providing reading material and refreshments, helping with baggage, and ensuring their safe passage to their final destination. In 1923 alone, Quebec city chapters received 10,416 unaccompanied women and 3,721 children, who passed through the Immigration Building’s Red Cross nursery on their way westward.¹²³ Among the arrivals was a group of orphan children sponsored by the Armenian Relief organization, who received Union Jacks as part of their welcome. The immigration convenor was happy

¹²⁰NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 6. *History of the IODE* (n.p., n.d.), p. 32.

¹²¹NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 19, doc. 10. *Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Brief Outline of History, 1900-1960* (n.p., n.d.), p. 2.

¹²²“The National Spirit,” *Echoes*, June 1924, p. 21.

¹²³Rosetta Joseph, “Report of IODE Immigration Work in Quebec in 1923,” *Echoes*, June 1924, p. 13.

to report that the children, who were at first merely fascinated by the bright colours of the flag, later saluted the flag proudly every day.¹²⁴ In 1929 Daughters of the Empire welcomed 188 ships in Quebec City and 25,954 immigrants arriving on 171 trains in Montreal.¹²⁵ Without port work to occupy them, the IODE in the western provinces cooperated with the Travellers' Aid Society to assist and follow up on women, girls, and children traveling unaccompanied. Members in Winnipeg welcomed incoming settlers at the Immigration Hall. An article in *Echoes* encapsulated the enduring effects of IODE and Red Cross welcome work: "First impressions are lasting ones, and in the welcome given these strangers on our shore lies the formulating of their opinions—the sowing of the seed of loyalty to the land to which they have come."¹²⁶

Daughters of the Empire were also visible in settlement houses and hostels, which served as entrepôts on the immigrants' journey to their new homes. Working with lists of recent immigrants supplied by the Department of Immigration, the IODE connected newcomers with local chapters through correspondence and friendly visits.¹²⁷ "Patriotism is of the heart and not of the head," the Order reminded its members. "It must be a building up, an every day contact, an unconscious growth

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵*Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Brief Outline of History, 1900-1960*, p. 2.

¹²⁶*Echoes*, March 1925, p. 20.

¹²⁷Mrs. C.C. Hearn, "Report of the National Committee on Immigration," *Echoes*, October 1927, p. 15.

and it needs the personal contact."¹²⁸ Local chapters reinforced this personal and intellectual connection with recent settlers by sending newspapers, magazines, and relief such as clothing, groceries, and infant layettes. In Manitoba one chapter alone donated enough clothing in one year for more than 600 new settlers.¹²⁹ This practical connection with immigrants was regarded as patriotism in its fullest sense as it would cultivate a bond of union among the foreign- and native-born.

Ultimately, the IODE relied on schemes of education to ease New Canadians into acceptable patterns of conduct. The Order set up special classes where immigrants could learn the three Rs, along with the Lord's Prayer, hymns, patriotic songs, and housekeeping.¹³⁰ The patriotic fervour of Empire Day provided a perfect opportunity for the IODE to teach New Canadians important lessons in citizenship. A Manitoba chapter organized an Empire Day social where flag-waving children performed patriotic songs, recitations, and little speeches about the significance of Empire Day. Clergymen and school trustees gave short talks on "Empire day, why we celebrate it," and "Canada and why we love our country," which stressed the need for national unity.¹³¹ Daughters of the Empire commonly used patriotic recitations and repetition of oaths of loyalty to indoctrinate newcomers with a sense of indebtedness for the blessings of Canadian citizenship. At the closing ceremony of a course of

¹²⁸*Echoes*, December 1914, p. 23.

¹²⁹"Annual Report of the Child Welfare Committee." *Echoes*, October 1926, p. 13.

¹³⁰*Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire Brief Outline of History, 1900-1960*, p. 4.

¹³¹*Echoes*, June 1921, p. 43.

English classes for immigrants, for example, the graduates were expected to make the following declaration:

We are certainly glad we are Canadian and live in this big and wonderful Dominion of Canada. This is due to a few reasons which we shall mention. First, because Canada belongs to Great Britain and Great Britain is one of the finest countries in the world, and is mistress of the seas. She is spoken of as Christian because she keeps the Sabbath day holy and believes in the Bible and the Church. Canada contains over fifty nationalities, and all of these will join hands and sing "God Save the King."¹³²

The Daughters continually evaluated the appearance and disposition of immigrants, often confusing intelligence with a willingness to assimilate and to conform to acceptable gender roles. "The appearance of the pupils were clean and intelligent," one member noted, "the women earnest and gentle, the men manly and progressive." The Clifton Chapter of Niagara Falls reported in 1924 that their instruction of sixty non-English-speaking men and women yielded "great improvement...in their homes and manner of living."¹³³ They took displays of gratitude as proof of the merits of their Canadianization work: "They showed the deepest gratitude to their teachers and were so thankful for the knowledge they had gained";¹³⁴ "[they] are most anxious to learn our ways and language."¹³⁵ They emphasized hard work as the key to good citizenship. Immigrants were told to pray for the "lust for labour" so their prosperity would enrich their communities and the

¹³²*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, Presidential Address, 11-16 June 1923, p. 13.

¹³³*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 2-7 June 1924, pp. 63-8.

¹³⁴*History of the IODE*, p. 25.

¹³⁵*Minutes*, Executive Meeting, IODE, 2 February 1921, p. 191.

nation.¹³⁶ Members of the New Fairy Hill Chapter knew progress was in hand when a group of New Canadians held their own Basket Social and donated the proceeds to the IODE. The proudest member of the chapter came from her small, prairie home to hold the Standard at chapter meetings.¹³⁷ Members of a Manitoba chapter were pleased to report that several Ukrainian women solicited their help in becoming “better citizens of Canada.”¹³⁸

Schools were the primary targets for Canadianization work. The Daughters believed immigrant families could be reached and transformed through the education of their children.¹³⁹ In her address to the Women’s Section of the Grain Growers Association in 1920, Mrs. C.C. Hearn simplified the task at hand: “The foreign-born children are really golden material to work upon, they respond so gratefully and intelligently to kindness. Our only way is to educate them to our point of view, put them through our mill and roll them out Canadians.”¹⁴⁰ In 1922 she reported that since 1915 over 200 new schools had been built in Manitoba for New Canadians. Working in cooperation with school boards and with education ministries in each province, the IODE hoped to instil the British spirit in foreign-born students through donations of libraries, flags, flag charts, and historical pictures. By donating prizes to

¹³⁶*History of the IODE*, p. 26.

¹³⁷*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 1-6 June 1925, p. 117.

¹³⁸*Echoes*, October 1925, p. 42.

¹³⁹“Canadianization in Alberta,” *Echoes*, March 1929, p. 7.

¹⁴⁰Mrs. C.C. Hearn, “The Education of the New Canadian,” *Echoes*, March 1920, p. 33.

a New Canadian school for the best essays on “The Book I Like Best in the IODE Library and Why” the IODE in Manitoba ensured that immigrant children were reading British material. The best essays were written by students who, despite their Austrian and German origins, expressed the appropriate sentiments of loyalty to the British flag and to their new home. The IODE included the non-prize winners by sending them a football with instructions “for playing a truly British game.”¹⁴¹ One chapter presented a picture, “The Surrender of the German Fleet,” to schools with foreign-born children. Mrs. Bray, a municipal regent for the IODE, spoke to the students about loyalty and later gave prizes for the best essays on the meaning of the picture, “the idea being to instil into the children’s minds a love of country and British ideals.”¹⁴²

Apart from regular school work and patriotic lessons, teachers in New Canadian schools also taught basic domestic skills, including knitting, patching, darning, and cooking.¹⁴³ Several chapters organized classes in cooking and household arts and awarded prizes in New Canadian schools for cleanliness and proficiency. Many chapters donated gramophones for teaching patriotic songs. Schools in the western provinces, encouraged by the IODE, increased their efforts to cultivate a patriotic spirit among students, many of whom were foreign-born. Upon the request of the IODE’s municipal chapter, a Calgary school board insisted that children salute

¹⁴¹*Echoes*, June 1921, p. 43.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*

¹⁴³“Canadianization Work in Alberta.” *Echoes*, March 1929, p. 7.

the Union Jack and make a declaration of loyalty: "I pledge allegiance to our Flag and to the Empire for which it stands, one Empire, indivisible with liberty and justice for all."¹⁴⁴ A visitor to Canada commented on the pleasant sight of Union Jack flags waving over prairie schoolhouses. "In these schools love of country and of the Empire is deliberately inculcated," she remarked. "In the first I went into...a roomful of girls of all nationalities...sang 'two of the songs they know best.' i.e., 'Rule Britannia' and 'The Maple Leaf.'"

In days of yore, from Britain's shore,
Wolfe, the dauntless hero, came,
And planted firm Britannia's flag
On Canada's fair domain.
Here may it wave, our boast, our pride,
and, joined in love together,
The Thistle, Shamrock, Rose, entwine.
The Maple Leaf Forever¹⁴⁵

Daughters of the Empire believed that social homogeneity, the IODE's ultimate goal through Canadianization, was contingent upon the universality of the English language. "It is essential for these children to be grounded in, and familiarized with, the British tongue," one member wrote, "in order that they may naturally talk and think in unison with the people of their adopted land."¹⁴⁶ Learning English and speaking English, Daughters believed, would inevitably lead new Canadians to *think* English—to internalize the ideals of morality associated with Englishness. Immigrants would reap the benefits of "mental, social, and business

¹⁴⁴*Minutes*. Annual Meeting, IODE. Report of the National Educational Secretary, 7-12 June 1926, pp. 72-89.

¹⁴⁵*Echoes*, December 1914, p. 56.

¹⁴⁶Mrs. C.C. Hearn, "Canadianization Work in Manitoba." *Echoes*, December 1922, p. 15.

progress” and “public approval” by adopting the language of their new land.¹⁴⁷ Hence the acquisition of qualified teachers who spoke good English was imperative. In isolated rural areas, the *Minutes* of the 1921 annual meeting explained, “oftentimes the school is the sole representative of British institutions.”¹⁴⁸ It acted as a social club where the wider immigrant community could gather to be indoctrinated into the Canadian way of life. British teachers in immigrant districts were regarded as bright lights in dark enclaves of ignorance and depravity. One Ontario chapter, for example, adopted a small prairie school whose teacher was the only English-speaking person in the community. The chapter corresponded regularly with the teacher and donated a library, pictures, a phonograph with records, and current magazines to make “modern ideas” a part of the curriculum despite “the ignorance of her non-British board of trustees.”¹⁴⁹

A letter from a teacher in Quinton, Saskatchewan, whose pupils were all of Hungarian descent, illustrated the significance of practical articles like balls and bats in the Canadianization of immigrants: “The only plaything we have is the ball and bat you sent us last year, a broken basket ball and football, also broken,” she wrote. “And yet it is on the playground that the new-Canadians learn English best and quickest.”¹⁵⁰ The IODE in Alberta also awarded ten scholarships of \$35 to assistant

¹⁴⁷*Echoes*, December 1919, p. 23.

¹⁴⁸*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, Educational Report, 30 May-4 June 1921, p. 76.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰“Our Canadianization Problem,” *Echoes*, March 1925, p. 21.

teachers, enabling them to take a summer course in the instruction of English and in the history and traditions of their New Canadian students.¹⁵¹ In a letter to the IODE, a prize winner in a Ukrainian settlement tried to convey the magnitude of the task:

The problem of the foreigner is a great one; greater than we realize. In Alberta we have over 60,000 Ukrainians who occupy roughly speaking a block of land 60 miles square. They have brought with them customs, morals and religions that are in many respects a century behind Anglo-Saxons. A Ukrainian missionary told me they had no traditions or what we would call such. They had no King Arthur, or St. George. The only tradition was oppression. From oppression they came to freedom—the freedom of this vast Western Canada, and as one would naturally expect, many do not know how to use their liberty. These people are in a solid block that they cannot change in one generation. The only points of contact are the few English and half breeds amongst them. And many of these have not been very good examples. It remains for the few Canadian teachers to carry the best of our Canadian culture to this great mass of people—teachers with a true British spirit who will sympathize and be of practical service.¹⁵²

This letter encapsulated many of the concerns and cultural biases that organized the IODE's work with immigrants: a disdain for *en bloc* settlements, a regard for British traditions as the universal cultural standard, and a sense of duty to rescue non-British New Canadians from the tyranny of their ethnicity. Daughters of the Empire helped to map out the behaviours and allegiances through which immigrants would be recognized as Canadian citizens. This process limited the "field of legitimate action and choice" for New Canadians.¹⁵³

As the "natural" progenitors of culture and morality, women were the primary objects of IODE Canadianization programmes. Daughters of the Empire regarded

¹⁵¹"Report of the 27th Annual Meeting Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire—Held at Winnipeg, June 1927." *Echoes*, October 1927, p. 6.

¹⁵²"Canadianization Work in Alberta." *Echoes*, March 1929, p. 7.

¹⁵³Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices*.

immigrant women as the most difficult to Canadianize because of their seclusion in the home and their tendency to retain the language and customs of their homeland. Thus the Order encouraged its members to befriend these women, to visit them in their homes where they could give motherly advice and keep them connected with the wider community. To some extent their likeness through gender mitigated the tensions of race and class in the IODE's relationship with non-white women: white middle-class women shared with their immigrant and working-class "sisters" an experience of patriarchy that was profoundly disempowering. "We must show our foreign-born sister that we are interested in her and sympathize with her," declared a Manitoba immigration convenor, "and how far-reaching sympathy is!"¹⁵⁴ For the IODE, however, the bond between women across racial lines was more fragile than the Order's fear of racial degeneracy and commitment to imperialism. As Vron Ware put it:

For imperialists the qualities shared by women could only be skin deep; developing theories of racial difference and eugenics contradicted any notion of equality or even similarity by claiming that the English were a superior race, which gave them the authority to hold their Empire together through force of both character and culture.¹⁵⁵

Thus the IODE's association with the non-British women (and children) it attempted to Canadianize, although maternal and protective, was essentially hierarchical and custodial. As the pure embodiment of white womanhood, Daughters of the Empire felt a moral responsibility on behalf of the empire to elevate non-white women to

¹⁵⁴Hearn, "Education of the New Canadian," p. 33.

¹⁵⁵Vron Ware. *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (New York: Verso, 1992), p. 160.

their own standards of respectability. This description of an Empire Day programme depicts the foreign woman as the object of the Daughters' sympathetic yet judgmental gaze:

The foreign women on being asked to take part in the programme, were very nervous at first, but members had stood up with them, and she said it was most interesting to see these women go up on the platform with a baby in arms and a few little ones clinging to their skirts. One sang without accompaniment, which is something a great many of us, she said, could not do. Another foreign lady brought a beautiful cake, iced, and decorated just as nicely as we would do it.¹⁵⁶

Likewise, typing the "foreign woman" as an oppressed victim of her culture enabled IODE members to adopt the role of sage and saviour. It supplied a point of contrast that accentuated their own superiority as women in what they considered to be a humane, liberal, and progressive society. Just as the degraded colonial woman signified the liberal benevolence of the west in popular imperial narratives, the position of the "immigrant woman" provided a foil against which white, middle class reformers could assert their own progress and superiority.¹⁵⁷ Mrs. C.C. Hearn's circular explanation of the plight of non-British women in western Canada highlighted this contrast: "These women must necessarily lead bare and isolated lives, on account of their ignorance of our language and viewpoint. Their lives to us seem to be largely dominated by their men. The girls are faced, we are told, to marry very

¹⁵⁶ *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE. Educational Report, 30 May-4 June 1921, p. 81.

¹⁵⁷ Antoinette Burton, "The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and 'The Indian Woman,' 1865-1915," in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 137-157.

young, men chosen by their fathers.”¹⁵⁸

The Daughters’ perception of the status of women from non-preferred countries also reinforced the IODE’s racism: the Daughters considered female status to be an indication of a nation’s racial character. They measured the condition of women as an “index of human progress.”¹⁵⁹ As one turn-of-the-century writer put it:

All history teaches us that the welfare and very life of a nation is determined by moral causes; and that it is the pure races—the races that respect their women and guard them jealously from defilement—that are the tough, prolific, ascendant races, the noblest in type, the most enduring in progress, and the most fruitful in propagating themselves.¹⁶⁰

The IODE’s feminist consciousness, then, although it intersected with the humanitarian side of their association with immigrants, was overshadowed by the differences of class and race. The primary motivation of the Daughters’ Canadianization efforts among immigrant women and children was what they perceived to be the “white woman’s burden” to civilize the less fortunate and to create respectable families that could be easily integrated into national life.

Respectable, middle-class women had a critical role to play in Canadianization, they believed, by “uplifting” the home conditions of the immigrant. “We women of Canada are the best housekeepers in the world to-day,” wrote Ontario’s IODE immigration convenor, “and a word to the mother of these families

¹⁵⁸Hearn, “Education of the New Canadian,” p. 33.

¹⁵⁹Billie Melman, “Under the Western Historian’s Eyes: Eileen Power and the Early Feminist Encounter with Colonialism,” *History Workshop Journal* 42 (Autumn 1996): 160.

¹⁶⁰Ellice Hopkins, extracted in *The Storm Bell*, April 1900, quoted in Ware, *Beyond the Pale*, p. 150.

regarding our Canadian homes will often help.”¹⁶¹ In part, the assimilation of immigrant families was judged according to their adherence to middle-class ideals of domesticity. Some IODE members tried to transform New Canadian houses into homes by providing furnishings and hanging curtains at the windows. Daughters of the Empire in Alberta sponsored lectures on the responsibilities of a farmer’s wife, such as butter-making, milking, and raising poultry.¹⁶² They donated two honoraria of \$200 each to local school teachers who were acquainted with the mothers of their pupils and thus able to teach them the English language and Canadian customs. Another chapter hosted a party for New Canadians, presenting each visitor with a recipe book with simple, easy recipes prepared by IODE members. Another chapter donated scrapbooks to New Canadian schools, illustrating household articles including furniture, dishes, and clothing. Many IODE chapters located and followed up on girls and women associated with the YWCA, and tried to exert their influence by acting as role models, “for everyone wishes to imitate what they admire.”¹⁶³ The IODE considered social clubs for New Canadian girls to be one of the most successful parts of their work along these lines. In one small western city, an IODE club served as a gathering point for young girls working in the service industry. Lessons in sewing, health, and hygiene provided girls with basic domestic skills, while patriotic instruction in history and geography purveyed important knowledge about Canada

¹⁶¹*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, Report of the Immigration Committee, May 1930, p. 80.

¹⁶²*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 2-7 June 1924, pp. 63-68.

¹⁶³Hearn, “Report on the Committee of Immigration, 1925-1926,” p. 29.

and the British empire. The immigration convenor reported proudly that “many of these girls are now married and are keeping house and bringing up their children in accordance with such teachings.”¹⁶⁴

As a logical extension of their preoccupation with cultivating the British character of Canadian homes, the IODE was concerned about the “problem” of domestic servants. The overall lapse in immigration and the opportunities for alternative employment during the war produced a shortage of domestic help that lasted throughout the 1920s. Middle-class women regarded the scarcity of good help in the form of modest, virtuous, and skilled domestics as a social crisis—indeed “one of the gravest problems facing the world.”¹⁶⁵ Driven by self-interest as well as by a need to protect the integrity of the home as the cornerstone of the nation, the IODE called for training facilities for this purpose as well as the careful selection of British women for Canadian kitchens.¹⁶⁶

By the end of the First World War, responsibility for the selection and supervision of young domestics was in the process of being transferred from private agencies to the state. In this transitional period, the IODE, along with church groups, the WCTU, the YWCA, the NCWC and the WI, continued to influence immigration practices as a lobby and regulatory body through a network of hostels and other receiving facilities that were beginning to receive public support. Members from these

¹⁶⁴“Report of the Annual Meeting, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Saint John, New Brunswick, June 1926.” *Echoes*, October 1926, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 2-7 June 1924, p. 66.

¹⁶⁶See, for example, *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, June 1921, p. 55.

organizations joined provincial government representatives in 1919 to form the Canadian Council of Immigration of Women for Household Service, a committee that began to supervise the immigration of domestics to Canada.¹⁶⁷ The imperialist ambitions of many of these groups were conveyed in the Council's demand for British women of moral integrity, and in the persistent assertion that the prosperity of the nation depended on the quality of its homes.

Barbara Roberts has submitted that reformers' obsession with regulating the passage of British female immigrants for the welfare of the nation transcended any feminist concern for their personal freedom. She wrote:

The reformers' imperative to build the nation upon culturally imperial lines—their patriotism—was far stronger than their commitment to the development of women's independence and autonomy—their feminism. The reformers' class position combined with their imperialism to give their maternal bent this rather authoritarian edge.¹⁶⁸

In spite of the preferred status of unaccompanied British women, the IODE endorsed procedures of close surveillance during their passage to Canada. The threat of white slavery combined with the questionable morals of working-class girls prompted pressure from the IODE for more stringent supervision of traveling women. The IODE and other concerned groups continued to regulate these female immigrants upon their arrival through a network of hostels and welcome homes that functioned

¹⁶⁷In 1921, the administrative function of the council was merged into the Women's Branch of the Department of Immigration and Colonization. The scope of the council was widened to include all women immigrants, although the selection of domestic workers remained the principal part of its advisory role.

¹⁶⁸Barbara Roberts, "'A Work of Empire': Canadian Reformers and British Female Immigration," in *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s*, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: Women's Press, 1979), p. 194.

as both employment agencies and temporary shelters. The Order cooperated with the YWCA and the Travellers' Aid in receiving and registering these immigrants at distribution centres across the country. An IODE representative sat on the committee for the Canadian Women's Hostel in Toronto, an important distribution centre for Ontario and the west.

The IODE hoped that the immigration of British women would offset the influx of unaccompanied women from non-preferred countries.¹⁶⁹ Due to the bulk nomination system of the Railways Agreement, between 1926 and 1930 the number of household workers coming from continental Europe surpassed the number coming from the British Isles.¹⁷⁰ As Marilyn Barber has noted, "few of those recruited had domestic training or any knowledge of the kind of equipment in Canadian middle-class homes."¹⁷¹ To protect the respectability of middle-class homes, which relied on such domestic help, the IODE insisted on the cessation of the mass migration of non-preferred women. They cautioned that "this particular movement is fraught with far-reaching possibilities in reference to the whole future population and character of this country."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹The number of unaccompanied women from non-preferred countries grew from a few hundred to more than 12,000 within the five years from 1921 to 1926. *Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, 27-31 May 1929, p. 64.

¹⁷⁰Marilyn Barber, "The Servant Problem in Manitoba, 1896-1930," in *First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History*, ed. Mary Kinnear (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1987), p. 109.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁷²*Minutes*, Annual Meeting, IODE, Report of the Immigration Committee, May 1930, pp. 88-9.

While exasperated middle-class housewives bemoaned the lack of home help and IODE women engaged in a protracted investigation of the “servant problem,” Canada’s racist immigration policies denied the entry of hundreds of Caribbean domestic workers who were willing to work in Canadian homes.¹⁷³ The few who gained admittance—through private immigration schemes designed to fill the need for cheap domestic labour in Nova Scotia and Quebec—worked for half the wage of their white counterparts. IODE reports do not acknowledge the availability of Black domestic servants. In light of prevalent assumptions about the moral depravity of Blacks, the IODE’s repeated appeals for respectable girls of a “superior class” made any specific reference to the exclusion of Blacks unnecessary. The IODE’s immigration committee, whose welcome homes and information bureaus assisted hundreds of newly arrived British domestics, made no mention of extending social services to servants from the Caribbean.

While Daughters of the Empire wanted competent working-class British women who could work as household servants, they also made a special appeal for middle-class British women—“women of education and breeding”—who would bring religion, domesticity, and cultural refinement to the pioneer communities of the Canadian west. They notified the government on several occasions regarding their desire for educated British women to find employment in Canada. Daughters of the Empire also demanded changes to the homesteading laws to allow single women to

¹⁷³In the three decades between 1904 and 1932 Canada accepted 2,378 Caribbean Blacks, who served as a pool of cheap labour in Nova Scotia steel plants and coal mines and as domestic servants. Calliste, “Race, Gender and Canadian Immigration Policy,” p. 84.

establish homes on the prairies from which they could transmit the British ideals and traditions they believed were crucial for the smooth incorporation of the west into the new dominion.¹⁷⁴ With the aboriginal peoples by this time conveniently tucked away on reserves and the suppression of the Métis rebellions now only a dim memory, there was no need for the IODE to acknowledge the displacing function of their colonizing efforts.

The Order's appeal for educated British women and for their fair access to land appeared to be inspired less by feminist interests than by the hope of securing genteel women who, by their breeding and respectable character, would contribute to the moral and physical health of the nation and "carry the gospel of Empire" to frontier communities.¹⁷⁵ Such views were not uncommon. In *A Woman in Canada* (1910), Mrs. George Cran echoed the dominant view of class relations when she wrote: "a woman of refinement and culture, of endurance, of healthy reasoning courage, is infinitely better equipped for the work of homemaking and race-making than the ignorant, often lazy, often slovenly lower-class woman."¹⁷⁶ Indeed homemaking and race-making, with all their attending distinctions of gender, race, and class, formed the core of the IODE's female imperialism.

The IODE's work in the areas of child welfare, mental hygiene, and

¹⁷⁴*Minutes*. IODE. Canadianization Work in Alberta. March 1929, p. 7; *Echoes*. June 1925, p. 48.

¹⁷⁵*Echoes*. October 1918, p. 43.

¹⁷⁶Mrs. George Cran. *A Woman in Canada* (London: John Milne, 1910), p. 109, quoted in Carter. *Capturing Women*, p. 8.

immigration demonstrate the fusion of imperialism and social reform in the process of nation formation. At a time when the appeal of empire appeared to be declining among Canadians, organized patriotic women continued to draw upon imperialist constructions of gender, class, and race in their efforts to reconstruct the nation as it emerged from the havoc of war. The problems of the working-class, immigrant household were inflated to become a menace to the welfare of the nation. The IODE addressed the issues affecting children, immigrants, the sick, and the feeble-minded as matters of imperial concern. This interpretation justified efforts to regulate the working class. It also provided opportunities for women to include themselves in the discourse of nation-building. The individual, the local, and the domestic were constructed as inextricable parts of a much larger Britannic national community.

By infusing domestic space with political significance the IODE at once elevated and constrained women's roles: mother's pensions, high standards for child care, and the construction of the "good mother" restricted women's access to public life while at the same time making the career of motherhood the highest service to the state. In her annual address in 1914 the IODE president left no doubt about the connection between domesticity and imperialism:

This may be criticized as not having a very Imperial ring, but to my mind it is the essence of Imperialism. Is there anyone left among the observers of society to-day who will attempt to refute the assertion that the home is the beginning of the State? If every home in the land were sending forth sons and daughters filled with a faith in lofty citizenship, Utopia would indeed be ours.¹⁷⁷

IODE child welfare propaganda, with its emphasis on bourgeois motherhood,

¹⁷⁷*Echoes*, June 1914, p. 8.

reinforced and created assumptions about the relationship between the child and the family, and about the role of woman as homemaker and child bearer. Their solutions to the problems of population and national health—regulated reproduction, good child care, and education in citizenship—were contingent upon the maternal figure building up the home life of the nation.

The national fantasy that fueled the IODE's social welfare projects was based on assumptions of gender difference, Anglo-Saxon superiority, and exclusive ideals of citizenship. Consecrated by their British heritage and social status as models of respectable womanhood, the Daughters set themselves up as the inevitable redeemers of the neglected child, the ignorant slum mother, the unprincipled misfit, and the unenlightened immigrant. Their literature drew repeated contrasts between the darkness, filth, disease, and oppression of a mythical immigrant underworld and a class-specific ideal of domesticity. Through the practical work of setting up well-baby clinics, hosting fresh air camps, organizing health education projects, and visiting immigrants, the IODE was actively creating a unified national consciousness based on the values of the middle class. Normative standards of morality, hygiene, and domestic life had the potential to draw working-class families and immigrants into an idealized national family.

Chapter Four

“Wash me and I shall be white”:¹ Race, Class, and Christian Womanhood in the Girls’ Friendly Society, 1882-1930

To Unite, for the Glory of God, in One Fellowship of Prayer and Service,
the Girls and Women of the Empire, to uphold Purity in Thought, Word, and Deed²

The external orientation of Canadian female imperialism is all the more evident in the Girls’ Friendly Society of Canada. As an Anglican society transplanted from England in the late nineteenth century, the GFSC was tightly bound by structure and mission to a distinctly British organizational family. While the GFSC, like other female imperialist organizations, became a casualty of an emerging liberal nationalism and the decline of the club movement in the 1920s, it was for several decades a modest but important link between organized Canadian women and a feminized British imperialism. GFSC women based their work not only on the division of gender roles and a Victorian ideal of domesticity, but also on a Christian imperialist civilizing mission. In doing so, they helped to configure the gendered contours of both church and empire to include the work of women. GFSC women were nation-builders in the cultural sense of the term, and so in part this study challenges the narrow, male-centred definition of nation-building that underpins traditional historical scholarship. GFSC women responded to the crises that grew out of political policies of national expansion and consolidation, to the exigencies of urban growth

¹GFS texts used this phrase repeatedly. See, for example, *Friendly Work*, March 1915, p. 35.

²National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC], reel A-1191, file 16, September 1918, Miss Ethel Campbell, Central Secretary of the GFS in Canada. “The Girls’ Friendly Society,” p. 3.

and western colonization, and to the “need” for Christian homes as the foundation for the national future. At the same time, however, GFS propaganda set up exclusive ideals for imperial citizenship, which highlighted race and class difference and rigidified restrictive boundaries for female behaviour through moral surveillance. These themes will be addressed in the following two chapters.

The Girls’ Friendly Society originated in England in 1874 as a organization devoted to the moral character and protection of young girls. It was a distinctly religious society, working as it did within the Church of England and with the sanction of Anglican clergy.³ Many of its leaders were clergy wives. Its foundress, Mary Elizabeth Townsend, saw a need for the preservation of true Christian womanhood through the religious and domestic training of the future mothers of the empire. Indeed the “battle for the purity of womanhood,” she believed, was “one of the greatest battles the world has ever seen.”⁴ This training occurred within a complex organizational structure that included local branches, diocesan councils, and a representative central council, along with several departments: workhouses and orphanages, industrial training, literature, employment registries, sick members, and homes of rest, and, later, emigration. At the centre of this structure was the “friendly” relationship between the well-heeled, lady associate and the working girl member. This relationship unfolded as associates and members came together at branch

³Church of England and Anglican Church are used throughout these chapters interchangeably and synonymously.

⁴Quoted in Mary Heath-Stubbs, *Friendship’s Highway: Being the History of the Girls’ Friendly Society, 1875-1925* (London: GFS Central Office, 1926), p. 8.

meetings and rallies, and in private moments of advice and guidance.⁵ Younger girls were also drawn into this sphere of influence through a probationary category, called candidates.⁶ Through such an exchange, GFS associates hoped to win girls from the temptations of modern life and direct them into pursuits that would cultivate the role that God intended for them: wife and mother.

The GFS was an immediate success. Just a decade after its inception, 821 branches were operating in England and Wales. Despite charges that the GFS was a social anachronism, or indeed “an interfering, meddling, persecuting, narrow-minded, pharisaical, unpractical, party-spirited, and even un-Christian Society, fettered by finnikin regulations and red tape, and existing only for the honour and glory or for the harmless amusement of upper-class women!,” the Society continued to grow at a brisk rate throughout the early part of the new century.⁷ At its height in 1913 it could boast a roll of 39,926 associates, 197,493 members, and over 81,000 candidates in England and Wales alone.⁸ Believing that “the Empire is woman’s sphere,” the GFS’s colonial (later imperial) committee extended the Society’s reach to all British colonies, and even beyond the empire to the United States, South America, China, and Japan. The Emigration Department, established in 1883 to guide and

⁵Girls were eligible for membership at the age of twelve.

⁶Girls were eligible to become candidates at the age of five.

⁷*Associates’ Journal*, February 1900, p. 27.

⁸Brian Harrison. “For Church, Queen, and Family: The Girls’ Friendly Society 1874-1920.” *Past and Present* 61 (1973): 109. These numbers dropped by the end of the 1920s. In 1929 there were 133,400 members, 30,600 associates, and 53,000 candidates in England and Wales. Archives of the Ottawa Diocese of the Anglican Church [hereafter AODAC], GFS, vol. 460 G, file 10, *The Girls’ Friendly Society Member’s Guide*, 1929.

direct female emigration to the Anglicized white settler colonies, gave further practical expression to the GFS's decidedly imperialistic mandate, as did the Society's increasing engagement in imperial missionary work. By 1918 GFS missionaries, branches, lodges, and hostels bound together "in bonds of prayer and mutual helpfulness over 500,000 women and girls of all ages and of all ranks of society, throughout the civilized world."⁹ As such, the GFS could claim to be the "largest society for women and girls and children in the Empire."¹⁰ Unlike the Victoria League, the Primrose League, and other British-born imperialist associations that admitted men to their membership, the GFS, as Julia Bush explains, "stood squarely on a platform of organization by women for women."¹¹

The Canadian GFS had its official beginning as a national society in 1882, although independent GFS branches were operating in Fredericton and in Toronto before then.¹² It was founded under the distinguished patronage of H.R.H. Princess Louise, and began its work under the presidency of Mrs. Body, wife of the Provost of Trinity College in Toronto.¹³ Through its treaty with the mother society, the GFSC

⁹Campbell. "Girls' Friendly Society," pp. 3-4.

¹⁰*Friendly Work*, October 1903, p. 148.

¹¹Julia Bush. *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* (New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 63.

¹²The GFS claimed to be the "oldest women's society in Canada." "Girls' Friendly Society," in *Yearbook of the National Council of Women of Canada*, 1922, p. 275.

¹³Mrs. Body was succeeded by Mrs. S.G. Wood, who served the Society as Central Council president for twenty-two years. Mrs. Welch, wife of the rector of St. James' Anglican Church, then filled the position for six years, followed by Miss M.A. Boulton for three years and Mrs. Kirvain Martin (daughter of Archbishop Hamilton of Ottawa) after 1917. "G.F.S.—The First G.F.S. in Canada," in *Woman's Century*, June 1916, p. 4.

had the freedom to determine its own programs and activities, but it was obligated to honour the Society's three central rules:

- I. Associates to be communicants of the Church of England (no such restriction being made as to Members), and the organization of the Society to follow as much as possible that of the Church, being Diocesan and Parochial.
- II. Associates (Working and Honorary) and Members to contribute annually to the funds; the former not less than one dollar a year; the latter not less than thirty-six cents a year.
- III. No girl who has not borne a virtuous character to be admitted as a Member; such character being lost, the Member to forfeit her card.¹⁴

The GFSC was organized along the same structural lines as the mother Society, and it carried out its work through several departments: commendation, missions, candidates, lodges, holiday houses, literature, and social service.

Organizing in Canada, however, proved to be a formidable task. Vast traveling distances, regional differences, cold winters, and poor roads and postal service in outlying districts impeded any efforts at expansion and centralization.¹⁵ In contrast with England, where there was a larger population and more rigid class differences, Canada had fewer leisured women to found new branches and to fill leadership roles within the Society. The Society's Anglican basis, hierarchical structure, aristocratic connections, and stiff, class-bound values no doubt restricted its appeal among

¹⁴The first rule was amended to suit the needs of the GFS in the colonies and the United States by including "or any church in communion with the Church of England." This addition opened the doors of the Society to associates from the Scotch Episcopal Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America and the Church of Japan. Campbell, "Girls' Friendly Society." p. 6; and "G.F.S.—The First G.F.S. in Canada." in *Woman's Century*, June 1916, p. 4.

¹⁵GFS periodicals and GFSC reports often spoke of the "enormous difficulties of organizing in a vast new country, ever changing its conditions of life, ever opening itself out to the thronging crowds of all nationalities, which year by year spread over its great plains, or penetrate into the vastness of its mighty mountain solitudes...." *Associates' Journal*, August 1912, p. 153.

potential Canadian participants, as did the stipulation that associates be communicants of the Church of England. While the GFS placed no denominational restrictions on membership, its unfavourable reputation as a society for household workers warded off any otherwise interested office or factory girls who were not inclined to pursue the company of servants.¹⁶ Then there was always the problem of denominational and secular competition:

there are the Roman Catholics increasing rapidly, on one side, and in the great West especially, large numbers of people with no religion at all, entirely engrossed in secular affairs. There are other general societies for young girls in the Church.... Church Guilds and Clubs are doing good parish work, and there is no room for another organization.¹⁷

The most visible of these church guilds and clubs was the broadly established, highly successful, Canadian-based Women's Auxiliary (WA), which provided funds and support for home and foreign mission work. The GFS was hard to sell among those who believed that the two organizations working within the same parish would create inefficient overlap. The GFS insisted, however, that its promotion of a "high ideal of personal spiritual life" was a unique and vital role within the church.¹⁸ GFSC Associate, Miss Nordheimer, explained that since the WA "existed primarily for missionary work, had no definite rules for life and conduct or personal link with its members such as the GFS had," she "did not consider it could ever cover the same

¹⁶The GFS was unsuccessful in its attempts to shed its domestic servant image. In the early 1900s almost half of its membership were servants. Bush, p. 61.

¹⁷AODAC. GFS, vol. 460 G, file 10. E.H.B. Roberts. *A Plain Statement of the Organization and Purpose of the Girls' Friendly Association in America*.

¹⁸NAC, reel A-1189, GFS 1, Minutes and Papers, 92, 1906-1920, Canada, G.F.S. Minute Book, Canada, November 1922.

ground or do the same work as the GFS."¹⁹ In some dioceses the two groups worked side by side, in a dual role, but with shared membership. Founder and long-time president of the GFSC, Mrs. S.G. Wood, was a lifetime member of the WA, for example.²⁰ Almost all of the members of the St. Cuthbert's GFS branch in Winnipeg also belonged to the Girls' Auxiliary, with the Rector's wife being president of both groups.²¹

The GFSC also competed for membership and support with the growing number of reform organizations and social service agencies that worked outside the church. The GFSC accommodated the proliferation of Girl Guides after 1909 by adopting or sponsoring Girl Guides companies. The two organizations shared a similar focus on female moral regulation, although the latter was distinct in its interest in citizenship and woodcraft. The interdenominational and international YWCA also shared the GFS's mandate for the spiritual, moral, and social uplift of working girls even while it lacked the Society's Anglican, imperial emphasis. The YWCA and GFS developed an amicable relationship through shared membership and by agreeing to refrain from establishing lodges in the other's territory. Ultimately, the GFS carved its niche within the work of social service by advertising itself specifically

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Mrs. Wood was also Vice President of the NCWC and Secretary of the Ministering Children's League. *Workers' Journal*, December 1925, p. 228. Minutes for the Ottawa diocese indicate that both the diocesan GFS president, Mrs. Tilton, and the secretary, Miss Wicksteed, were involved in the Women's Auxiliary. AODAC, GFS, vol. 8 G8 1, file 1, Girls' Friendly Society Associates' Minute Book.

²¹These girls also filled the ranks of the choir and the Sunday School teaching staff. AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1928. Toronto branches were also associated with the Girls' Auxiliary.

as the “handmaid of the church.” It was a church-based society designed for the promotion of church interests.²² The GFSC carried out this mandate through the practical work of hosting spiritual and instructional meetings for girl members, providing aid for missionaries abroad, assisting the upbuilding of the church in remote western communities, and supporting British emigration schemes designed to populate the empire with girls of good Christian character.

All of these complications of geography, reputation, and competition meant that the GFSC grew very slowly, reaching a peak of only about 2,000 members in 1918.²³ Most of the GFSC activity took place in the towns and cities around the Great Lakes, with the dioceses of Toronto and Niagara claiming the greatest concentration of branches. In the early part of the century, isolated branches sprang up in Halifax, in the North-West, and on the coast of British Columbia. Upper crust leadership and royal patronage gave the Society a prestigious reputation, but GFSC executives often admitted their disappointment at the Society’s poor showing across the dominion.

Assessing the Society’s influence, however, is complicated by the fact that the number of women who remained within the GFS’s sphere of influence may have been larger than the membership rolls would indicate. GFS girls lost their membership upon marriage. Some stayed on as Married Friendly Helpers, and others moved from

²²Miss Nordheimer pointed out that the undenominational basis for much of the social service work meant that “the Church might recognize GFS efforts as definitely for Church interests.” G.F.S. Minute Book. Canada. November 1922.

²³Campbell. “Girls’ Friendly Society.” p. 5. The Society had gained some momentum after the appointment of Miss Whitley as Extension Secretary in 1910.

the GFS into the Mother's Union, which continued much of the same efforts among married women that the GFS directed at unmarried girls.²⁴ Also the GFS's influence extended beyond their own members and helpers. A branch president in western Canada reported that "through the G.F.S. we have been able to get into touch with sick, needy, and lonely girls, and although they have not become probationers, we have been able to help them in passing."²⁵ Moreover, the moral force of GFS work is not quantifiable. In the words of one GFSC associate, Miss Ridley: "the work that we try to do is intangible in its result as is the work done in the Branches of the Society, and it is impossible to estimate how far reaching and permanent its influence."²⁶

Despite its small numbers, a high level of cross-membership with other women's organizations meant that the Christian, imperialist, and moralist ideals of GFS women infiltrated many areas of the club movement. Mrs. Skinner, for example, GFS president for the diocese of Vancouver, was also a highly active representative of the British Women's Emigration Association (BWEA) and leader in the Vancouver YWCA. The GFS sent delegates to the executive meetings of the National Travelers' Aid and the Girls' Work Council of the General Board of Religious Education and to the annual meetings of the Canadian Girl Guides Association. Its speakers "addressed

²⁴The Canadian branch of the Mother's Union was established in 1888 as a means of promoting the sanctity of marriage and motherhood.

²⁵AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1930, p. 8.

²⁶Ibid. Along the same lines, Mrs. Wood explained that the Society's "progress cannot be measured by numbers and visible results alone, as individual influence and effort can never be exactly calculated, but it is a work which assuredly brings a reflex blessing to the workers, and is a powerful instrument for welding together the various classes and characters which it associates for the carrying out of its rules and objects...." "Annual Report of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada," in *Women Workers of Canada: Annual Report of the National Council of Women of Canada*, 1898, p. 67.

every conceivable organization” on the merits and necessity of its work.²⁷ They complemented these addresses with the dissemination of Society literature in churches, at immigration ports, and at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. Along with other patriotic organizations, including the IODE and the Girl Guides, the Society also had vocal representation on the executive of the National Council of Women of Canada. The GFS’s founder and president, Mrs S.G. Wood, was a NCWC vice-president. These connections placed GFS women within the upper echelons of a broadly defined Canadian women’s movement.

Ultimately, however, the insubstantial scale of the GFS within Canada in terms of hard numbers and its distaste for feminist causes has made the Society an unlikely subject for historians of women. As a small and scattered organization, the GFSC did not generate written material of the volume and quality of larger groups like the WCTU, the IODE, or the National Council of Women. Many diocesan collections have been lost, and the ones that exist are incomplete. Nor did the Canadian Society produce its own periodical literature, which might have yielded insights into the inevitable differences between the GFSC and its much larger English parent organization. Nonetheless, the GFSC must not be left for dead. Its national annual reports provide useful information about the Society’s activities and supply glimmers of GFSC ideology. The modest archival collection for the GFS of the Ottawa diocese gives much-needed accounts of local problems and interests. GFS

²⁷NAC, reel A-1191, GFS in Canada, Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918, Christabel Robinson to Mrs. Hay, Toronto, 29 October 1912.

publications, including Mary Heath-Stubb's *Friendship's Highway*, included histories of Canadian work. Although not always a direct voice for GFSC affairs, the rich periodical literature, correspondence, and imperial reports produced by the GFS in England are a gold mine of information on the purpose, projects, and ideological assumptions of the organization as a whole. They often carried reports of developments in the GFSC (the establishment of Canadian lodges, the growth and decline in membership, the need for churches and women in the west), letters from Canadian associates and members, and verbatim speeches given at meetings of the imperial committee by Canadian GFS representatives and Canadian clergy.

While these sources are useful for their glimpses into the workings of the GFSC, they are particularly invaluable for what they reveal about the kinds of imperialistic ideas to which Canadians were exposed as they went about their business of nation-building in the early twentieth century. As a study of the IODE has indicated, the construction of Canada did not take place strictly within national borders, but was rather a fluid process that was profoundly affected by outside, particularly British, influences. Within the GFSC, imperial connections abounded, connections that were forged primarily through the Society's Anglican origins, structure, and outlook. Unlike the younger evangelical Protestant denominations, the Church of England maintained strong links between Canada and Britain through its status as the established royal church and through its hierarchical relegation of

authority.²⁸ Likewise, the GFS organized its branches along diocesan lines, under the strong administration of a central council in the imperial capital. Many leading GFS ladies were wives of senior clergy, and the Society strengthened church ties through clerical representation on its committees. The Church of England, to which the GFS was so closely allied, was by this time unabashedly imperialistic in its religious outlook. This alliance drew the GFS into colonial mission work, although the expansion and protection of its own membership in the distant parts of Greater Britain remained its primary focus. Julia Bush describes the immense influence of Anglican imperialism on organized patriotic women:

The Pan-Anglican Congress of 1908 was a living embodiment of the worldwide power of the Church, and of Britain's leadership of Christian imperialism. It made a profound impact upon the Girls' Friendly Society and the Mothers' Union, reinforcing the growing emphasis on 'women's work for Empire' within both these large, all-female organizations, and spreading ripple effects into the other ladies' associations. Both the GFS and the Mothers' Union organized their own imperial gatherings alongside the main Congress, and sent many supporters to the sectional meetings on 'the Church's duty to her Colonists.'²⁹

Through the Colonial Committee of the GFS Central Council, formed in 1896 to bring representatives from the colonies and the United States "into direct communication with the parent Society and with each other," Canada was drawn into this sphere of Christian imperialism.³⁰ Ultimately, the Anglicanism of the GFS and by extension the GFSC, with all its connotations of deference and monarchism,

²⁸The Church of England in Canada did not become the Anglican Church of Canada until 1956.

²⁹Bush, p. 78.

³⁰"Report of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada," in *Women Workers of Canada: The Yearbook of the National Council of Women of Canada*. 1898, p. 56. Each diocese where the GFS was working appointed a representative to sit on the Colonial Committee.

aligned the Society's loyalty to a class-divided social hierarchy with an interest in a Christian imperial mission.

Even beyond its Anglican affiliations, the Canadian GFS was inextricably linked to its parent society through shared literature and practice. The Canadian Chain kept Canadian GFS girls in touch with their sisters in English branches, thus "bind[ing] the daughter Nations to the Motherland," through the exchange of correspondence and small gifts.³¹ GFS branches on all continents observed a common day of Intercession each year. GFS annual reports and minute books for the Ottawa diocese provide evidence that Canadian associates and members were exposed with regular frequency to periodicals published by the mother society. In fact GFSC branches adopted English GFS periodicals as their own, which reveals a great deal about the GFSC's vision of itself as part of one large transatlantic society. GFSC records note the sale of GFS Kalendars and member subscriptions to GFS periodicals, including *Friendly Leaves*, *Friendly Work*, and the *GFS Magazine*.³² An Alberta member submitted her subscription fee with the comment:

I am sending my subscription for *Friendly Work* for 1913 and postage, also for 'Bible Reading Card': I am sure I should miss *Friendly Work* quite sorely if I discontinued it. I am always glad to see its bright red cover peeping out of our bundle of mail the third Saturday in each month; this year there has been so much of interest in it about Canada.³³

³¹*Associates' Journal*. August 1910, p. 184.

³²The numbers indicate that the periodicals were reaching a Canadian audience: however, only a minority of members actually bought their own subscription. At the Ottawa GFS annual meeting in April 1897, the chair reported that 9 subscriptions to *Friendly Leaves* and "three dozen & a half" GFS Kalendars were sold among a membership of 40. AODAC, GFS, vol. 8 G8 1, file 1.2, GFS Minutes, 1 April 1897.

³³*Friendly Work*, February 1913, p. 32.

Items from the *Associates' Journal*, reports of colonial news, as well as correspondence from the GFSC's representative in England were a routine part of the agenda at associates' meetings. Members heard readings from *Friendly Work* on a range of topics of concern to their English counterparts: purity, temperance, and missions, to name a few. They attended "most interesting, instructive, and inspiring" GFSC public lectures where lantern slides captured images of life in India, Africa, South America, China, and Japan.³⁴ GFSC missionaries, home on furlough, "roused much enthusiasm" with addresses that gave personal meaning to the Society's Christianizing work overseas.³⁵ Even while they were abroad, GFS missionaries corresponded with Canadian branches, their letters bringing a constant supply of information about the "glorious conversions" of unbelievers in all parts of the empire.

Although GFSC branches, then, were separated geographically from each other and from their English progenitor, they were plugged into a common imperial ideology. As one GFSC associate commented as late as 1927, "though we are a small group in a sparsely populated country, we have, at our backs, the strength of a large influential body, with the interest and support of the parent Society in England always ready to encourage us."³⁶ Secretary for the Ottawa diocese GFS, L. Wicksteed, reminded her constituents in 1916 that "small as our Society is in Ottawa, we must

³⁴AODAC, vol. 8 G8, file 1.3, Girls' Friendly Society Associates' Minute Book, 1907-1918, 26 January 1909.

³⁵See, for example, AODAC, vol. 8 G8, file 1.3, Girls' Friendly Society Associates' Minute Book, 1917-1918.

³⁶AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1927, p. 6.

never forget that we are part of an enormous organization, consisting of over 40,000 Associates, between 2 & 300,000 Members, and acknowledged & recognized by our Bishops all over the world as a valued handmaid of the Church."³⁷ As such, the Girls' Friendly Society challenges the Bergerian notion of Canadian imperialism as an indigenous phenomenon. Despite the GFSC's small numbers, the sharing of literature, rituals, religious services, and manuals for religious teaching, and the continual exchange of visits fostered a sense of being part of one large Britannic family. GFSC president, Edith Marion Welch saw the Canadian Society as "part...of a great family scattered through the earth, held together and sustained by common prayer."³⁸

To be sure, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which GFSC associates and members internalized the spirit and concerns of GFS publications originating from England. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from this study can only be tentative. Even though the mother society claimed that "*Friendly Work* travels far and wide" in the colonies,³⁹ and GFSC records indicate a considerable level of dialogue with the central council in England, it is impossible to measure, with any certainty, the intensity or sincerity of their ideological kinship. There is also evidence that the

³⁷ AODAC, GFS, *Report of G.F.S.—Ottawa*, April 1915-April 1916, p. iv.

³⁸ AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G, file 10, Edith Marion Welch, *The Girls' Friendly Society What it is and What it does*, p. 3. The GFSC's founder and first president, Mrs. Wood, saw the Canadian Society as "a child of the GFS in old England." The parent and daughter societies were, she noted, "engaged in the same work, and begin with the same prayer." *Workers' Journal*, August 1901, p. 191.

³⁹ In 1901 the *Associates' Journal*, the *Girls' Quarterly*, and *Friendly Leaves* had a combined circulation of 79,607. *Girls' Quarterly*, January 1901, p. 102.

GFSC, while embracing larger imperial ideals, also operated with a level of independence and a concern for local issues. Nonetheless, it is clear that imperialist impulses played a part in shaping the programmes of the GFSC and that the Canadian Society supported GFS projects in other colonies. As such, the GFSC cannot be understood in isolation from the larger Society and ideals from which it sprang. It is also important to recognize the part that the English GFS played in Canadian nation-building—through its funding of Anglican churches in the west and its emigration practices—even independent of its connection to the GFSC. Clearly, imperialist impulses *external* to Canada were penetrating the internal work of nation-building.

If one thing is certain, it is that the GFSC shared with its parent Society a profound commitment to Christian principles as the basis of its work. The ambiguous legacy of religion for women's status has been the subject of lengthy debate. Following the recent historiographical emphasis on female agency, this study does not regard religion as a monolithic instrument of oppression. Marta Danylewycz, Martha Vicinus, and others have shown how the church could restrict women's institutional power while at the same time opening up opportunities for spiritual authority and meaningful work.⁴⁰ Likewise, this study recognizes the role of religion, within the parameters of a Victorian ideology of gender, in providing

⁴⁰For example, Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987); Gloria Neufeld Redekop, *The Work of Their Hands: Mennonite Women's Societies in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996); Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); and Ruth Y. Jenkins, *Reclaiming Myths of Power: Women Writers and the Victorian Spiritual Crisis* (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1995).

discursive entrances into public life. It also gives serious regard to the meaning of spirituality as it inspired, moved, and comforted GFS women in their mission as “handmaids of the church.” Even beyond its empowering potential, women’s involvement in religious enterprises such as the GFS deserves evaluation in its own right. Ruth Compton Brouwer and Sharon Cook observe that historians, blinded by their own secularism and disdain for repressive structures of authority, have generally underrated or ignored the significance of spiritual experiences in the lives of English-Canadian women at the turn of the century.⁴¹ If religion appears at all, it is assessed for its utility as a “way-station on the road to feminist consciousness.”⁴² The search for a relevant past threatens to strip historical subjects of the beliefs and passions that gave meaning and sustenance to their lives and work. For GFS women, divine will formed the basis of their understanding of themselves and of the history and future of the world around them.

Excluded from formal channels of authority and influence, Society women took on a religious identity that fused notions of sexual difference with a belief in moral character as the foundation of national and imperial growth. They claimed superior spiritual capacities, in a sense a more direct line of communication with God, by virtue of their emotional vulnerability. Gloria Redekop argues that

⁴¹Ruth Compton Brouwer, “Transcending the ‘unacknowledged quarantine’: Putting Religion into English-Canadian Women’s History,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27, 3 (Fall 1992): 47-61; Sharon Cook, “Through Sunshine and Shadow”: *The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995) and “Do not...do anything that you cannot unblushingly tell your mother’”: Gender and Social Purity in Canada,” *Histoire Social / Social History* 30, 60 (1997): 215-38.

⁴²Brouwer, p. 48.

Mennonite women's organizations operated as a "parallel church," as a "context where women could speak, pray, and creatively give expression to their understanding of the biblical message" alongside the male-dominated structures of the institutional church.⁴³ In the face of a male-centred Christian canon, GFS writers participated similarly in constructing their religion as one that held central roles of influence for women. While man could lay claim to ancestral prophets and apostles, woman, they believed, occupied a special place in the Christian narrative. "At the First Christmas," they wrote, "it was in a Woman's Arms that God Incarnate was presented to the Universe, as the World's Redeemer."⁴⁴ It was a woman who bore witness to the secret of the Incarnation and to the rising of Christ from the dead. In the face of persecution at the hands of male non-believers, Jesus sought refuge in the houses of Martha and Mary. They prepared his final resting place and wept for Him while men "mocked at his agony." These acts of honour, nurture, and compassion foreshadowed the sacred moral place women were to hold in the eternal spiritual kingdom.⁴⁵ Although God and Christ were male in form, women could identify the female in the Divinity through their understanding of "Jesus as mother," a concept which dated back to Julian of Norwich and other 14th century theologians.⁴⁶ Like the mother-heart

⁴³Redekop, *The Work of Their Hands*, p. 51 and overleaf.

⁴⁴NAC, reel A-1191, GFS Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918, Canada. "The Vision of the Incarnation and the Resurrection."

⁴⁵"O Blessed Jesus. Who by Thy Holy Incarnation didst consecrate womanhood to Thy glory...." was part of a GFS prayer. AODAC, GFS, *Office of the Girls' Friendly Society*, p. 8.

⁴⁶Lisa Gaudet, "Julian of Norwich," in *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Nadia Margolis (New York: Garland Publishing, forthcoming).

of Jesus, woman's "nature is more gentle, and her heart more impressionable; her mind is more open to holy influences, and her feelings are more easily moved."⁴⁷ This nature suited women for their role as moral guardians of the home and family and for work within the wider sphere of teaching, nursing, and missions among the sick, the poor, and the unenlightened.

Circumscribed though it was, this moral function brought power to those who were blessed with the trappings of ideal womanhood. White middle-class women could claim authority as exemplars of the kind of moral character that would fuel the engines of Christianity and civilization. The belief that technology, war, and colonial conquest were melding the world into a unitary organism meant that the greatest challenge of the twentieth century, so it seemed, was to ensure the victory of (western) forces of civilization and Christianity over (eastern) barbaric heathenism and fleshly impulses. One Friendly Worker concluded: "Let us go on with our work, then, in Africa, China, India, and Japan, and share with them the Christianity that alone ennobles a nation, knowing that it is part of God's purpose to bring to the light of the Heavenly City 'the nations of them that are saved'.... God is welding the nation into one."⁴⁸ Good Christian women could claim a role in this process. Their argument was simple: spiritual development would be the foundation of national growth; women were, by nature, more spiritual than men; therefore, the work of women would determine the nation's future. The GFS emphasized repeatedly the

⁴⁷*Friendly Work*, June 1904, p. 87.

⁴⁸*Friendly Work*, May 1915, pp. 71-73.

connection between national development and the upbuilding of the church. GFS president, Mrs Chaloner Chute spoke of the Society's evangelizing work as their "National Mission." "The national life can only be consecrated," she insisted, "by the conversion and consecration of individuals."⁴⁹

GFS mission work was legitimized by a firm belief that the evangelization of the world was commissioned by God as part of His plan for the creation of the divine kingdom on earth.⁵⁰ Expansion of empire was inextricable from the spread of the gospel: "the greatness of our Empire depends, as does the life of our King, upon God's will."⁵¹ Queen Victoria expressed this prevalent belief in the inseparability of imperialism and Christianity when she noted that it was inconceivable to have "an empire without religion."⁵² By insisting on the divine ordination of England as a civilizing agent and on women's capacities for evangelism, GFS women set themselves up as legitimate participants in the imperial project. Imperialism and evangelization were understood to be concurrent processes. "Why do we urge Imperialism?" GFS emigrationist, Ellen Joyce, asked. "Not from selfish views, not from mere pride of race, but deep down in our hearts we believe that God has set us to be not only pioneers, or civilisers, but evangelists... The gift of the genius of colonisation, which is so essentially English, must not be stifled; it is God given for

⁴⁹*Friendly Work*, August 1916, p. 115.

⁵⁰*Girls' Quarterly*, October 1900, p. 93.

⁵¹*Friendly Work*, August 1902, p. 114.

⁵²Quoted in Thomas Dickens, "Winnipeg, Imperialism and the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Celebration, 1897" (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1982), p. 218.

evangelisation....”⁵³ As Marilyn Barber has pointed out in her study of British female emigrationists, religion and patriotism were mutually reinforcing.⁵⁴

The Society’s belief in the spiritual foundation of national life—“no Empire can stand unless it puts God first in all its dealings”⁵⁵—gave women a central role in nation-building through what they regarded as the mainspring of all power and change—prayer and divine energy. The magnitude of prayer’s mobilizing potential and its function in creating a *feeling* of agency must not be underestimated. In 1916, when women could have stood helpless on the sidelines of war, *Friendly Work* reminded them of their place at the *centre* of the world stage by virtue of their spiritual function: “The highest and best way of helping is prayer.... The chief work of all women is to pray...as the spiritual sense is more highly developed in an average woman than in an average man, she is, as it were, specially equipped to do her part in calling up those Great Reserves on which the issue of the War must rest.”⁵⁶

GFS women were also drawn into the work of empire by their conviction that Christianity was responsible for the true emancipation of women. More than just a system of belief, Christianity was an organizing social code, which supposedly sanctified womanly virtues and fostered chivalrous relations between the sexes.

⁵³*Associates’ Journal*, August 1912, p. 165.

⁵⁴Marilyn Barber, “‘The Empire is Woman’s Sphere’: British Female Immigration to Canada 1884-1914.” paper presented at the Canadian Studies Conference, Imperial Canada, 1867-1917, Edinburgh, May 1995.

⁵⁵*Friendly Work*, June 1916, p. 106.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

Friendly Work insisted that it alone accounted for the “fundamental difference that exists between you and your sisters in pagan lands,” for the “wide contrast between their pollution and your purity, between their degradation and your refinement, between their ignorance and your culture, between their superstition and your faith, between their servitude and your freedom.”⁵⁷ In their understanding, Christianity had rescued western women from the indignities of “heathen” superstitions and rituals like “sati” in India and foot-binding in China. But for the blessings of Christianity, woman was “little better off than an animal.”⁵⁸ Bishop Boutflower, who supervised three GFS workers in Tokyo, reported on the urgency of their work in a country where “men always entered a room before women” and where women were expected to be completely obedient to their husbands. “There is no chivalry in Japan,” he preached. “This is not a matter of civilization—the Japanese have an advanced and very ancient civilization—but of Christianity. Only the knowledge of the Incarnate Son of God will give woman her rightful place.... The very weakness of the Japanese woman is an appeal to us. ‘We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.’”⁵⁹

⁵⁷*Friendly Work* . June 1904. p. 86.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹*Friendly Work*. August 1916. p. 126. The sense of responsibility for the plight of non-Western women has been the subject of numerous studies. See, for example, Barbara Ramusack, “Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies: British Women Activists in India 1865-1945.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 13. 4 (1990): 309-321. On the significance of the status of non-Western women for British feminist self-identity see Antoinette Burton, “The White Woman’s Burden: British Feminists and ‘The Indian Woman’ 1865-1915.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 13. 4 (1990): 245-308 and *The Burdens of History. British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

Within this discourse, the GFS helped to construct a feminised Christian imperialism, which manufactured a need for women in colonial space. The GFS saw the seclusion of high caste women in India, for example, as creating a need for female missionaries who, unlike their male counterparts, could be allowed access to the inner sanctum of the Indian household. Their missionary reports constructed the Indian woman as “degraded and ignorant,” suffering at the mercy of superstition, patriarchy, and bigotry.⁶⁰ The repeated expression of sympathy for their “weaker sisters,” undoubtedly genuine, justified GFS branch and mission work in non-white colonies:

Are they to have no help to raise them from the low position they fill amongst humanity? Oh, yes, there is a great deal to teach them, and it requires cultivated Englishwomen of ability to devote laborious years to the task. They must be taught first and last and foremost throughout to lead a good life, and this can only be done by Religion. English girls, with their quiet homes and careful mothers can have no notion of the sort of atmosphere in which these poor girls grow up. Ideas of purity and chastity are new to them, and very, very difficult to teach in a country where polygamy is the custom, and the marriage tie is a loose one. There is much for these girls to unlearn, for even the youngest can hardly be called innocent, and they require constant help and guidance if they are to keep the most elementary rules of a Christian life.⁶¹

Christian belief combined with imperial theory, then, to create a special and influential moral role for elite white women in the civilizing mission.⁶² Cynthia Enloe writes: “Ladylike behavior was a mainstay of imperialist civilization. Like sanitation and Christianity, feminine respectability was meant to convince both the colonizing

⁶⁰*Girls' Quarterly*, July 1900, p. 70.

⁶¹*Friendly Work*, July 1902, p. 103.

⁶²This role has been explored elsewhere. See Marilyn Lake, “Colonised and Colonising: the white Australian feminist subject,” *Women's History Review* 2, 3 (1993): 377-86 and Joanna Little and Shirin Rai, “Feminism, Imperialism and Orientalism: the challenge of the ‘Indian woman.’” *Women's History Review* 7, 4 (1998): 495-519.

and the colonized peoples that foreign conquest was right and necessary.”⁶³ Powerful though it was for GFS women, this role was forged *in opposition to* the women of lower classes and “lower races” to whom they preached their message. It contributed to the cultural differentiation that helped to consolidate the economic and cultural hegemony of the new Anglo-Saxon middle class.⁶⁴ Protestant, middle-class domesticity became a signifier of the greatness of the British nation.

While evangelizing and imperial activities were mostly the enterprise of the English Society, they were also supported by the Canadian GFS, whose own missionaries could be found in countries overseas as well as in the aboriginal and railway settlements of the Canadian prairies. Observations that “Canadian hearts seem tuned to the cry of foreign missions,” and that the “Canadian GFS has always set us a stimulating example by its work for Foreign Missions” were supported with evidence of practical mission activities, especially during Lent, in all GFSC branches. Bake sales, teas, pageants, plays, and bazaars raised money for the Cawnpore hospital, for the China Church Mission and the Labrador mission, and for the salary of GFS missionaries and “Eskimo” catechists. One Canadian chapter reported donating a bell and organ to a Native reserve, others sent hospital supplies to the Columbia Coast Mission Hospitals, and parcels of dolls and clothing for overseas

⁶³Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 48.

⁶⁴Alison Twells, “‘So Distant and Wild a Scene’: language, domesticity and difference in Hannah Kilham’s writing from West Africa, 1822-1832,” *Women’s History Review* 4, 3 (1995): 302-3.

bales.⁶⁵ Even as late as 1927 reports of GFSC financial expenditures showed that a considerable portion of the yearly budget—meagre though it was—went to missions: \$1,771.82 for parish purposes; \$1,108.97 for Missions; \$185 for welcome and welfare work, \$744.83 for social service; \$152.05 for other objects.⁶⁶

Missionary zeal among Canadian members was sustained through heroic tales of English and Canadian GFS workers who braved the company of “hostile or half-converted natives” to bring God’s word to the darkest parts of the empire.⁶⁷ They were following in the footsteps of evangelist pioneers—David Livingstone, Harriette MacDougall, and Frank Weston—who “heal[ed] the open sores of Africa”⁶⁸ and “carr[ied] the flag of the Empire to the ends of the earth as the fruitful mother of colonization and commerce.”⁶⁹ In the Canadian North-West, William Carpenter Bompas had faced the “stern dangers and bleak privations” of the “ice-blocked and snowbound...outer limit of Canadian frontier border of civilization” to save the souls of “Eskimos” and “Indians” from “heathen darkness.”⁷⁰

For the majority of GFSC women, who never observed the colonial frontier firsthand, racial assumptions were based solely on photographs and tales brought

⁶⁵AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1925, p. 15.

⁶⁶AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1927, p. 31.

⁶⁷*Girls' Quarterly*, January 1900.

⁶⁸*Workers' Journal*, June 1928, p. 90.

⁶⁹*Workers' Journal*, August 1928, p. 118.

⁷⁰*Workers' Journal*, October 1928, p. 168. See also Kerry Abel, “Bishop Bompas and the Canadian Church,” in *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970*, ed. Barry Ferguson (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1991), pp. 113-125.

back home from GFS travelers and missionaries on furlough. For example, Miss Townend's lecture on "Mission Work in India," presented for audiences of GFS members and candidates in several Canadian branches in 1909, "was illustrated by a most beautiful series of lantern views, Indian scenery being vividly brought before the audience, and also the Mission work carried on in different stations, which Miss Townend had personally visited."⁷¹ Slides of "Hindoos (sic) in their sacred river, struggling to wash away their sins in the waters of the Ganges;" and of "thickly-shrouded figures of Moslem women, veiled in ignorance and cramped in captivity" gave meaning to distant missionary work and served as foils against which GFSC women could assert their own power.⁷²

GFS lantern lectures and missionary reports created knowledge about the empire's non-white colonies along the lines of Edward Said's observations on Orientalism. "India", "Africa", and their colonial inhabitants, "while appearing to exist objectively,...[had] only a fictional reality."⁷³ Said writes: "To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for 'us' to deny autonomy to 'it'...since we know it and...[the colonized

⁷¹*Friendly Work*, March 1909, p. 48. Talks presented to GFSC branches each year always included several lectures on imperial missions, even as late as 1928: Cheerfulness, Health, Psychology, V.O.N, Social Welfare, Women's Court, League of Nations, Africa and her Peoples, India and her Peoples, Missions, Anglican National Commission, New Zealand, Fiji Islands, The Work of the Sisters of St. John the Divine, A Few Lenten Thoughts, Prophets and Prophecy, The Fulfilment of the Prophecies, AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1928, p. 10. GFSC reports also indicate the regular borrowing of lantern slides from the parent society.

⁷²*Friendly Work*, February 1916, p. 21.

⁷³Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 40, 54. See also Kelvin A. Santiago-Valles, "'Higher Womanhood' Among the 'Lower Races': Julia McNair Henry in Puerto Rico and the 'Burdens' of 1898," *Radical History Review* 73 (1999): 53.

country] exists, in a sense, as we know it.”⁷⁴ A GFS mission report from the diocese of Newfoundland, which extended to the Arctic Circle to include “several tribes of heathen Eskimo,” spotlighted the “terrifying” and “ludicrous” incantations of aboriginal medicine men. Its representation of these northern subjects as “unenlightened” and “hitherto neglected” people in need of the “light of the glorious Gospel” exemplified the Anglican Church’s lack of regard for the inherent integrity of host cultures.⁷⁵ The word “neglected” betrayed the assumption, explained by Said, that non-white, non-Christian societies existed only in relation to their Anglo-Protestant keepers.

Indeed, non-white colonies, for the GFSC, existed only as they were understood through such racialized imperial discourses. Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri have explained that as “Europe’s ‘scientific’ racism was transmogrifying into commodity racism,” non-white colonies became curiosities laid bare for the gaze of Western onlookers.⁷⁶ Agnes Leigh, an English GFS associate who visited the United States, the West Indies, and Panama in 1916, reported in *Friendly Work*:

While at Panama we drove out to the real jungle: primitive forest untouched by man.... We saw Red Indians and their thatched huts, but, alas! the Indians were not clad in blankets, nor did they carry tomahawks. They lived too near to civilization. But we saw enough in the jungle of wild and beautiful vegetation in the forest to move an American gentleman, who was one of our

⁷⁴Said, *Orientalism*, p. 32.

⁷⁵*Girls' Quarterly*, April 1901, p. 137.

⁷⁶Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri, eds. *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), p. 13.

party, to say: "This is the tropics served out to us on a platter."⁷⁷

The dichotomies of light and darkness, whiteness and blackness, good and evil, civilized and barbaric, which organized these discourses, were used repeatedly in GFS writings and speeches. They served to place GFS women at the centre of the empire and at the top of a social hierarchy based on qualities of modesty, industry, and sexual self-control. For the GFS, their work represented the light of Christ in a darkening world of unbelief; they provided the oil of grace to keep the lanterns burning in the hands of every girl.⁷⁸ Their light was a symbol of Truth and Knowledge, and they were divinely ordained, they believed, to shine that light on those living in the shadows of sin. Their emblem, the pristine white lily, symbolized purity of thought, word, and deed.⁷⁹ Blackness, on the other hand, represented selfishness, conceit, indolence, untruth, irreverence, love of pleasure, and disobedience. Frequent warnings about attempts in South America "to decoy girls from proper living" conjured images of a dark underworld of moral filth and sexual vice.⁸⁰ An article in *Friendly Work* admonished GFS members to beware of these sins: "Abhor evil.... Call it black.... If we are to be numbered amongst the white-robed

⁷⁷*Friendly Work*, November 1916, p. 168.

⁷⁸Reference to the lantern metaphor can be found in the *Supplement to the Associates' Journal*, June 1914, p. 14.

⁷⁹Whiteness was a pervasive metaphor for purity in GFS prayers and purity propaganda. For example, "O cleanse me. Lord. I pray Thee That so my heart may grow As pure as is the lily, and whiter than the snow" was one of the entries in AODAC, GFS, *My Little Pocket Book of Prayers & Hymns* (London, 1899), p. 18. One of the prayers in the *GFS Manual of Intercession*, 1901, p. 10, included the line "bless all children for His sake.... Preserve them in whiteness of innocence." AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G, file 8.

⁸⁰See, for example, *Associates' Journal*, January 1914, p. 173.

hosts who are before the throne of God, we must fight sin.... Wash me and I shall be Whiter than Snow."⁸¹

Within these discourses, women's bodies were often the signifiers of cultural difference. The diocese of Newfoundland mission report, cited earlier, described a woman named Naluk as "rudely tattooed about the face," her love of "glistening trinkets" and tobacco and her sealskin garments establishing her as a peculiar deviation against the norm of "true womanhood."⁸² "Woman" was indeed contested terrain. From the perspective of the GFS, aboriginal women would never completely achieve the gender status of their civilized benefactors. In essence they were differently gendered.⁸³ These assumptions are vividly illustrated in the words of

Agnes Leigh:

The black women love finery, and spend much of their money on dress. The more brilliantly coloured their clothes are, the better they are pleased. As I write to call to mind the vision of the coal-black maiden behind whom I sat on a tram-car. She was adorned in a blouse of flaming pink, while the skirt was of a crude blue, a wonderful hat of enormous height was luxuriously trimmed, large beads surrounded a bare neck, and long earrings dropped from the ears. If I remember rightly the beads were of silver and the earrings of coral. The negroes, as a race, are very religious.... [But] there is a great deal of superstition among them, more I believe, than they will willingly own to in conversation with those whom they might suspect of a disposition to laugh at them.... Though the negro can work well when he pleases, he is not always to be depended upon, and will stay away from work if it suits his convenience,

⁸¹*Friendly Work*, March 1915, p. 35.

⁸²*Girls' Quarterly*, April 1901, p. 137.

⁸³There is a body of literature that expounds this idea of women occupying more than one gender. See, for example, Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Elizabeth V. Spellman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988).

without consulting that of his employer.⁸⁴

By highlighting decadence, colourful finery, superstition, laziness, and disrespect for employers as characteristics of blackness, this passage is stark in its contrast to the qualities repeatedly associated with whiteness. For the GFS, frugality, modesty, and practicality of dress were marks of true womanhood, and industriousness a sign of civilization.⁸⁵ In identifying and characterizing others, GFS women were defining themselves. Pure white was what GFS women were, what Black women were not, what working-class girls might become. Whiteness, for the women of the GFS, meant more than just skin colour. Whiteness signified order, civilization, Christianity, domesticity, and benevolence, attributes that were attainable to some degree by all peoples of the empire. "Negroes from the *English colonies*," Agnes Leigh was proud to write, "are better behaved and more amenable than those from the United States."⁸⁶ Clearly, the fluidity of their concept of "race" allowed Black imperial subjects to take on an element of whiteness despite the colour of their skin, and in turn provided justification for GFS missionary work.⁸⁷ For if "race" had been strictly a biological

⁸⁴*Friendly Work*, November 1916, p. 168.

⁸⁵*The Associates' Journal* published a letter by Anna L. Burrows on the question of appropriate dress. She wrote: "It is distressing that our very low evening dresses should shock our Indian fellow-subjects, especially the women. and this shows that our conventional ideas need revision. lest unwittingly, we may be a stumbling block in the great advance movements of the Missionary Church! If we believe that these mortal bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, it is our duty to be neither outrageous nor vulgar. remembering that our dress is an index of our character...." March 1915, p. 44.

⁸⁶*Friendly Work*, November 1916, p. 170.

⁸⁷The malleability of their conception of race is illustrated again in the following excerpt from a report by Mrs. Palmer on GFS work among Anglo-Indian girls in Bombay: "It is most pathetic to see how the Eurasians hold on to their white blood. Their white ancestry may have been generations ago, but if they have not again married with Indians they regard themselves as Europeans. Some are as fair as

designation then the washing and scouring of souls which so preoccupied GFS workers in the colonies would have been a useless undertaking.

While racial and ethnic assumptions placed GFS (and by extension GFSC) women at the pinnacle of civilization among colonial peoples, class was also a central component in the formation of their personal and public identity. At the centre of the GFS organization was the custodial relationship between the middle-class (often upper-class) associate and the working-class girl. By and large the wives of Anglican priests, bishops, and archbishops, GFS/C associates did not face the same economic pressures as their working-class "sisters."⁸⁸ Indeed, their social identity was formed in part by the poorly-paid labour of domestic servants.⁸⁹ Class privilege was evident in the lavish teas, "at homes," and garden parties hosted by associates, clergy, and well-to-do supporters. The *Canadian Churchman's* description of a GFSC garden party, held annually at the "beautiful home" of Colonel and Mrs. Foster, Erlescourt, illustrates the atmosphere of upper-class gentility that permeated GFS social gatherings, even in Canada where class boundaries were less clearly defined:

In spite of the doubtful appearance of the weather, a large number of Members of 'the Mothers' Union,' as well as Members and friends of the Girls' Friendly Society, assembled on the beautiful lawn, under the spreading trees, and happy parties and groups of girls were soon to be seen wandering through the fields, or examining the many curiosities and lovely flowers in the drawing-rooms. Tea in the meadow, large tables well laden, proclaimed the tea hour, after

I am, others are as black as my frock, but, all the same, they regard themselves as Europeans...." *Associates' Journal and Advertiser Supplement*, June 1915, p. 18.

⁸⁸GFS/C refers to both the English and Canadian branches of the organization.

⁸⁹For the role of domestic service in shaping class relations see Magda Fahrni, "'Ruffled' Mistresses and 'Discontented' Maids: Respectability and the Case of Domestic Service, 1880-1914." *Labour/Le Travail* 39 (Spring 1997): 69-97.

which a few loving words were spoken by their President, words which, perchance, found echo in many a heart, and helped to cement the chain which serves to bind the daughters of Greater Britain, to their sisters and fellow-workers in the dear Home Land, the kindly hand of fellowship being felt, and the springs of service and love opened afresh, as all remembered that another page was turned in the loved Society's history.⁹⁰

While the GFS/C professed a desire, in its motto, to "bear one another's burdens," class biases shaped the Society's response to social matters. Rather than addressing the larger issues of poverty and capitalist inequities, the GFS/C women emphasized the God-given power to resist temptation and to follow a pure and rewarding life. Immorality was, in their opinion, the root of all social ills, and therefore the solution could be addressed on an individual basis rather than through collective legislation or state intervention. Ill-attuned to the complexities of poverty, GFS women worked on the assumption that personal motivation, self-control, and religious influence could bring a modicum of decency to the most "worthless ne-er-do-weels (sic)."⁹¹ *Friendly Work* often warned of the "prevalent evils" which would surely lead to national degeneration if left unchecked: drinking, smoking by children, gambling, overcrowding, lack of physical fitness, and even the drinking of overstewed tea.⁹² Ignorance, intemperance, and self-indulgence were in large part blamed for the problems that were created by the capitalist system that supported their middle-class way of life. *Friendly Work* detected a "growth in the readiness of the poor to be pauperised." Workhouse inmates were described as "drunken bullies," "loose

⁹⁰Quoted in *Friendly Work*. October 1903, p. 159.

⁹¹*Friendly Work*. April 1903, p. 63.

⁹²*Friendly Work*. October 1904, p. 57.

women,” “loathly to every sense!”⁹³ At a monthly meeting of the GFS in Ottawa in 1897, an associate read a paper on working women from the employers’ point of view. She concluded that “poor work does not merit good pay” and that workers had a duty to be content with their “lot in life.”⁹⁴ Ultimately, “to be ashamed of our position in life; to think that the work assigned to us not worth doing well, is to dishonour God.”⁹⁵ Influencing wrong-doers to do right, they believed, would prevent much of the suffering, sin, and disease that demanded more penal and aid institutions. GFS women saw their Society as a “great humanising agency,” which, through friendship and sympathy, would play an important role in breaking down social barriers.⁹⁶ In reality this was an effort to soften the antagonism of the working class and to raise the masses to a level of morality deemed to be acceptable by the middle class. The Society’s emphasis on morality and personal character had the ambiguous effect of creating a public role for GFS women in the work of social purity and diverting attention from the structural issues that perpetuated class difference. As Mariana Valverde has observed for social purity and philanthropy as a whole, the GFS “sought to establish a non-antagonistic capitalist class structure, not to erase

⁹³*Friendly Work*. May 1905, p. 70.

⁹⁴AODAC. GFS, vol. 8 G8 1, file 1.2. Annual Minute Book 1894-1908. 4 March 1897.

⁹⁵AODAC. GFS, vol. 8 G8 1, file 1. Paper read before the annual meeting 1890, Ottawa. 24 April 1890, p. 5.

⁹⁶*Workers’ Journal*. September 1920, p. 165.

class differences.”⁹⁷

While maternal imperialists, like GFS women, hailed Anglo-Saxons as the bearers of freedom and democracy, paradoxically, they were also deeply distrustful of democratic principles. Peace, order, and progress would be better served, they believed, if society operated as an organic entity rather than as a collectivity of competing individuals.⁹⁸ This did not mean that they were socialists. Like the Daughters of the Empire, the imperialist women of the GFS feared socialism as an affront to the liberal values of private ownership and individual initiative and the conservative values of duty and service. Their social conservatism and class biases led them to warn of the dangers of unchecked individualism. Harnessing the individual will to a middle-class ethic of work and behaviour was required for collective efficiency and order. For the GFS, this was to be achieved through moral persuasion rather than through state intervention.⁹⁹ As one GFS associate insisted, “Legislative machinery is not provedly the main instrument of national well-being”¹⁰⁰ Instead, elite club leadership would take on this role. In this way, the GFS’s vision of the organic unity of society did not preclude the continuation of social hierarchy.

Like the IODE, the GFS saw the family as the foundation of this organic

⁹⁷Mariana Valverde. *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991).

⁹⁸Carol Bacchi. *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 47.

⁹⁹GFS women did, however, see themselves as allies of the state. They believed in the necessity of state-run education, for example, as a social control measure.

¹⁰⁰*Friendly Work*, December 1909, p. 183.

society. In keeping with the late-Victorian conservative ethos, the GFS upheld the family as the essential unit for nation-building and mothers as the moral keepers of the home.¹⁰¹ A GFS associate explained: “The nation grows out of the family, and the family is very largely...moulded...by the influences of her who is placed at its head.”¹⁰² The GFS embraced the middle-class family as a bulwark against radicalism and socialism and as an instrument of social discipline. It was also revered for its function as the nursery of the Anglo-Saxon race. GFS women took to heart Lord Milner’s claim that “the greatest of all the resources of any country is admittedly the character of its citizens.” This placed women in a superior position. If character was the foundation for national greatness, and women—through their ‘natural’ propensity for nurturing, morality, and religiosity—determined the character of the nation’s citizens, then the future of the nation depended, fundamentally, on the work of women. This conception of the family, with the mother as its moral head, reinforced traditional notions of women’s place, but it also elevated the political significance of the private sphere and allowed women to combine domesticity with a role of national significance. At a time when woman’s “proper place” was being debated in popular circles, mothering gave GFS ladies an acceptable rationale for their public work.

The GFS’s conceptualization of woman as a moral, selfless being, however, created a moral double standard by which women were obligated to live a life of

¹⁰¹Anna Davin discusses the connection between motherhood and nationalism in her important article, “Imperialism and Motherhood.” *History Workshop* 5 (1978): 9-64.

¹⁰²*Associates’ Journal*, January 1914, p. 3.

untarnished virtue but were also responsible for saving men from their own uncontrollable impulses. Men passively yielded to the temptations of the modern world—gambling, alcohol, and sex. Women were often blamed for their downfall. Indeed, in the words of one GFS worker, “the moral tone of Society is an exact reflection of the moral tone of the Women who rule it.”¹⁰³ Also, in return for the elevated status and freedoms conferred upon them by Christian gender mores, women were, paradoxically, called to surrender themselves completely to the will of Christ. Their debt to Christianity could be repaid through a life of service and selflessness. This surrendering of the self as the ultimate act of Christian virtue combined with the belief that Christian women enjoyed unparalleled social latitude to dampen any thoughts about the possibility of equal rights.¹⁰⁴ The emancipation of women (in the feminist sense), of course, was not on the GFS’s agenda. Apart from England’s Lady Knightley of Fawsley, few GFS women supported votes for women, and their only comment on women’s rights came in the form of a poem printed in *Friendly Leaves* in February 1908:

The Rights of woman, what are they?
 The Right to labour, love, and pray;
 The Right to weep with those that weep,
 The Right to wake when others sleep.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³*Friendly Work*, June 1904, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴This dynamic is explored by Jane Haggis in “A heart that has felt the love of God and longs for others to know it: conventions of gender, tensions of self and constructions of difference in offering to be a lady missionary,” *Women’s History Review* 7, 2 (1998): 171-92.

¹⁰⁵Quoted in Harrison, “For Church, Queen, and Family,” p. 109. Mary Heath-Stubbs tells of an English Bishop who spoke of the “fresh opportunities which were being offered in the Church for women’s work.” He insisted that “the best claim they had to ‘women’s right’ was the right to give service to God and their fellows.” *Friendship’s Highway*, p. 115.

The GFS's conceptualization of the empire as an ongoing project requiring moral and spiritual renewal created important work for women in the larger processes of civilization and progress. GFS women constructed for themselves a public identity based on race and class difference and on an ideal of Christian womanhood. It was within this matrix that the Society approached its nation-building work in Canada. Although the Girls' Friendly Society of Canada was limited in scope and membership, its familial bond with the parent society drew GFSC women into the imperial mission. This connection illustrates the inflow of ideas from Britain and the porous nature of national identity formation.

Chapter Five

“Working ‘for Church and Empire’ in the great Dominion of Canada”:¹ Gender, Purity, and Empire-building in the Girls’ Friendly Society, 1882-1930

GFS missionary work among the non-white peoples of the colonies revealed the operations of race, class, and gender in the Society’s Christian imperial vision. It also drew Canadian GFS women into the sphere of empire both practically and imaginatively as they supported missionaries abroad and eagerly read reports of their work. Missionary activity, however, was not the GFS’s central focus. The GFS was first and foremost a Society dedicated to church affairs at home and in the white settler colonies as well as the guidance and protection of its own girl membership. “I have always conceived of the GFS work as of the nature of a Mission,” wrote Mrs. Townsend in 1897, “the Mission of Women to Women.” She went on to advise that GFS work in “distant lands” should concentrate on “helping to sustain the work of the Church and *the work of the GFS as church work.*”² For the English GFS, the establishment of branches overseas, guided female emigration, the moral protection of girls, and the expansion of the Anglican Church went hand in hand. Through such practical activities, which fell acceptably within the female purview, GFS women established themselves as indispensable contributors to the consolidation of both church and empire.

¹*Girls’ Friendly Society Associates’ Journal and Advertiser Supplement*, June 1915, p. 18.

²Mary Heath-Stubbs, *Friendship’s Highway: Being the History of the Girls’ Friendly Society, 1875-1925* (London: GFS Central Office, 1926), p. 82.

As Britain's largest white settler colony, Canada was the object of considerable GFS interest in the early years of the twentieth century. By this time, the GFS in England had taken an imperial turn under the leadership of the Honourable Mrs. Ellen Joyce and Lady Louisa Knightly, who based their GFS work on a strict policy of "Empire first."³ This policy was no doubt inspired in part by the South African War of 1899-1902, which drew attention to the need to reinforce the British presence in the empire's outer reaches. For GFS women in both England and Canada, the imperial frontier included not only the far-flung colonies of the "dark" continents, but also the newly acquired lands of the Canadian west. Purchased by the Canadian government from the Hudson Bay Company in 1869, the Canadian west was indeed a site of ongoing colonial contest. By the late Victorian period, the Métis had been suppressed and dispersed and the aboriginal reserve population was conveniently hidden from view to make way for preferred British settlement.⁴

For the GFS, Canada represented an important component in the moral

³Ellen Joyce was a widowed clergyman's wife, who for many years was the GFS's foremost imperial propagandist. She was also president of the British Women's Emigration Association, established in 1884 as an outgrowth of the GFS's emigration work. Unlike Joyce, who was anti-feminist in her outlook, Louisa Knightley was a strong supporter of woman suffrage. Apart from her involvement in the upper ranks of the GFS, Knightley was also president of the South African Colonisation Society (1901) and the founding editor of the *Imperial Colonist*. Membership in the Primrose League and the Victoria League rounded out her formal imperialist affiliations. Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* (New York: Leicester University Press, 2000).

⁴Sarah Carter's definition of colonialism as it applies to the Canadian prairie west is applicable here. She writes: "While the Prairie West does not readily conjure up the powerful images of 'Empire'—spacious mansions, palm trees, houseboys, and ayahs—nevertheless, the fundamental features of colonialism were clearly present in the extension of the power of the Canadian state and in the maintenance of sharp social, economic, and spatial distinctions between the dominant and subordinate population. Colonial rule involved the domination, or attempted domination, of one group over another. There was a racial dimension and a dimension of inequality, since the colonies were run by whites for the prestige, power, and profit of whites. *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), pp. 19-20.

consolidation of the British empire, a promising opportunity for the fulfilment of God's kingdom on earth. Canadians, with their reputation for honor, modesty, and good sense, were celebrated as "the natural product of making Empire in a brilliant and bracing climate."⁵ Like other contemporary observers, the GFS/C saw the years spanning the turn of the twentieth century as a crucial time in the nation's history. Industrial development, railway construction, a wheat boom, and large-scale immigration promised growth and prosperity in the new century. Canada's population soared. The years between 1881 and 1901 saw a modest increase of 24 percent, but then the population nearly doubled between 1901 and 1921, from 5,371,315 to 10,376,786.⁶ John Hobson spoke for many when he prophesied: "Now Canada (no longer the United States) is 'God's country, sir!' Now the twentieth century belongs to her. Now her population and her prosperity will swell until she becomes the corner-stone of the temple of the British Empire."⁷ Despite the best hopes for Canada's imperial future, the GFS did not dare leave empire-building in Britain's senior dominion to accident. The GFS pamphlet, *Every-Day Climbing or Why I should join the G.F.S.*, issued an impassioned call for "nation-builders" to secure Canada's place under the wing of the mother country:

⁵Perseverance, resourcefulness, and pluck were also words commonly used by the GFS to characterize Canadians. See also R.G. Moyles and Doug Owsram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

⁶Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 50.

⁷J.A. Hobson, *Canada To-Day* (London, 1906): 6, quoted in Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896-1921*, p. 50.

Canada calls to us:
 Help us to make it a Christian state
 This land of yours which you never trod
 For never a nation yet was great
 That was not built on the fear of God.⁸

The conflation of God and nation created opportunities for good Christian women to participate in this colonizing process. By building up the Church of England in the Canadian west and by attempting to reproduce Anglo-Protestant values in the new homes of the dominion, the GFSC joined the English Society in a colonial project designed to “keep Canada Christian and British.”⁹

This project faced threats on several fronts. GFS literature characterized Canada as at once a youthful fount of “vigorous, resourceful manhood,”¹⁰ ready to serve the imperial cause whenever called, and a seedbed for materialism that required careful pruning and cultivation if the ideals of imperialism were to maintain their hold. The ideals of chivalry, service to others, and noblesse oblige, central tenets of the late Victorian imperial mind set, were seen to be at odds with the increasingly

⁸Archives of the Ottawa Diocese of the Anglican Church [hereafter AODAC], GFS, vol. 460 G, file 12, *Every-Day Climbing or Why I should join the G.F.S.*, July 1913, p. 8.

⁹*Associates' Journal*, June 1918, p. 75. See also National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC], reel A-1191, GFS Correspondence and Papers, Canada. Miss Beatrice Whitley, GFS Central Office to Mrs. Hay (Canadian Representative on the Imperial Committee), 28 July 1920. Like Adele Perry, I see a colonial project as “a socially transformative endeavour that is localized, politicized, and partial yet also engendered by larger historical developments and ways of narrating them.” Adele Perry, “‘Fair Ones of A Purer Caste’: White Women and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,” *Feminist Studies* 23, 3 (Fall 1997): 502. She is quoting Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 104.

¹⁰NAC, reel A-1191, GFS Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918, Canada. The Archbishop of York on the Work of the Archbishops' Western Canada Fund. Being a Speech made at a public meeting in the church house, Westminster, November 1914, p. 12.

flagrant “worship of the dollar.”¹¹ Indeed the materialism, secularism, and ethnic heterogeneity that came with expansion and consolidation threatened Canada’s identity as an Anglo-Christian nation.¹² At the heart of this transformation was what Brian McKillop describes as the “Victorian conundrum” of striking a “balance between material and moral progress.”¹³ The urgency of this task created a crucial role for religious societies like the GFS: “for the sake of the future of this self-developing, free Empire of nations, it lies upon us at the present time to do nothing to reduce or shorten the influences that bring into the material forces of the Empire the uplifting, redeeming, chastening, and elevating influences of the Kingdom of God.”¹⁴

The secularization of state schools, the culture of corporate capitalism, the temptations of Canada’s growing urban centres, and the influx of non-British immigrants after 1896 posed additional challenges to the task of maintaining moral and ethnic uniformity in the new dominion. The need for agriculturalists and labourers to populate the western provinces, to stimulate the operation of the railways, and to meet the labour needs of commercial farming, mining, and lumbering arose simultaneously with a heightened sense of Anglo-Canadian hostility towards

¹¹NAC, reel A-1 191, GFS Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918, Canada, Rev. Douglas Ellison to Mrs. Champion.

¹²Cultural homogeneity, of course, was only an illusion to begin with. Although Canada’s outward identity was founded on the ideals of the Anglo-Saxon middle class, its aboriginal and francophone populations were constant reminders of the dominion’s multicultural origins.

¹³A.B. McKillop, *Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario, 1791-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 94.

¹⁴Archbishop of York on the Work of the Archbishops’ Western Canada Fund, pp. 6-19.

“the foreigner.”¹⁵ Canada, with its promise of opportunity, material prosperity, and even, with the opening of the Klondike, the riches of gold, was, in the words of the GFS, “suddenly populated by swarms of the lowest adventurers of all nations.”¹⁶ The rapid growth of western Canada in the opening decades of the century—the building of railways and towns and the inrush of new settlers—created a situation described by the GFS as “unique in the annals of the British Empire.”¹⁷

It was a crucial, unprecedented moment, “the decisive hour,” for the Church in Canada.¹⁸ The opening up of new lands brought fierce denominational competition for the winning of souls.¹⁹ GFS/C women were troubled by the Church of England’s poor showing in Canada compared with Roman Catholics in the East and Methodists in the West. Mrs. Hay, Canada’s representative on the GFS Central Council, expressed the prevailing concern within the Society when she wrote:

We also need many good Church people especially, because the Church of England is so much in the minority in all parts of Canada. In the North West I was struck by a very handsome Methodist Church, and was grieved for our Church when I was told that they could get so much more money than we do because they are so friendly! In the East there is a large percentage of Roman Catholics. The GFS in England is trying to help build up Church life in

¹⁵Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975), pp. 4-12.

¹⁶*Friendly Work*, May 1903, p. 72.

¹⁷NAC, reel A-1191, GFS Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918, Canada, Archbishops’ Western Canada Fund: Sites List. Places in Western Canada Where Sites for Churches have been purchased—Our Progress, p. 1.

¹⁸*Associates’ Journal*, August 1912, p. 153.

¹⁹For a general history of the Anglican Church in the west see T.C.B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies: A History of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert’s Land and Its Dioceses from 1820 to 1950* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962) and Frank A. Peake, *The Anglican Church in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959).

Canada.... So I think that our Society may claim to be working 'for Church and Empire' in the great Dominion of Canada.²⁰

While, in the west, Presbyterians and Methodists each outnumbered Anglicans in the early part of the century, the Anglican Church enjoyed the greatest comparative increase in membership in the years leading up to the First World War.²¹ An influx of English immigrants during this period created a serious imbalance between the number of Anglican churches and clergy and the population of potential communicants.²²

Organized efforts to correct this imbalance through the expansion of the Anglican Church illustrate the infusion of British funds and interests into the project of nation-building in the Canadian west. Unlike the Presbyterians and Methodists, who looked to their eastern Canadian churches for support, the Anglican Church in the western provinces was largely a mission church, depending on Great Britain and its Church of England missionary societies for funds and personnel.²³ Well into the

²⁰*Associates' Journal—Supplement*, June 1915, p. 17. A GFS member in Alberta wrote, in a similar vein: "The Roman Catholics and Methodists are very active in this country, and I do like to think that *our* Church and especially *our* Society are also helping. It is an opportunity which we may never get again. Also I am thankful for the warning given against Mormonism. It seems a dreadful thing to me that any one should give up their early Christian training for Mormonism, yet it is done!" *Friendly Work*, February 1913, p. 32.

²¹Marilyn Barber, "The Motor Caravan Mission: Anglican Women Workers on the Canadian Frontier in the New Era." in *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada*, ed. Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 220-21; Trevor Powell, "The Church of England and the Immigrants of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle," in *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970*, ed. Barry Ferguson (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1991), pp. 145-6.

²²L. G. Thomas, "The Church of England and the Canadian West," in Ferguson, pp. 16-28.

²³Two such societies were the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and the Colonial and Continental Church Society (CCCS).

1920s, the majority of Anglican missionaries and clergy were recruited directly from England. Only later did the eastern-based Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC) and the Women's Auxiliary (WA) begin to regard western Anglican missions as a project worthy of their attention. Until then, the Anglican Church in western Canada represented a countervailing influence against the forces of Canadianization that were sweeping Canada after the First World War. As Marilyn Barber points out, "While Presbyterians and Methodists viewed their churches as national churches with a national responsibility, Anglicans had a stronger commitment to the imperial tie."²⁴

The implantation of Anglicanism in western Canada has generally been remembered as an endeavour of male concern. The historical record that documents the activities of male clergy and missionaries west of Hudson Bay reaches back into the pre-Selkirk era. Male-run English missionary societies of a later period—the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), and the Church Missionary Society (CMS)—have, likewise, been recognized for their role in attending to the spiritual welfare of British settlers in the outer reaches of the empire. A notably ambitious initiative in this direction, one that was designed to address the particular ecclesiastical problems of the early twentieth century, was undertaken by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. Their Archbishops' Western Canada Fund, established in 1910, drew upon the human and financial resources of the United Kingdom to help secure the dominance of Anglo-

²⁴Marilyn Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," in Ferguson, p. 154.

Protestantism in Canada's pioneer communities.²⁵ L.G. Thomas notes that, through its provision of church workers and financial resources, the AWCF had "a considerable impact on the western Canadian church at this critical juncture in its history...."²⁶

Recent research on women in the Christian Church in Canada has shown that, despite their subordinate status in both church and society, women did not leave the work of church building in the west completely to their male counterparts. Through the sponsorship of the Fellowship of the Maple Leaf, formed in 1916 by the Reverend George Exton Lloyd, over 400 British teachers, mostly women, braved the isolation and hardship of the Canadian west to bring Church of England values to frontier settlements.²⁷ Similarly, the bold and tireless Eva Hasell, a native of Cumberland, England, responded to the urgent need for Anglican ministry in western Canada by first canvassing for the AWCF and then establishing the long-lived caravan mission in 1920.²⁸ Hasell's "missionaries on wheels" held the ground for the Church in the outlying districts of the Canadian prairies by conducting religious services and enrolling children in a programme of "Sunday School by Post." The educated British women of the FML and the caravan mission exemplified women's

²⁵L.G. Thomas notes that the AWCF papers were unabashed in stating the goal of "keeping Canada British and Christian." Thomas, p. 25.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Barber. "Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," pp. 154-166.

²⁸Vera Fast. "Eva Hasell and the Caravan Mission." in Ferguson, pp. 167-175; Vera Fast, *Missionary on Wheels: Eva Hasell and the Sunday School Caravan Mission* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1979); Barber. "Motor Caravan Mission," pp. 219-237.

part in Anglicizing the Canadian west through the female religious tradition of education, home visits, and social service. Given the overtly imperialistic overtones of their religious mission and the expansion of their work in the 1920s, these women also strengthen the case for imperialist continuity in Canada in the interwar period.

The role of the Girls' Friendly Society in this venture has largely been forgotten. And yet even before the AWCF issued a call for aid in 1910, the GFS took on the "problem of western Canada" as one of its central projects. The Society's records include a considerable body of correspondence and propaganda relating to the AWCF. GFS women were plugged into the ecclesiastical network of high-ranking clergy who were in charge of organizing Anglican missions along the rail lines of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Their primary contacts in the mission field were the Reverend Douglas Ellison, head of the Regina Railway Mission, and Archdeacon George Exton Lloyd, founder of the FML, who reported regularly to the GFS Central Council in England on the problems and progress of the Church in Canada. Lloyd reported that in just the first eight months of 1910, 36,900 homesteads were taken up in the western provinces, most of them in Saskatchewan.²⁹ At the same time, the Anglican Church in Saskatchewan ranked fourth behind the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Roman Catholics.³⁰ The prospect of thousands of isolated settlers, battling the elements of nature far from the restraining and uplifting influences of the

²⁹Archdeacon Lloyd to *Canadian Churchman*, quoted in *Associates' Journal*, April 1911, p. 59. For population growth statistics see Alan F.J. Artibise, *Prairie Urban Development 1870-1930*, Canadian Historical Association Booklet No. 34 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1981).

³⁰Barber, "Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers," p. 155.

Church was distressing for GFS women, who believed firmly in the civilizing powers of the Anglican Church. Reverend Ellison expressed similar fears in a letter to Mrs. Campion, of the GFS Central Council. "Church influence is therefore of pressing importance for those who come into these new regions, away from all Church privileges at home," he wrote, "the loss of which too often results in utter slackness as to all religious observance and life."³¹

GFS women supported the AWCF archbishops in their claim that it was the "primary duty of the Church to go and occupy that portion of the world" which lay open to the influences of isolation and corruption.³² For them, the lone wooden prairie church became a visual symbol for the implantation of an English Christian ethos in uncivilized frontier communities. In these churches, often the sole representative of old world values on the "great wild prairie,"³³ "the Sabbath bell" called "England's sons in the Far West" to unite in prayer with the ancient churches of England's towns and villages.³⁴ Through "links of personal and living fellowship between members of the Church at home and in distant outposts of the Empire" the Society hoped to create a unitary moral culture based on Anglo-Protestant standards of character, piety, and domesticity. In their understanding, church-building and empire-building were one and the same.

³¹NAC, reel A-1191, GFS Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918, Canada. "The Great Need of Religious Education."

³²Archbishop of York on the Work of the Archbishops' Western Canada Fund, pp. 6-19.

³³Ibid.

³⁴*Friendly Work*, September 1902., p. 142.

On a practical level, the GFS took part in this process by putting women's traditional fund-raising expertise to good use. In 1912 and 1913 the GFS amassed enough funds to purchase 84 church sites in western Canada. With the CPR's temporary reduction of land prices for the Church, the GFS felt the lots were a bargain at prices ranging from £25 to £42 10s..³⁵ GFS women saw their practical contributions to the building of churches in the Canadian west as taking their "little share in building up the distant part of our Church and Empire."³⁶

GFS women in Canada, the majority of whom were concentrated in the dioceses of Ontario, played a much quieter role in this lofty endeavour. Like other eastern-based Anglican organizations, such as the MSCC and the WA, the GFSC showed greater interest in the more exotic overseas missions than in their own home field.³⁷ As part of their own country, the Canadian west was for them a less intriguing sphere of work than it was for their associates back in England. GFSC women also had fewer financial resources, and contributors were more likely to donate funds for missions abroad. Whatever the reason, GFS women in England expressed frustration at the lack of support from eastern Canada in reports like the one that appeared in the *Associates' Journal and Advertiser* in 1911:

Twenty thousand new homesteads in Saskatchewan means that last year [1910] we have added 10,000 square miles of humanity, without church,

³⁵Heath-Stubbs, *Friendship's Highway*, p. 87 and Bush, p. 78.

³⁶*Friendly Work*, May 1911, p. 78.

³⁷Trevor Powell notes, for instance, that in 1900 the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society reported that Canadian Anglicans had donated \$15,000 more to foreign missions than to domestic missions. Powell, p. 145.

minister, or service, as far as the Church of England is concerned. That means that in two years we have fallen behind by at least 17,000 square miles of untouched humanity (English speaking and foreign). Cannot something be done to rouse the East to make a supreme effort in the next five years, to get the Church of England planted on the great plains? By 1915 our chance will be gone forever."³⁸

Nonetheless, unlike other Canadian-based Anglican organizations, the GFSC's British connection through its parent society meant that their ears were not completely deaf to English concerns regarding the Canadian west. GFSC women launched a series of campaigns in the pre-war years to raise funds for altars, kneelers, communion rails, and other church furnishings to be donated to prairie churches. The GFS in Martin's Point, Nova Scotia, for example, was one of many branches that donated money for the lumber to build pews.³⁹ Associates and members in several GFSC branches worked continuously into the 1920s to supply the western Church with clergy vestments, embroidered altar linens, frontals, hangings, and alms bags. They also played a role in establishing GFS branches in the prairie provinces, which, they believed was the most valuable contribution they could make to the expansion of Anglican interests in the west. One GFS worker explained:

The Church has to face the problem of unprecedented immigration in certain districts. One Bishop has more than 180 congregations 'waiting to be organized.' One clergyman has twenty seven stations to serve. There are the Indians and the Eskimos, and not far off are China and Japan.... But there is the need in Canada, as in other countries, of the high ideal of personal spiritual life upheld by the G.F.S., and there is no religious teaching in the public schools. To supply this need twenty eight GFS branches have come into existence, and are already a very powerful influence for good.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Associates' Journal*, April 1911, p. 59.

³⁹ AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1928, p. 26.

⁴⁰ *Associates' Journal*, September 1906, p. 176.

The GFS saw the gender specific work of cultivating a “high ideal of spiritual life” as a crucial force in the taming of the western frontier. GFS periodicals and reports often carried urgent appeals for the extension of the GFS into the prairie provinces for this purpose. GFS associates took up evangelizing work in the west as itinerant Sunday School teachers, through the Anglican caravan mission. The mission’s founder, Eva Hasell, was also a GFS associate. In 1922 she reported on the great need for their work: “Many...English emigrants’ children did not even know the story of our Lord’s life or the Lord’s Prayer, as there is no Scripture teaching in the schools and great shortage of clergy and Sunday schools.”⁴¹ So closely connected were God and nation in the GFS’s imperial vision that formal non-religious education, in their opinion, would lead to no less than the downfall of the empire. “The G.F.S. realises that the power of the British Empire must indeed decline and fall,” they warned, “if the great rising Dominions, beneath the British Flag... should finally adopt the disastrous system of National Education...whereby in all their State Schools and Colleges the Holy Bible is absolutely out of reach of their children.”⁴² They placed great value on the caravan mission, the FML, and the GFS for filling this spiritual void and for shaping the “future tone of Western Canada” along Anglican lines. Without the kind of personal influence that in their view women could best provide, they would face, they warned, the “gravest peril that Canada will not remain

⁴¹*Workers' Journal*, March 1922, p. 36.

⁴²NAC, reel A-1191. GFS Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918. Canada. “The Decline and Fall of Empires.”

as Christian and British as it has been."⁴³

While historians have begun to show interest in women's missionary societies and women's auxiliary function within the church,⁴⁴ "much Canadian church history," Norman Knowles has observed, "has been written with the underlying assumption that the clergy are the church."⁴⁵ Here it is evident that women, barred from the ordained ministry and from the upper echelons of the ecclesiastical establishment, worked behind the scenes, raising funds, sewing altar linens, beautifying the church, providing religious education, and supporting the parish community. Their steady, quiet work enabled the church to function. To be sure, this auxiliary status was restrictive in many ways. While GFS programs were run independently of church supervision, the Society was nonetheless beholden to the whims of parish clergy. No branch was permitted to organize within a diocese or

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women For God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Wendy Mitchinson, "Canadian Women and Church Missionary Societies: A Step towards Independence," *Atlantis 2* (Spring 1977): 55-75; Geoffrey Deane Johnston, "The Road to Winsome Womanhood: The Canadian Presbyterian Mission among East Indian Women and Girls in Trinidad, 1868-1939," in *Canadian Protestant and Catholic Missions, 1820-1939: Historical Essays in Honour of John Webster Grant*, ed. John S. Moir and T.C. McIntire (New York: Peter Lang, 1988); Elizabeth Muir, *Petticoats in the Pulpit: The Story of Early Nineteenth-Century Methodist Women Preachers in Upper Canada* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1991); and Rosemary Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

⁴⁵Norman Knowles, review of *Petticoats in the Pulpit*, by Muir and *A Sensitive Independence*, by Gagan, in *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 35, 2 (October 1993): 147 quoted in Sharon Cook, "Beyond the Congregation: Women and Canadian Evangelicalism Reconsidered," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G.A. Rawlyk (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 406.

parish without the written consent of the bishop or rector.⁴⁶ On occasion, the GFSC reported the dismantling of branches due to lack of clerical approval.⁴⁷

Generally, however, the Society seemed to enjoy widespread support from church officials: branch gatherings and associates' meetings were often graced by the presence of bishops and archbishops; editors of the *Canadian Churchman* agreed to include GFS reports. In 1915 the General Synod of Canada gave official recognition to the GFS as an important agency in the furtherance of the Church's mission in the dominion:

The House of Bishops and General Synod desire very warmly to commend the GFS and M.U. as organizations similar to that of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, all of them from their nature tending to the highest ideals of Christian character; and they express their earnest hope that all these organizations may receive the fullest encouragement, and find the utmost scope in the more important parishes throughout the Dominion.⁴⁸

Such an official blessing was arguably more self-serving than it was charitable. The Church could not have failed to recognize the valuable function of women's voluntary services in the day-to-day operations of the parish. As one parish priest noted, the GFS branch was a "nursery for Church workers of all kinds."⁴⁹ The GFS established a niche for itself by drawing into the fold of church work girls who were too old for Sunday School but too young for ladies' guilds. As part of the "living

⁴⁶AODAC. GFS, vol. 460 G, file 10, E.H.B. Roberts, *A Plain Statement of the Organization and Purpose of the Girls' Friendly Society in America*, 1912, 19.

⁴⁷This lack of approval usually stemmed from the belief that there was not enough parish interest to support more than one auxiliary society.

⁴⁸*Associates' Journal*, January 1916, p. 10.

⁴⁹AODAC. GFS, *The Girls' Friendly Society from a Parish Priest's Point of View*, p. 11.

organism of the Church,” it also helped to enliven the church with human interest by recruiting worshipers to Sunday services, bible study circles, and confirmation classes.⁵⁰ In other words, it helped to bridge the distance between clergy and “those of their flock whom it is so very difficult for them to reach.”⁵¹ The GFS saw this gap in terms of class difference. GFS women called members together,

not to amuse and instruct them only..., but because we want their help, in getting hold of those who neither Clergy nor ladies can reach, in softening & winning back those who are alienated, or who are drifting away...; in bringing their friends who are not G.F.S. members, to Church & to Bible class...to bring others within hearing of the Gospel.⁵²

They openly acknowledged that the “ever increasing number of what are commonly known as the ‘working class’” was the primary target for recruitment.⁵³ GFS women saw the church as a means to create a unity of interests among workers and employers, to cultivate a sympathetic relationship between the working girl and “the lady who employs her.”⁵⁴ Ultimately, religious influence was regarded as an instrument of social control that had long-lasting implications for the nation. GFSC president, Mrs. Welch, spoke of women’s special role in this process: “We do our

⁵⁰*Associates’ Journal*, September 1915, p. 132.

⁵¹AODAC, GFS, vol. 8 G8 1, file 1, Paper read before the annual meeting, Ottawa, 24 April 1890.

⁵²AODAC, GFS, vol. 8 G8 1, file 1, Paper written for Women’s Conference, Toronto, 12 September 1893 on G.F.S. Work, pp. 5-10.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 5. One GFSC associate made it clear that “it is untrue that we do not want the poor in our churches, it is only too true that comparatively few of them find their way there, & still fewer bring their children with them when they come. Of course it is not for us now to discuss the reasons for this state of things: what we want to remind ourselves is that it is a great grief & burden of soul to our Clergy & Church workers....” Paper read before the annual meeting, Ottawa, 24 April 1890, p. 8.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

country, speaking soberly and advisedly, an injury, the extent of which we cannot estimate, in not doing what we can to deepen, extend and permanently establish in our midst, this true handmaid of religion. The responsibility, in great part, for the spiritual tone of our parish life rests with each one of us, because we are women."⁵⁵

Because of their (supposedly) special religious and civilizing capacity, women, in large numbers, were needed to establish Christian homes in the scattered towns and villages of the west and to extend the religious teaching of the new churches. The GFS saw women as an important factor in the "Epic of Saxon Enterprise" that was unfolding in the west.⁵⁶ They were the "future Teachers and Mothers of the Western Empire, who will help build Churches on our Sites, and, in their turn, teach their children."⁵⁷ To this end, the English and Canadian branches of the GFS engaged in a scheme of emigration designed to bring "respectable" British women to Canadian settlements. The English GFS promoted opportunities for work and marriage in Canada among GFS members, arranged for supervised passage through the British Women's Emigration Association (and then, in the 1920s, the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women), and sent letters of commendation to the GFSC branch and clergy nearest the point of destination. The Canadian Society received commended girls at their port of arrival, provided lodging and assistance,

⁵⁵AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G. file 10. Edith Marion Welch, *The Girls' Friendly Society What it is and What it does*, p. 5.

⁵⁶NAC, reel A-1 192, GFS, 2, file 227, Correspondence and Papers, 1924-28, The Victoria League Education Work.

⁵⁷*Friendly Work*, April 1913, p. 64.

and made every effort to keep them within the Society's fold once they reached their place of employment.

The GFS's emigration schemes were made possible by the services of the BWEA, which was responsible for the largest number of women emigrating from Britain in protected parties. Founded in 1884 by one of the most prominent GFS ladies, Ellen Joyce, the BWEA was the descendant of longstanding emigrationist organizations, including the British Ladies Female Emigrant Society and the Female Middle Class Emigration Society.⁵⁸ GFS executives, Ellen Joyce and Lady Louisa Knightley, were presidents of the BWEA, which promoted ideological cross-fertilization between the two organizations. They were pioneers of protected emigration for women and girls. The GFS contributed to the salaries of BWEA matrons who supervised GFS girls traveling to Canada. With its network of correspondents in chief Canadian towns, the BWEA also provided intelligence to the GFS about prospects for employment.

The GFS's role in British female migration to the colonies is often overlooked in favour of more prominent organizations like the National Council of Women of Canada and the BWEA. To be sure, women who traveled through the auspices of the Society represented only a small fraction of the total female emigration from

⁵⁸The BLFES had been in operation since the mid-nineteenth century; the FMCES was formed in 1862. Barbara Roberts, "A Work of Empire': Canadian Reformers and British Female Emigration," in *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s*, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: Women's Press, 1979), p. 190. The South African Colonisation Society (1902) and the Colonial Intelligence League (1911) were also offshoots of these earlier organizations. Julia Bush, "The Right Sort of Woman': female emigrants and emigration to the British Empire, 1890-1910," *Women's History Review* 3, 3 (1994): 389.

Britain.⁵⁹ But the system of selection, commendation, supervision, and lodging of young women destined for the colonies was a central part of the GFS's imperial mission.⁶⁰ The paper trail left by GFS emigrationists provides important information about the imperial ideology that constructed traveling women as empire-builders. Ellen Joyce believed that the genius for colonization, for which the English were reputedly well endowed, carried the responsibility for evangelization. The GFS had an important role in this process: women "brought up...under the gleam of Christianity" had a "vastly important, humanising influence" over even the roughest of colonies. We "feel thankful that such right-minded girls are to be the mothers in the making of Canada," Joyce proclaimed, "and that evangelization in thought is going hand-in-hand with emigration in practice."⁶¹ Therefore, while GFS emigrants may have chosen a life in Canada for their own personal betterment, they were also serving the larger political function of extending and supporting the cultural hegemony of the British middle class.

⁵⁹The GFS's Emigration Department, established in 1885, emphasized quality over quantity. The numbers of women who emigrated through the department were relatively minuscule: 203 in 1886, 407 in 1896, and 393 in 1906. Brian Harrison, "For Church, Queen and Family: 'The Girls' Friendly Society 1874-1920,'" *Past and Present* 61 (1973): 124.

⁶⁰In a report for the National Council of Women of Canada, the GFSC claimed to receive "upwards of 500 members from Great Britain and Ireland" each year. Halifax: Dalhousie University, F1001 C1155, "Report of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada." *Report of the Federated Associations*, NCWC, 1912, p. 27. The high point for commendations was just before the outbreak of the First World War. The GFSC reported receiving 375 commended girls in just three months of the year 1911. Reports for other years give lower numbers: for example, between 40 and 50 commended members in 1894; 208 in 1910; 119 in 1924; and 90 in 1929. Commendations slowed to a trickle of 65 by 1930. "Report of the Girls' Friendly Society," in *Women Workers of Canada: Annual Report of the National Council of Women of Canada*, 1894, p. 65; "Report of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada," *Women Workers of Canada*, 1910, p. xxvi; *Associates' Journal*, August 1911, p. 174; AODAC, GFS, vol. 102 G, The G.F.S. in Canada, 1924, p. 10; AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1930, p. 15.

⁶¹*Associates' Journal*, August 1913, p. 17.

On a more practical level, at a time when government immigration services were underdeveloped, the GFS, along with other sending and receiving societies—including the BWEA, the Women’s Protective Immigration Society, the Traveler’s Aid, the NCWC, and the YWCA—provided a means for women to travel safely, to find employment, and to make the social connections necessary for the transition to a new environment.⁶² The GFS/C maintained formal connections with all of these organizations, and its representatives sat on the Canadian Council of Immigration of Women for Household Service, which was organized in 1919.

Imperialism as well as practical concerns shaped the emigration mandate of both the GFS and the BWEA. The overabundance of women in England and the shortage of women in the colonies could be balanced, they believed, through the natural outlet of emigration. This outlet would provide practical opportunities for women who otherwise would have had no choice but to join the ranks of low-paying, sweated labourers, workhouse inmates, or dole recipients. It would also give women a better chance to experience the “crowning joy of womanhood”—marriage—that was denied to many in a population plagued by gender imbalance.⁶³ One associate described the crisis in simple terms: “Out of every six women, one, as a matter of statistics, certainly cannot marry. Look round at your class of thirty-six bonnie lassies, six of these can never have a real home of their own, if they stay in this

⁶²See Mrs. John Cox, “The Immigration of Women.” in *Women Workers of Canada: Annual Report of the National Council of Women*. 1896, pp. 196-201.

⁶³*Associates’ Journal*. August 1905, p. 153.

crowded-out little island.... It lowers her value, it lessens her self-respect, she is worth so little in the working world!"⁶⁴ The unmarried and unemployed woman was regarded as a superfluous social burden, an economic liability, and an anomalous waste of potential for imperial growth. Ellen Joyce was unabashedly forthright about her imperial motivations and her belief in the grandiosity of GFS emigration work.

She wrote:

I do not want our girls to go to the States—I want our girls to sail under the Flag and live under the Flag. Believe me, it is of enormous importance to the Empire where each girl goes. The matter is one of Imperial significance. Canada cannot grow for want of population; we are told it wants from 8000 to 10,000 women this year. The G.F.S. as a body of intelligent women can do a great deal for the unity of their country. We owe it to our beloved Empress, Queen Victoria; to our Patroness, Queen Alexandra; to our Emperor-King, to keep a united, loyal Empire.⁶⁵

She prophesied that, ultimately, “everybody we send to Canada will become more loyal, every potential mother of brave boys will give hostages to Great Britain of loyal men, who can fight for the Motherland at very short notice.”⁶⁶

The GFS Emigration Department and Imperial Committee spoke of Canada as the most promising destination for redundant women. Emigration would “transplant the superfluous, half-starved seamstress, the potential mother of five unemployables, to the country where she can earn good food..., and when she becomes a mother, every babe, boy or girl, may grow up to be the land owner of 160

⁶⁴The *Associates' Journal* even went so far as to say that “the female lunatic asylums are full of hysterical women, who would have made happy wives in a prosperous country....” August 1910, p. 182.

⁶⁵*Associates' Journal*, August 1909, p. 173.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

acres of Canadian land...."⁶⁷ It also figured into the dynamics of class: as a mechanism for creating a higher standard of living, emigration had the potential to reduce class tension, which was an ever-present concern of the Society. At the same time it would provide much-needed human material for the building of good homes in distant parts of the empire.⁶⁸ Put simply, the female emigrant would help to "populate the Empire where it is empty, instead of impoverishing it where it is crowded."⁶⁹

In the Canadian west, good women, indeed women of any sort, were scarce. Ellen Joyce explained that women were "prayed for to make homes for good living men," that in Canada "women can be mothers of quivers full, without fear of there ever being one too many; for there will be plenty of work for every hard-working boy of every class, and a Jack for every Jill...."⁷⁰ The proliferation of a transient, labouring, male population presented a serious problem for those concerned about maintaining the hallmarks of Anglo-Saxon civilization in Greater Britain. Domesticity, observance of the Sabbath, moral restraint, and the reproduction of the race required the "civilising work of women."⁷¹ "We owe to these men [building Canada]," Joyce

⁶⁷*Associates' Journal*, August 1913, p. 18.

⁶⁸As one associate put it: "In every settler's home, in every part of the British Empire, whether in the back country, the middle country, or the great cities where everything was going very well indeed, they would find that nine times out of ten there was a good woman at the back of it all." *Workers' Journal*, December 1928, p. 201.

⁶⁹*Associates' Journal*, August 1905, p. 153.

⁷⁰*Associates' Journal*, August 1912, p. 165.

⁷¹*Associates' Journal*, August 1901, p. 190.

insisted, “well-conditioned English wives, Empire-building ought not to be left to accident.”⁷² At the heart of such views lay the belief that the undomesticated male was vulnerable to the temptations of colonial life—gambling, drinking, and interracial sex. He needed to be drawn from the disorderly bachelor world of flesh, vice, slovenliness, and impulse into the realm of the *social*. The *Associates' Journal* warned that “the inequality [meaning numerical imbalance] of the sexes is the source of the greatest danger.... We must send our young men to make their way in Bigger Britain; tired of batching it, and leaving their dirty plates for a Sunday wash-up, they take up with a squaw or a half-breed....”⁷³ White women, as moral keepers of the home and as the conduits for religion and tradition, were constructed as civilizing agents, as cultural links between the old world and the new, and as the only hope for a racially pure society.

GFS periodical editors were always pleased to print reports of emigrant girls who were able to create some semblance of domesticity in the rugged frontier environment. A GFS transplant, newly settled on the Canadian prairie, described to her English home branch the dwelling she shared with her brother: a two-room shanty made with logs and a sod roof. Despite her modest arrangements, she wrote:

⁷²*Associates' Journal*, August 1912, p. 165. Joyce's motives were distinctly imperialistic. She wrote: “We are, I have no doubt, all Imperialists at heart, whatever our views on Fiscal Policy may be.... Drift from a national point of view means that we allow our emigrants to ‘drift’ to countries not under the Flag, instead of directing them to Canada or Africa...by the exodus outside the Empire, we had lost our Army and Navy at least 20,000 men...we had lost enormously to commerce and to unity...if these people had been directed to Canada they would have strengthened the Empire for ever and ever increasingly, instead of throwing their interest and their political wealth into a neighbouring country.” *Associates' Journal*, August 1904, p. 173.

⁷³*Associates' Journal*, August 1910, p. 182.

“I have got it all fixed up and it looks quite nice and comfortable. I am quite proud of our little home. I have learnt to cook and bake bread, and am going to learn to milk and make butter next week.”⁷⁴

As Adele Perry has noted, “the absence of white women took on special significance in contexts where colonial dominance was being actively asserted over non-European populations.”⁷⁵ In the case of Canada, and in particular the west, white women, specifically white, *British* women were needed to counterbalance the Native presence as well as the rapid increase in non-British population through immigration from eastern and central Europe and from the United States.⁷⁶ Ellen Joyce explained:

It is the magnetic clutch of common ideals, common interests, common hopes, and common aspirations, that to-day keeps the British Empire one and indivisible. The call of Empire is strongest there; we can keep Canada for the Empire if we will find it: we shall lose it, if in its splendid growth we allow the miles of pasturage, the acres of corn-lands, the navigation of its rivers, to pass into alien, foreign, rival hands.... Can we Empire-builders sit down and be content for Europe to snatch the heritage of our sons and daughters? Australia is not in the same danger of being overrun by a new race speaking its own language; let us make sure of Canada ‘here and now.’ Let us enthuse ourselves, and then enthuse others, with the idea that the Empire, and not the island, is

⁷⁴*Friendly Work*, May 1904, p. 52.

⁷⁵Perry, “Fair Ones of A Purer Caste,” p. 504.

⁷⁶The Americanization of Canada was a prominent concern. Joyce noted that “In the year 1904 the emigration of people from the British Isles to Western Canada was, roughly speaking, 45,000, but the emigration from the United States to Canada was 50,000. The preponderance of numbers is very serious indeed, both from an Imperial and a commercial point. We do not want our splendid and most loyal Colony so filled up with people from the great Republic that the ties with the mother country would be loosened or lessened.” *Associates’ Journal*, August 1905, p. 153. Aboriginal peoples, although declining in numbers, were, of course, also an age-old concern. At the time of Confederation, for example, British Columbia’s population of First Nations people doubled that of non-aboriginals. B.C.’s white population did not match that of aboriginals until the end of the nineteenth century. Adele Perry, “Fair Ones of a Purer Caste’: White Women and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,” *Feminist Studies* 23, 3 (Fall 1997): 502. The Métis rebellions of 1869 and 1885 were still relatively fresh memories at the turn of the century. Also, white-aboriginal sexual relations threatened to erode the racial lines that privileged British colonizers.

woman's sphere....⁷⁷

Joyce's passionate support for female emigration was based on the staunch conviction that population is power and that women, as mothers of the race, had a crucial role and obligation in the important project of empire-building.⁷⁸ "In the game of national supremacy," Joyce warned, "the exodus of our women folk plays a part of extremest, of gigantic, consequence."⁷⁹ GFS emigrationists believed that England could *possess* Canada and South Africa and other colonies by *occupying* them with English people. GFSC president, Mrs. S.G. Wood, echoed these sentiments: "Supposing that we women could stand on a pinnacle and look down over this wide Dominion, what would be the great want felt, a want greater than any other? It would be the want of pure, good, strong and healthy young women because it is in that way our Dominion would grow. In that way the vast fields of the Northwest would be possessed."⁸⁰ This discourse of imperial motherhood had the potential to draw women, across classes, into a unified movement for social betterment by associating even the most pragmatic acts of work, travel, and home-making with a larger imperial mission.

"Well-bred" women were the first choice for this venture. Women of culture

⁷⁷ *Associates' Journal*, August 1912, p. 165.

⁷⁸ Joyce's views were echoed by Lord Clarendon, who spoke at the Imperial and Overseas Conference in 1929. "Women were needed overseas as companions to the men who had gone out to carve out futures for themselves," he said. "to become the mothers of the future race in these far-flung corners of the Empire.... The development of a country and the increase of its population must go hand in hand..." *Workers' Journal*, August 1929, p. 133.

⁷⁹ *Associates' Journal*, August 1905, p. 153.

⁸⁰ "Sectional Conference on Immigration," *Women Workers of Canada*, 1896, p. 420.

and refinement, who could fill positions in Canada as teachers, nurses, governesses, and “lady helps,” held the most promise for the moral elevation of colonial society.

The lack of social control, loneliness, and isolation characteristic of Canadian rural settlements required women of education, good taste, and strong moral backbone.

The *Associates' Journal* explained that the example of the pioneer gentlewoman could be multiplied through the inspiration of others:

Educated women have a very special part in laying the foundation and in raising the arches in Empire-building. They are loaded with the best traditions, which are so all-important in forming character and moulding customs in a new country. A cultured woman takes her love of culture within herself, and in the winter evenings has longer hours for study than we have, or generally use. I only wish that my acquaintance with English literature had been half as good as that of the wife of a Major in the North West Mounted Police, or that I had kept up my music as she had kept up hers. One happy use she made of her music was that she had an open door on Sunday evenings for the young Englishmen who liked to drive in from their ranches or stations. Part of the evening became a ‘Service of song,’ and the words these young pioneers had sung with their mothers in the fine old churches scattered about the county houses of old England, kept alive their religion, and their aesthetic tastes were preserved by a sonata from Beethoven or Mozart.⁸¹

The exclusivity of GFS/C migration preferences was also demonstrated at NCWC meetings where GFSC representatives joined with others in insisting that Canada accept immigrants of only the best stock and character and turn away those who were morally and physically unfit.⁸² Like their GFS collaborators in England, they regarded immigration as more of an imperialist enterprise than a humanitarian one. The emphasis of their concern lay on what women immigrants could do for the dominion, not what the dominion could do for those women who were in most need of an

⁸¹*Associates' Journal*, August 1913, p. 18.

⁸²See, for example, *Yearbook of the National Council of Women of Canada*, 1922, pp. 156-61.

escape from poverty.

GFSC president, Mrs S.G. Wood, hoped to lure women of the most respectable type with the promise of “good homes, good wages, and good husbands.”⁸³ Clearly, GFS women expected that, after an interlude of paid employment, GFS emigrants would take on the higher pursuit of marriage and motherhood, the prospects for which were less favourable in their home country. In England, the GFS attempted to assuage fears of the unknown by playing up the image of Canada as part of one large, extended British family. Prospective emigrants would “find in Canada that they were still members of the British Empire and under the same flag, and that they sang ‘God Save the King’ there with as much vigour as they did at home.”⁸⁴ The very class of women that was preferred for immigration, however, was the class that was least willing to face the insecurity of relocating to western Canada.⁸⁵

There was also a great need in Canada, however, for “unskilled or inferior workers” in the profession of domestic service.⁸⁶ In the harsh, frontier conditions of western homesteads, general servants, who were “willing to turn their hands to anything,” were in more steep demand than the blue-blooded “lady help.”⁸⁷

⁸³*Associates' Journal*, August 1901, p. 191.

⁸⁴*Workers' Journal*, August 1921, p. 167.

⁸⁵By 1911 only about 20% of women assisted by emigration societies were ‘ladies.’ James Hammerton, *Emigrant Gentlewomen, Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p. 177.

⁸⁶*Associates' Journal*, August 1905, p. 155.

⁸⁷*Workers' Journal*, August 1929, p. 135.

Throughout the entire period from the 1880s to the 1920s the acute shortage of domestic servants was a focal issue in women's organizations of every persuasion.⁸⁸ NCWC secretary, Mrs. Willoughby Cummings, described the domestic servant problem in her 1921 report as a crisis that was "menacing national welfare."⁸⁹ Indeed while the lack of household help had obvious practical and self-serving implications, it was constructed by women reformers as an issue of national magnitude. The underlying fear was that the absence of servants would disrupt the ideal middle-class family, which was the cornerstone of the nation, by lowering birth rates and by forcing overworked housewives into smaller homes or apartments.

The dwindling supply of "home helps" reflected the general change in women's patterns of work.⁹⁰ With the emergence of retail, hotel, clerical, and industrial employment at the turn of the century, Canadian-born girls of working age began to view domestic service as employment of last resort.⁹¹ The long hours, moral supervision, hard labour, limited freedom, and low wages of service could not compete with the higher paying, less restrictive jobs of the office or the factory.

⁸⁸Genevieve Leslie. "Domestic Service in Canada, 1880-1920," in *Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930*, ed. Janice Acton et al. (Toronto: Women's Press, 1974), pp. 71-125.

⁸⁹A. Pauline Raymond. *Gathered Sheaves from the National Council of Women, Calgary* (St. John, N.B.: J. & A. McMillan, 1921), p. 61.

⁹⁰In 1891 40.55% of all Canadian women older than 10 years who were registered on the census as having an occupation were employed in household service. This percentage declined to 34.25% by 1901. *Census of Canada*, (1921), vol. 5. *Population*, cited in Magda Fahrni. "'Ruffled' Mistresses and 'Discontented' Maids: Respectability and the Case of Domestic Service, 1880-1914." *Labour/Le Travail* 39 (Spring 1997): 71.

⁹¹Helen Lenskyj. "A 'Servant Problem' or a 'Servant-Mistress Problem'? Domestic Service in Canada, 1890-1930." *Atlantis* 7, 1 (Fall 1981): 3-11.

Women's organizations, including the NCWC, YWCA, Women's Protective Immigration Society,⁹² and GFS, joined governments and transportation companies on both sides of the Atlantic in forming a loose but complex migration network designed to bring British household workers to Canadian homes.⁹³ While openings were also posted for positions in nursing, teaching, and other more professional occupations, eligibility for government-assisted passage required prospective women immigrants to demonstrate an aptitude for household service.⁹⁴ As a Society that insisted upon the virtuous character of its members, the GFS liked to think it was ideally suited to provide the best class of girls for domestic work in Canada. Indeed the chief government immigration official at Quebec commented that the GFS party who sailed on April 28, 1900 were "the very best girls ever landed in Canada."⁹⁵

GFS workers struggled to reconcile the persistent conflict between their attempts to cast off the popular image of the GFS as a Society of servants and the

⁹²Formed in Montreal in 1881, the Women's Protective Immigration Society changed its name to the Women's National Immigration Society in 1898. Barbara Roberts, "Sex, Politics and Religion: Controversies in female immigration reform work in Montreal, 1991-1919," *Atlantis* 6. 1 (1980): 25-38.

⁹³For more information on the domestic servant problem see: Marilyn Barber, "The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestic for Ontario Homes, 1870-1930," *Ontario History* 62: 3 (September 1980): 148-72; Varpu Lindstrom-Best, "I Won't Be A Slave!—Finnish Domestic in Canada, 1911-30," in *Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945*, ed. Robert Harney and Him Albert (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985); Claudette Lacelle, *Urban Domestic Servants in 19th-Century Canada* (Ottawa: Environment Canada—Parks, 1987); and Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Markham, Ont.: Penguin Books, 1988), pp. 54-55.

⁹⁴This requirement, of course, reinforced the already pervasive link between women and domestic work. Marilyn Barber has calculated that 170,000 of the British women who immigrated to Canada between 1900 and 1930 claimed to be seeking employment in domestic service. Marilyn Barber, "Sunny Ontario for British Girls, 1900-30," in *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: an Exploration in Women's History*, ed. Jean Burnet (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), p. 56.

⁹⁵*Associates' Journal*, August 1900, p. 180.

need to encourage girls to pursue the line of work that was in greatest demand.⁹⁶ Rev.

Dr. Perrin, the Bishop of Columbia, described the situation as thus:

So many of our people have never heard of the GFS at all, or if they have, they often have an entirely wrong impression [that] it is...a society for servants... In the Far West it affects us badly. The number of servants is comparatively small, partly on account of the Chinese, and service is looked down upon in a way which you can hardly realise.... Send us out G.F.S. Members who have a high ideal of domestic service, and you do not know the good you will be doing.⁹⁷

GFS/C women placed much emphasis on the need to elevate the status of household service. They encouraged girls emigrating through the GFS to take a course in domestic arts at Leaton Colonial Training Home in Shropshire before departing for the colonies. GFS registry offices throughout the colonies promoted their role in matching up girls with safe and “respectable” situations. GFS women in both England and Canada advocated more leisure time, off-duty hours, training, and respect for servants in the hopes that potential members would not be repelled by the Society’s domestic servant image and would be more inclined to consider service as a legitimate profession.

In keeping with the British imperialist ideology that shaped GFS emigration practices, the real value of domestic servants lay in their capacity to serve as future mothers and wives in Britain’s favourite colony. They were expected to exhibit the ethic of work and loyalty of the respectable working class while conforming to the

⁹⁶Domestic servants made up 57% of *employed* GFS members in 1891 and 49% in 1906. Harrison, p. 117. The *Workers’ Journal* reported in 1923 that domestic servants made up about 1/4 of the *total* membership. Statistics for Canada alone are not available. *Worker’s Journal*, August 1923, p. 116.

⁹⁷*Associates’ Journal*, August 1911, p. 136.

familial and moral ideals of their bourgeoisie employers.⁹⁸ At the NCWC Sectional Conference on Immigration in 1896, GFSC president, Mrs. S.G. Wood, spoke to the heart of the matter: “I think that the great point at issue is this in connection with the girls who are coming to our country—not are they good servants, but are the women who are coming suitable, healthy and the right kind for the settlers’ wives?”⁹⁹ The ultimate goal was for young, well-bred girls to hone their “natural” housekeeping skills through a period of domestic service, skills that could be transferred into their married life. Their confinement in private homes during their period of service would provide the shelter from moral and physical temptations that was absent in the industrial or commercial workplace.¹⁰⁰ Unlike the female employment agencies that were flourishing in many cities during this period of growth and flux, the GFS, was concerned about more than just job placement.¹⁰¹ GFS women aimed to ensure the moral well-being of their clients and saw their work with women as part of a larger nation-building mission. Young women were called to Canada “not merely to gain higher wages, or to make a home, but to take...part in strengthening the foundations of Church and Empire.”¹⁰²

All of this meant that GFS women emigrants were not constructed as

⁹⁸Roberts. “Sex, Politics, and Religion,” p. 27.

⁹⁹“Sectional Conference on Immigration,” *Women Workers of Canada*, 1896, pp. 519-20.

¹⁰⁰Veronica Strong-Boag, “Working Women and the State: the Case of Canada, 1889-1945,” *Atlantis* 6, 2 (1981): 4.

¹⁰¹See Robin John Anderson, “Domestic Service: The YWCA and Women’s Employment Agencies in Vancouver, 1898-1915,” *Histoire Sociale—Social History* 25, 50 (November 1992): 307-33.

¹⁰²*Associates’ Journal*, August 1912, p.153.

autonomous subjects; their primary function lay in their capacity to reproduce respectable, religious, domestic life on the imperial frontier. The GFS hoped their girls would reproduce in Canada the most valued of their English traditions: observance of the Sabbath and the high moral tone of family life. The *Associates' Journal* explained that through gentle breeding and good example, GFS girls were powerful as individuals and as a collective moral force: "So breathing forth that pure influence in a thousand different places, they stand forth by their lives, the ripples of unconscious good, through many and many a life that comes in contact with them...for the sanctification of the future home life of the English speaking races."¹⁰³ Although women were offered opportunities for work, travel, and social mobility, their independence was subverted by the need for girls who were "trained in Church principles and in loyalty to the Empire and Dominion..., a splendid, Christian, patriotic womanhood which in the days to come may be the salvation of the country."¹⁰⁴ As Adele Perry explains, this obsession with women's political utility as mothers of the race was the product of a particular era—the period from the end of the century to 1920. During this period, as Anna Davin has argued, imperialism, fears about race degeneration, and an ideal of middle-class motherhood combined to place women in an ambiguous position as both active agents of progress and passive

¹⁰³ *Associates' Journal*, August 1904, p. 131.

¹⁰⁴ AODAC, GFS, vol. 102 8 G, file 1, *The G.F.S. in Canada, Report*, 1928, p. 27.

“angels in the home.”¹⁰⁵

The preservation of maidenly virtues required strict protection and supervision. Indeed, as Julia Bush points out, “moral surveillance was integral to a philosophy of female emigration which, despite its sometimes emancipatory aura, stood rooted in a class-bound patriarchal society and a racist imperialism.”¹⁰⁶ Moral screening began with the process of selection. Only GFS members were invited to travel with the Society’s protected parties, which meant that the women who came to Canada under the GFS banner were virginal at least on paper if not in practice. Girls with “illegitimate” children or a blemished reputation of any nature were automatically ruled out. The BWEA, which acted as the GFS’s sending agent, vowed to send only women and girls of “good character and capacity.”¹⁰⁷ During travel, a watchful matron sheltered GFS emigrants under her wing. Emigrants were lodged and entertained separately from general passengers lest they might fall victim to the deceptions of lonely men or white slave traffickers. GFSC president, Mrs. Wood, commented that such procedures would best preserve “the bloom of the peach and

¹⁰⁵Anna Davin. “Imperialism and Motherhood.” *History Workshop* 5 (Spring 1978): 9-66. In contrast, in the mid-nineteenth century, “white women’s primary colonial utility lay not in their maternity but in their sexual and familial status.” Perry. “Fair Ones of a Purer Caste.” p. 512. See also Adele Perry. “‘Oh I’m Just Sick of the Faces of Men’: Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality, and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia.” *BC Studies* 105-6 (spring/summer 1995): 27-44. The specific conditions of colonization in these years created a need for a *woman’s society* to maintain homo-racial relations and to draw the marauding male adventurer into the restraining sphere of home life.

¹⁰⁶Bush. “Right Sort of Woman.” p. 396.

¹⁰⁷Objects of the British Women’s Emigration Association and the South African Expansion Committee, quoted in *Imperial Colonist* 1. 1 (January 1902), quoted in Bush. “Right Sort of Woman.” p. 396.

the whiteness of the lily.”¹⁰⁸ The passengers themselves perceived the effects of restricted travel more ambiguously. One member recounted:

Some of the girls grumbled very much because the rules were strict, they wanted to do as they liked. I thought those girls very ungrateful, for we who belonged to the G.F.S. party had many more luxuries and comforts than the other third-class passengers; in fact, we fared almost as well as the saloon passengers, beef-tea for lunch, and apples, oranges, and warm lemonade were brought to us when we were sea-sick. The captain told our matron that we were far better-behaved girls than the saloon passengers.... I shall never be able to render all my thanks to the G.F.S. if I live to be a hundred.¹⁰⁹

Continual reminders of the dangers of unassisted emigration helped to bring migrant girls under the moral surveillance of protected travel. Mrs. Foster, Diocesan Representative for Niagara, Canada on the Colonial Committee, warned of the “evils of letting young women travel alone.” She explained how such irresponsible practices had led to many cases of girls disappearing without a trace. She did not lose sight of the grand implications of female protective immigration. The GFS was “doing all this for the ‘daughters of the Empire,’ for the sake of the Old Country,” she insisted, “for it is Imperial work.”¹¹⁰ Abduction into white slavery and sexual exploitation were the worst scenarios for women who were prized for their virginity. Ellen Joyce gave an emphatic reminder to colonial representatives at the meeting of the Emigration Department in August 1910 that, within the previous four years, 20,000 women had been “entrapped and ruined and imprisoned” in the white slave traffic.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸*Associates' Journal*. August 1911, p. 174.

¹⁰⁹*Friendly Work*. November 1907, p. 176.

¹¹⁰*Associates' Journal*. August 1909, p. 176.

¹¹¹*Associates' Journal*. August 1910, p. 182.

Moral vigilance was not lifted upon arrival in Canada. GFSC social service workers met commended immigrants at the ports of arrival. With “the warm, loving hand of friendship,” the young women were directed to receiving homes in Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto and then chaperoned on their journey westward.¹¹² Those who were employed near a GFSC branch were taken under the wing of local associates; the large number of girls who went to isolated districts were linked to the GFSC through correspondence. Society workers often commented on the atmosphere of autonomy and social latitude in Canada as compared with the mother country. Plunged into a novel and more liberal environment, GFS transplants were particularly pervious to the allure of drink and promiscuity. Therefore, as *Friendly Work* explained, the helping hand of the GFSC was of far-reaching importance in these circumstances: “They enjoy the freer life and the greater independence; but the G.F.S. is to them a great safeguard, for here, as, alas! everywhere, are many temptations for the young and thoughtless. Many of our girls are far from home and friends, and the kindly help given cannot be over-estimated.”¹¹³ An English member, who expressed gratitude for the assistance and kindness she received through commendation, reported to her home branch: “Tell them that out here the GFS is keeping heaps of girls from going to the bad, when they are too homesick and lonely, it gives them friends; tell them that is my experience.”¹¹⁴

¹¹²*Associates' Journal*, August 1911, p. 174.

¹¹³*Friendly Work*, September 1902, p. 142.

¹¹⁴*Associates' Journal*, January 1906, p. 2.

GFS/C women spoke repeatedly of the need for lodges and hostels to house self-supporting girls at a stage in life when they were most vulnerable to the temptations of a new and uncontrolled environment. They feared that, left to their own devices, most girls would surely be lost to the Church:

The moment is one of immense opportunity for the Church. There is little or no religious education at all in the State schools of Western Canada and the awful menace of secularism in the educational systems of so many of our colonies is one of the most dangerous signs of the times. The Roman Catholics and the Methodists in Regina (all honour to them) are carrying on strongly-supported movements on behalf of their girls, but a very large percentage of emigrants who go to Canada belong to the Church of England, and shall their Mother Church remain deaf to their pleadings, and let it be said of her—to her unspeakable shame that multitudes of these young sisters of Christ were strangers in a great city, and she took them *not* in? No! Let our eager desire to bring these girls under strong and wise Church influence, and to teach the teachers and the future MOTHERS of Canada the full faith of Christ, and how to achieve the highest ideals of womanhood and absolute purity of life, by the help of his own Sacramental Grace; and thus may we influence thousands of precious souls in the rising generations of the Empire.¹¹⁵

The shelter, guidance, religious influence, and social ties provided by supervised lodging were key elements in the effort to shepherd working girls into such Christian ways of living. However, GFS women believed that in this crucial area of commendation work, the Society was falling far short. In 1914 *Friendly Work* reported that out of the 62 hostels for women and girls in the whole dominion of Canada, only seven were the result of Church of England efforts, and out of these seven only four were operated by the GFS: two in Toronto, one in Winnipeg, and one at Lloydminster.¹¹⁶ The GFS was also associated with the All Saints Home in Edmonton and the Joyce Hostel in Kelowna. The former was opened in 1911 under

¹¹⁵*Friendly Work*, November 1912, p. 176.

¹¹⁶Thirty-nine of the 62 hostels were run by the YWCA. *Friendly Work*, January 1914, p. 46.

the auspices and rules of the Church of England to provide girls working in the city (both GFS and non-GFS, provided they were “respectable”) with lodging and religious influence.¹¹⁷ The latter was established in honour of Ellen Joyce in 1913 for the purpose of housing women of “refinement and education” who wished to settle in Canada’s western-most province.¹¹⁸ To this list was added the Mabel Martin Memorial Lodge, opened by the GFSC in Hamilton in 1919 as a memorial to the Society’s beloved war-time president.¹¹⁹ For a modest fee, these lodges provided young working women, convalescents, and transients with home-like accommodation and a community of friendship in what was otherwise an inhospitable working world.

A GFSC Holiday House in Hamilton, in operation from 1894, the Diocese of Ottawa Holiday House in Aylmer, Quebec,¹²⁰ and the summer camp at Grand Beach run by Winnipeg’s St. Cuthbert’s branch supplemented the work of lodges and hostels by giving working and invalid girls a chance to rest and recuperate on a healthful social vacation away from the demands of the workplace. GFSC Secretary, Miss Ethel Campbell, recognized the unique challenges faced by working women and

¹¹⁷*Friendly Work*, October 1911, p. 159.

¹¹⁸*Associates’ Journal*, August 1913, p. 18.

¹¹⁹Unsuccessful attempts were also made to establish GFS lodges and hostels in Montreal, London, Windsor (Ontario), and elsewhere. The most notable of these attempts was the bid to create the Princess Patricia Hostel in Regina, which preoccupied the English GFS from 1912 until well into the 1920s. Their plans fell through because the small numbers of the Canadian Society would not have been able to sustain a hostel in this city.

¹²⁰The Holiday House in Aylmer was not officially operated by the GFS, but it was used frequently by GFS members. It was purchased for the Anglican Cathedral under the leadership of Mrs. Lennox-Smith, who was a GFS Vice President. GFS members made use of the house for rest and recreation and assisted in the activities connected with the house, chiefly the annual garden party and Sunday afternoon teas.

how a holiday with the GFS could help to sustain both industry, with its need for healthy workers, and the careworn and friendless employee:

To many of these girls, the victims of poverty or of our modern industrial system, this brief summer holiday is the only time in the whole year in which they have a chance to cultivate the social side of their natures. Here, amid pleasant surroundings and congenial friends, the tired body becomes rested, jangled nerves become normal, and the girl experiences all the joys of social intercourse with others. The beneficial effect of such an experience, especially upon the girl in her 'teens, is incalculable. Her nature expands under its influence as a flower does in the sun, and she returns to her work refreshed in mind and body and with a broader view of life and its possibilities.¹²¹

GFS lodges and holiday houses drew women into the sphere of domesticity and religious influence by ministering to their physical, recreational, and spiritual needs. Through their libraries stocked with "pure" literature, regular religious services, daily prayer, and the moral guidance of matrons, they were "quietly influencing one here and another there to higher thoughts and nobler purpose."¹²²

The GFS/C's network of protected parties, welcome hostels, and branch contacts served as a means to control behaviour, but it also gave many girls the confidence to take advantage of the opportunities presented by life in a new land. A new member arriving in Vancouver admitted that the long trip from England was made possible by the help received by the GFS: "Indeed, I should never have had the courage to come so far had I not known there was a G.F.S. Branch here."¹²³ GFS connections also helped to ease new transplants into what could be lonely and bleak

¹²¹NAC, reel A-1191, file 16, Miss Ethel Campbell, "The Girls' Friendly Society," September 1918, p. 16.

¹²²AODAC, GFS, *Report of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1928, p. 20.

¹²³*Friendly Work*, September 1902, p. 142.

circumstances. One member reported back to her home associate about the social ties provided by the Society:

I am very pleased to say I have a nice situation as a companion-help; there are only four in family, and I find them very nice people to live with. I find it very cold out here, and we have a great deal of snow. I go to the St. George's G.F.S. Branch, and I find the ladies very nice indeed—it is so nice to have somewhere to go. I go down to the Emigration House when I have my evenings out, and I find Miss Drake and Miss Jeffries so nice—we are always sure of a welcome there. I have met a nice lot of girls who belong to the G.F.S. I have read the book you sent me, and I find it very true. I have passed it on to one of the girls who did not have one. I will keep it in dear remembrance of you.¹²⁴

The letter from a GFS member who settled in Manitou, Manitoba with her mother was also typical of the many grateful testimonials printed in *Friendly Work*: “I cannot tell you how glad I am that I belong to the G.F.S.; it has been such a help to me. The minister called to see mother the day after he received our letters and I joined the Bible class.”¹²⁵ Another wrote: “I often think of the G.F.S. Members over there [in England], and pray for them, and I know that you Associates and Members often think of us girls in a strange land, it helps to brighten up many in what would be a sad and lonely time.”¹²⁶

Notwithstanding the individual perceptions of GFS transplants, the Society's immigration practices helped to provide the cheap pool of female labour that was essential for the smooth operation of the capitalist economy in the early twentieth century. Society executives and propagandists reinforced women's primary role as

¹²⁴*Associates' Journal*, August 1905, p. 153.

¹²⁵*Friendly Work*, August 1916, pp. 116-17.

¹²⁶*Associates' Journal*, August 1905, p. 153.

household labourers to serve both their own need for servants and their belief in an inextricable connection between domesticity, imperialism, and progress. By steering women into traditional roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers, the GFS was indirectly supporting the partnership between capitalism and patriarchy. This partnership was based on the subordination of women's independence for the purpose of sustaining the reproductive function of the family unit in a capitalist economy.¹²⁷ The patriarchal family—complete with male wage-earner and female homemaker—was a central component of their vision of Canada and the empire.

Virtuous womanhood, which formed the moral basis of the ideal family, was celebrated as the fount of economic prosperity, national strength, moral order, and progress. “The girls of to-day are the mothers of to-morrow,” wrote GFSC Central Secretary, Ethel Campbell, “and in their hands lies to a great extent the future of our country. Can we, *dare* we, leave anything undone which will help these little sisters along the perilous paths so many of them must tread, and to enable them to attain the highest possible standard of womanly character?”¹²⁸ While girls were encouraged to cultivate their minds through a well-rounded education, marriage and motherhood were consistently held up as the ultimate goals of respectable young women. The *Associates' Journal* explained that “the primary idea for a woman in Canada is to be a good housewife, a good help-mate for a practical working husband. She is to be a girl,

¹²⁷Mary McIntosh. “The State and the Oppression of Women.” in *Feminism and Materialism*, ed. Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 255.

¹²⁸Campbell, “Girls' Friendly Society,” p. 7.

a natural girl, growing every day into a useful woman—a woman first, before she is a scholar.”¹²⁹ Similarly, an associate writing in *Friendly Work* insisted: “Nothing better can be wished for a girl than a good husband and a happy home.”¹³⁰

The GFS’s message of purity and imperial motherhood was disseminated through the activities of branch meetings, through the one-on-one relationship between associate and member, and through the Society’s Department of Literature.¹³¹ Using classes, retreats, leaflets, lectures, calendars, and periodicals, GFS associates in Canada encouraged members, both immigrants and native-born, to live a life of prayer and service and to adhere to the principles of modesty, dutifulness, temperance, and thrift. Character training was complemented by the cultivation of domestic and literary arts. Branches held exhibitions of home industries and central competitions offered prizes for art, essays, knitting, embroidery, and other needlework. The Society’s affiliation with the Canadian Association of Girl Guides promoted instruction in good citizenship. GFS Girl Guides companies trained girls in the habits of obedience, resourcefulness, and loyalty. Religious instruction, of course, was a constant factor in preparing for imperial motherhood. After all, one asked, “what will give them strength and fit them to be mothers of sons who will build up

¹²⁹*Associates’ Journal*, August 1910, p. 185.

¹³⁰*Friendly Work*, January 1916, p. 11.

¹³¹Associates and members met at four meetings per month—three for various kinds of Society work, and one for devotions or recreation.

the mighty Dominion of Canada, but the truth and teaching of Jesus...
 The GFS's purity work among girls was based on deep-seated ideas about
 individual sexual and social behaviour. As Mariana Valverde notes, "Physical and
 sexual hygiene—which were to a large extent in women's spheres—were the
 microcosmic foundation of the larger project of building a 'clean' nation."¹³² GFS
 workers were motivated by a firm belief that the shaping of individual moral
 behaviour would affect the character of national life. Girls were warned, especially, of
 the many dangers that could lead them astray: unprotected immigration, the white
 slave traffic, strangers (or, more specifically, "gutter-crawling motorists"), bad books,
 and the temptations of adolescent sexuality.¹³⁴ The centrepiece of their purity work,
 the Third Central Rule, stipulated that members must maintain a "virtuous
 character." Girls were obliged to relinquish their membership upon marriage or in the
 event of any offence that would tarnish their maidenhood.¹³⁵ In its own words, the
 GFS was a "society of virgins."¹³⁶ The rule was the subject of heated debate within
 the GFS and of disapproval from without. Critics argued that the rule was

¹³²T.G. Beal, Secretary of the Archbishops Western Canada Fund to GFS Central Council, *Workers' Journal*, February 1920, p. 23.

¹³³Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1800-1925* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), p. 29.

¹³⁴*Workers' Journal*, November 1928, p. 180. A pamphlet called *Warning to Girls: Forewarned is Forearmed* was distributed to GFS members. It warned girls about the dangers of speaking to strangers, asking for directions, loitering, and accepting food and drink and even smelling flowers offered by a stranger. AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G, file 12.

¹³⁵Some, however, stayed within the fold as GFS Married Helpers.

¹³⁶NAC, GFS, file 310, 1932-36, *The Proposed Alteration of the Central Rule of the GFS*

inconsistent with the Christian belief in God's forgiveness of sin. It required the awkward investigation of the reputation and private life of potential members. And, ultimately, it meant turning a blind eye to the girls who were in most need of help.¹³⁷ But proponents of the rule countered that the GFS could make the greatest mark on national life through moral *prevention*. Many other organizations were designed to focus on rescue work. As the Canadian Central Secretary put it: "We prefer to place a fence around the top of the cliff, rather than wait at the bottom with an ambulance."¹³⁸

The surrendering of the self and the control of internal appetites and impulses were the foundation of moral prevention. GFS members were counseled to put "God first, friends next, self last."¹³⁹ GFSC president, Miss Glassco, emphasized the need to teach candidates and members "to control their tempers, to control their natural desires in games..., to control their appetites for sweets, etc." These lessons, she believed, would give them strength when faced with "much more serious temptations of life."¹⁴⁰ Instead of focusing on what girls "mustn't do," the GFS/C tried to engage in the positive inculcation of ideals of integrity, restraint, and selflessness. Candidates learned these ideals in their 'Candidates' Hymn:

Little maidens must be holy,

¹³⁷NAC, reel A-1192, file 292. The Church of England Women's Help Society contrasted with the G.F.S., 1898.

¹³⁸Campbell, *Girls' Friendly Society*, p. 7.

¹³⁹"Girls Friendly Society," in *Yearbook of the National Council of Women of Canada*, 1922, p. 275.

¹⁴⁰AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1930, p. 8.

Pure in every thought;
By the precious blood of Jesus
Each one hath been bought.

Little maidens must be gentle,
Even in their play,
Modest in their words and ways,
Innocently gay.

Little maidens must be honest,
True in deed and word,
Fearing naught but sin and evil—
Servants of the Lord.

Little maidens must be helpful,
Fly at mother's call,
Swift and joyous as the sunbeams,
Shining bright on all.¹⁴¹

Members learned these ideals through study circles on appropriate dress, duty to parents, and service to others and through the repetition of prayer: "O Almighty Lord, and Everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments."¹⁴² GFS periodical literature continually reminded members of the larger significance of these principles:

The British race and the British Empire has one of the biggest contributions to make towards the good of mankind. This contribution cannot rightly be made unless its citizens recognize their duties. Girls and women are beginning to have this charge laid upon them. It involves, not Imperial self-glorification, but service and self-giving; its watchwords should be, as the watchwords of the Empire Day Movement: 'Responsibility, Duty, Sympathy, Self-sacrifice.'¹⁴³

The Literature Department was instrumental in imparting the values of the

¹⁴¹This is the first four verses of the "G.F.S. Candidates' Hymn," loose paper. AODAC.

¹⁴²AODAC, GFS, *Office of the Girls' Friendly Society*, p. 7. T.G. Beal, Secretary of the AWCF, to GFS Central Council. *Workers' Journal*, February 1920, p. 23.

¹⁴³*Workers' Journal*, September 1928, p. 148.

GFS to its young members. It promoted a taste for “acceptable” literature, and steered young women away from the “insidious poison” of “silly trash” novels.¹⁴⁴ Pure, uplifting literature was regarded as an important tool for socialization, for, in the words of the *Associates’ Journal*, “girls [are] made or marred...by what they read.”¹⁴⁵ Reading good, wholesome books was encouraged in GFS/C clubs and recreation rooms, through festival bookstalls, and GFS approved book lists. GFS/C branches regularly sent letters and reading material to invalid or isolated members. Included in the list of publications recommended by the department in 1889 were the following: *Maidens of Scripture*, *Modest Maidens*, *Daughters at Home*, *Loyal Maidens*, *Girls’ Book of Prayers and Hymns*, and *Thoughts on the Marriage Service*.¹⁴⁶ GFSC president, Mrs. Wood, encouraged the circulation of principled books, believing that “surely if we fill the mind with good thoughts they will crowd out evil imaginations.”¹⁴⁷

The dutiful woman was glorified in the writings of Charlotte Yonge, an author, philanthropist, and one of the earliest associates in the Girls’ Friendly Society. Pieces by her or about her appeared frequently in GFS periodicals. In Yonge’s *The Clever Woman of the Family* Ermine Williams, the girl who shows the patience and stoicism of a “superior character” is contrasted with the independent

¹⁴⁴*Friendly Work*, December 1890, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵*Associates’ Journal*, August 1904, p. 131.

¹⁴⁶NAC, reel A-1199, GFS, Minutes of the Reading Committee, 1889, p. 160 .

¹⁴⁷“Women’s Work with Social Reform—Preventive Work.” *Women Workers of Canada: Annual Report of the National Council of Women of Canada*, April 1894, p. 125.

and impulsive Rachel Curtis, who eventually abandons her “high flown schemes” to “become an excellent wife and mother.” In other stories, Ethel May and Helen Fotheringham, who sacrificed romance and health for the care of an aging father and grandfather, epitomized the character of duty and selflessness encouraged by the GFS.¹⁴⁸ One “sweet girl” reported to GFSC president, Mrs. Wood, about the transformative powers of one of Yonge’s tales: “I have felt so much better for the last month, and really my work has not seemed nearly so hard, because I have been reading in the evenings the book you lent me, and it has made everything seem brighter.”¹⁴⁹

The GFS/C also celebrated real life girls as models of maidenly virtue. Mrs. A.L. Skinner, GFSC Secretary of the New Westminster Branch told the story of a “gentle, quiet, little woman,” named Elizabeth, who felt the friendly touch of the GFSC from her arrival from England until her untimely death. The GFSC received her upon her landing in Vancouver, assisted her in preparing for her wedding, visited her faithfully as she lay dying in hospital, purchased a hospital chair for her comfort, prayed with her in her final days, and followed her to her “last resting place in God’s Acre.” Through it all, Elizabeth was a loyal exemplar of the GFS’s ideal of true womanhood. She worked hard “beyond her strength” to perform her household duties. She sustained her faith in God in the weary hours of pain and weakness. And, to the end, she kept in touch with her old GFS branch in Manchester. “I love to hear

¹⁴⁸*Workers’ Journal*, October 1928, p. 171.

¹⁴⁹“Women’s Work with Social Reform—Preventive Work.” p. 125.

of the G.F.S.," she said one day; "it seems to belong to the best and happiest things of my life." Her story taught "a lesson of duty done, of pain patiently borne, of faith in the Eternal Love of God, and of love for the Society to which we all belong." It also showed the rewards of support and friendship such virtues could bring.¹⁵⁰

The GFS confronted the changing status of women in the early twentieth century—access to higher education and the professions, increased labour-force and political participation, declining birth rates¹⁵¹—by celebrating the independence of the "new woman," while at the same time preserving the familiar definition of "true" womanhood. GFS periodicals reminded readers that "wifehood and motherhood are the best and most beautiful blessings that can come to any woman. No work, no profession, no independence, can ever really be to her what these are, the perfect fulfillment of perfect womanhood."¹⁵² The assumption that any female bold enough to scorn the essence of her femininity proved herself "to be no true woman" set up differences between those who were worthy of the claim to womanhood and those who were not.¹⁵³ Along with the Society's training in selflessness, service, duty, and domesticity, this assumption pulled back on the reigns of feminist consciousness and promoted the normalization of woman as wife and mother. In their view of gender relations, women could demand respect from men only if they cultivated the qualities

¹⁵⁰*Friendly Work*, August 1904, p. 124.

¹⁵¹See Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 2d ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996), chapters 5-8.

¹⁵²*Girls' Quarterly*, April 1900, pp. 35-6.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

worthy of such respect: modesty, piety, sobriety, and moral virtue.

At the same time, the discourse of maternal imperialism infused women's domestic roles with national significance. At a time of swift technological development, waves of human migration, and international conflict, the GFS saw morality as the basis for any future national growth. Hence they saw themselves as performing the most essential service to the state—the upbuilding of temperate, self-restrained, and selfless womanhood. “If we fall short,” an article in *Friendly Work* warned, “we cannot but lower the moral standard of the nation.”¹⁵⁴

In an even larger sense, GFS women believed they were helping to transform the world by infusing it with the feminine qualities of sympathy, compassion, and care.¹⁵⁵ The turmoil of mass migrations, war, industrial development, urban growth, and other dislocations of modernity, created a need, in their view, for the nurturing capacities of women as never before.¹⁵⁶ The GFS motto, “bear ye one another's burdens” was celebrated as the “golden cord which circles the whole civilized world, binding loving hearts together, and proving by acts of self devotion, how much one sister can do for another, and so bringing into active service for others' good, that sympathy and tender thoughtfulness, which else might never have been brought to

¹⁵⁴*Friendly Work*, February 1915, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵The GFS saw themselves, as they reported in the *Canadian Churchman*, as a “great band of earnest, loving-hearted women and girls, who, with the daily prayer upon their lips, the law of kindness on their tongues, and loving hands stretched out to help and support weaker sisters, bids well to become one of the greatest unions for good in the Catholic Church of Christ.” *Canadian Churchman* quoted in *Friendly Work*, October 1903, p. 159.

¹⁵⁶On the connection between imperialism and anti-modernism see Donald Wright, “W.D. Lighthall and David Ross McCord: Antimodernism and English-Canadian Imperialism, 1880s-1918,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, 2 (Summer 1997): 134-153.

light.”¹⁵⁷ Undoubtedly, the GFS engaged in many acts of genuine kindness and sympathy. A GFSC member who lost most of her skin in a factory accident, for example, was saved by skin courageously donated by members of her branch.¹⁵⁸ At the foundation of their work was an appeal to women of all classes to use the humanizing and softening influences of motherhood to make the world a better place for all. The discourse of motherhood had the most enduring potential to create a unitary sisterhood among women of differing backgrounds, including those women who bore no children of their own: “The great heart of motherhood beats in sympathy for those around it,” *Friendly Work* reminded its readers, “and the spirit of motherhood is found in many a woman who has never pressed a child of her own to her breast.”¹⁵⁹ These actions and beliefs were underpinned by what Carol Gilligan has described as an “ethic of responsibility and care.”¹⁶⁰ For the GFS (like the IODE, the Girl Guides, and other maternalist women’s organizations), this ethic of care promised great transformative agency, but it entailed a selflessness that muted any potential for authentic power.

¹⁵⁷“Report of the Girls’ Friendly Society in Canada.” in *Women Workers of Canada, The Yearbook of the National Council of Women*. April 1894, p. 45.

¹⁵⁸*Friendly Work*, December 1905, pp. 182-3.

¹⁵⁹*Friendly Work*, August 1910, p. 98.

¹⁶⁰Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). Gilligan analyzes the ethical and political implications of difference feminism. See also for this approach: Sara Ruddick, “Maternal Thinking,” *Feminist Studies* 6, 3 (Summer 1980): 342-67; Jean Bethke Elshtain, “Antigone’s Daughters,” *Democracy* 2 (April 1982): 46-59; and Eva Feder Kittay and Diana T. Meyers, eds., *Women and Moral Theory* (Totowa, N.J.: Roman and Littlefield, 1987). Like Gilligan I do not suppose that an ethic of care is part of a separate female moral system rooted in biology. Rather, “given prevailing socialization patterns and the traditional position of women in the family, certain values are woven more deeply into the fabric of women’s everyday lives than men’s.” Stephen White, *Political Theory and Postmodernism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 97.

The theories and practices of the GFS's crusade for purity tell us more about the mind set of social imperialism than about how they were received by the girls themselves. In the words of Adele Perry, "the chasm between representations of white women in high imperial discourse and the social practices of white working-class women in [the] colonial setting could be large indeed."¹⁶¹ While GFS periodicals are filled with gratitude-laden testimonials from members who availed themselves of GFS services, there is also some evidence of dissatisfaction, resistance, and even rebellion. GFS immigrants to Canada, and indeed all who migrated under the protection of supervised parties, represented only a small fraction of the total immigration of women, which indicates that many travelers may have preferred the freedom of an unchaperoned voyage. The complaints of a "Guild Girl," traveling under the protection of the Domestic Women's Guild in 1912, gives an impression of the aversion felt by some migrants to the restrictions of assisted passage :

We all wondered if we were coming to a civilized country, for we were brought from the ship as though we were prisoners, and had to sit in a room, and hardly dared move, let alone speak. We were not allowed to bid goodbye to our friends we had made during the voyage, and in fact I think they thought we were heathens. Several passengers passed the remark as we were driven as cattle.¹⁶²

The rapid turnover in domestic service indicates that GFS/C members were able to, and did indeed, express their dissatisfaction and preferences by changing jobs. As Claudette Lacelle has noted, "People in service had a sovereign remedy when

¹⁶¹Perry, "Fair Ones of a Purer Caste," p. 517.

¹⁶²Letter to the Superintendent of Immigration, 1912 in *The Proper Sphere*, ed. Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 193.

ill-treated—they changed employers.”¹⁶³ Some simply refused to do the work that was demanded of them. One dismayed associate wrote: “I saw girls who had come out with a view to taking service in British Columbia, and yet were going straight home because they would not help the mother with her little ones. Such folly is degrading and it makes one ashamed of one’s English girls, and, does much harm to their credit in the West.”¹⁶⁴ One of the frequent complaints among GFSC workers was that weak-boned English girls were ill-suited for the rigours of domestic service in the Canadian west. Frontier families required general servants who were willing to put their hand to whatever needed doing, including child care, cooking, hauling water, and working in the fields. Many English girls came under the false assumption that they would perform the more genteel labour required of the less burdened “lady help.” When faced with less appealing placements, some English girls wasted little time making the decision to return home.

GFSC complaints about the quality of early English emigrants indicate that GFS girls did not always agree to conform to the Society’s strict standards of conduct. In 1884, GFSC president, Mrs. Body, complained to the Central Council in England: “When the Canadian Council sanctioned the reception of girls they supposed that only G.F.S. girls of proved good character would have been sent, but others have come with them and have been both troublesome and expensive to the Society. Some of the G.F.S. girls have been exceedingly satisfactory, but others quite

¹⁶³Lacelle, p. 131.

¹⁶⁴*Friendly Work*, December 1905, pp. 182-3.

the reverse."¹⁶⁵ A GFSC Central Council resolution, written in 1885, expressed similar dissatisfaction:

the Council & Advisory Board....positively refuse to receive into the Canadian Society, as a member of the GFS any girl emigrated under the auspices of the GFS Emigration Committee. Furthermore, not only as GFS workers, but as loyal Canadians, they emphatically protest against the character of the emigration work as conducted by the Revd J. Bridger (to whose protection G.F.S. emigrating members are consigned) & his co-workers.¹⁶⁶

As each member held on her shoulders the reputation of the world-wide Society, individual acts of licentiousness were regarded as a serious embarrassment. It is possible that Canadian demands for tighter controls on the quality of immigrants may be part of the reason for formation of the BWEA, which quickly developed far more stringent regulations for the selection of migrants.

Also, GFSC members may have engaged more fully with local branch activities than with the larger, imperial themes of the Society. The wide range of topics and activities covered by branch classes, talks, socials, and practical work—domestic science, art, Shakespeare, gymnastics, first aid, nursing, gardening, fancy work, devotions, plays, bazaars, central competitions, mother-daughter banquets, basketball, visiting the sick, and charity—provided girls with opportunities for self-development. The Society was, in its own words, “an association for the discovery of

¹⁶⁵NAC, reel A-1188. GFS Minutes and Reports. Mrs. Body, GFSC President, to Central Council, 16 October 1884, p. 162.

¹⁶⁶NAC, RG 17, vol. 462 50480, file 3, Department of Agriculture records.

buried talents.”¹⁶⁷ Ultimately, members had the power to decide what they wished to take from the GFS and what they wished to ignore.

Just as the reception of GFS principles and services by members was far from uniform, the Society itself was not a completely homogeneous or static entity. There is ample evidence that the GFS’s nation-building schemes in Canada were orchestrated, in large part, by the mother Society. Canadian branches, while they were undoubtedly influenced by the larger imperial framework of the Society, were also preoccupied with their own, more localized, concerns and activities. Moreover, GFS papers indicate some antagonism between the GFSC and the English Society, especially in the post-war period when the organization was strained by poor growth, internal divisions over the Third Central Rule, and increased criticism from its contemporaries. The Imperial Secretary noted in 1920, for example, that the GFSC was “not very keen on the scheme” to build the Princess Patricia Hostel in Regina, a project in which English associates were passionately involved.¹⁶⁸ By the end of the 1920s the English Society was expressing, through correspondence, considerable concern about the lack of documentation and GFSC support regarding the sites purchased through the Archbishop’s Western Canada Fund.

The GFS/C came into being, evolved, and declined in accordance with a changing ideological climate. The years before the First World War were the GFS/C’s most dynamic period of growth. During this time, the strong emotional attachment

¹⁶⁷Quoted in Harrison, p. 22.

¹⁶⁸NAC, reel A-1191, GFS Correspondence and Papers, 1912-1918, Canada, GFS Imperial Secretary to Mrs. Hay, 20 February 1920.

to Great Britain among English Canadians and the strength of evangelicalism and popular religiosity created a social milieu that was open to the Society's civilizing and Christianizing work. During these years, the discourse of maternal imperialism provided a credible and inspiring role for women in building a nation that was worthy of its status as a privileged daughter of the British empire.

The war itself brought a renewed sense of mission among GFS associates. GFSC branches threw themselves into the campaign for greater food production by participating in fruit picking and light farm work. They produced vast quantities of needlework for the Red Cross and Regimental Supplies, and raised money for the war effort through teas and sales. Believing the real meaning of history to be the gradual revelation of God's purpose for the world, the GFS saw the war as an apocalyptic metaphor for the forces of good and evil. More than a material struggle, the war was a battle of Godliness against the "perverted will, which has rejected Christ and has proclaimed the triumph of the Corsican."¹⁶⁹ It was a searchlight, which would illuminate both the social evils that needed uprooting and the spiritual forces that were necessary for world peace. The *Associates' Journal* explained that Canada was an ideological battlefield on which these conflicts were played out:

The splendid loyalty of the British Canadians, their instant rally at the beginning of the war, their splendid heroism, their sustained courage, are applauded wherever the English tongue is spoken. But there is a large foreign population in Canada—they did not join up...there are fifty-two foreign nationalities existing in Canada; ..the shortage of British teachers is so great that foreigners are employed as teachers, some Germans, Austrians, Russians, and other nationalities; and many of these teachers are without pronounced religious opinions or are antagonistic and worldly-wise... Germans, Prussians,

¹⁶⁹*Associates' Journal—Supplement*, June 1915, p. 6.

Austrians, Russians, such teachers will work with the bitter sound of war ringing in their ears; they will bring the young Western Canadians up to hate Britons and Canadians with the hatred of Huns.¹⁷⁰

GFS/C women believed there was no time in the world's history or in the history of the dominion when there was more need for the Society's uplifting and stabilizing hand. As an indication of its optimism, the GFSC became federally incorporated in 1918. It was given a boost of support in 1920 when the General Synod of the Church in Canada affiliated the GFS with its Council of Social Service. The GFS thus became "an agency of the Church of Canada for social and preventative work." The Council took responsibility for the salary and traveling expenses of the GFSC Organizing Secretary, which provided the Society with the financial relief and official recognition necessary to carry on its work in the stormy days of the interwar period.¹⁷¹ This turn of events marked the beginning of a shift in the GFSC's organizational frame of reference, one that reflected the GFSC's increasing concern for Canadian over British interests.

In many ways the 1920s was a decade of transition. Emerging from the furore of the First World War, Canadians reassessed their position within the British empire, their relationship with the United States, and their status on the international stage. Out of a growing sense of nationalism, and through the leadership of a new prime minister, Canada achieved, by 1931, political autonomy as part of the Commonwealth of Nations. In the same period, social, demographic, and

¹⁷⁰ *Associates' Journal*, June 1918, p. 75.

¹⁷¹ *Workers' Journal*, September 1920, p. 167.

economic changes initiated a process that would transfigure Canadian society significantly. Immigration, which dramatically altered the country's racial and ethnic composition, combined with the cultural invasion by the United States through the popular media to resurrect concerns about Canada's cultural identity. For the first time, more Canadians lived in urban than in rural areas. Punctuated by the recessions of 1920 and 1923, Canada's economy was gradually shifting from the resource and manufacturing sectors toward the service industry; and the growth of corporate capitalism and the emergence of the welfare state signified the increasing intervention of business and government into the lives of "ordinary" Canadians. Once the backbone of public relief and of the moral regulation of society, the social reform movement began to decline in the 1920s, giving way to the professionalization of social services and the rise of state welfare.

The tides of change and circumstance were not easily weathered by the Girls' Friendly Society. The Society's founder, Mary Elizabeth Townsend, died in 1918. In the year 1919-20 most Canadian branches suspended their activities because of the influenza epidemic and a widespread shortage of coal. Ellen Joyce retired as Central Head of the Migration Department in 1920. Her successor, Lady Bertha Dawkins, was far less passionate about the Society's imperialistic function. After enduring ten years of blindness, GFSC founder and long-time president, Mrs. Wood, died in 1925. The younger generation, to which she passed on the torch of leadership, struggled to sustain the organization in the face of declining numbers and the gradual loss of a unifying purpose.

The strong connection between imperialism and maternalism, which sustained and legitimized GFS/C work, began to soften at the close of the war. The jingoism of GFS/C imperial rhetoric became less palatable as nationalism, secularism, and egalitarianism began to take hold in the interwar period. As the ideological tenor shifted, the Society attempted to survive by adopting a more secular and less imperialistic tone. It focused more attention on the practical considerations of employment and lodging, and less on the spiritual aspects of their work. GFS/C leaders spoke of imperialism less as an aggressive, patriotic enterprise and more as the extending of care and benevolence to the colonies. GFSC women began to show more of an interest in the promotion of national, rather than imperial, pride. In the 1930s, after years of debate and in a final attempt to save the Society, the GFSC distinguished itself from mother Society by altering its rule requiring chastity as a qualification for membership. But as the fervour of imperialism gave way to a more temperate Canadian nationalism, as state welfare took over the social services hitherto provided by women's voluntary organizations, and as the ideology of separate spheres became eroded by the achievements of the women's movement, the Girls' Friendly Society became increasingly anachronistic.

By the 1930s the Canadian Central Council could not hide its pessimistic outlook for the Society's future. Although a handful of branches reported recruiting new candidates, overall membership was declining. In 1930 the GFSC rolls were as follows: 28 branches, 45 honorary associates, 155 working associates, 490 members, 406 candidates, 59 married helpers, and 67 probationers. As immigration slowed

with economic decline. GFS commendations were reduced to a trickle of 65 in 1930.¹⁷² The small number of immigrants arriving at the port of Quebec hardly warranted the dispatch of a GFSC social service worker. At this time only one parish, St. Jude's in Winnipeg, reported active companies of Girl Guides.¹⁷³ In 1933 GFSC president, Miss Glassco, admitted that the Society was "neither growing in numbers nor in enthusiasm."¹⁷⁴ Such a state of decline and disarray led the council to turn down the Imperial Committee's offer to finance an organizing worker for Canada as a hopeless undertaking.¹⁷⁵

Although the vision of womanhood promoted by GFS/C women was one of selflessness, purity, and domestic duty, their belief in the power of women as agents of social change must not be overlooked by those in search of sites of transition in the construction of gender. In spite of the GFS/C's conservative social agenda, it deserves recognition as part of a larger women's movement that sought power for women within the boundaries of patriarchy and imperialism. Otherwise confined by social convention to the gardens and drawing rooms of their upper-class homes, the

¹⁷²AODAC, GFS, *Report of Work of the Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, 1930, p. 15.

¹⁷³The "flourishing Guide Company" at St. Jude's Church in Winnipeg boasted a roll of 65 members. The church's pack of 48 Brownies was also officered by members of the GFS. AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G, file 7, *Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Central Council, 8 November 1935, p. 3. By 1937, the Council was expressing interest again in promoting its affiliation with the Guides Association. AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G, file 7, *Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Central Council, 5 November 1937, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G, file 7 *Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Central Council, 18 November 1933, p. 2.

¹⁷⁵By 1937, in the last GFSC annual report that I was able to locate, the Council expressed some optimism that an organizing tour might be possible with the help of the Girl Guides. AODAC, GFS, vol. 460 G, file 7, *Girls' Friendly Society in Canada*, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Central Council, 5 November 1937, p. 3.

leaders of the GFS/C were able to exploit growing fears of secularization, feminism, and racial degeneration to create public careers for themselves. Using the credentials of moral leadership, devout religiosity, and upper-class respectability, they, along with a host of other women's reform organizations, provided companionship, spiritual uplift, and practical services for young women at a time when state welfare was in its infancy. As Brian Harrison points out in his 1973 article on the Girls' Friendly Society, "women's emancipation should not be seen solely in terms of feminist history."¹⁷⁶ While maternal imperialists, like the women of the GFS/C, did not seek the vote, campaign for equal rights, or critique patriarchal social structures, they were nonetheless involved in the more subtle redefinition of "woman" as a functioning "citizen."

The GFS/C associates themselves were by no means downtrodden women. They set a powerful example through a profound belief in their own social agency, and they celebrated Christian womanhood as the source of truth, morality, and progress in the world. Canadian GFS president, Mrs. Wood, hoped that women would "realize the great power which God has given us, and then humbly but actively use the power of personal influence in His service and for the good of our country, in order to protect the weak, and uphold the needless and uncertain steps that are already slipping over the brink."¹⁷⁷ At a time when Canada and the empire were thought to be at a defining historical moment, this was perceived to be a crucial role.

¹⁷⁶Harrison, p. 121.

¹⁷⁷"Women's Work with Social Reform—Preventive Work," p. 125.

Faced with a pervasive ideology of gender difference, GFS/C propagandists constructed women as mothers of the race, thereby exploiting women's unique qualities as the foundation for civilization and imperial growth. They drew upon existing discourses of race, class, and womanhood to claim a public role as the mothers of an imaginary, universal, imperial Christian family. By drawing connections between domesticity, motherhood, and imperial destiny, the GFS/C demonstrated the inseparability of private and public life and the inescapably gendered nature of nation and empire.

Undeniably, the GFS/C offered a level of status and freedom for those girls who were willing to take on the characteristics and behaviours of polite society. Promoting high standards for sexual morality and intellectual achievement, the Society instilled confidence and self-respect in an elite group of working girls. Its employment registries and protected emigration parties provided safe, respectable employment in Canada and other colonies; its lodges and hostels furnished inexpensive accommodations for working girls away from home; and its sponsorship of professional examinations for "home helps" elevated the status of domestic service.¹⁷⁸ The GFS/C provided girls with the skills they would need to function effectively within the prevailing ideology of domesticity.

But clearly the women of the GFS/C defined themselves in opposition to working-class women and the indigenous populations of the colonies to which they sent missionaries. Their public identity was built on the assertion of their superiority

¹⁷⁸For details of the GFS's work in these areas see Heath-Stubbs, *Friendship's Highway*.

over “self-indulgent” working girls, over motherless children, and over the “downtrodden” peoples of the empire. The Society’s non-critical engagement with the project of imperial expansion, and the assumptions of racial superiority that went with it, sustained the empire as an acceptable paradigm of rule. Mrs. Joyce proudly claimed credit for the GFS in contributing to the “solidification of the Empire.”¹⁷⁹ Despite their position on the periphery of Greater Britain, GFSC women, through their strong connections with their English parent society, were also implicated in this process. For the Society in both Canada and England, class interests, and even ethnic loyalty (though perhaps less conspicuously), frequently overrode allegiances along the lines of gender. Protecting class and ethnic interests was intimately connected to a deeply held concern about the destiny of the nation and empire. By extension, these loyalties were a crucial component in the making of history and in ensuring the progressive evolution of the world. To this end, young women were shepherded into modes of thought and behaviour that bolstered the ideal of the Christian family as the nation’s greatest asset.

¹⁷⁹*Associates’ Journal*, August 1900, p. 180.

Chapter Six

King Solomon's Virtuous Women and Socrates's Loyal Brotherhood: The Socialization of Youth for Empire in the Canadian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, 1909-1930

"The building of a nation finds its foundations in its boys and girls."¹

Both the IODE and the Girls' Friendly Society of Canada saw in the Girl Guides an ideal opportunity to affirm women's relationship with the nation through the construct of imperial motherhood. At a time when sectarian youth groups, like the Canadian Girls in Training and the Trail Rangers, were gaining popularity, Guiding, initiated in 1909 as an outgrowth of an English-born movement, provided an outlet for a more imperialistic programme of training in citizenship.² A comparison of the early years of the Canadian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts complements previous chapters by providing further insight into the gendered nature of citizenship and nation-building.³ Despite their widespread appeal, Guiding and Scouting in Canada have attracted very little scholarly attention.⁴ Elsewhere historians have generally

¹*The Canadian Boy*, February 1922, p. 105.

²The first Guide company in Canada was formed in St. Catherines, Ontario in 1909 but was officially registered in 1910.

³The Girl Guides organization developed out of the all-male Boy Scouts movement: therefore, it is necessary to include the Scouts in this chapter as a point of contrast.

⁴Bonnie MacQueen, "Domesticity and Discipline: The Girl Guides in British Columbia," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays On the History Of Women's Work In British Columbia*, ed. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), pp. 222-235. Most publications relating to the Canadian Guides and Scouts are conventional organizational histories. See, for example, Marita Robinson, *Celebration: 75 Years of Challenge and Change* (Montreal: Grosvenor House Press, 1984); Robert Milks, *75 Years of Scouting in Canada* (Ottawa: National Boy Scouts Association, 1981); Nancy Bowden Hutchins, *Guides, All Guides: A History of Guiding in Nova Scotia, 1911-1977* (Halifax: McCurdy Print, 1977); *I Promise: A History of the Girl Guides in Alberta* (Edmonton: Girl Guides of Canada, Alberta Council, 1984); Edith Woolliams, *Boots, Tents, and Mini-skirts: Girl Guides in Calgary* (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975); *Echoes: A History of Girl Guides in Chinook Area* (Lethbridge, Alta.: Chinook

studied Guiding and Scouting separately.⁵ None have seized the opportunity presented by these organizations to view the relationship between citizenship and gender difference up close. Through an examination of the handbooks, administrative records, and propaganda of the Guides and Scouts from 1909 to 1930, this chapter will suggest that the socialization of youth for empire operated, through gendered sets of patriotic symbols, rituals, and imagery, to construct the male as the forward looking adventurer/protector/arms bearer and the female as the timeless mother of the “imperial race.” It also illustrates the complex interplay of gender, imperialism, nationalism, and internationalism in the interwar period.

The Boy Scout movement, founded in Britain in 1908, was conceived as a remedy for the poor health and slovenliness of a generation of urban-born youth. Its founder, Robert Baden-Powell, had intended, through the publication of *Scouting for*

Area Trefoil Guild. 1988); Katherine Panabaker. *The Story of the Girl Guides in Ontario* (Toronto: Girl Guides of Canada. Ontario Council, 1966); Herb Suplis, ed. *Scouting in Calgary: Boy Scout Group Activities (1910-1974)* (Calgary: Century Calgary Pubs., 1975); and *History of Sherbrooke District, 1912-1982. 75th Anniversary of World Scouting, 1907-1982* (Sherbrooke: Boy Scouts of Canada, Sherbrooke District, 1982).

⁵ Elisabeth Israels Perry, “From Achievement to Happiness: Girl Scouting in Middle Tennessee, 1910s-1960s.” *Journal of Women’s History* 5, 2 (Fall 1993): 75-94; Allen Warren. “‘Mothers for the Empire’? The Girl Guides Association in Britain, 1909-1939.” in J.A. Mangan. *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 106-9; J.O. Springhall, “Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future?” *English Historical Review* 102 (October 1987): 934-43; Robert H. MacDonald. *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (New York: Pantheon, 1984); and David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). Exceptions are Allen Warren, “Citizens of the Empire: Baden-Powell, Scouts and Guides and an Imperial Ideal, 1900-40,” in *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880-1960*, ed. John MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 232-255; Anne Summers, “Scouts, Guides and VADs: A Note in Reply to Allen Warren.” *English Historical Review* 102 (October 1987): 943-947; and Allen Warren, “Baden-Powell: A Final Comment.” *English Historical Review* 102 (October 1987): 948-50. Gender, however, is not a central category of analysis in these articles.

Boys in 1908, to bolster the character, moral fortitude, and loyalty of young boys, who would then become efficient recruits for the British empire.

Scouting was brought to Canada from England by Methodist and Anglican clergymen who promoted Scouting as a healthy form of leisure for Canadian boys.⁶ It grew in popularity, quickly earning the sponsorship of churches, schools, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, and YMCA locals across the country. The federal government supported the Boy Scouts through an annual grant of \$5,000, which it increased to \$15,000 after 1922. Scout leadership was composed of prominent military figures, businessmen, and politicians: the governor general held the position of Chief Scout, the Gooderhams, Eatons, and Pellatts were among its patrons, and the prime minister and provincial lieutenant governors made up its advisory council. By 1920 Scout membership in Canada had reached almost 23,000. By the end of the decade the Chief Commissioner was pleased to report that in “a number of communities every boy of Scout age belongs to a troop and in many other places one boy out of every four is a Scout or a Cub.”⁷

Scouting became a popular form of education in Canadian and imperial citizenship. Using *Scouting for Boys* and after 1911 *The Canadian Boy Scout* handbook as their guide, local Scout leaders—often teachers, ex-military officers, and clergymen—encouraged boys to fulfil their civic duty through the refinement of their

⁶Milks, p. 10.

⁷National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC], MG 28, I 73, vol. 2, file 1, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Dominion Council, Boy Scouts of Canada, 31 May 1928, p. 16.

moral, physical, and military prowess. Canadian Scouts joined thousands of other boys throughout the empire in their promise to do their duty to God and the King and to obey the Scout law:

A Scout's honour is to be trusted; A Scout is loyal to the King, his country, his officers, his parents, his employers and to those under him; A Scout's duty is to be useful and to help others; A Scout is a friend to all and a brother to every other Scout; A Scout is courteous; A Scout is a friend to animals; A Scout obeys orders of his parents, patrol leader, or Scoutmaster without question; A Scout smiles and whistles under all difficulties; A Scout is thrifty; A Scout is clean in thought, word and deed.⁸

Scout camps, rallies, parades, and badge work were designed to reinforce these ideals and to shape young, Canadian boys into men.

Initially girls were not included in B-P's grand scheme of character building through woodcraft and training in citizenship. Imitating their brother Scouts, however, thousands of girls had already read *Scouting for Boys*, had fashioned their own uniforms, and had taken to the woods with their staves and paper badges by the time the Scouts gathered for their first rally in London, England in 1909.⁹ Mary McDougal, one of Canada's earliest Guides, recalled that she and her three boy cousins pored over a copy of *Scouting for Boys* given to them by an English girl who had come to Canada. On the Royal Military Grounds where the boys lived, they carried out the manual's instructions:

We lit fires, we tied our knots, we went looking for nature study. I even had a bugle to blow when we marched up and down. We were given khaki shirts and

⁸NAC. MG 28. I 73, vol. 2, file 3. Executive Minutes, Boy Scouts of Canada, 28 November 1929.

⁹"Girl Guides—What They Are." *Nanaimo Daily Herald*, 15 July 1914. All news clippings in this chapter come from NAC. MG 28, I 290, vol. 14. *Girl Guides of Canada: Our First Fifty Years* (Scrapbook).

hats by the father of one of the boys.... And we made paper badges, *first-class* paper badges, and we had been given cheesecloth scarves that we tied around our necks. And of course, we had our whistles.... We really had fun!¹⁰

Confronted with the prospect of “tomboy” girls bringing discredit to his infant Scout movement, Baden-Powell enlisted the help of his sister Agnes in writing instructions for a separate girls organization called Girl Guides. These instructions, which appeared in the form of *Pamphlet A* and *Pamphlet B* in 1909, *How Girls Can Help Build Up the Empire* in 1912, and *Girl Guiding*, which was written by B-P himself in 1918, formed the basis of Guiding in Canada until the 1930s.¹¹

By the time word of the new arrangements for girls had reached Canada, girl scouts had already set up camp in towns and rural communities across the country.¹² Led by the wives of Canada’s prominent professionals and industrialists, and supported by various organizations, including the IODE, the GFS, the WCTU, the YWCA, and the Dominion Order of the King’s Daughters, the new Girl Guides

¹⁰Robinson, p. 7.

¹¹Girl Guides of Canada Ontario Council Archives [hereafter OCA], R. Baden-Powell, *Pamphlet A: A Suggestion for Character Training for Girls* (1909) and *Pamphlet B: A Suggestion for Character Training for Girls* (1909); Ottawa Area Guides Archives [hereafter OAGA], Agnes Baden-Powell and Robert Baden-Powell, *How Girls Can Help Build Up the Empire: The Handbook for Girl Guides* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1912) and Robert Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding: A Handbook for Guidelets, Guides, Rangers, and Guiders* (London: Arthur Pearson, 1925, 1st pub. 1918).

¹²The first Guide company was formed in St. Catherines, Ontario in 1909; the second was formed in Toronto in 1910. Later that year companies were formed in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Due to the lack of early documentation, it is impossible to know how many unregistered Guides were scouting on their own at this time. OAGA, *Historical Sketch of Guiding in Canada* (Canadian Council of the Guides Association, 1940), p. 1. See also “Girl Guides—What They Are.” *Nanaimo Daily Herald*, 15 July 1914.

Association grew to 28,700 members in 1929.¹³ That year, the Chief Commissioner estimated that since its inception in 1909 at least 38,000 Canadian girls had come under the influence of Guiding.¹⁴ Guide leaders hoped that such influence would mould girls into loyal and productive citizens, sound in mind, body, and character, willing to serve others, and capable of keeping good homes.¹⁵

Within the themes of this dissertation, Guiding and Scouting are significant as a movement that, like the IODE and the Girls' Friendly Society, was rooted in a British ideological framework. Like the GFSC, the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts of Canada were extensions of British organizations that had strong ties with the Church of England.¹⁶ The flow of literature and leadership from England to Canada ensured that the empire connection remained a central component in Scout and Guide ideology well beyond the First World War. In both organizations imperial links were maintained by frequent correspondence with imperial headquarters in England, by subscriptions to English Guides and Scouts periodicals, by English instructors at Canadian training camps, by British royal patronage, by strong (informal) affiliations

¹³The Girl Guides' first Dominion Council, formed in 1912, included representatives from leading women's organizations: the IODE, the NCWC, the YWCA, and the Canadian Business Women's Club.

¹⁴OCA, M. Constance Payne, *The Girl Guide Movement in Canada* (n.p., n.d.), p. 4.

¹⁵See "Aims and Methods of the Girl Guide Movement." *Canadian Girl Guide*, December 1928, p. 8.

¹⁶In the case of the Guides and Scouts the connection was informal and did not exclude affiliation with other denominations. However, Anglican clergy commonly attended Guide and Scout ceremonies, served as leaders, and provided meeting space in their churches. Affiliations with the IODE and the GFS also strengthened the Anglican connection. As Bonnie MacQueen has noted, "the political ideology of imperialism was well-established in the Anglican Church." MacQueen, p. 227.

with the Church of England, and by occasional visits from Baden-Powell and his wife, Olave. Many of the early Canadian Guide companies were sponsored by imperialist organizations like the IODE and the GFS. In many cases, companies not officially affiliated with these groups received generous IODE and GFS support in the form of donations of flags, pictures, and other patriotic material. The Girl Guides' first Chief Commissioner in Canada (1912-1921) was none other than Lady Mary Pellatt, whose devout commitment to imperialism was frequently demonstrated at patriotic fêtes at her Casa Loma estate in Toronto, and through her lively involvement in the IODE.¹⁷ Likewise, Canadian Scouts often spoke of themselves as part of a larger British national community. In a letter to imperial headquarters, written in 1921, the Honourary Provincial Secretary for the Boy Scouts of Saskatchewan referred to the Canadian West as "an outpost of the British Empire" and to the work of the "Boy Scouts of the Empire" in building up a "great British Citizenship." "Saskatchewan Scouts, six thousand strong, with their Wolf Cubs," he wrote,

are doing their part in the great construction work of the Empire. As they played the game during the war period so they are playing the game today. They are going forward in the year 1921 under the banner of British Freedom and Democracy, preparing themselves to take their place as the men of tomorrow in the greatest Empire of civilization.¹⁸

Local Guide and Scout troops and patrols made the empire a regular focus of their activities. Scouts studied the "history and deeds that won the Empire" and read

¹⁷Lady Pellatt was also a long-time benefactor of the Canadian Girl Guides. From 1912 to 1920, the Canadian Girl Guides Headquarters was financed almost entirely from funds donated by Lady Pellatt. *Historical Sketch of Guiding in Canada*, p. 4.

¹⁸Milks, p. 63.

tales of colonial adventure. Guide and Scout enrolment ceremonies involved elaborate, solemn rituals featuring the Union Jack.¹⁹ Rangers in Burnaby, British Columbia started a flower chain by writing to Old Country members and exchanging wild flower seeds, ideas, and lots of good fellowship.²⁰ At a meeting of the YWCA in Toronto, Girl Guides presented papers on “Honour, Purity, Loyalty,” “The Imperial Guide,” and “The Flag and What it had Stood For.” They were asked to think of themselves as “one of the slender bands that binds the Empire.”²¹ Bonnie MacQueen, in her study of Guiding in British Columbia, has argued that Girl Guides “did more than just keep the sentiments of loyalty to Britain alive; quite frequently they fanned the flames.”²²

Throughout the First World War and into the 1920s, church sermons, lectures, and campfire talks persistently reminded Canadian Guides and Scouts of the greatness of the British empire. Won by the courage and grit of their forefathers, the empire, as it was represented, carried a sacred duty to shed light on the darkness of the world. Its flag stood for right, liberty, justice, and a sense of fair play.²³ The 1912 Guide handbook, *How Girls Can Help Build up the Empire*, heralded Canada’s glorious deeds in the name of imperial unity: the taking of Fort Ogdensburg, the hard fighting

¹⁹For an example, see the description of the Guide enrolment ceremony in the *Canadian Girl Guide*, March 1926, p. 12.

²⁰“British Columbia Page,” *Canadian Girl Guide*, March 1927, p. 6.

²¹*Toronto Daily Star*, 9 January 9 1915.

²²MacQueen, p. 230.

²³“Indoor Activities,” *Canadian Girl Guide*, December 1926, p. 10.

at Lundy's Lane, and the suppression of Riel.²⁴ Well into the 1920s Guide and Scout plays and pageants were routinely held in concert halls profusely decorated with flags, pennants, and streamers in Union Jack colours. Songs like Hail, Hail King George, Rule Britannia, O'Canada, and God Save the King, standard fare on pageant programs, inevitably inspired strong patriotic emotions among spectators and participants. The romance of the ancient throne of Britain appealed to young members, and they looked to the King as the outward symbol of the might and majesty of "the great ruling race of the world."²⁵

Through patriotic rituals, tableaux, and flag drills, Canadian Guides and Scouts demonstrated and experienced *bodily* their loyalty to the motherland.²⁶ They played a prominent role, for example, in Empire Day services across the country, attending church services, forming tableaux of "Rule Britannia," and parading in uniform behind the celebrated Union Jack. As organs thundered the national anthem, armies of Guides and Scouts, in dapper uniforms, filed into churches with military precision and stood at attention to sing the Empire Hymn:

Unfurl the Empire's Standard, and song aloud today,
One great glad song of triumph that echoes far away,
"For God, for King, for Country," we pledge
ourselves to be, true servants of our Empire, in strength and unity. As citizens

²⁴*How Girls Can Help Build up the Empire*, p. 408.

²⁵*Girl Guides' Gazette*, July 1925, p. 205.

²⁶Anne Bloomfield writes about the bodily absorption of imperial ideals in the British context in "Drill and dance as symbols of imperialism," in *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism*, ed. J.A. Mangan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 74-95. Brownies of the 2nd Burnaby Pack, for example, put on an intricate Union Jack display while chanting "Our Union Jack! Our Union Jack! We have made our Union Jack! Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves! Britons never shall be slaves." *Canadian Girl Guide*, September 1928, p. 16. See also the *Dauphin*, Manitoba, 21 October 1913 and *Toronto Daily News*, 14 October 1912.

and patriots let all in concord stand, Uphold by noble living the honor of their land, "for God, for King, for Country," thus prove themselves to be, True servants of the Empire, in love and sympathy. The Empire's Red Cross standard unfurled aloft today, Bids every loyal Subject, to work, to watch, to pray, "For God, for King, for Country," that future ages see, The servants of our Empire, heirs of Eternity.²⁷

The services were closed with a salute, which signified the soldier's respect and duty and imprinted on young minds their vows of service and allegiance.

Mary Ann Clawson, in her study of fraternalism, argues that ritual plays a cognitive role in the organization of experience. She explains that "the selective organization of objects and events into patterns" and "the location of objects and events in symbolic frames of reference" create "reality" and consciousness.²⁸ For the Guides and Scouts, the repetition of drills, tableaux, secret codes, and gestures simplified and gave meaning to the experience of citizenship by converting abstract ideals into bodily habit. If, as Steven Lukes argues, ritual defines "as authoritative certain ways of seeing society," then ritual can be regarded as an instrument of social hegemony.²⁹ The ritualized activities of Scouting and Guiding provided a means to structure the popular consciousness along imperial lines. They also had the function of creating particular values and identities that served the needs of an emerging capitalist society.

The cultivation of a sense of mutual obligation and solidarity—a crucial by-

²⁷*Girl Guides of Canada: Our First Fifty Years*, p. 156.

²⁸Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 12.

²⁹Stephen Lukes, "Political Ritual and Social Integration," *Sociology* 9, 2 (May 1975): 301.

product of Guide and Scout rituals—promised to organize competing interests into a unified collectivity. Middle-class Guide and Scout leaders in Canada organized companies and troops in connection with public schools, the YMCA and YWCA, Sunday Schools, and factories in an attempt to reach girls and boys from all walks of life. The Lones programme, which connected isolated members with a Guide company or Scout troop through correspondence, extended the corporate philosophy to rural youth. The Extension Department of the Girl Guides, formed first in England but also established in Canada in 1930, brought Guiding to invalid girls in hospitals. The far-reaching network of Guides and Scouts created liaisons through which the discourse of loyalty and brotherhood/sisterhood across class lines could be communicated. “As our movement attracts all classes....” Robert Baden Powell wrote in January 1914, “much of the present human wastage will be turned into valuable citizenship.”³⁰

Indeed, B-P promoted his youth movement as a way of ensuring social stability. He called upon young men and women to suppress their own needs and to live by the motto “country first and self second.”³¹ An ordered house was an oft-repeated metaphor for imperial unity. Young people were bricks in the walls of the imperial house. B-P insisted, and “a house divided against itself cannot stand.”³² B-P frequently invoked the fear of invasion and the disdain of Bolshevism to remind his

³⁰Quoted in Robinson, p. 32.

³¹*How Girls Can Help Build up the Empire*, p. 33.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 418.

charges that the British empire would fall as Rome did unless its subjects were fit and healthy and were allied by common loyalties.

The social metaphor of corporatism had the potential to organize the thought and behavior of imperial youth along these lines. In drills and parades Guides and Scouts displayed uniformity and deference to authority. The knightly tradition of chivalry, which formed the basis for the Scout and Guide code of conduct, promoted the principles of comradeship, loyalty, and public duty. The company uniforms, identical in detail, symbolized the surrender of the material self to an organic unity of spirit. Throughout the 1920s B-P promoted social homogeneity through international brotherhood. World jamborees were designed to “break down barriers between races...[and to bring] the red, black, white, and yellow races of the earth to dwell together for fifteen portentous days in amity and unity.”³³ Boys and girls of many nations and many languages were joined by their identical laws and by the comradeship of the campfire. This emphasis on corporate citizenship provided a persuasive model of harmonious social relations and forged socio-cultural links between the individual and the nation-state. Corporatism made a unity of interest compatible with the hierarchy of authority that was central to the Guides’ and Scouts’ para-military structure. Unity did not mean equality.

Corporatism, as a unifying mechanism, was particularly useful in the Canadian context, where separation by geographical distance forestalled the formation of a collective national consciousness. A Scout troop organized in 1921 in

³³*Montreal Standard*, 3 August 1920.

a fishing community 300 miles from St. John's, Newfoundland, for example, brought unifying notions of citizenship to "a very isolated part of the colony."³⁴ In the ranching districts of Alberta, Guides rode on horseback for several miles to attend their company meetings in the district schoolhouse.³⁵ In 1922 the Canadian Girl Guides Chief Commissioner underscored the larger significance of these far-reaching contacts:

Canada to-day sorely needs the bond that draws together, and we of the Girl Guide sisterhood can surely do our bit, however small, in that direction. United in our own ranks we should be qualified to help in drawing East and West, Town and Farm and Countryside, into closer fellowship.³⁶

The class divisions so clearly drawn in Britain were less distinct in Canada; therefore, the fear of the working class was not as pronounced in the Canadian context. However, Canadian youth supposedly lacked the refining influence of a landed aristocracy. And the leveling and isolating influences of the Canadian pioneer landscape threatened to create a coarse and disinterested population. B-P believed that the uniquely rugged nature of the Canadian frontier produced wild boys who needed to be tamed through scouting. The *Canadian Boy Scout* handbook, which alluded to the particularly aggressive and competitive impulses of Canadian youth, begins with a plea from Baden Powell for obedience, selflessness, and loyalty.

You are already good Scouts in the woods but to be perfectly reliable you must also be sure that you are disciplined and can obey orders, however distasteful they may be, without any hesitation—and cheerily. Canada can be a very big

³⁴Milks, p. 64.

³⁵*Historical Sketch of Guiding in Canada*, p. 20.

³⁶*Canadian Girl Guide*, January 1922, p. 2.

nation in a few years if each one of you determines to do his bit in making it so. A nation is not made merely by its territory or wealth, it is made by its men. If they are men of grit and energy who work together like a football team, each in his place and “playing the game” in obedience to the rules and to the orders of the captain, they will win, they will make a great nation.³⁷

“Playing the game” became a standard metaphor for minding the rules and honouring authority. For Canadian youth it meant obeying their parents, teachers, and employers, and keeping dual patriotic loyalties: they were encouraged to love their country while respecting Canada’s long-held ties to the British empire.

In the case of girls, the general fear was that the unbridled freedom of the Canadian frontier would lead to rebellious promiscuity. Following a visit to Alberta in the mid twenties, East London Guide trainer, Miss Joyce Wolton, explained her perception of this problem in an Edmonton newspaper:

Do I find any fundamental differences between the Canadian and the English girls? Well, *rather!* The English girl of 14 or 15 is still very much a child. The Canadian girl of the same age is quite grown up. The former would never be allowed the great freedom of the latter. Such thoughts as dances, going out at night with boys, and that sort of thing would never occur to her—and if they did she would be smartly relieved of such ideas!³⁸

Guide codes of service, modesty, and selflessness and the discipline of an organized peer group promised to mould potentially unruly girls into models of Christian womanhood. Rev. Dr. George Duncan, speaking at a Montreal Guiding ceremony in May 1922, stated the case quite simply when he praised the Guides for helping to “do away with unnaturalness and affectation, of the eye-brow pencil, lip-colouring,

³⁷Milks, p. iii.

³⁸Barbara Villy Cormack, *Landmarks: A History of the Girl Guides in Alberta* (Edmonton: Girl Guides of Canada, Alberta Council, 1968), p. 25.

powder-puff and rouge pot.”³⁹

Nation builders in Canada also faced the additional obstacle of a large immigrant population. Laurier’s aggressive immigration campaign brought 3 million immigrants to Canada between 1896 and 1914, over 800,000 of whom were of non-Anglo-Saxon origin.⁴⁰ B-P and his Canadian supporters regarded the Guide and Scout programme as “the most powerful tool” for assimilating New Canadians.⁴¹ “We should get in touch with these [foreigners],” B-P said at the Canadian Boy Scouts annual meeting in 1923, “and teach them to play our games; it would not then be long before they would become Canadianized.”⁴² Dr. Anderson, the director of Education in Saskatchewan, responded enthusiastically to B-P’s request. As a long-time Scout commissioner, he established Scouting in rural schools where foreign-born children were in attendance.⁴³ Similarly, the Girl Guides saw great value in their efforts to organize New Canadian girls into companies. “For the children of New Canadians,” one reported, “Guiding forges a strong link in citizenship with the country of their adoption.”⁴⁴ In the 1920s the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts

³⁹*Canadian Girl Guide*, July 1922, p. 6.

⁴⁰Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975), pp. 4-12.

⁴¹“Songs of Babylon.” *Girl Guides’ Gazette*, January 1922, p. 15.

⁴²NAC, MG 28, I 73, vol. 1, file 6, Minutes of Dominion Council Meetings, Boy Scouts of Canada.

⁴³NAC, MG 28, I 73, vol. 2, file 2, Minutes of Dominion Council Meetings, Boy Scouts of Canada.

⁴⁴*Historical Sketch of Guiding in Canada*, p. 17.

organizations reported active companies and troops composed of Ukrainian, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Chinese, Japanese, Black, and Native membership.⁴⁵ The comradery of Scouting and Guiding, it was believed, would cultivate the good will and cooperation that was necessary for the creation of a homogeneous national collectivity. The basis for this collectivity would be British values, institutions, and traditions. A Guider from Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, writing in the *Girl Guides' Gazette* in January 1922, expressed this assumption: "Weld these races into one strong nation. Not Galician, nor Scotch, or even English, but British."⁴⁶

While Guiding and Scouting provided a model of unity (though not necessarily equality) across lines of class and ethnicity, gender difference remained an immutable part of their imperialist outlook. From the outset it was apparent that citizenship and allegiance had different meanings and implications for boys and for girls. At a time when traditional gender roles were being challenged by the women's movement, a decline in fertility, and women's participation in the First World War, fears about the degeneration of the home and family were fueled by popular images of the masculinized woman. Even Agnes Baden-Powell warned in *Pamphlet B* that girls who romped and engaged in violent exercise risked the growth of a moustache.⁴⁷ Robert Baden-Powell knew that any scheme that allowed girls to participate in camping, tracking, and outdoor sports would have to be tempered by an emphasis on

⁴⁵*Landmarks*, p. 24; *Girl Guides' Gazette*, December 1925, p. 359; Milks, pp. 94, 110.

⁴⁶"Songs of Babylon." *Girl Guides' Gazette*, January 1922, p. 15.

⁴⁷*Pamphlet B*, p. 18.

domesticity and virtuous womanhood. He believed that training in mothercraft would both placate skeptical onlookers and help to solve the problems of infant mortality, disease, and spiritual degeneration, evils which threatened to weaken the empire.⁴⁸ As it was in the IODE and the GFS, motherhood was both blamed for the ills of the nation and revered as the most promising cure. In March 1912 Ernest Thompson Seton, whose books were world-famed and who was then Chief Scout of America, spoke of the difference between the Boy Scout training and that of the Girl Guides. "In girls' activities we must not aim at strength and endurance, but at grace and beauty. Each girl must look for beauty in every walk of life, and try to make life beautiful."⁴⁹ Likewise, *The Canadian Courier* ran an article in 1915 in defence of the Girl Guides against mounting criticism that Guiding was turning girls into tomboys:

The girls will be the mothers of our citizens by-and-by. We must train them for womanhood and for citizenship.... Who said [guiding] meant unsexing...? This Movement is not...an imitation of the Boy Scout Movement; for there is no militarism in it. It is a purely womanly scheme and the aim of the pursuits engaged in is to make girls better housekeepers, and more capable in the womanly arts from cooking, washing, and sick nursing to the training and management of children. Girls are encouraged in every way to practise the most useful subjects a woman can know in order that they may become "better mothers and guides to the next generation."⁵⁰

The Dominion Secretary's address to the Oshawa Guides in the same year continued this defensive tact when it emphasized the fact that the "aim of the Girl Guides

⁴⁸Robert Baden-Powell, "The Chief's Outlook," *Girl Guides' Gazette*, November 1917, p. 176; "The Chief's Outlook," *Girl Guides' Gazette*, September 1917, p. 135; and "The Value of Womanliness," *The Guider*, September 1928, pp. 283-4.

⁴⁹Rose Kerr, *The Story of the Girl Guides 1908-1938: Official History of the Girl Guides Association* (London: Girl Guides Association, 1976), p. 66.

⁵⁰*Canadian Courier*, 21 December 1912.

movement was not to make the girls weak imitations of Boy Scouts, not yet to make militant suffragettes out of them, but to encourage them to become more capable and womanly, and above all to be homemakers in the highest sense of the word.”⁵¹

Far from being a universal fact of “nature,” femininity is a social construct, the product of historical processes that define the parameters of gender relations and gendered identities.⁵² The socialization of girls through Guiding did not in itself create the boundaries of gender, but it certainly played a role in maintaining them at a time when new social conditions were expanding the possibilities for girls and women. In the 1910s and 1920s the increased, though still reluctant, acceptance of women in business, academia, and politics expanded girls’ life choices. But those life choices were heavily circumscribed by a persistent and pervasive ideology of motherhood that designated the home and family as woman’s proper place. Mirra Komarovsky explains that the contradictions created by such a discrepancy “engender mental conflict or social conflict or otherwise frustrate some basic interest of large segments of the population.”⁵³ Indeed within the Guides organization itself, girls were receiving mixed messages about gender. On the one hand they were being initiated into the male domain of militarism and woodcraft. But they were receiving constant messages that placed them firmly within a domestic, maternal role. At such

⁵¹*Girl Guides of Canada: Our First Fifty Years*, p. 129.

⁵²Masculinity is, of course, also a social construct; however, it is used here only as a point of contrast for the construction of femininity, which is the focus of this chapter.

⁵³Mirra Komarovsky, “Cultural Contradictions and Sex Roles,” *American Journal of Sociology* 52, 3 (November 1946): 184-189.

an impressionable age, adolescent girls were easily bound to ideals of true womanhood by notions of propriety, respectability, and normalcy, notions that were an integral part of the Guides' training in citizenship.

Left to their own resources, early Canadian girl scouts had eagerly participated in the unrestricted rigours of outdoor life. They donned their khaki shorts and hats, and they refused to be left out of the fun enjoyed by their scout brothers. "What fun those early meetings were!" one Canadian Guider recalled. "How the Guides pored over their few available books on Scouting and dreamed dreams of adventure like their brother Scouts."⁵⁴ Amy Leigh, who started the first Guide company in Burnaby, British Columbia in 1915, reminisced about girls' pioneering days in the movement. "We even learned how to fell trees," she recalled. "As I look back, we were very fortunate not to have had more accidents because it was the kind of rough camping that would make any camp adviser today just cringe.... No swimming restrictions! No rules for anything!"⁵⁵ But as the Guide movement became more visible with its growth, Guides were forced to hang up their bugles and whistles and to adopt a more feminine style. Unlike Scout troops, which were named after animals, Guide patrols took on the name of flowers, much to the dismay of the early Guides of the 1st Toronto company who thought that a "beaver" patrol sounded much more sensible than a "scarlet pimpernel."⁵⁶ "Another basic change," wrote a Toronto Guide in 1910,

⁵⁴OCA. (loose article), "The Origin and Development of the Guide Movement in Canada." p. 1.

⁵⁵Robinson, p. 7.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 22.

“was that we were to sing, not whistle [like the Scouts], in all difficulties. This was actually a relief, as none of us could whistle anyway; whereas any fool can sing, and most of them do.”⁵⁷ Here we can see the arbitrary construction of gender difference at work.

Early Guide material and activities displayed this tension between the need for Guides to “be prepared” for a national emergency and the need for them to adhere to the feminine ideal. A newspaper clipping entitled, “Girl Guides are Little Women,” provides a clear image of the fusion of these ideas: “Evidences of Guide prowess in the domestic arts...proved that the Guides’ lore of wood and field and military manoeuvre is not preventing them being womanly little women, who can make a home as well as a sailor’s knot, and can rock the cradle as well as troop the colors.”⁵⁸ This dual purpose was demonstrated at Casa Loma, Lady Pellatt’s palatial residence in Toronto, where Girl Guides gathered every spring for a garden fete and rally. Patriotic plays, songs, and tableaux featuring Britannia were topped off with the annual crowning of the May Queen amidst the spring blossoms. The rallies would not have been complete without exhibitions of the skills and handiwork of Guides. Knot tying, signaling, and first aid demonstrations proved the girls were “prepared” for any emergency, while an attractive array of pastries, cakes, preserves, and needlework assured onlookers that Guides were not neglecting their womanly functions.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸“Girl Guides are Little Women,” *Girl Guides of Canada: Our First Fifty Years*, p. 223. See also *Woman’s Century*, 23 September 1916.

Similarly, at a county fair in British Columbia in 1916, both Guides and Scouts enjoyed the honour of standing for inspection by the Governor General, Duke of Connaught. The Guides fulfilled their domestic duties, however, by spending the remainder of the day washing thousands of cups.⁵⁹

Guide teachings helped to construct the female self based on notions of domesticity, morality, and service. They presented appropriate forms of behavior through examples of the ideal woman: Queen Victoria, who was devoted to her husband and who was skilled in housekeeping, cooking, sewing, and crafts,⁶⁰ and the homesteader housewife who toiled endlessly on the farm, milking cows, cleaning, cooking, and tending to children, all the while happily “making do” with her blessings from God.⁶¹ King Solomon’s virtuous woman, the central figure in the thirty-first chapter of the Book of Proverbs, was held up as the ultimate example of noble womanhood, for “strength and honour are her clothing...and in her tongue is the law of kindness.” She commanded the respect of her husband, “whose heart...doth safely trust in her”; she toiled for her family—“her candle goeth not out by night”—and she devoted her life to serving the poor.⁶² Her work and character embodied the tenets of the Guide law: selflessness, industry, loyalty, and devotion to family. “Nature gave to men the qualities of aggressiveness and pugnaciousness for

⁵⁹MacQueen, p. 225.

⁶⁰*How Girls Can Help Build up the Empire*, p. 424.

⁶¹See, for example, the description of the pioneer wife in the *Canadian Girl Guide* quarterly, September 1929, p. 12.

⁶²*Pamphlet B*, pp. 12-13.

selfish ends,” the *Guider* explained in 1928, “while she gave to women patience and peaceful instincts.”⁶³ This moral double standard was a central component of the Guiding ideology. Women were held responsible for men’s moral uplift; the influence of their superior moral character would be their contribution to nation-building. A January 1924 article in the *Girl Guides Gazette*, entitled “Wanted! Wanted! Real Women and Girls,” explained:

No nation will rise above the standard of its women.... If women and girls would lead men to the sunny mountain tops...instead of enticing them to the shadow of the vales, what a much better world this would be. We want girls and women to help burnish up the armour of the boys and men, and to buckle on their swords, and send them forth to win the victory over themselves and the difficulties of life. And the result would be seen not only nationally but internationally..... What wonderful healers of the body, with their gentle touch..., these wondrous women and girls. But there is a greater and more difficult healing to be done—a healing of the soul and spirit...of our men and boys, that in all their dealings—business, professional, state, or what not—righteousness would be the watchword! And once again...dear Britain would stand high in the councils of the world.⁶⁴

Hiking, camping, and woodcraft for girls, at first a novel and dreaded concept, became acceptable when nature study assumed a moral purpose. Baden-Powell insisted that an appreciation of nature gave young people a reverence for life and brought them closer to God. Special lectures, *Canadian Girl Guide Quarterly* articles, and Guide program material emphasized horticulture, and appealed to women, as the preservers of nature, to appreciate and protect the beauty of the earth.⁶⁵ Woodcraft did not detract from the feminine sweetness of little girls, for even King Solomon

⁶³“The Value of Womanliness.” *The Guider*, September 1928, p. 284.

⁶⁴“Wanted! Wanted! Real Women and Girls.” *Girl Guides’ Gazette*, January 1924, p. 7.

⁶⁵See, for example, “Have You Begun to Prepare Your Florist Badge?” *Toronto Daily News*, 20 March 1915.

likened the loveliness of his beloved to the beauty of a garden and on occasion placed woman, like a jewel, in the perfect surroundings of the out of doors.

While Scouts and Guides were exposed to an equally wide range of badge work activities, requirements for promotion in rank ensured that boys and girls engaged in activities suitable for their sex. A first-class Scout could become a King's Scout, the most coveted rank, once he qualified to wear four of the following badges: ambulance, cyclist, marksman, pathfinder, signaller, fireman, and rescuer.⁶⁶ Guides, on the other hand, were directed into more domestic pursuits. During an eighteen-month period in 1916-17 only one out of the 64 badges earned by Guides of the Victoria area was not domestic in nature.⁶⁷ The Little House emblem, higher in rank than an activity badge, was offered to Guides who showed proficiency in cooking, child nursing, needlework, laundering, homemaking, and hostessing.⁶⁸ First Class standing required the biennial renewal of either the ambulance or the sick nurse badge.⁶⁹ On 5 April 1913 the *Canadian Courier* reported that Girl Guides in three Toronto companies were publicly awarded badges for laundry work, cooking, and household management. The writer assured readers that "emphatic stress is laid on domestic work by the officers, and girl guides are conspicuously "home girls."⁷⁰ This

⁶⁶NAC. MG 28, I 73, vol. 1, file 5, Executive Minutes, Boy Scouts of Canada, 27 February, 1920.

⁶⁷MacQueen, p. 223.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰*Canadian Courier*, 5 April 1913.

emphasis on domestic arts exposed and confined girls to vocational pursuits deemed suitable for their sex. A report in the *Canadian Girl Guide* expressed the assumption that girls would choose their path from a limited assortment of acceptable options: “Another aim of the guides is to fit a girl for life. It is a splendid thing to be ready for life, so in taking up first aid, home nursing, cooking and other subjects a girl very often is able to find out her vocation.”⁷¹

While the primary demonstration of civic virtue for girls was their moral influence, domestic prowess, and selfless service to others, for Boy Scouts, the body itself was a tangible, moving symbol of the qualities of healthy citizenship: an athletic, robust, and upright physique became a familiar archetype for manliness. Honing the body’s athletic potency and mastering its functions went hand in hand with cultivating the inner qualities of moral fortitude and self-control. For Baden-Powell, masturbation, smoking, poor posture, and laziness were certain indications of a moral spirit gone bad.⁷² Fear of the limp, pasty, and passive body of the inner-city “hooligan,” “waster,” and “slacker” prompted Scout leaders to make open-air athleticism a central part of their program. Spokesmen for Canadian Scouts often boasted of the brawn of their own boys, whose natural playgrounds of farms and forests cultivated a ruggedness uniquely associated with the colonial frontier.

⁷¹*Canadian Girl Guide*, September 1925, p. 5.

⁷²B-P’s warnings about the dangers of smoking, loafing, and masturbation were a familiar part of early Scout handbooks. The “temptation of self-abuse” was of particular concern. “for should it become a habit it quickly destroys both health and spirits; he becomes feeble in body and mind, and often ends up in a lunatic asylum.” *The Canadian Boy Scout: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (Toronto: Morang & Co., 1911), p. 201.

The boy's body in action, so frequently displayed on the covers and in the stories of the *Canadian Boy* contrasted sharply with the demure, lady-like still images of the Girl Guide. Pamphlets A and B, as well as *The Canadian Girl Guide Quarterly*, illustrated the uniformed Guide in a bashful and unassuming stance, standing or sitting with her legs together and her head slightly bowed as she gazes at the birds and flowers around her. The repeated display of the inward looking female form served as a visual reminder to Guides that, while they were allowed a taste of the adventure of the wilderness, their citizenship was spatially limited.

But while Scout propaganda demanded finely-tuned bodies, it also created a distinct binarism between the physical and mental self. The valorisation of mind over body was necessary to convince potential soldiers that their bodies were dispensable in times of war. "This physical life is temporal," wrote a regular contributor to *The Canadian Boy* magazine, "the character within is age lasting—and the greatest builder of character is unselfish sacrifice."⁷³ Scouts were called upon to follow in the footsteps of the heroes of history who gave their lives for a higher purpose: Wolfe who died for a British North America, Livingstone who died for an unchristianized Africa, and the countless soldiers who died in defence of democracy and freedom. The following speech by Baden Powell, printed in *The Canadian Boy* in 1921 poignantly illustrated the infusion of honour and dignity with bodily sacrifice:

Scouts! Hold up your heads! Look wide! Only the coward dreads such death as these have died.... Heaven's hill of joy he treads Who fought upon God's side.

⁷³Bert Reed. "Camp Fire Corner." *Canadian Boy*, March 1921, p. 136. This Easter lesson uses the sacrifice of Jesus as an example to Scouts.

Not with the feeble found, Not with the false allied, These firmly, held their ground. Fear, pain and death defied, Hearing Heaven's trumpet sound, Because they took God's side. Right overthrowing wrong, Love overcoming pride, Truth making weakness strong, Duty their only guide; Thus marched our Scouts along like lions on God's side. Now let temptation call, Now let our steel be tried, We will be true in all, True as our Scouts who died; And when at last we fall, It shall be on God's side. Only coward dreads, Such death as these have died.⁷⁴

According to the General Council Minutes, at least 2,500 Canadian Scouts, former Scouts, and Scout officers fulfilled this ultimate test of manliness by serving with Canada's forces overseas during the First World War.⁷⁵

War service work was appropriately gendered. Boy Scouts prepared themselves to give their bodies to a higher cause; Girl Guides were encouraged to demonstrate their patriotism in a supportive role. For them, service was defined by the all too familiar acts of providing care and comfort. Far removed from the theatre of war, Canadian Guides proved their devotion to the flag and earned war service badges by assisting in the hospitals, making clothing for soldiers' children, raising funds for destitute war orphans in Belgium and France, providing flowers and care packages for the wounded, and sending comforts to the men in the trenches. Over 2,000 articles were sent overseas from just the Chatham, Ontario Guides alone.⁷⁶ Receiving a war service badge meant that a Guide had donated one hundred hours of

⁷⁴*Canadian Boy*, February 1921, p. 97.

⁷⁵NAC, MG 28, I 17, vol. 1, file 3, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Dominion Council, Boy Scouts of Canada, 10 March 1916. J.O. Springhall explains how the normalization of concepts of obedience and sacrifice by the Boy Scout organization contributed to the willingness of young men to go to war. "The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930," *International Review of Social History* 16 (1971): 125-158.

⁷⁶"Out of Town News—Chatham." *Girl Guides of Canada: Our First Fifty Years*, p. 142.

service in the war effort, had knitted at least four pairs of socks and made one shirt or pair of pajamas, all in keeping with the requirements of female care and service.⁷⁷

The extension of Guide work between 1914 and 1918 did much to normalize the appearance of girls outside the home. When B-P wrote the new Guide manual, *Girl Guiding*, in 1918 he included numerous stories of Guide pluck during the war and shifted the focus from motherhood to citizenship. Nevertheless, B-P made it very clear that the most important outlet for female citizenship was their influence over children in the home. Speaking to a group of Saskatoon ladies who were interested in the Girl Guides, Reverend H. Wilson spoke of the movement's value to the empire in developing womanly citizenship. "The Empire today needs not military girls, imitating soldiers," he said, "but girls with a thorough knowledge of sick nursing, cooking, sewing, knitting, housekeeping and management of children. These [are] the objects of the Girl Guides."⁷⁸

The very perception of imperial space was conditioned by images and narratives designed to evoke an appropriate, gendered relationship to the empire. Guide literature created an imperial role for young girls within an enclosed domestic setting, while Scout propaganda promoted certain expectations of masculinity—courage, virility, aggression—while simultaneously legitimizing the existence of empire by mapping it as at once familiar and untouched. Baden-Powell himself yielded much fruit for the young imagination as he recounted his story-book

⁷⁷MacQueen, p. 226.

⁷⁸*Saskatoon Daily Star*, 14 September 1915.

life: fighting off wild mountain tribesmen in India, outwitting hostile natives, and hunting down wild boars in the jungles of Africa. Scouting handbooks and stories in the *Canadian Boy* enabled Canadian Scouts, from their peripheral vantage point, to participate imaginatively in a frontier of vast open space where exotic lands were theirs for the taking. The *Canadian Boy* is replete with stories of courageous colonialists, entrepreneurs, and frontiersmen who used their Scout-like resourcefulness, wit, and ingenuity, to “blaze the way” for imperial expansion in spite of an adverse terrain and native hostility. The story line of “Greater Love Hath No Man: Or Among the Cannibals of the South Seas” by Edgar J. Biggar would have been comfortably familiar to loyal readers of the *Canadian Boy*. A retired Colonel of the British Army settled with his wife on the eastern coast of Tanna, part of the New Hebrides Archipelago, 2,000 miles northeast of Australia. In the company of 70,000 native cannibals and in the midst of incessant tribal warfare, the brave colonel managed to establish a successful local trade in copra and coffee. Detailed descriptions of his encounters with the native inhabitants contrast the clean, Christian character of the white visitors with the superstitious, colourful barbarism of the Melanesian “boy.”

In full war paint, his whole body and the parts of his face free from hair, were daubed in hideous designs of red, blue, and green ochre. His frizzy hair and thick black beard, were powdered with white dust. As he curiously regarded me with his shifty blue black eyes, he clasped my hand in the approved whiteman's style, while he dropped his gun to his side, in order to feel my muscles with the other. Then with a guttural sound of greeting he shouldered his musket, stepped back and immediately made off into the dense undergrowth, followed

by a dozen or so of his kind.⁷⁹

These repeated images of “noisy natives,” both hideous and captivating in all their “savage” painted nakedness, added to the exotic quality of the adventure stories and reaffirmed the civility of western society.

Canadian fields and forests provided an ideal setting for the simulation of colonial exploration. Articles in the *Canadian Boy* instructed Scout leaders to emphasize the “out” in Scouting and to “play ‘wide games’—games covering miles of territory.⁸⁰ They suggested that boys were naturally inclined to feel at home in the outdoors. An article on Scouting in the *London Advertiser* in August 1929 repeated this sentiment: “The instinct to love the open and to wish to understand it better is in all boyhood worth the name.”⁸¹ Canadian Scouts tested their aptitude for adventure through winter camping, canoeing, and long hikes through the wilderness. In 1921 the first Penatanguishene troop organized a trip by canoe from Penatanguishene to Montreal, following Champlain’s legendary route in his expedition against the Iroquois.⁸² A year later a group of Scouts and lumberjacks set up camp in the “untouched woods” near Lake St. Joseph, Quebec, after paddling nine miles by canoe, clearing the dense woods, and building a wharf and large hut. Field Secretary Lister

⁷⁹Edgar J. Biggar “Greater Love Hath No Man: Or Among the Cannibals of the South Seas.” *Canadian Boy*, June 1921, p. 237.

⁸⁰See, for example, *Canadian Boy*, December 1921, p. 6 and *Canadian Boy*, September 1912, p. 464. The reference to “wide games” comes from Milks, p. 46.

⁸¹The *London Advertiser*, Ontario, 14 August 1929, quoted in NAC, MG 28, I 73, vol. 21, Boy Scouts of Canada, 1929 World Jamboree Press Clippings.

⁸²*Ibid.*

reported in 1923 that the Minnedosa Scouts braved temperatures of minus forty degrees to continue their outdoor scouting, snowshoeing their way through the woods and cooking their stews on an open fire. Even more daring exploits were successfully attempted: in the spring of 1926 a group of Hamilton Scouts embarked on a 150-mile canoe adventure during which thirty-five portages were made; the first Glenwood Mounted Troop undertook a ten-day saddle and pack horse outing in the mountains of Alberta; and Scouts of the 17th Saint John Troop carried out a 300-mile trekking and camping tour of New Brunswick in 1928.⁸³

Women seldom made appearances in this rough-and-tumble world of action and adventure. They existed as only shadowy, peripheral figures: obscure parlormaids, home-bound sisters and mothers, and helpless pioneer women saved from the Iroquois by courageous frontiersmen. The whole purpose of instilling in boys a love for the outdoors and for the frontier was to remove them from the feminizing influences of the home. Baden-Powell believed that boys who were able to escape the confines of domesticity to explore the wonders of the wilderness became real men. He pointed to the Scout camp as a remedy for boys' natural impulse to "get away from home."⁸⁴ A former Scout, writing in the *Canadian Boy* about his attraction to Scouting, insisted that "the man who has never been in a camp, who has never cooked his own grub, pitched his own tent, and seen the sun rise above the tree tops,

⁸³Milks, pp. 66-99.

⁸⁴*Canadian Boy*, July 1922, p. 329.

has never lived and can hardly count himself 'a man' at all."⁸⁵

"Real men" were also defenders. The *Canadian Boy Scout* handbook, which spoke of good marksmanship as a sign of manliness, came complete with instructions on how to shoot a man.⁸⁶ A running advertisement in the *Canadian Boy* appealed to a boy's need to belong, to fit in with the group, in its sales pitch for the Remington Model 12 rifle. "The boy with the gun gets all the fun," it warned mothers, "while your boy is humiliated and miserable."⁸⁷ Learning how to handle a rifle was an important rite of passage for young men, who were expected to protect the women and children in the event of an invasion.

But B-P insisted that Scouts were preparing for peace, not war. In fact chivalry was held up as the highest form of manliness, and the romance of knightly deeds became a repeated trope in Scout literature. Around the world, Scouts celebrated April 23 as St. George's Day, in honour of the patron Saint of Cavalry. St. George was a Christian knight who gallantly slayed the dragon who preyed upon young maidens. He was regarded as a model of selfless heroism for Canadian Scouts whose own courageous and thoughtful deeds were reported regularly in Scout minutes, pamphlets, and periodicals. There was frequent mention of dramatic rescues, lost children found, and old ladies given assistance in crossing the street. One troop rescued a motor boat crew that was lost in the fog; another troop found a man lost in

⁸⁵*Canadian Boy*, July 1921, p. 287.

⁸⁶*Canadian Boy Scout*, pp. 288-9.

⁸⁷*Canadian Boy*, October 1922.

the woods at night and brought him out to safety.⁸⁸ Scout Fred Loeffler, who put out a house fire, and troop leader Joseph Cuthbert, who rescued a drowning young woman, were two of many Canadian Scouts who won the Gilt Cross for bravery.⁸⁹ Scout literature used the code of chivalry to mould young boys into productive citizens. The slogan “Do a Good Turn Every Day” prompted Scouts to render community service by assisting local Red Cross and IODE chapters, participating in Save the Forest and Fire Prevention weeks, and ushering at fall fairs and conventions. Their Christmas Toy Repair shops in Halifax, Sherbrooke, Owen Sound, Ottawa, Calgary, and Vancouver turned out hundreds of refurbished dolls and toys for needy children each year.⁹⁰

The Scout clubroom became a familiar space where boys could nurture these fraternal instincts and reaffirm their masculinity and emotional self-sufficiency away from the womenfolk. *The Canadian Boy Scout* handbook advised that the clubroom “must not be made cosy like a lady’s boudoir, as the boys must be able to romp in it occasionally.”⁹¹ Ideally a club would include a strip of land or an outdoor yard “where the scouts can make huts, light fires, play basketball, cultivate gardens, make tracks, etc.”⁹² The boys were encouraged to make their own furniture and to decorate the

⁸⁸NAC. MG 28, I 73, vol. 2, file 4. Executive Minutes. Boy Scouts of Canada, 25 October 1927, p. 10.

⁸⁹Milks, p. 84.

⁹⁰NAC. MG 28, I 73, vol. 2, file 4. Executive Minutes. Boy Scouts of Canada, 4 March 1926.

⁹¹*Canadian Boy Scout*, p. 319.

⁹²*Ibid.*

room with “pictures of incidents (not landscapes or old portraits).”⁹³ The rules and rituals of the clubroom, which emphasized action, initiative, secrecy, and self-management, were devised to instill in boys a sense of competence and proprietorship. They nurtured a feeling of belonging to a male-only fraternity, a hallowed meeting place for “Socrates loyal brotherhood.”⁹⁴

In contrast with the Scout clubroom and wilderness camps, social space for interaction among Guides usually took the form of cosy parlours, flower-laden tea rooms, and fragrant gardens where the hospitality and social graces of young hostesses were under constant scrutiny. The *Canadian Courier* reported in April 1913 that “the girls behaved beautifully—a girl guide’s characteristic—the while they over-ran joyously the fairy conservatories, paid a visit to the stables, and sat at tea”⁹⁵ Similarly, *The Globe* observed that “courtesy, that charming grace, is being instilled with many another feminine essential into the girl Guides, and it was prettily displayed on Saturday...at Casa Loma.”⁹⁶ Descriptions of Guides-sponsored social gatherings emphasized the fresh, floral femininity of the decor, the fragrance of the air, the dainty refreshments, and apparel of the ladies in attendance.⁹⁷ At her garden party at Casa Loma in 1915, for example, Lady Pellatt, was reported to be wearing an

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴B-P occasionally used the metaphor of “Socrates loyal brotherhood” to describe this form of male bonding.

⁹⁵*Canadian Courier*, 15 April 1913.

⁹⁶*The Globe*, 26 March 1914.

⁹⁷See, for example, “Casa Loma tea hosted by Lady Pellatt,” *Evening Telegram*, 17 March 1913.

“Alice blue taffeta gown with a black velvet hat trimmed with osprey.” She received her visitors at the entrance, assisted by Mrs. Torrington, who was “gowned in black satin with white lace collar and an ostrich-feathered hat.”⁹⁸

Even Girl Guides’ camps, in contrast with the Scouts’, often displayed an atmosphere that was far from roughing it in the bush. A September 1922 article in the *Canadian Illustrated Monthly* described the picturesque setting for the first general Girl Guides camp in Quebec:

Located...on the West bank of the North [River], the camp presents a most attractive and convenient situation—a dry, level lawn, completely sheltered by trees, and carpeted and perfumed by the lavish hand of nature. Privacy, drainage, running water, and accessibility to the railroad, are its attributes while the thick woods that abound on two sides, furnish every opportunity for woodcraft and scouting. A dozen spotless bell tents house the forty-six guides and ten officers, with a good sized marquee, as a dining hall, and Red Cross tent for hospital purposes and supply house.⁹⁹

Similarly, Glen Garland, a delightful farm nestled amidst rolling pastures, fragrant flower beds, and a pheasant aviary, was home to the Toronto Guides’ during their summer camp. A paved entrance led to their main camp building, a barn that was converted into a spacious playhouse with paneled walls, hardwood floor, and an array of wicker chairs and tables. Outside under the acacia trees were hung rows of hammocks, to which the Guides would retire after a long day of frolicking in the barnyard. The domesticity of the camp setting prompted the farm’s owner, Mr. Nicholas Garland, to remark that “if [they] made it any more like home it wouldn’t

⁹⁸*Chatham Daily News*, 30 October 1915.

⁹⁹Norman S. Rankin, “The Girl Guides in Canada.” *Canadian Illustrated Monthly*, September 1922, p. 23.

be camping.”¹⁰⁰

A letter to the editor of the *Canadian Girl Guide* in September 1928 drew attention to the contrast between the Guide camping of the early days and the domesticated outings of a later period:

In the old days the Company and its equipment all arrived at the camp site together and proceeded to make it so, even to our own digging (alas!) Nowadays, in many instances, parties of men or Guiders, or both, go forth and make all ready and the Guides simply walk in like little ladies and go to bed. Some Companies even take cooks to camp. Where is the excitement of choosing one's own tent site and creating a home from home, or the chastening grief of burning the porridge? Yet the best of those old camps pitched by the Guides themselves were as good, or not better than the elaborately prepared modern camp.¹⁰¹

The writer went on to warn that Guiding was in danger of being “killed by kindness,” the rigid official management of Guiding leaving “hardly any bits for the poor Guide, except that of an ornamental doll and moved here and there in spectacular events all planned and organized by Guiders and Commissioners, and requiring so many rehearsals that there is no time for the joyous Saturday afternoon hikes of an earlier date.”¹⁰²

Even beyond the distinctions of space, role, and activity, gender difference in the Guides and Scouts was reflected in their responses to the evolving discourses of nationalism, imperialism, and internationalism in the interwar period. With the decline of militarism in the 1920s, Canadian Scouts gradually lost an acceptable

¹⁰⁰*Girl Guides of Canada: Our First Fifty Years*, p. 194.

¹⁰¹*Canadian Girl Guide*, September 1928, p. 5.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*

discursive connection to the imperial project. The spectacle of militaristic pageantry that was central to the Scouting image during the First World War was far less palatable in the ensuing years of peace. Hence just as Guiding was taking on a more systematic domestic emphasis, Scouts began to shed their organized militarism in exchange for more time in the great outdoors. Harsh criticism from the more conservative ranks of Scout leadership met the publication of a new *Canadian Boy Scout* handbook in 1919, which emphasized American-style woodcraft over parades and drill.¹⁰³ The Scoutmasters' Council of Vancouver urged that the new handbook be "withdrawn from circulation and suppressed as far as possible" because of its "excessive Americanism." One reader, however, submitted a more favourable response:

While thoroughly British it is distinctively Canadian, and it is here you have scored your greatest hit. Nothing will turn a Canadian boy against a book so quickly as to find an attempt made to palm off on him non-Canadian birds, animals, trees, vehicles, etc., as Canadian. To avoid this means that the book must be Canadian in spirit and in fibre, and that is what your book is.¹⁰⁴

The appearance of the new handbook signified a gradual but marked shift in the Scout's imaginary national orbit—from the British empire to North America.

The Dominion Scout executive evinced this "Canadian spirit" in its response to a forceful invitation by imperial headquarters to attend the World Jamboree in 1924. At the executive committee meeting in October 1923, Chief Commissioner Robertson was indignant in his remarks about B-P's imposition:

¹⁰³NAC. MG 28. I 73. vol. 1. files 3-5, Executive Minutes, Boy Scouts of Canada.

¹⁰⁴NAC. MG 28. I 73. vol. 1. file 5, Executive Minutes, Boy Scouts of Canada.

It may be that in Scouting, as in other spheres of national development, we in Canada are sensitive to that attitude of mind which assumes that, when questions which we regard of considerable importance to Canada are decided by Imperial authorities for Great Britain, the decisions should be accepted by us, without consideration as to their suitability to Canada, or otherwise incur the risk of having separatist or other similar tendencies attributed to us.¹⁰⁵

This emerging sense of Canadian autonomy and national identity was also evident at the 1929 world Boy Scout jamboree in England where Canadian Scouts proudly exhibited their national wares in a display tent that featured Scouts making baskets and carvings amidst Native motifs and samples of different kinds of fruit and grain. Pictures illustrating life in Canada emphasized the country's wide open spaces, prairie wheatfields, and industrious homesteaders.¹⁰⁶ Spectators received copies of *Canada The Land We Come From*, a booklet that evoked images of old, majestic forests, powerful rivers, and sweeping prairies ripe for the plough. It boasted of Canada's "vigorous climate" and "abundance of outdoor life," which produced fine young boys who were perfectly designed for the rigours of Scouting.¹⁰⁷

Although Canadian Scouting texts continued to express an enduring affection for the mother country, by the late 1920s peace, internationalism, and brotherhood had begun to take the place of imperialism as the most common Scout abstractions. Boy Scouts were less frequently referred to as "soldiers of the Empire." Instead they increasingly took on the identity of "Young Ambassadors of Peace," an identity that

¹⁰⁵NAC, MG 28, I 73, vol. 2, file 4 Executive minutes, Boy Scouts of Canada, 4 October 1923.

¹⁰⁶NAC, MG 28, I 73, vol. 3, file 1, Executive Minutes, Boy Scouts of Canada, 31 May 1929, pp. 22-3.

¹⁰⁷NAC, MG 28, I 73, vol. 22, file 2, *Canada The Land We Come From. Canadian Souvenir Boy Scout World Jamboree July 31 to August 13, 1929.*

was increasingly at odds with the exploitative and oppressive connotations of imperialism.¹⁰⁸ In the interwar period Canadian Scouts were in training for world citizenship in a spirit of international, not just imperial, fellowship.¹⁰⁹

The Girl Guides papers, on the other hand, reflect a more subtle transition from imperialism to nationalism and internationalism after the First World War. Undeniably Guides did express a love for Canada within the larger imperial context. Guide leaders often spoke in the same breath of their love of Canada and their allegiance to Britain. Mrs. Ernest Smith, the Girl Guide commissioner for Ontario in the 1920s, was educated in London, England and lived her whole life in service of the empire. She served as a vice-regent of the IODE's Municipal Chapter in London, Ontario during the Boer War and again from 1920 to 1921. She also sat as Regent of the Lord Roberts Chapter for nine years and was very active in IODE work throughout the First World War. In an article entitled, "Among Those Present," Jean Graham described her as

a true imperialist, with an appreciation of all those elements which make our Empire what it is; and she is also a Daughter of the Dominion, with pride in her own land and an appreciation of its possibilities. No Canadian would, for a moment, wish to decry the beauties and traditions of our forefathers' land—the British Isles. But we have a history of our own, with the chivalry of Old France and the dignity of Britain to lend colour to the background. Mrs. Smith is one who loves both the Old Land and the New, and is qualified as our representative at home or abroad.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸NAC. MG 28. I 73. vol. 22. file 3. *Canada's Scouts at the World Jamboree 1929. The Report to His Excellency Viscount Willingdon, Chief Scout for Canada.*

¹⁰⁹NAC. MG 28. I 73. vol. 2. file 3. Executive Minutes. Boy Scouts of Canada. October 1922. p. 16.

¹¹⁰OCA. (loose article). Jean Graham. "Among Those Present." n.p.

The Guides themselves, “marching on the King’s highway,” also combined the old with the new as they cheerily sang that “the Empire was their country and Canada their home.”¹¹¹ The “Canada Room” at the international Guide house in England served as a reminder of Canada’s home within the empire while featuring distinctive Canadian iconography in the form of pictures donated by the Canadian Pacific Railway: the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, the city of Quebec, a mountain scene in the Rockies, and an Indian canoe shooting the rapids. A knocker of a beaver on a maple leaf adorned the door.¹¹²

A patriotic Girl Guides play in Dauphin, Manitoba in 1913 illustrated the emergence of this new Canadian identity even before the onset of the war. Guide Cora McMillan recited Pauline Johnson’s poem, “Canadian Born,” as little flower girls and fairies, representing Canada’s beauty, danced about and spread her grace and influence around the world. Flag, wheat, and wheel drills displayed Canada’s traditions, while three Guides representing the rose, thistle, and shamrock stood as reminders of a much-loved British heritage. “Canada” herself, personified by Mrs. E.R. Jarvis, regally graced her court under John Bull’s attentive eye. Strong in her union of provinces, ten of Dauphin’s finest young ladies, Miss Canada resisted advances by Uncle Sam and the European Nations. She did, however, humbly give her hand to the King of Righteousness as a procession of white angels entered bearing

¹¹¹The first line in the Song of the Girl Guides was: “We’re the Girl Guides marching on the King’s highway.” The final chorus went: “Up, girl! Wake, girl!. Think not of your pleasure. To the land beloved give your strength and golden youth, For Canada, homeland, needs the pour’d out treasure Of her children’s loyalty and service, faith and truth.” *The Globe*, Toronto, 16 March 1914.

¹¹²*Canadian Girl Guide*, October 1923, p. 8

snowy crosses. Little Lizzie Sutherland, as an Indian maid, added a touch of poignancy as she recited a poem, the “Vanquished Race,” dying at “Canada’s” feet in closing. The local newspaper reported that “the enthusiastic applause which many of the clever hits and expressions of both national and imperialistic sentiment called forth, goes to prove that loyalty is a live question in the town.”¹¹³

The indignant expressions of Canadian autonomy found in Scout texts, however, were absent in the Girl Guides. Unlike Canadian Scouts, who made steps to create periodicals and handbooks that reflected Canadian interests, Canadian Girl Guides continued to use a body of literature and instruction that was predominantly British in origin and orientation. Their strong connections with the IODE in the 1920s sustained in Guiding the discourse of imperial motherhood.¹¹⁴ As Scouts were losing the male connection with empire through militarism and colonial exploits, Guide literature and practice continued to place girls firmly within the empire in an acceptable, familial role. Even in the late 1920s Girl Guides of St. Hilda’s College in Calgary danced around the maypole during their May Day celebrations each year chanting: “Daughters of Britain, loyal and true, Hear now your country calling, calling you. Princess or peasant, or daughter of earls, Britain the service claims of Britain’s girls.”¹¹⁵ In 1930 a *Canadian Girl Guide* article on citizenship reminded

¹¹³Dauphin. Manitoba. 21 October 1913.

¹¹⁴The IODE’s energetic involvement in establishing and supporting Girl Guide companies was fueled by the intention that “Guides would be the future daughters of the Empire.” *Girl Guides of Canada: Our First Fifty Years*. p. 236.

¹¹⁵“British Columbia Page.” *Canadian Girl Guide*. March 1927. p. 6.

Guides and Guiders of the nation-building role of their mothering, “personal influence” and their loyalty to a larger imperial community:

If we are to build a great Canada, we must visualize a great Canada, and know what attributes we want our home country to have. We must believe in a splendid future of our city, our province of our Dominion. We must remember, however, that we are citizens not only of Canada but of the British Empire.¹¹⁶

These distinctions in the evolution of national identities in the Guides and Scouts points to the intriguing possibility of separate, gendered chronologies for the transition from imperialism to nationalism in Canada.

Such were the official, prescriptive messages of Guiding. It is almost impossible to gauge the extent to which the ideals of femininity, nation, and empire were internalized by the Guides themselves. The motivations and interests of a young Guide in rural Saskatchewan, for example, may have been far removed from the values and concerns expressed by a middle-aged, middle-class woman at Guide headquarters in Toronto or in London. Indeed each Guide and Guide leader may have derived different meanings from the images and ideals presented to her by the organization’s elite. The activities listed for a Girl Guide camp in Nanaimo, British Columbia, which included prayers, saluting the flag, signaling, tracking, nature study, talks, and singing, indicate the variety of activities to which Guides were exposed may have balanced the stifling expectations of femininity.¹¹⁷ Likewise, any contemplation of their duty to nation and empire may have been greatly

¹¹⁶*Canadian Girl Guide*. September 1930, p. 12.

¹¹⁷*Nanaimo Daily Herald*, 27 August 1914.

overshadowed by the simple pleasures of the campfire. Undoubtedly, young Guides would have found important role models in their company leaders. Phyllis Munday of Vancouver, for example, the woman who initiated Lone Guiding in British Columbia in 1924, was a well-known mountaineer who conquered the most challenging peaks of the Coastal Mountains. She was nationally recognized for her wildlife photography, and became British Columbia's Woodcraft Adviser.¹¹⁸ Also, the introduction of camping, outdoor sports, and rescue work into their lives would have inspired new thoughts about the opportunities available to them. An early student of British Columbia's Queen Margaret School, which incorporated Guiding into its curriculum from its founding in 1921 recalled:

For me, perhaps the most significant contribution the school made was in giving me a remarkable foretaste of freedom...a vivid demonstration of how women could be strong, independent, and self-assured. We were confronted with a constant demonstration that we were all capable of service, and all capable of realizing ourselves as complete individuals.¹¹⁹

Nonetheless, the appearance of Scouts in outdoor spaces was never questioned, while Girl Guides were faced with a constant tension between a desire to enjoy the adventures of their Scout brothers and the need to conform to the feminine proprieties of the day. Often that meant Guides were forced to bring the trappings of domesticity wherever they went. This brief glimpse into the Canadian Scouts and Guides elucidates some of the lessons in femininity and masculinity that organized the experiences of Canadian youth during this period, lessons that reflected middle-

¹¹⁸Robinson, p. 36.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 18.

class fears about a rapidly changing world. Guiding celebrated domesticity, heterosexuality, and virtuous motherhood as the essence of womanly citizenship just as Scouting held young boys to a standard of virile, resourceful, and assertive manliness. These gendered values, identities, and notions of citizenship, promoted by Scout and Guide propaganda, were cemented by the ritual experiences of the clubroom, the parlour, and the campfire. The suppression of self, service to others, and adherence to appropriate gendered roles, primary tenets of Guiding and Scouting, were deemed to be crucial components in the maintenance of national and imperial order and unity.

Conclusion

The *Echoes* post-war cover picture said more than a thousand words about women and nation-building in the IODE's imperial vision. Enrobed in a flowing gown, a noble matron sat with one hand holding an open book and the other resting on top of the globe. At her feet sat a food basket labeled "Production" and a stack of books labeled "Knowledge." The caption—"the sun neither sets on our Empire nor on the work of women of the Empire"—summarized the IODE's assumptions about women's political function and about the inevitability of imperial dominance. In a single image, the Daughters of the Empire were able to convey the exclusive ideals of gender, class, and race that shaped the work of organized female imperialists, the conceptualization of the empire as a gendered socio-cultural entity, and the persistence of imperial loyalties in Canada into the 1920s. These are the themes that organized the details of this dissertation.

This dissertation contributes to both national history and the history of women in Canada. If, as Ruth Roach Pierson claims, the arguments for a grand narrative of Canada's past (put forth by Bliss, Granatstein, et al.) rest on the "assumption of a deep and impervious divide between the public and the private, the privileging of the public over the private, a definition of the public so narrow as to exclude all but so-called 'high' politics, an extreme reluctance to relinquish a unitary conception of Canadian identity, and a conception of the 'national' as transcendent, i.e., separate from and beyond the experiences of 'region, ethnicity, class, family, and

gender,” then this study engages with the national history debate on several fronts.¹ The story of those “great statesmen and great events of statesmanship” whom Bliss credits “for the making of Canada” represents a simplistic and distorted view of the forces and interests that were included and excluded in the evolution of Canadian cultural and political life.² It obscures the inescapably gendered constitution of nation and nation-building. It overlooks the important contributions women made to the welfare state and to the imaginative bond of national belonging.

As rail and post began to connect Canada’s scattered population in the decades following Confederation, organized middle-class women stepped up to the national stage to make a mark on the kind of nation Canada would become in the new century. In all their varied concerns—temperance, public health, denominational missions, women’s rights, and urban reform, to name a few—lay an intense interest in creating an orderly society. Through their literacy practices—the production of club reports, resolutions, and histories and the dissemination of texts in club, school, church, and community—organized women were engaging in the larger process of cultivating a harmonious national consciousness. The “womanly” work of educating children and attending to the issues of reproduction and morality contributed to an informal system of governance that encouraged self-regulation, industry, cleanliness, and respect for authority, qualities that were necessary for a smooth transition to

¹Ruth Roach Pierson. “Colonization and Canadian Women’s History.” *Journal of Women’s History* 4. 2 (Fall 1992): 146-7.

²Michael Bliss. “Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada.” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26. 4 (Winter 1991-92): 5-17.

capitalism and nationhood.

The conceptualization of women's club work as a point of convergence for private and public interests helps to expose the fiction of "separate spheres" that has been central to traditional Canadian history. Club texts revealed intimate connections between nation-building and questions of morality, domesticity, and gender relations.³ They expressed domestic concerns—motherhood, reproduction, health, and hygiene—as matters of national survival. The maternal welfare policies demanded by club women—mothers' pensions and protective legislation, for example—further bridged the figurative gap between the home and the state.⁴ In fact, in the discourse of nation-building, womanhood itself became a repository for national ideals, a site through which the inheritance, identity, and destiny of the nation were debated.

The study of organized female imperialism enriches our understanding of these connections between public and private, gender and nation. For national women's organizations like the WCTU, the YWCA, the NCWC, and the Women's Institutes, the transformation of society was a by-product of their varied preoccupations. For the imperialist women of the IODE, the GFS, and, to a lesser extent, the Girl Guides, however, nation-building was an explicit goal and unifying

³Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1889-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Lykke de la Cour, Cecilia Morgan, and Mariana Valverde, "Gender Regulation and State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Canada," in *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Canada*, ed. Allan Greer and Ian Radforth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 163-91.

⁴Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "National Unity and the Politics of Political History," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 3 (1992): 10.

purpose. Their practical work in education, immigration, child welfare, public health, church-building, and citizenship was fueled by a mission to strengthen the human and cultural components of the nation.

Imperialism formed the core and essence of this nation-building project. For the IODE, the GFS, and the Girl Guides, imperialism was less a matter of military aggression or preferential economics than a matter of racial unity and moral idealism. In their view, imperialism represented a set of values—duty, service, deference, benevolence—that would mend the perceived discrepancy between lagging moral growth and accelerating material progress. It was expressed as a belief in the civilizing mission of the Anglo-Saxon ruling bloc and as a rejection of the anonymity, immorality, and rootlessness of modernity.⁵

The intensity of such imperial convictions among organized Canadian women confirms that the evolution of Canadian national identity must be understood within the larger context of the British empire. As Ged Martin explains,

Historians study their subjects by drawing boxes of definition around them—Canadian history by definition takes place within a geographical box labelled ‘Canada’ which tends to obscure the extent to which Canadians focused their own interests on the outer world. Grattan O’Leary grew up in a household on the Gaspé where his father ‘talked of Parnell and Gladstone more than he did of Macdonald or Laurier.’ O’Leary was named after an eighteenth century Irish hero. Joey Smallwood, born a dozen years later, was named in honour of the British colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain and the British general

⁵Modernity coincided with the expansion of industrial capitalism beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, although Patricia Jasen identifies characteristics of modernity in early nineteenth century Upper Canada. “Romanticism, Modernity, and the Evolution of Tourism on the Niagara Frontier, 1790-1850,” *Canadian Historical Review* 72, 3 (September 1991): 283-318.

Lord Roberts. He called his own son after Ramsay MacDonald.⁶

Likewise, the leading ladies who orchestrated the patriotic programmes of the IODE, the GFS, and the Girl Guides saw themselves as part of a Britannic national family. They enjoyed the privileges of elite status within a transatlantic social circle based in London, the imperial capital. Their beliefs and practices illustrate the ideological intimacy shared by Britain and Canada well into the interwar period. Despite its Canadian origins, the IODE was created to serve the needs of this larger national family, and its patriotic propaganda was firmly grounded in the British movement of 'Education for Empire.' The Girls' Friendly Society and the Girl Guides Association of Canada were outgrowths of English-born organizations. The structure, texts, and ideals they shared with their parent societies inspired an external orientation. The GFS's formal identification with the Church of England reinforced this imperial connection.

Like their male counterparts in the Orange Order, the British Empire Club, and the United Empire Loyalists Association, Canada's organized female imperialists tread comfortably within the discursive waters of British colonialism. Their assumptions about cultural absolutes, the universality of the British moral code, and hierarchies of class and race were by this time already time-worn residuals from centuries of imperial conquest on several continents. Their reform platforms and patriotic literacy practices helped to reproduce the hegemonic ideologies that had

⁶Ged Martin, "The Canadian Question and the Late Modern Century," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 7, 2 (1992): 228.

hitherto sustained this project.

Canadian women imperialists expressed a deep emotional attachment to the “Mother Country.” Their club texts were punctuated with references to a stock of British historical and literary Anglo-Saxonists: Kipling, Carlyle, Tennyson, Milton, Livingstone, and Kingsley were celebrated as representatives of the grand traditions of English literature, politics, colonialism, and monarchism. In the schools, homes, and clubrooms of the nation and around the Guide campfire, these traditions were held up as evidence of Britain’s place at the centre of history and civilization. While these women recognized Canada as their home and country, the British empire was their “imagined community.”⁷

This external outlook has interpretive implications for our understanding of Canadian nationalism and imperialism. In a 1998 review of *Imperial Canada* Doug Owrarn explained the need to investigate conventional assumptions about Canada’s relationship with the British empire: “In some ways we know very little about the place of Canada within the broader British world,” he writes. “We understand even less about the mechanisms by which culture was transmitted across the Atlantic in either direction.... Most of all we need to look at interpretive frameworks that extend or challenge Berger.”⁸ Since Carl Berger released his seminal book, *The Sense of Power*, in 1970 few have questioned the claim that imperialism was in fact one variety of

⁷Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2d ed. (London: Verso, 1997).

⁸Doug Owrarn, review of *Imperial Canada, 1867-1917*, ed. Colin Coates, in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26, 3 (September 1998): 124-5.

Canadian nationalism.⁹ Berger portrays his all-male subjects as nationalists whose imperialist ideas were Canadian grown for the purpose of Canadian ascendancy. Even though he professes to be rescuing Canadian imperialists from the whig emphasis on national growth, he does so by arguing that they were nationalists after all. Hence as Graham Carr has pointed out, the acceptance of nationalism as good and just and the valorisation of nationalism over imperialism continues in his work.¹⁰

Organized female imperialists in Canada complicate Berger's tidy conclusions. Their extensive connections to Britain and the empire, and their belief in the moral union of Anglo Saxons give strong indication of a broader, Britannic nationalism. In short, their imperialism was inspired, in many ways, by their outward allegiances rather than by their commitment to an indigenous nationality. Textual exchanges between Canadian and British organizations, the encouragement of immigration from Britain, the transplanting of English girls in Canadian soil through GFS emigration schemes, and the injection of British funds and influence into the Anglican Church of western Canada all point to the porous nature of national identity formation. These

⁹Similar conclusions were reached by Robert Page in "The Canadian Response to the 'Imperial' Idea during the Boer War Years." in *Canadian History Since Confederation: Essays and Interpretations*, ed. Bruce Hodgins and Robert Page (Georgetown: Irwin-Dorsey, 1972), pp. 506-18 and by Norman Penlington in *Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965). Penlington argued that Canadian imperialism was a product of the tensions between Canada and the United States. C.P. Stacey also voiced support for Berger's thesis in his book, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, V. I, 1867-1921* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977). Critiques of Berger's conclusions include Douglas Cole, "Canada's 'Nationalistic' Imperialists" and "The Problem of 'Nationalism' and 'Imperialism' in British Settlement Colonies," in *Journal of British Studies* 10, 2 (May 1971): 160-82 and Terry Cook, "George R. Parkin and the Concept of Britannic Idealism." *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 10, 3 (August 1975): 15-31

¹⁰Graham Carr, "Imperialism and Nationalism in Revisionist Historiography: A Critique of Some Recent Trends." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17, 2 (Summer 1982): 91-99.

offshoots of organized female imperialism provided vehicles through which British culture was transmitted to Canada.

These British influences did not drop off suddenly in the interwar period. Contrary to conventional belief, the First World War did not “kill” the appeal of imperialism in Canada. Rather, many patriotic women saw the ideals of imperialism as the best bet for reconstruction in the post-war years. The IODE approached its 1920s work in the fields of immigration and child welfare with a distinct adherence to the racial and social codes of its imperial heritage. Through patriotic education, Daughters of the Empire contributed to a memory of the Great War, not as a catalyst for Canada’s separation from Britain, but as a point of convergence for the imperial triumphs of the past and the future. Indeed imperialist, woman-centred initiatives, like the Sunday School Caravan Mission and the Fellowship of the Maple Leaf only just got started in the post-war years and indeed reached their height of activity during the 1920s. Similarly, Canadian girls took up Guiding after 1909 and struggled to reconcile prescriptions for domesticity with imperial citizenship long after the close of the First World War. In their club resolutions, patriotic displays, and vocal declarations of loyalty to the Union Jack, the women of these organizations struggled to maintain Canada’s symbolic connections to Britain even as the last remnants of their formal ties were disintegrating.

The identification of organized imperialist women with a larger, Britannic national family can only be understood by accepting the gendered nature of imperialism. For all its conservative underpinnings, the rise of an imperialist

consciousness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided scripts with which middle-class women could take on a powerful, gendered role in the building of Canada. While female imperialists celebrated the imperial achievements of male explorers, soldiers, and statesmen, they did not accept the established narratives of a male-centred imperialism without question or revision. Instead, they shared with the imperial ladies of England's BWEA, Primrose League, Victoria League, and Mothers' Union a vision of an empire sustained by the mothering acts of reproduction, nurture, and moral guidance. As "mothers of the race," they were able to challenge dominant conceptions of women as either outside of empire, as an imperial problem, or as submissive bearers of the nation's citizens. They created a role for women as agents of progress and civilization in the national project. In doing so, they provided a place in the public collective mind for woman as a positive, regenerating force. For the imperialist women of Canada, a pan-nationalistic Anglo-Saxonism held greater discursive opportunities for public power than did any narrow Canadian nationalism. Its emphasis on moral authority and racial instinct gave women a role in nation-building through their imperial motherhood.

The trope of maternalism, however, left an ambiguous legacy. The conceptualization of women as the mothers of the nation, for all its empowering functions, reinforced a citizenship based on woman's "natural" reproductive capacity. Arguments for women's bodily autonomy were ultimately undermined by a maternalist ideology that attached women's sexuality to the reproduction of the race. The idealization of motherhood implied the exclusion of non-reproductive sexualities

from nationalist discourses.¹¹ The preeminence of national concerns imposed severe limitations on the demand for self-determination. The moral protection of women and girls took precedence over their emancipation. Selflessness and sacrifice, claimed by women as the source of their moral authority, left little room for any credible expression of a vocabulary of rights. These contradictions are especially evident in chapter six, which demonstrated how gender difference, as the foundation of citizenship training for Guides and Scouts, created adventuresome opportunities for girls in a familiar mothering role while restricting the possibilities for true female autonomy.

This position was also race and class exclusive. Organized female imperialists imagined themselves, women of the Anglo-Saxon ruling group, to be Canadians in the truest definition. By centering their own bourgeois values and virtues as the highest ideals of citizenship, they rendered other belief systems and traditions un-Canadian and legitimized their own authority over the working-class and immigrant families they sought to transform.¹² They actively supported and extended exclusive immigration practices, and they promulgated domestic ideals that suited their own privileged perspective. In this way, they reinforced definitions of Canadian citizenship that were class and race specific.

There were, of course, tensions, gaps, and contradictions within organized

¹¹Catherine Hall et al., "Introduction." *Gender & History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993): 163.

¹²Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Captured Subjects/Savage Others: Violently Engendering the New American." *Gender & History* 5, 2 (Summer 1993): 177-195 and Anne Ruggles Gere, "Constructing and Contesting Americanization(s)," in *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), pp. 54-92.

female imperialism that limit the findings of this dissertation. As a study of the upper echelons of imperialist women's organizations, this dissertation reveals a great deal more about the prescriptive components of the official imperial message than it does about their reception among both the societies' lower ranks and the population at large. It is also important to recognize the inevitable differences between Canadian imperialist women and their British counterparts. Although the IODE, the GFSC, and the Canadian Girl Guides drew extensively upon their connection to an overseas network of imperial women, they carried out their programmes in a Canadian setting and, by necessity, attended to local concerns. Ultimately, the pull of Canadian national interests in the 1920s meant that Canadian imperialist women's organizations had more difficulty sustaining their morale and membership in the interwar period. As a study of only three women's organizations in a complex and interconnected club movement, this study represents only a partial (but significant) recovery of female imperialist ideology in Canada. Further research into the Mother's Union, the Dominion Order of the King's Daughter's, interconnections with the larger women's movement, and the individual leading ladies of imperialist reform would help to build on the preliminary foundation established in this dissertation.

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