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**As Canadian As Possible: “Canada First” and the
Shifting Rhetoric of Canadian National Identity**

by

Anna Blaszczyńska, B.A.

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August 28, 2001
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Shifting Rhetoric of Canadian National Identity**

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Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Thesis Supervisor

Carleton University
September 19, 2001

ABSTRACT

As Canadian As Possible: “Canada First” and the Shifting Rhetoric of Canadian National Identity

by Anna Blaszczyńska

**Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Derek Smith
Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

This thesis examines various post-Confederation visions of Canada’s emerging “national” identity, focusing primarily on the emergence of the Canada First Movement (1869-73). The “Canada First” movement emerged in the aftermath of Confederation, as an intellectual (and later social and political) movement interested in furthering Canada’s “new nationality.” This thesis will examine the movement’s original goals and aspirations and situate the movement within a broader context of post-Confederation social and intellectual debates on Canadian identity. In addition, this thesis will examine the shifting rhetoric in Canada First’s conceptualization of “new nationality,” and illustrate an interesting and complex set of Self/Other relationships that were inherent in the process of identity formation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

M P	Morgan, Henry James Papers
D P	Denison, George Taylor Papers
C M P	Mair, Charles Papers
P A C	Public Archives of Canada
N L C	National Library of Canada
W M	<i>Willisons Monthly</i>
C M & N R	<i>The Canadian Monthly and National Review</i>
D T	<i>Daily Telegraph [Toronto]</i>
N E	<i>The New Era</i>
I F L	Imperial Federation League
N C	The National Club

INTRODUCTION

AS CANADIAN AS POSSIBLE: “CANADA FIRST” AND THE SHIFTING RHETORIC OF CANADIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

The 19th century was an Age of Nationalism. Much of nineteenth-century nationalism revolved around world-wide efforts to translate identifications of commonality among people based on such parameters as language, culture, and history, among others, into self-governing nation states. Although particular Canadians in this period were aspiring for political unification and self-determination, the nation-state that emerged with Confederation was a political, constitutional and economic matter, rather than a product of a common cultural identity.

Canada as a nation-state emerged on 1 July, 1867, by an act of the British Parliament. Canada was to be a self-governing dependency, a Dominion. The British North America Act created a federal system; with the new provincial legislatures wielding considerable power while Ottawa regulated interprovincial and international economic affairs. A number of small and weak provinces – Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia – were to be brought together into a single state out of which would grow a “new nationality.” As Scott (1942: 415) pointed out, “towards this new nation and its central government the allegiance of all the citizens was expected to turn.” At Confederation, Quebec retained the distinct cultural features such as language, the civil code, and the educational system in the parts of the Dominion where they had already been established by law or custom. The French Canadian population of Quebec saw the British North America Act as a pact between the English and the Canadiens, and

understood Confederation as the construction of a bilingual and bicultural state: the union of two “races,” or separate nations joined in equal partnership (Corse, 1997).

Many Canadians were conscious of the absence of “national feeling” in the “new nation,” and worked hard to find suitable myths and symbols around which a national spirit might rally. The fathers of Confederation appealed to the patriotism and self-reliance of the people, and inspired its founders of creation of “new nationality,” a phrase which appeared in the Speech from the Throne in the Canadian Parliament of 1865 (Scott, 1942: 389). The phrase “new nationality,” however, was first coined by Thomas D’Arcy McGee (1825-68) in the first issue of the *New Era* (1857-8) and occupied a prominent position in McGee’s writings and lectures. The excitement of this “new nationality” rested on the possibility of an identity different from the old status of a mere British subject. In addition, this vision instilled a sense of potential strength and future growth of Canada.¹ National sentiment mounted in the aftermath of Confederation, as evidenced by the Canada First Movement whose primary goal was to promote Canadian national feeling.

The vision of the fathers of Confederation of Canada’s “new nationality” bore strong resemblance to that proposed by the Canada First Movement, an intellectual and social movement formed in 1868 by a small number of Toronto’s prominent public figures. The Canada First Movement (1868-73), also known as the “Twelve Apostles” and the North-West Emigration Aid Society, was characterized by “all the trappings of an undergraduate fraternity, including a solemn oath, code names, and a secret society” (Gagan, 1964: iv). Militant and ultra-nationalistic, the proponents of Canada First can be

¹ For some historians (see for example, Bennet and Jaenen, 1986) late 19th century Canadian nationalism was most clearly symbolized and embodied in Sir John A. Macdonald’s policies for national development. Macdonald, who governed the young Dominion between 1878-1891, developed a series of nation building policies, a program, which can be arguably seen as being nationalist in appeal. Whether or not, Macdonald’s brand of nationalism was economic in nature; his public aim was to create a ‘Canada for Canadians.’ This in turn served as the expression of basic impulse for national survival on the North American continent.

seen by some as extremist proponents of English Canadian exclusivism in a bi-cultural nation. Canada First was conceived as a militantly patriotic expression of faith in the historical objectives of Confederation (Gagan, 1970: 36). Canada First's project was to define and delineate a vehicle for national sentiment and of popular will. However, the aims of the Canada First Movement were broad, and the means by which they were to be attained were vague and, in some respects, contradictory. The essential desire of Canada First was to achieve a distinctive Canadian national character and status. By far the most vital and controversial aspect of the Canada First Movement was the question of Canada's external relations: the problem of developing in Canada a national personality that would set it apart from both Britain and the United States.

Research Objectives

This thesis will examine the terrain of nationalism in Canada, by examining one of Canada's first nationalist movements "Canada First." Even though the Canada First Movement never gained sufficient momentum to be considered a broad-based political movement, its brief existence had a lasting impact upon Canadian social history. In less than a decade, the Canada First Movement and its adherents among Canada's Anglophone elite managed to force Francophone Quebec into a defensive position, which in some respects, it still retains today. The movement's original purpose was to create a unique Canadian nationality and a sense of national purpose.

My project, however, is not to re-write the history of the Canada First Movement, rather, using Canada First as an example of an intellectual/social movement, it is to illustrate the shifting discourses and rhetoric of Canadian nationalism and identity. It is clear that the members of Canada First were constantly re-examining their premises concerning the "new nationality." For example, at the earlier phase of the Canada First Movement, English and French Canadians were said to be united by their "Norman" ancestry, proof of their "racial" superiority over the rest of the inhabitants of the

Dominion. This was clearly illustrated by the work of Canada Firster Robert Grant Haliburton (1831-1901) in *The Men of the North and Their Place in History* (1869). Haliburton's quest for national solidarity and legitimacy resulted in a discourse of common historical origin and genealogical descent. This discourse changed with the events during and following the Red River Uprising (1869-70) which occurred when settlers of the Red River Valley of what is now Manitoba resisted steps to put the valley under Canadian government control. The "Norman" ancestry of the Francophone population was replaced by claims about the mediaeval inertia and indolence characteristic of the Francophone population. French Canadians and Métis were thus discursively constructed as representing a bar to progress, and to the extension of a great Anglo-Saxon Dominion across the continent. The shifting discourse regarding the Francophone and the Métis populations in Canada during the Red River Uprising, in Canada First's vision of "new nationality," illustrated a revival of older racial and religious prejudices of pre-Confederation Canada West. In addition, as Gagan (1970) pointed out, the discourse constructed a romanticized notion that national sentiment rightfully ought to be the product of a violent struggle for political existence. The infusion of national sentiment with a spirit of militarism thus allowed for the identification with national greatness and imperialistic images.

Following the basic premises that 1) identity is a contingent historical construction, and 2) the integrity of identity is contingent upon the identification of elements that are not-the-identity, or in other words, a field of "Otherness" outside the identity which stands in antithetical relation to identity, my objective is to illustrate the various Self/Other formulations apparent in the rhetoric of Canada First. Canada First's attempt at the construction of the Canadian "new nationality" simultaneously constructed the devaluation and subordination of the "Others," those who were excluded from their national narratives. However, as this thesis will illustrate, while the Self/Other dichotomy is inherent in the construction of Canadian Identity, it is not limited to the

view of the “Other” as a single particular group. The social relations between the Anglophone component of the Canadian population and various “Others” were socially and historically shaped and at times contradictory. By looking at the different visions of Canada’s “new nationality” and the distinct means proposed to instill national sentiment into Canadian consciousness, Canada First illustrates an interesting and complex set of relationships. Hence, instead of a simple dichotomy based on “us” and “them” as presented by various scholars (see for example, Tomkins, 1997; Stamp, 1977), Canada First’s nationalism provides a complex and often contradictory set of social relations and practices. In the rhetoric on “new nationality” presented by various Canada First members, the following formulations emerged: 1) “us” = Canadian = English Canadian + French Canadian vs. “them” = American; 2) “us” = Anglophone = Anglo-Saxon + Protestant vs. “them” = Francophones + Catholic; and 3) “us” = English Canadians vs. “them” as “Others” (First Nations, Allophones, Francophones, American, etc.). This thesis will attempt to understand the construction of these differences as they were produced within subjectivities and between socio-cultural groups in terms of the historical and social grounds on which they were organized.

By examining the literary and scholarly works of Canada First members, and pointing to the shifting discourses on Canadian nationality and identity, I will attempt to situate Canada First as a movement that was exclusively English-Canadian, even though it is almost solely cited as a pan-Canadian national movement. While there exists a scholarly pre-occupation with various historical and social aspects of nationalism in Canada, mainly Quebec, ethnic and First Nations nationalism(s), there seem to be very few attempts to trace how something called Canada’s national feeling came into existence and that there has been very little historical research regarding the emergence of a specifically “Canadian” nationalism. In addition, attempting to examine the Canada First Movement, as an example of English-Canadian nationalism might shed light on the contradictory nature of Canadian nationalism in general.

An important aspect of this project is the exploration of the nationalist rhetoric from a socio-cultural perspective, and focus on Canada First's project as an example of English-Canadian cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism tends to focus on the construction of myths in the process of (national) identity formation. While some scholars argue (see for example, Wayland, 1997; Widdis, 1997) that Canada lacked "clear" Canadian national symbols in the century following Confederation, this thesis will illustrate that the cultural construction of specifically Canadian symbols and "myths" in the process of Canadian national identity formation was well established by the mid 19th century (see Francis, 1997; Berger, 1966; Smith, A. 1994; Fraser, 1990; 1998). In mid 19th century Canada, national self-image or identity intersected with the broader concept of cultural myth making and in Canada, as in other nations, every cultural and sub-cultural group built its identity around a body of notions about its history and status with respect to the rest of the world.

Assumptions Underlying the Study

The first assumption underling this study is that the 19th century and early 20th century discourse on Canadian national identity was predominantly Anglophone. As Corse (1997: 38) pointed out, the very phrase "Canadian nationalism" is misleading because it occludes the central divisions inherent in the notion of "Canada" itself. The concept of "nation" in Canadian discourse is used to refer 1) to a pan-Canadian nation; 2) to the "nation" of English Canada; and 3) to the "nation" of French Canada. Historically, Francophone nationalism (now Quebec nationalism) and pan-Canadian (English) nationalism have been mutually exclusive (Corse, 1997: 44). Pan-Canadian nationalism is generally defined in Anglo-Canadian terms. Consequently the study of Canadian nationalism is largely the study of English-Canadian nationalism. Similarly, the discourses of English Canadian and Canadian identity are inextricably bound. English

Canada's salient identity is with the Canadian state, whose self-conception it also articulates (Kaufmann, 1997: 111).

The second set of assumptions underlying this study consider the discursive constructions of nations and national identities. In this set, the first assumption is that nations are to be understood as mental constructs, as "imagined political communities" (Anderson, 1991: 6). Nationhood sets vague demands, including identification with a particular nation, concern for its survival and prosperity and a feeling of special responsibility for the well being of fellow nationals. In addition, nationhood implies the adoption and practice of national culture. Terms of membership in a nation are not guided by legal or formal procedures alone, but also by a sense of membership in an imagined community (Anderson, 1991: 6-7).

Second, national identities are assumed to be discursively constructed by means of language and other semiotic systems (De Cillia et al., 1999: 153). National identities are not only historical and social constructions, but are also a part of a continual process of transformation. In other words, identities are not static, but are produced, reproduced, transformed and destroyed. National identities contribute to the imagination of a "common body" or "national territory" (De Cillia et al., 1999: 153). Included in this are stereotypical notions of other nations and their cultures.

In addition, national identity is always formed and transformed within and in relation to representation (Hall, 1992: 296). A nation, therefore, can be seen both as a system of cultural representations, and as a symbolic community with "power" to generate a sense of identity and allegiance. National narratives attempt to construct and maintain a sense of homogeneity of a nation state or a national culture. Furthermore, as Hall (1992; 1996) emphasizes, national culture can be seen as a discourse, as a way of constructing meaning which influences and organizes both our actions and our conceptions of ourselves. National cultures manufacture identities by producing meaning about the nation with which we can identify.

Consequently, since 'identity' is a relational term, a group 'self' is defined in distinction from an 'other' group. Thus, the discursive construction of nations and national identities is always involved with the production of difference and uniqueness (Hall, 1992; 1996). Sociological and Anthropological research has indicated that an idea, an imaginary representation, of the "Other" is present in the organization and culture of all societies. Inherent in this formulation is the construction of a presumed self-superiority in projecting a debasement of the 'Other.' At the extreme group 'self' identity runs a risk of degeneration into exclusion and scapegoating of all 'Others.' In addition, Angus (1997: 4) argues, nationalism is a form of social identity "to which violence towards the other seems a permanent possibility."

Likewise, identity is not merely an individual or social category, but also a spatial category, "since the ideas of territory, self and 'us' all require symbolic, socio-cultural and/or physical dividing lines with the Other" (Passi, 2001: 10). Nation-states, like regions, always require some sort of boundaries or borders, even if these are not exclusively physical. Boundaries and borders, are not fixed lines; rather, like identities, they arise out of processes in which territories and their contested meanings are socially and culturally constructed (Passi, 2001).

The final assumption is that National Identities are never as unified or homogenous as represented. One national identity in an essentializing sense does not exist; rather there are multiplicity of identities that are discursively constructed according to context (De Cillia, et al., 1999: 154). Moreover, even though identity is deeply implicated in representation, all identities are located in symbolic space and time. For example, the meaning of 'Canada' is always refracted and mediated through particular experiences- regional, racial, gender-specific, and so on, "an infinite horizon of sites of particularity" (Keohane, 1997:7). These positions are also constituted within a discursive terrain that is more often than not antagonistic.

The following section will briefly discuss the concepts of nations and national identities, in order to provide working definitions which are based on the works of Benedict Anderson (1991), Stuart Hall (1992; 1996), De Cillia, et al., (1999) and Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998).

The Concepts of “Nation” and “National Identity”

Historians note that the category of “nation” is different from the category of “state,” even though they overlap. “A state is a legal and political organization, with the power to require obedience and loyalty from its citizens” (Seton-Watson, 1977: 1). Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998: 485) define the nation, as a cultural order composed of certain values, symbols and ethno-historical myths. Nations are what Benedict Anderson (1991: 6) calls “imagined political communities.” For Anderson, the nation is imagined “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (1991: 6). The boundaries of such a community, as well as the notion of recognition that follows from it, are the product of the member’s ability to ‘think the nation’ through their power of imagination. The task of fostering national consciousness is usual called “nation building.” By examining the link between nationalism and literature, Kertzer (1998: 12) asserted that nation building is “a triumph of imagination.” In addition, even though nations are supposed to spring from the ‘folk,’ according to Kertzer (1998), nation building has always been conducted by small, educated elites and inspired political missionaries.

National identity can be seen as a recurrent project of national reconstruction, “the process whereby nations are fostered and redefined in the course of the history” (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998: 485). The construction of national identity builds on the emphasis on a common history, language, religion, and historical traditions. Stuart Hall (1990; 1992; 1996) emphasizes the role culture plays in the construction of nations and

national identities. For Hall, nations are not only political constructs, but are also “system[s] of cultural representation” by which the imagined community may be interpreted (1992: 292). Hall (1992: 293-5) argues that there are three main representational strategies that are deployed in the manufacture of common sense views of national belonging or identity: 1) the narrative of the nation (national histories, literature, media, popular culture and the like); 2) strong emphasis on the nation’s origin, continuity and tradition; and 3) the invention of tradition.

Delimitations

This thesis limits itself to the intellectual and social aspect of the Canada First Movement between 1868-73. Except when necessary it will discuss the Canada First Party (1874), and the various offspring of the original movement, including the Canadian National Association (1874-), and the National Club (1878-). In addition, even though the works of all Canada First members will be examined priority will be given to two original members of the movement, Robert Grant Haliburton, and Charles Mair, and to a third, later recruit, John Schultz.

As previously pointed out, the 19th century discourse on Canadian national identity is dominantly Anglophone and the study of Canadian nationalism is largely the study of English-Canadian nationalism. Consequently, the discussion of French Canadian culture and nationalism will be limited, and most of our discussion on Quebec will serve to demonstrate the ways Quebec was “imagined” by English Canadian intellectuals and by Canada First members and sympathizers. It must be remembered, however, that Canada First’s conceptualization of Canadian identity, as presented in this thesis was exclusively white, Anglo-male centered. However, if we insist that ‘identity’ is relational, and that individual subjectivities occupy a multiplicity of often contradictory subject positions, there exist limitless possibilities in the construction of

de-centered discourses(s) based on the exploration of the experiences of 'Other' Canadians from previously excluded positions.

Since this thesis will not cover the entire life-span of the Canada First, a brief chronology of the movement until its emergence as a political party is needed. The original membership of Canada First consisted of five young men: William Alexander Foster (1840-1888), Charles Mair (1840-1927), Henry James Morgan (1842-1913), Robert Grant Haliburton (1831-1901), and George T. Denison III (1839-1925). In 1870, following the Red River Uprising, new members were added to the movement until the group acquired the nickname of the "Twelve Apostles." In 1870, the Twelve Apostles created the North-West Emigration Aid Society, a society formed to encourage English-speaking, Protestant emigrants to settle the West. By 1874, the original members of Canada First gradually lost control of the movement and they all left the movement, except for W. A. Foster who was left with a group of Torontonians, most of whom were Liberals and lawyers. Nevertheless, the group's new leaders were inspired by their successes and attempted to take the movement from the grassroots to the House of Commons. A third party, the Canada First Party, appeared in the Canadian political arena during the federal general elections in 1874 (see Farrell, 1969; Hougham, 1953). Its platform called for the creation of new parties that would be more truly national. The Canada First Party was thus the self-appointed executor and successor of the Canada First Movement. However, less than two years after its inauguration the Canada First Party, slid into political oblivion, "harassed into submission by the partisan press, and emasculated by weaknesses inherent within its own structure" (Gagan, 1964: iii).

Research Methods

A large part of research for this thesis consisted of gathering ethnohistorical data found in correspondence, as well as a wide range of Canadian newspapers magazines and journals published in mid 19th century. As with most historical research, the biggest challenge that faces the researcher is that of interpretation of historical and written records. As an anthropologist, I have accepted early Canada as a foreign world, and have attempted to understand the land, the people and the society which gave rise to the development of a conscious system of beliefs. Since no society is a homogenous or static entity, I assume that early Canada was a dynamic product of the activities of its members. Stemming from the social constructionist approach, I assume that knowledge is a social product, and in order to understand social facts the researcher must situate them in context. The documentary products of the mass media are major sources of evidence in this thesis. The valuable sources of information found in popular newspapers as well as scholarly journals of the time illuminated the diversity of beliefs, thoughts, and opinions of Canadians. These are and were extensively cited in this thesis, primarily as they provide an excellent account of the popular and intellectual discussions on Canada's destiny, they allowed me to set the general "mood" or "character" of the mid 19th century Canada. While I assumed newspapers to have a broad reader base, I must accept that certain magazines, journals, books and some scholarly texts, by-and-large, represented the discussion and debates of the intellectual and social elites.

Speeches, literary and scholarly works of Canada First men provided the core of the textual analysis for this thesis. The interpretation of a "text" cannot be separated from the questions of its production and its effects. Since texts as objective cultural entities are ephemeral, they were studied as socially situated products by considering the intentions of the authors as well as the perspectives of their audiences. By-and-large, I attempted to comprehend the textual works of Canada First members, by trying to understand the frame of reference from which they were produced.

A large body of archival work for this thesis was the Henry J. Morgan Papers and George T. Denison Papers consulted (and available) at the Public Archives of Canada (PAC). However, some correspondence from the Mair Papers was consulted with the aid of Interlibrary Loan Department at Carleton University. The analysis of archival work (correspondence, unpublished manuscripts, and diaries/journals) proved to be challenging. Most of it was prepared for a limited [or no] audience, as apparent 'gaps' and 'inconsistencies' emerged during my research. While I considered the authenticity and credibility of archival records, the question of meaning and literal interpretation raised considerable problems in those personal documents which were handwritten and unreadable due to damage. Thus the problems encountered in the interpretation of archival record, was considered in the reconstruction of the intended meaning of the text. Nevertheless, the inspection, and subsequent interpretation of archival and historical data, at the very least, encouraged me to think in terms of history as a social process.

Early Canadian biographies proved to be a rich source of biographical data and were extensively used in this research to collect information on all the historical figures discussed in this thesis. Other primary sources for this project, including pamphlets, newspaper commentary, and other documents directly bearing on the Canada First Movement, were also consulted and used.

The secondary sources that were used in this thesis involved the evaluation and review of key debates regarding the emergence of nationalism in Canada and the formation of a distinct Canadian identity. By-and-large, these sources can be characterized as representing general history of the period 1865-1900, and those sources in which the Canada First Movement has received significant treatment. As the section on "Assumptions Underlying the Study" (pp.6 ff) and our discussion of the concepts of "Nation" and "National Identity" (pp.9 ff) have illustrated, the sources for critical analysis for this thesis were drawn from the theoretical perspectives found in Benedict Anderson (1991), Stuart Hall (1992; 1996), and De Cillia, et al., (1999).

The Canada First Movement: Scholarly Interpretations

Praised by some scholars (see for example Gagan, 1964; 1970; Holinsky, 1988) for being successful in the agitation against Louis Riel (1844-85), the central Métis figure of the North-West Rebellion in 1869-70, and criticized for its subsequent “ill-defined” political ingénue and for the failure of its political party, the Canada First Movement’s role in the development of Canadian national sentiment has been debated by historians and scholars alike. Studies of the immediate post-Confederation period inevitably cite the movement as an example of the first rampant early Canadian national sentiment (see Creighton, 1962; Morton, 1964, Waite, 1971; Wallace, 1920; Woodcock, 1989). The Canada First Movement was also criticized for its concern with the visionary rather than the practical aspects of Canada’s “new nationality.” However, considering the 20th century historian’s search for the origin of Canadian Identity, the body of literature concerning itself with the movement is limited. In 1964, David Paul Gagan wrote, “no comprehensive history of the Canada First Movement has ever been written” (vi), and his M.A. Thesis remains one of the very few secondary sources available on the subject. Gagan (1970) is one of the few scholars to argue that Canada First Movement actually comprehended the political and economic ramifications of Confederation. Elsie Holinsky’s (1988) detailed M.A. Thesis on Canada First further explored the significance and the history of the movement.

According to Tomkins (1977: 12), the “Canada First” Movement illustrates the “most explicit formulation of the essence of mission and most interesting effort to promote a national consciousness and distinctive Canadian nationalism.” Creighton (1962) argues that 1870s represented the most keen and daring attempt to define and produce ‘true’ Canadian Nationality. According to Creighton, the Canada First Movement illustrates the “purest,” most “disinterested” as well as the “most naïve,” expression of the “new nationality” of the time (1962: 322). In addition, Creighton sees the movement, as an “irrepressible youthful urge towards poetry and prophecy,”

responsible for cultivating literary propaganda about the “new nationality.” For Creighton, therefore Canada First, represented nothing more than the naïve, confused, and urgent aspiration towards national unity by young intellectuals.

“Canada First,” Wallace argues, is “a movement of profound significance in Canadian history” and holds a place of primary importance in the account of the growth of Canadian national feeling (1920: 157). In addition, Wallace considers W. A. Foster’s “Canada First; Our New Nationality” as “a document of cardinal importance in Canadian history.” While it is clear that Wallace attributes a significant degree of importance to Canada First’s intellectual contribution and its value as an intellectual movement, he sees the Canada First Party as having had no lasting impression on Canadian political history. Rather, the Canada First Party “died a pre-ordained death” (1920: 157).

Consequently, Wallace argues that the lack of attention dedicated to exploration of the Canada First Movement at the hands of Canadian historians is primarily due to the fact that they tend to see Canada First as a failed political party rather than as a social movement. Gagan (1964; 1970) also argues that it has become commonplace to cite Canada First as the “first unsuccessful incursion of the intellectuals into the political life of the new Dominion, and with the awakening of liberal nationalism in Modern Canadian history”(1970: 36). In addition, he argues that historians and political scientists seem to be pre-occupied with the rise and the decline of the Canada First Party, leaving largely unexplored the earlier, more secretive aspect of the movement. However, as Gagan (1964; 1970) points out, strong early Canadian national sentiment existed long before the emergence of the Canada First Party, in an earlier more secretive phase of the Canada First Movement.

Farrell (1969) argues that as an intellectual discussion group Canada First posed no threat to the established political parties. The movement’s greatest mistake was entering the political sphere. Farrell suggests that the movement was contradictory and confusing not only to the Canadian public, but also to its own members. He states that it

is debatable if Canada First stimulated patriotism, but admits that it might have encouraged the National Policy and influenced constitutional autonomy.

Historian Peter B. Waite mentions Canada First in passing, arguing that Canada First was a characteristic expression of the idea "Ontario, Ontario" (1971: 9). In addition, Waite is forceful in suggesting that Canada First "contained much that was bigoted and violent, but it also reflected the high-minded and exuberant patriotism of the young"(9). Focusing primarily on Canada First's emergence on the political sphere, Waite re-enforces the connection between Canada First and Edward Blake (1833-1912), the Liberal leader, emphasizing Blake's refusal to lay the cornerstone of the National Club because it would compromise the Liberal Party. Although Edward Blake has often been linked to the Canada First Movement, the attention placed by historians on his contribution is often exaggerated and misrepresented. Nevertheless, Edward Blake's famous 1874 Aurora speech, where he claimed that "the time will come when that national spirit which has been spoken of will be truly felt among us, when we shall realize that we are four millions of Britons who are not free" (1921: 256) is more often than not cited as Blake's re-appropriation of Canada First's platform and proclamation in the direction of Independence (see Underhill, 1939).

Finally, Berger (1966; 1970) argues that Canada First was linked and affiliated with the Imperial Federation League (IFL) because one of its original members George Taylor Denison led the IFL. For Berger, Canadian Imperialism, or the movement for 'imperial unity,' espoused a unique variety of Canadian nationalism (see Berger 1966; 1970). Berger further argues that historically, the imperial and national projects were intertwined, and hence the imperialistic elements present in the character of Canadian identity, were also nationalistic.

Summary of Chapters

As the previous section attempted to illustrate, the body of literature concerning itself with the Canada First Movement is limited. In general, scholars addressing early nationalism in Canada mostly do not agree on Canada First's significance and role in the development of Canadian national sentiment. Generally, the aforementioned studies have contended with many problems and apparent contradictions associated with the Canada First Movement. In addition, the scholarly interpretations of the Canada First Movement tend to be historical, focusing on the emergence and the fall of the movement, and detailing the activities of particular members. A comprehensive textual analysis of the rhetoric of Canada First men is limited, with a notable exceptions by historian Carl Berger, and Charles Mair biographer Norman Shrive (1965; 1974; 1995). Berger's (1966; 1970) analysis of the movement include limited textual analysis of works of G. T. Denison and Robert Grant Haliburton. Berger's (1966) analysis of Robert Grant Haliburton's notion of Northern Races is commendable, and Chapter Three further expands on Berger's arguments. Norman Shrive's studies provide a comprehensive analysis of Charles Mair's literary works; however, he pays very little attention to the literary and scholarly works of Mair's counterparts in the movement.

This thesis aims at answering some of the questions unanswered by previous studies, and challenging some of the previous interpretations of Canada First as a movement for an imperial unity. Although I agree with Berger that at various points in Canadian history the imperial and national projects were intertwined, and hence the imperialistic elements present in the character of Canadian identity are also nationalistic, I disagree that all attempts at the fostering of Canadian sentiment by Canada First members were imperialistic in nature. Within the existing anti-American and pro-Empire sentiments in the Canada First Movement specifically, and broader spectrum of Post-Confederation public opinion in general, there was room for the emergence of a "specifically" Canadian national sentiment or "Canadianism."

Using Canada First as an example of an intellectual/social movement, this thesis will examine the rhetoric of Canada First members, with respect to their premise of “new nationality,” and point to the shifting and at times contradictory discourses on national identity that emerged within the movement. Chapter One examines the formation of the Canada First Movement. Since Canada Firsters’ texts and literary works must be studied as socially situated products, this chapter will situate the movement within a broader set of Post-Confederation debates on “The Canadian Question,” and visions of “new nationality.” Although the discussions regarding Imperial Federation and Commercial Union climaxed in the late 1880s, long after the fall of the original Canada First group, they will be considered in detail in Chapter One, as they framed the debate on the “new nationality” in the Canadian National Association (1874-), and the National Club (1878), offspring of the original movement. In addition, the discussions in Chapter One are offered as affirmation of the mid-to late 19th century progressive intensification of the dialogue regarding Canada’s “new nationality.” The repetition of particular themes regarding “new nationality” gave rise to the arrangement of the material into sections. I have therefore arranged the sections of this chapter according to an apparent progression of ideas rather than by a strict chronological order.

Chapter Two explores the early phase of the movement, by examining the rhetoric of Canada First members, and will argue that from its outset the Canada First Movement was an “intellectual” movement concerned with literary promotion of “new nationality.” In addition, Chapter Two will situate the Movement’s visionary views of the “new nationality” within the emerging literary and artistic milieu in Post-Confederation Ontario. In Chapter Three, the visionary aspect of Canada First will further be addressed by looking at the writings of Robert Grant Haliburton. This chapter will assert that, concerned with the lack of symbols and mythology for the new nation, Haliburton’s nationalist project was to create a new mythology for the nation at its inception.

Chapter Four deals with the shift in the Canada First Movement from an intellectual to a militant organization. In this chapter, I will illustrate the role that Canada First played in the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70 and illustrate the shift in Canada First's rhetoric on the "new nationality" by focusing on the works of Charles Mair. The final Chapter will consider the role of Canada First in the discursive construction of national identities. In this chapter, an analysis will be made with respect to the Self/Other relations inherent in the rhetoric of Canada First men. This thesis will conclude by reflecting on the significance of this study for the understanding the contradictory nature of Canadian nationalism.

CHAPTER ONE

“CANADA FIRST” AND THE COMPETING VISIONS OF CANADA’S “NEW NATIONALITY”

This chapter will explore the emergence of the Canada First Movement, and argue that nationalist sentiment in Canada has historically taken a wide variety of forms and referenced many different visions of Canada. Consequently, in this chapter I will situate the Canada First movement within competing visions of the Dominion’s “new nationality:” Imperialism, Commercial Union, Independent Nationality, or “Canadianism,” visions that were at times incompatible. Although some scholars (for example Berger 1966, 1970; Bashevkin, 1991) argue that Canada First was linked and affiliated with the Imperial Federation League (IFL), because one of its original members George Taylor Denison led the IFL, not all the members shared a common vision of “new nationality” in its relation to British imperialism. Berger’s analysis of Canada First as an example of Canadian Imperial Nationalism must be understood in terms of Berger’s overwhelming emphasis on the imperialists such as G. T. Denison (1839-1925), G. M. Grant (1835-1902), and R. G. Parkin (1846-1922). Also, it is clear that while the five original members of the group all aspired to create an independent nationality for the new Dominion, they tended to have different ideas on how to foster Canada’s national spirit. There also seems to have been debate around the notion of what type of “new nationality” Canada should adopt. Nevertheless, while most scholars agree that Canada First embodied a vague sentiment rather than a distinct opinion or idea, this chapter will argue that Canada First represents the first movement exclusively united in striving to cultivate post-Confederation Canadian patriotism.

“Canada First” Men and the Inception of the Movement

The story of the emergence of Canada First is well known. Here we will examine the emergence of the Canada First movement, and provide brief biographies of its founding members.

In the spring of 1868 shortly after the Confederation of the British North American colonies, five young men, William Alexander Foster (1840-1888), Charles Mair (1840-1927), Henry James Morgan (1842-1913), Robert Grant Haliburton (1831-1901), and George T. Denison III (1839-1925) met in Morgan’s “corner set” hotel room in Ottawa, and as Denison later recollected, made a “solemn pledge to each other that we would do all we could to advance the interests of our native land; that we would put our country first, before all personal, or political or party considerations” (1909: 11).

The consolidation of British North America evoked high aspirations amongst young Canadians. “With confederation,” Denison recalled, “came visions of a great and powerful country stretching from ocean to ocean, and destined to be one of the dominant powers of the world” (1909: 9). Foster and Denison were all ready well acquainted in Toronto legal circles, and were introduced to Mair and Haliburton by a mutual friend, Henry James Morgan. Months before his death, Thomas D’Arcy McGee had appealed to the young minds of the Dominion to exercise their “northern energy” for the creation of “a distinct national existence in North America” (see McGee 1857a, 1858). McGee’s assassination in 1868 gave the group of young nationalists its first martyr, considered by the Firsters as the true Canadian patriot, who held high hopes for the country and gave them eloquent expression. Linked by their mutual admiration for Thomas D’Arcy McGee, as well by their disgust for the provincialism and bitterly partisan selfishness evident in party politics, the five men set out to promote Canada’s “new nationality.”

Morgan’s “corner room” at the Revere Hotel on Rideau Street, had long been the “after-hours” meeting place of newspaper and literary men, and it was there that the five men would meet to “have a smoke and a chat” (Denison, 1901: 126). “A warm

friendship rapidly sprang up, and we were a great deal together,” recalled Denison (1901: 126) adding that the constant topic of their conversation was the future welfare of Canada, and it “was discussed evening after evening from every point of view, with the result that we made a solemn pledge to each other that we would as a primary duty do all in our power, collectively, and individually, to advance the interests of Canada” (1901: 126). In addition, Denison (1909: 11) noted that: “it was apparent that until there should grow, not only a feeling of unity, but also a national pride and devotion to Canada as a Dominion, no real progress could be made towards building up a strong and powerful community.” Due to the fact that Canada Firsters saw narrow partisanship as one of the deterrents to the growth of national spirit, they decided to keep their organization secret. The aims, strength, and existence of Canada First were “unknown outside of the ranks of the members” (Denison, 1909: 21). W.A. Foster, summing up the prime objectives of the new group as putting the needs of Canada as a nation before any party or personal interests, coined the motto “Canada First.” However, the name “Canada First” did not obtain general currency until the publication in 1871 of Foster’s “Canada First, or Our New Nationality.”

William Alexander Foster (1840-1888) graduated in law from the University of Toronto and was an aspiring young lawyer. In 1865 he launched a literary career with a treatise on “The Canadian Confederacy” for the *Westminster Review*. He wrote for the commercial and political press on issues pertaining to national interests. While in Ottawa, he attended sessions of parliament. In 1871, Foster produced “Canada First; Or our new Nationality,” a pamphlet that became Canada First’s manifesto and that “embodied a prevailing sentiment, gave shape to a floating idea, and called into existence the group of sympathizing spirits known by the collective name of ‘Canada First’” (Smith, G. 1890: 2-3). Goldwin Smith (1823-1910), in his preface to W.A. Foster’s

memorial,² described Foster as “a man of bright intellect, high professional promise, winning character, and many friends” (1890: 1). Smith further maintained that it was Foster who represented the idea of new nationality and was the animating spirit of the movement, so much so that “the movement and the idea died with him” (Smith, G. 1890: 1).

As previously pointed out, at its inception as a national movement, Canada First did not ally itself to either of the political parties. Contrary to his fellow Firsters, mainly Haliburton and Denison, Foster was a political nationalist, but his critique of party politics was clear in his article “Party versus Principle,” published in *The Daily Telegraph* [Toronto] in 1867, where he claimed that “Party has been the curse of Canada” (Foster, 1867: 89). In “Canada First,” an address of the *Canadian National Association* to the People of Canada, Foster repudiated nativism, arguing that every immigrant should become a Canadian as on the other side of the border every immigrant became an American. Furthermore, Foster moved that:

it is the duty of all Canadians, whether such by birth or adoption to recognize the pressing necessity for the cultivation of a national sentiment which will unite the people of the various Provinces more closely than the bond of citizenship, promote a mutual confidence whose common source of affection will prompt acts of toleration and bonds of respect, and prove the best safeguard of our Dominion against absorption on the one hand and disunion on the other (1890: 54).

Charles Mair (1840-1927) was born in Lanark in 1840. His father, James Mair emigrated from Scotland and established large business interests in Lanark and Perth. James Mair was also one of the pioneers of the square timber trade in the Madawaska and the other tributaries of the Ottawa. Charles Mair engaged in the study of medicine at Queen’s University, but he never finished his studies. Mair arrived in Ottawa in 1868 to find a publisher for a manuscript of his poems. Soon after pledging to promote Canada’s

2 William Alexander Foster died in 1888. Soon after, his literature was gathered and published.

new nationality, Mair put his resolutions into practice. During his visit in Ottawa, Mair met with William McDougall (1822-1905), then Minister of Public Works, who hired him to work in the Parliamentary Library to help prepare materials to defend the Canadian government against possible litigation on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, should that company's claims stand in the way of Britain's transfer of the North-West Territory to the Dominion. That year Mair managed to publish a volume of poems entitled *Dreamland and Other Poems* (1868), which was well received by the press. In the fall of the same year he was appointed by McDougall as paymaster of the party sent under J. A. Snow to Red River.

Of the five original members of Canada First, Charles Mair was what Shrive (1965, 1995) called a "literary nationalist." H. R. Morgan, in an article written for *Willisons Monthly*³ described Mair as the "father of the present school of Canadian verse" (1926: 110). Charles Mair believed that the way to achieve a sense of patriotic spirit included fostering education and creating a rich Canadian artistic and literary milieu. In 1886 he published *Tecumseh*, a drama that was received by the press with the strongest possible encomiums.

Mair's vision of the "new nationality," however, was at times contradictory. While clearly arguing for the emergence and sustenance of Canadian patriotic and national artistic milieu, and for showing a growing nationalistic attachment to Canada, more often than not Mair was emotionally drawn to a colonial attachment to Britain. At times, especially in his correspondence with Denison, Mair's imperialist tendencies emerged. In a letter to Denison, he commented: "I have always thought that the development and the extension of our Empire, is the first great and permanent step towards the universal brotherhood of mankind." He further added that, "as I expressed it years ago, I am a true radical in my hopes for this, through I shall not live, nor shall my

3 A national magazine devoted to the discussion of public affairs affecting Canada and the Empire.

children live to see it, for it will be the product of slow time and the elimination and destruction of the bad elements of society” (DP, Mair to Denison, 29 October 1884).⁴

Henry James Morgan (1842-1913) Chief Clerk of the Department of State, entered public service in 1853. From 1860-1864 Morgan was a sessional clerk in the Legislative Assembly of Canada, where he was appointed private secretary to Isaac Buchanan, then president of the Executive Council. In 1864 he was transferred to the Provincial Secretary’s Department as private secretary to William McDougall, a member of the coalition cabinet of Taché-Macdonald. After Confederation, Morgan was appointed to the department of State and in 1873 he was promoted to first-class clerk in charge of the State Records of Canada. In the same year Morgan was called to the bar of Quebec and Ontario. He was appointed chief clerk of the Department of the Secretary of State in 1883.

Henry James Morgan also shared Mair’s ‘poetic’ vision regarding the role that national literature might play in fostering a sense of patriotism in the new Dominion. Morgan at the age of eighteen published his first book *Tour of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales through British America and the United States* (1860) -- an account of the tour of the Prince of Wales through Canada and United States. Edward Hartley Dewart (1828-1903), a later Canada First recruit, once wrote that a national literature is “an essential element in the formation of national character [...] it is the expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and the guide of national energy” (1864: ix). This idealist vision of the role of literature in reflecting, integrating and directing national experience formed the core of Henry James Morgan’s *Sketches of Celebrated Canadians and Persons Connected with Canada* (1865), one of the earliest attempts ever made in Canada to get into book form the biographies of the principal actors in the history of the country, and *Bibliotheca Canadensis* (1867). Morgan’s manuals of new Dominion

4 A similar quote is also found in Mair (1875b)

literature attempted to demonstrate that Canadians had for some time possessed a sense of their country as a distinct place, reflected in a body of literature based primarily on the Canadian experience. Morgan's *Bibliotheca Canadensis* was pronounced by the *Westminster Review*, to "be equal merit to Lowndes and Watt, the leading English biographical authorities of the day" (Rose, 1886). Morgan also compiled and edited McGee's speeches in *Speeches and Addresses of the Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee in Favour of British American Union* (see McGee, 1865b), issued in London at the time of Confederation movement. In 1862, Morgan established the *Canadian Parliamentary Companion*, which he continued to publish and edit up until 1876. His other works included "The Place British Americans Have Won in History" (1866) a lecture; *The Canadian Legal Directory, a Guide to the Bench and Bar of Canada* (1878); and *The Dominion Annual Register and Review* (1877-1887). In addition, Morgan was a corresponding member of the *Historical Societies* of Quebec, Buffalo, Manitoba and New York, as well as the *Society of Historical Studies in Montreal*, the *American Geographical Society*, and many other organizations.

Unlike his "Canada First" counterparts, Robert Grant Haliburton (1831-1901) was a native of Nova Scotia, and the eldest son of judge Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796-1865), the celebrated author of a series about the sayings and doings of *Sam Slick*, which he began in the *Nova Scotian* and were collected in *The Clockmaker* (1836). In 1868, prior to meeting with other Firsters, Robert Grant Haliburton published two pamphlets on national issues, *The Coal Trade of the New Dominion* (1868a) and *Intercolonial Trade: Our Only Safeguard Against Disunion* (1868b). In the spring of 1868 Haliburton visited Ottawa as a representative of the *Nova Scotia Coal Owner's Association*, promoting his two pamphlets, which attracted the attention and interest of leading statesman. They were "quoted with high approval in the House of Commons by the Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee in the last speech he ever made, only a few hours before his assassination" (Denison, 1901: 126). Coincidentally, Haliburton dined with McGee the night before his

assassination, discussing issues pertaining to his literature. Haliburton's idea of how to foster national spirit was clear, as prior to his encounter with other Firsters he had been lecturing in Ontario and Quebec on the question of interprovincial trade, arguing that it was the most important factor for developing the economy, and attempting to demonstrate that it should be strongly encouraged as a most efficient means for developing a feeling of unity among various provinces. Hence, Haliburton supported a transcontinental economic consolidation based on western agriculture, eastern industrial growth, and maritime commerce as necessary factors for national unity and survival. He envisioned a national economy based on an exchange of the products of Canada's heartland for the products of Nova Scotia's mines. In this instance, Haliburton recognized the relationship between national unity and the economic stability which inter-colonial trade would produce.

"Haliburton was the first to exert his great abilities in the cause," remembered Denison (1901: 126). Following his pledge to Canada First, Haliburton produced "The Men of the North and Their Place in History" (1869) and "The Young Men of the New Dominion" (1870), both works developing the premise that national spirit can only spring from a faith in a bright future, or from the memory of a glorious past, a premise shared by other Firsters. "History has taught us," wrote Denison, that "every nation that had become great, and had exercised an important influence upon the world, had invariably been noted for a strong patriotic spirit" (1909: 11-12). Thus, after his encounter with other Firsters, Haliburton shifted his emphasis from economically driven national unity to a new and different position on how to foster Canada's "new nationality," a position that argued that all Canadians should recognize as a common unifying factor the claim that they are the "new Northern Races." Interested in anthropology, ethnology and evolution, as illustrated by his publications, Haliburton was also *Fellow of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries of Copenhagen*. His lecture "The Men of the North," a fusion of

Canada First's sentiments and his interest in mythology of "primitive peoples,"⁵ became the rallying cry of young Canadian nationalists.

Lieutenant-Colonel George Taylor Denison was born in Bellevue, Toronto, on the 31st of August 1839, the eldest son of Colonel George T. Denison (1816-1873). Denison was educated at Upper Canada College, and was a Bachelor of Law of the University of Toronto. In 1855, Denison was gazetted to the active militia and was made a major in 1862. Denison was called to the bar of Ontario in 1861 (Rose, 1886:246). In 1866 he was promoted to the lieutenant-colonelcy of the *Governor General's Body Guard*. From 1865 to 1867 Denison served in the City Council as alderman for St. Patrick's ward. In 1866, he served during the Fenian raid, and commanded the outposts on the Niagara river under Colonel Wolseley. Denison was appointed police magistrate for the City of Toronto in 1877, and in 1885 he served in the North-West rebellion.

Denison argued for a military force as a way to foster national sentiment. "That National Unity can be a product of a united effort against a mutual foe has always been a cardinal tenet of the theory of national self-determination" (Gagan, 1964: 19). Denison's militaristic approach to the creation of "new nationality" was expressed in his writings and in his occupation. Arguments in favour of a military nationalization in Canada, were common, as illustrated by an editorial in *The Nation* (9 April 1874) arguing:

The history of the world has proved that the nation possessed of the soundest military organization based upon the principle of self-defense, and not aggression, and in accord with the requirements of a free people, has also manifested the strongest development of national spirit.

Denison's knowledge of war, of the science of war and the history of war is illustrated by his many publications. His literary works include *Canada; Is She Prepared*

⁵ From 1881, R.G. Haliburton devoted his attention to scientific discoveries and in 1887 he discovered a "race" of pigmies in North Africa. Later in his career, he became a leading authority on African and South American Anthropology.

for War? (1861), *Manual of Outpost Duties* (1866a), *History of the Fenian Raid* (1866b), *Modern Cavalry* (1868), *A History of the Cavalry* (1877), and *Soldiering in Canada* (1901). In 1882 Denison was appointed an original member of the English literature section of the *Royal Society of Canada* and was elected president in 1885. In 1925, *Willisons Monthly* declared Denison “downright and aggressive” but nevertheless, a “great soldier of Empire.”

Denison’s view of Canada’s “new nationality” exemplifies the contradictory relationship between English Canadian nationalism and British imperialism. While Denison was the original member of Canada First, and worked to promote a sense of Canadian patriotism, he was also a British imperialist. For Berger, Canadian Imperialism, or the movement for ‘imperial unity,’ espoused a unique variety of Canadian nationalism (see Berger 1966,1970). Berger further argues that historically, the imperial and national projects were intertwined, and hence the imperialistic elements present in the character of Canadian identity are also nationalistic. “Canadian Imperialism,” such as Denison advocated, rested, Carl Berger has shown, upon an intense awareness of Canadian nationality combined with a colonial attachment to Britain. The view that ‘Canadianism’ and ‘Imperialism’ were intertwined and hence compatible was common in the post-Confederation era, illustrated by the number of editorials dedicated to the topic. The view persisted well into 20th century. Appealing to Canadian history in a speech delivered at Vancouver in 1908, Lord Milner, described by *Willisons Monthly* as “almost the last of the Imperialists” exclaimed that “there is no incompatibility between local and national patriotism, as there is, in my judgment no incompatibility between Canadian national patriotism and the wider patriotism of the Empire” (Quoted in *WM*, 1925: 27). Furthermore:

It is not reasonable to expect that men who are not of the British race, or who, though originally of British race, may have become alienated from British traditions, should be Imperialists from love of Great Britain. But I

think the time will come when they may be Imperialists from love of Canada. (Quoted in *WM*, 1925: 27)

Not surprisingly then, a brief editorial on G. T. Denison in *Willisons Monthly* declared Denison “A Canadian Patriot and an Imperial Statesman,” stating that he was among the most influential of all Canadian imperialists and “a devoted and uncompromising Canadian” (1925: 49,50).

From the brief biographies of Canada First’s founding members, we can ascertain how the five intellectuals were drawn together by an abiding interest in politics, and a deep sympathy and respect for Thomas D’Arcy McGee. The original Canada First members came from distinguished social backgrounds, and before the emergence of the movement, each had, in some form, contributed to Canada’s emerging literary milieu. Out of the five members, four were lawyers and except for Mair, who failed to graduate, had attended and finished university. Except for Haliburton, who at the inception of the movement was thirty-seven years old, all were in their mid to late twenties. In addition, the Firsters’ conception of Canadian nationhood, and the strategies employed to attain their “national” goals, were reflected by each member’s background, and to a lesser degree, aspects of their character. Apart from Haliburton, the original Firsters, to a lesser or greater degree, exhibited some colonial attachment to Britain. We must now examine the relationship between the newly emerging spirit of Canadianism, and other competing visions of “new nationality”: Canadian Imperialism and Commercial Union.

The Canada First Movement and the Competing Visions of “New Nationality”

In order to grapple with some of the contradictory positions taken by Canada First members, it is essential to situate the movement’s rhetoric within a broader context of post-Confederation public opinion. Canada’s leading intellectuals and public figures pondered the Canadian Question fundamental to the late 19th century Canadian nationalism. Questions of identity and nationhood were prominent in discussions of

Confederation: what was to be Canada's position in the British Empire?; would **Independence** be better, or would it lead to annexation to the United States?; what sort of **national spirit** is it desired to cultivate? While young Canadians expressed signs of doubt and uncertainty, at least three distinct possibilities for Canada's future emerged: **Imperial Federation**, **Commercial Union** or **Continentalism** (a closer tie to the United States) and **Independent Nationality** or **Canadianism**. These three major political and economic alternatives each assumed a variety of forms, and while they each had their proponents and preferred policies, they shared an idealized vision of Canada's future. More importantly however, the debates regarding these three visions of the future serve not only as the backdrop to Canada First's rhetoric, but represent the new Dominion's three approaches to the fostering of national sentiment. The following sections will consider each in turn.

Canadian Imperialism and G.T. Denison's Imperial Federation League

The Imperial sentiment in Canada has a long history. From the offset, in British North America, the Colonial and Canadian state elites drew from British imperial philosophies ideas about the appropriate character, physical stock, and behaviour of settler women and men. Most [if not all] forums of public influence, with the educational system leading the way, demanded an uncritical 'loyalty' and reverence to the agents of the colonial crown (Samuels, 1997). Samuels (1997) argues that early Canadian education in Upper Canada furthered the "good etiquette" required for the preservation of the colonial society. For Anglo Canadians, as many scholars have argued (for example see Berger, 1970), loyalty to Britain and to British institutions illustrated how Canadian Nationalism "wore the garb of imperialism" (Thomkins, 1977: 11).

Samuels (1997) observed that the Canadian Colonial self-image was based on the ideological defence of the 'Second Empire,' the "raison d'être of BNA was becoming the ideas of a Second Empire" (35). The common British bond played a significant role in

melding disparate colonies into a country in the 1860s and 1870s. In what became an implicit motto of Canadian imperialists, Sir John A. Macdonald rode to victory with his last electoral address stating: "A British subject I was born-a British subject I will die" (Ottawa, 7 February 1891). "For many Canadians," Fraser (1990: 65-6) argued, "imperialism had long encapsulated both a pride of place within the British Empire and a reverence for the ideals of a British heritage." Furthermore, Fraser (1998: 2) maintained that:

the romantic vision of the Canadian imperialists was not only cultivated on Canadian soil, it was largely conceived on Canadian soil. Perceiving Canada as but a roomy extension of the old country, the British settler carried with him a nostalgia for his former home, and this nostalgia gradually congealed into a vision of a distant land of consummate grandeur, power, justice, and freedom. But the romantic vision did not stop there; it was extended over the years into a rather dazzling conception of a global and monolithic British Empire, to which the settler and his children owed homage.

However, it was not until late 1880s, that the Imperial Federation League (IFL) emerged as a social movement for imperial unity. In the 1880s, British imperialist Joseph Chamberlain actively promoted the rise of imperialism in Canada during his visits in 1887-8 (Berger, 1970). The IFL was founded in England in 1884 and soon after set up branches in parts of Canada. While the IFL attracted support in parts of English-speaking Canada, largely it met with hostility and indifference amongst French Canadians. The IFL scheme was laid out by George R. Parkin (1846-1922), a New Brunswick teacher and writer, in his *Case for Imperial Re-Organization* (1888). The aim of IFL was to bind the Empire in one great economic, cultural and military federation. The IFL turned away from political federation to mutual tariff preferences as the method by which the unity and consolidation of the Empire could best be achieved. Even though discussions regarding the future of Canada included talks about Imperial Federation, Imperial

Federation was but one possibility for Imperialism, articulated in relation to Preferential Trade and Military Co-operation (see, Lewis, 1900).

Imperial Federation was mobilized by the belief that Canada would be strengthened as a nation by maintaining the connection to the Empire. In addition, Imperial Federation has been advocated not only as a means of strengthening the Imperial bond, but also as a means of placing the Colonies on an equal economic footing with Great Britain. Like the Commercial Union, the Canadian Imperial sentiment arose out of the widespread mood of pessimism about Canada's destiny at the time (see Berger 1970: 4). Similarly, the support for Imperial Federation arose in Canada when the primacy of the British Empire was being challenged. Drawing upon the traditional loyalties of Canadians to the British Connection, leading spokesmen, Canada Firster George T. Denison (1839-1925), George R. Parkin (1846-1922) and George M. Grant (1835-1902), principal of Queen's University, advocated an economic union of the Empire to be secured through preferential tariffs. They argued that imperial unity would bring closer union of the British Empire and greater economic cooperation. For the supporters of the IFL, the strength and pride in imperial unity constituted an expression of a strong Canadian Nationality. The links between early Canadian nationalism and British Imperialism are illustrated by Berger, who claims that Canadian Imperialism was one variety of Canadian nationalism (1970).

Rev. George Monro Grant (1835-1902), author and educator, was born in Albion Mines, Nova Scotia. In 1863 he accepted a call to the pastorate of St. Matthew's Church in Halifax where he remained for fourteen years. While in Halifax he was a director of Dalhousie College. In 1877 he became principal of Queen's University in Kingston. Politically, Grant's sympathies were with causes and principles, rather than parties. In 1889, Grant was elected President of the Imperial Federation League, Kingston.

Grant argued that Canada remained a dependency of Britain with little or no influence in foreign affairs, denied a voice in decisions of trade, war and peace. He

linked Imperial Federation with the extension of Canadian self-government, and the acquisition of full political rights. In "Imperial Federation," a lecture delivered in Winnipeg on September 13th, 1889, Grant argued that Imperial Federation was a continuation of a process of a political and historical development that began in 1763 when Canada was declared to be British. Furthermore, according to Grant, Canada was faced with two choices:

either in clothing Canadians with a legitimate share in the supreme rights and privileges and responsibilities of the Empire to which they belong, that is in full citizenship, or in a Revolution which means the gradual disintegration or violent breaking up of the British Empire (1890: 1).

"Canada cannot continue long a mere dependency," Grant further maintained. Imperial Federation, "a union between the Mother Country and Canada that will give to Canada not only the present full management of its own affairs, but a fair share in the management and responsibilities of common affairs" (1890: 2). Grant's sentiments regarding Imperial Federation continued and in 1891, at a public meeting held in Toronto under the auspices of the Toronto Branch of the Imperial Federation League, Grant's 1891 lecture, "Advantages of Imperial Federation," reinforced the need for the preservation of the unity of the Empire.

While some Canadians embraced the relationship between Canadian nationality and Imperialism, others found the rhetoric of "new nationality" a threat to the preservation of the unity of the Empire. Grant, for example, saw an inherent weakness in Canada First's organization. In a lecture entitled "Canada First," read before the Canadian Club of New York in 1868, Grant argued that the fate of Canada First societies was "proof that there is no national sentiment in Canada and that Canada is not a nation" (248). "Is there, then a common national sentiment in Canada, independent of the vigorous Provincial contingent that we find in each Province?" (1868: 248) asked Grant. "Does political unity represent any underlying sentiment?" (248). For Grant, Canada's

national pulse was weak and was all but overpowered by the currents of Provincial interests.

In an article written for the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, Mathews also criticized the ideas put forth by the Firsters, arguing that the national spirit that developed in Canada was the spirit of “glorious BRITISH nationality” (1875: 55). For Mathews, Canada First’s rhetoric of the ‘new nationality’ threatened the existing Imperial patriotism, and he questioned whether the national spirit as advocated by the Firsters was meant to supersede British patriotism or to be used to cultivate “such a national spirit as English, Irish, Scotch, Australian, or Canadian, may each feel for the land of his birth” (55). He blamed Canada First “nationalists” for attempting to influence the public by “painting the glories of an imaginary Canadian future” (56). Attempting to grapple further with the Canada First’s rhetoric, Mathews tried to understand what Canada First meant by new national spirit:

Do these war-cries mean, Canada First, in the *Empire*, and a *British -- Canadian spirit*; or do they mean, Canada First *irrespective of the Empire* and a spirit of nationality *exclusively Canadian*? (1875: 55; emphasis original)

The spokesmen for Imperial Federation exaggerated the threat of Continental Union. For Mathews, as for so many other Canadian imperialists, Canada First’s nationalism was seen as a threat to Pan-Britannic Empire, and a stepping-stone to annexation to the United States. Our next section will focus on the movement towards Commercial Union.

The Movement Towards Commercial Union

An ongoing concern throughout much of Canada’s history has been its relations with the United States. Even though the provinces of British North America did not follow the Americans into rebellion against Britain, and they fought the War of 1812 to remain separate politically from the United States, before Confederation the provinces

frequently sought an economic connection with their southern neighbour. A formal economic connection was temporarily achieved in the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. In the 1860s Confederation was in part responsible for ending that commercial interchange in favour of a quest for internal markets, evident in John A. Macdonald's 'National Policy,' a protective tariff policy promising tariff protection of Canada's 'infant' industries. For some historians (see for example Bennet and Jaenen, 1986) late 19th century Canadian nationalism was most clearly symbolized and embodied in Sir John A. Macdonald's policies for national development. However, Bumsted (1986: 145) pointed out that Macdonald's were combined with a strong resurgence of enthusiasm for the British Empire to produce the sentiment of 'imperialism/nationalism' among English-speaking Canadians. French Canadians, on the other hand began to argue for an independent Canada, free from imperial ties. Consequently, "economic relations with the United States were often an important subtext in the debate over imperialism" (Bumsted, 1986: 145).

Goldwin Smith (1823-1910), professor, free trade advocate and economic liberal, led the Commercial Union Movement⁶ along with another prominent Canadian Erastus Wiman (1834-1904), a capitalist residing in New York. While Commercial Union did not gain as much popularity as Imperial Federation, it was nevertheless supported by a small number of prominent Canadian intellectuals, politicians and businessmen and was central to the discussions regarding economic policy in the 1880s. Goldwin Smith was an English-born liberal who taught history at Oxford and Cornell Universities. He settled in Toronto in 1871 and became a prominent and influential Canadian journalist. Initially, Smith espoused the nationalism of the Canada First Movement and then began

⁶ Commercial Union was but one possibility of establishing an economic, political and/or socio-cultural relationship with the United States, spoken in relation to Continentalism, Political Union, and American Union.

to argue for Continental Union. Smith's classic case for North American Continentalism was made in *Canada and the Canadian Question* (1891).

The book focused on what Smith believed was the inevitable and logical absorption of Canada into United States. Smith's work is a textbook example of the rhetoric of Continentalism. Predicting the new nation's collapse, the proponents of Commercial Union proposed closer ties with the United States and maintained that free trade with United States was beneficial to Canadians as it would provide producers with freer access to American markets, and reduce the cost of American imported goods. Arguments for Political Union also emphasized the issue of military security (see Charleton, 1901).

Not all supporters of Commercial Union agreed that annexation to the United States was imminent. Edward Blake (1833-1912), the federal opposition Liberal Party leader, pronounced the National Policy a failure and was committed to a policy of a freer trade with the United States (see Livermore, 1975; Underhill, 1939). In addition, the strength of continentalist public sentiment was further illustrated in 1887, when the Liberal Party embraced the ideas of commercial union by adopting a free trade policy of 'unrestricted reciprocity' with United States. Thus from 1887-1891, unrestricted reciprocity formed the basis of Liberal trade policy.

The previous two sections demonstrated that historically, from the perspective of English Canada, the enigma of Canadian identity concerned the position of an Anglophone Canada between the old mother country Britain, and the powerful neighbour to the South, the United States. Consequently, "Canadianism" must be understood as existing within these competing systems of allegiance. Furthermore, and as the next section will illustrate, the movement towards "Canadianism" was not a cohesive movement, and at times, included contradictory national(ist) visions of Canada.

“Canadianism” and the Dominion’s “New Nationality”

Before Confederation, Thomas D’Arcy McGee (1825-68) did perhaps more than any other single person to establish faith in the possibility of a ‘great northern nation’ in America, and to warm into active life a patriotic love for the “new nationality.” Thomas D’Arcy McGee was born in Ireland and first emigrated to America in 1842. In Ireland he was involved in the “Young Ireland” movement and edited the *Dublin Nation*. In the United States, McGee edited several papers in New York, Boston, and Buffalo. When he moved to Montreal, he founded and edited *The New Era* (1857-8).⁷ In 1858, McGee was elected to the Legislative Assembly and became one of the most persuasive proponents of a Confederation of the British North American provinces. McGee delivered numerous speeches on political and literary matters, quoted with high regards by Canada First members. In the 1850s-60s, McGee’s activities in the form of writings and lectures on the subjects of Confederation and literature revealed a desire to see a national feeling created in British North America, and he envisioned in Confederation the means of creating this feeling.

After Confederation, the movement toward “Canadianism,” or the newly created national sentiment, was illustrated by a number of intellectuals and social elites who resuscitated and ideologised Canada’s national identity. By-and-large, the discourse on Canadianism included an ideological vision of the nation state as a unique cultural community. Culture, on the other hand, was defined more metonymically in terms of select cultural spaces and values, as well as a specific legitimated symbol of difference.

In 1875, William Canniff (1830-1910), an Upper Canadian historian, advocated Canadianism in one of the first published historical works on Canadian nationality, “Canadian Nationality: Its Growth and Development” (1875). Canniff took the day of

⁷ McGee’s publications include *A Popular History of Ireland* (1863), *The Irish Position in British and Republican America* (1866), and *Canadian Ballads and Occasional Verses* (1858).

Confederation as the appearance of national sentiment in Canada, arguing that before Confederation, attachment and sentiment were directed toward provinces. The growth of the Dominion, and the growth of Canadian national feeling, Canniff argued, “may be designated as ‘the body and soul of national life’” (1875: 14). One was dependent on the other. In “Canadian Nationality: Its Growth and Development,” (1875) Canniff speculated on the future of “Canadianism,” and cautioned that the movement towards Independence might be a stepping stone to Annexation to the United States or a development toward Imperial Federation. Even though Canniff (1875) advocated Canadianism, it is clear that he disagreed with the tactics employed by Canada First in its promotion of national sentiment. “The unfortunate use of the motto *Canada First*” he argued, as well as “the more unfortunate declamation against British institutions and honours, at a public meeting, had a disastrous effect upon the movement while it was in an incipient state” (1875: 16).

Another advocate of “Canadianism” was the Hon. James Young, Treasurer of the Province of Ontario. In “Canadian Nationality: A Glance at the Present and Future,” (1891) an address delivered before the *National Club* of Toronto, Young argued that patriotism was “one of the noblest of human impulses” and although Canadians were not deficient in this “noble quality,” they were doubtlessly “deficient in culture,” lacking in the literary and artistic accomplishments of other nations (1891: 1). As the next chapter will illustrate, advocates of Canadianism tended to focus on the creation of distinct cultural agencies as a way to promote a distinct national feeling in the new Dominion. Arguing that “the Dominion has reached National adolescence,” Young proposed National Independence “in friendly alliance with Great Britain” (1891: 33). Furthermore, he added that “whether Conservative or Liberal, we should all realize that above and beyond all political parties we are Canadians, men whose country has reached the verge of National manhood, and whose highest intelligence and patriotism are needed to solve the great political problems” (1891: 28).

The sentiment of “growth” and “maturity” of the “new” Dominion was also illustrated in prose shortly after Confederation. In 1880, a work from an anonymous writer, known only as “A Toronto Boy,” (Anonymous, 1880) entitled “Canada First: An Appeal To All Canadians” attempted to answer why should Canada desire to change? The following verses illustrate the justifications for Canadianism. According to the author:

Let Eighteen-eighty, close Colonial life;
 And Canada, a Nation now become!
 We court no bitter feelings, war, or strife,
 But we must have an Independent Home (1)

The older nations of the earth may ask,
 “Why then, should Canada desire to change?
 Why cut the British cords? Why cease to bask
 In Britain’s glorious sunshine? This seems strange.”(3)

Not, stranger, than in stripling grown a man,
 Thoughts, yearnings, rise, that urge him for to roam
 ‘Twas ever thus since first the world began; --
 Strong natures seek an Independent Home (4).

“We’ll choose no British *colony* for home;
 We will be *citizens*, free men among.
 Now forced from Britain far away to roam,
 We join the great Republic from her sprung!
 (19; emphasis original)

Charles Mair’s poem, “In Memory of William A. Foster” (1891) also made reference to the theme of maturity:

Nor lessened would the duty be
 To rally, then, around the throne,
 A filial nation, strong and free --
 Great Britain’s child to manhood grown!

To the advocates of Canadianism, the Canadian Question was situated among the widespread public debates around three visions of Canadian future, Imperial Federation,

Political Union and Canadian Nationality. Both Canniff (1875) and Young (1891) denounced the move toward Political Union and Imperial Federation as solutions to Canada's socio-cultural, political and economic growth, and development. Political Union was assumed to lead to Annexation to the United States, and according to Young, "there are very few Canadians, especially those who are native born, who seriously entertain that idea" (1891: 29-30). Imperial Federation, on the other hand, represented a connection with the Great Britain that could no longer be satisfactorily maintained, leaving Canadians with little voice and control over their own commerce.

The open ended character of the public debates regarding the status and future of Canadian nationality, or Canadianism, as well as the contradictory positions taken by Canada First members were further illustrated by the competing systems of thought present in both the Canada First's organization and in the National Club. In addition, for some advocates of Canadianism, the national(ist) vision that emerged after Confederation supposed a Canadian future within an imperial system. The subsequent ambiguity and contradictory alliances resulting from such understanding of Canadianism were illustrated by the fact that the presumed harmony between the Canadian nation and the imperial sentiment were not always clear in the intellectual discussions and debates of the era.

The National Club was originally formed, and a clubhouse created, in order to give the Canada First Party a "local habitation" (NC, 1900: 5). The National Club maintained that "the future greatness of Canada was foretold, not as an argument for a declaration of independence, but as an additional motive for continuing British connection" (1900: 6). In addition, even though the Club acknowledged the "presence" of opposing views held by members in the Movement, the Club officials insisted that a majority of members "frowned upon [the] revolutionary doctrines" related to Independent Canada and "cherished only the hope of making Canada the greatest and most prosperous unit in the British Empire" (1900: 7). Young (1891: 2) noted that

National Club's membership comprised gentlemen of "varying shades of political opinions, but all more or less attached to the grand idea of Canadian Nationality."

Following Young's address (1891) before the National Club of Toronto which we have previously quoted, Denison criticized Young's interpretation of Imperial Federation, asserting that Young misrepresented and misunderstood its scheme. In a comment on Young's address, Denison remarked:

We all feel that Canada cannot always be a colony or dependency, she must some day be independent nominally as well as practically, for we are practically independent to-day, and I think that most Canadians feel that real independence, absolute independence, can be better obtained within the Empire, than outside of it (1891: 35).

Similarly, the open-ended character of the public debates regarding the status and future of Canadian Nationality was clear when Goldwin Smith, in an address delivered at the *Dinner of the National Club* (1874), disagreed with the opinions of Canadian Imperialists. However, he mentioned that although their opinions differed, they can "club" together. Smith further remarked that, "there are other subjects of national interest to talk about, and we can talk about this, if we are men of sense able to hold our different theories on a public question without bandying charges of disloyalty and treason" (1874: 14). Although Smith became a frantic Continentalist, his initial views on Canadian nationality, evident in the address, were close to the ones advocated by Canada First. Smith's address was charged with the language of patriotism, and loyalty to Canada: "I believe no native Canadian can be more thoroughly identified with it in interest or more loyal to it than I am" (1874: 6). "Nationality," Smith insisted, "will make our citizens citizens indeed," (9) for "national spirit gives life to everything" (10). Furthermore,

It will give us a race of thoroughly Canadian statesmen looking to Canada and not elsewhere for their highest reward. It will lend dignity to our

public life and to our press [...] It will give an impulse to our literature and to the development of our national life (1874: 10).

A common view held by public figures was that Canadianism would necessarily and inevitably lead to Independence, providing a stepping-stone to Annexation to the United States. Others, however, maintained that Independence “will be the most certain means of once and forever settling the question against the possibility of annexation” (Canniff, 1875: 16). This view, which was to be followed by Canada’s already emerging literary milieu, was illustrated in a verse from the poem we have already cited:

Nor deem that Annexation is involved;
Our hearts on Independence, set are sure!
We love our home, as ours, and are resolved
On Independence, -- Annexation’s cure
(Anonymous, 1880: 4).

We have so far explored the Canadian Question fundamental to the late 19th century Canadian nationalism, and have attempted to grapple with the contradictory positions taken by Canada First members by looking at the competing systems of thought that were present in both the Canada First’s organization as well as in the National Club.

Canada First and The Debates on “New Nationality”

This chapter has provided an overview of the Canada First Movement, and attempted to situate the movement’s rhetoric within a broader context of post-Confederation debates on “new nationality.” It is clear that in the decades after Confederation, the competing systems of allegiances contained in the Imperial Federation and the Commercial Union represented divergent systems of thought which were part of an overall struggle to come to grips with the enigma of national identity in Canada (see Raymond, 1997: 3). The constant struggle between the Imperial Federation League’s justification of the Second Empire, and Commercial Union, must be taken into

consideration when exploring the rhetoric of Canada's "new nationality" as advocated by the original members of Canada First. The overall scholarly consensus that Canada First's vision of the "new nationality" and its understanding of nationalism was never clearly defined and expressed, is largely due to the fact that the original five men of Canada First did not share an identical vision when it came to the future of Canada. Furthermore, as this chapter demonstrated, the movement towards Canadianism, was not a cohesive movement, and there was room for debate and discussion regarding what type of national identity Canada should adopt. In addition, while Berger maintains that Canada First was imperialist and therefore its attempt at the construction of "new nationality" incorporated imperial allegiance, the fact remains that his study of Canada First focuses on G.T. Denison, who was also a member of the Imperial Federation League, thus largely biasing Berger's view of the organization.

The next chapter will examine how the decade of "new nationality" (1860-69) inspired the development of literary culture in English speaking Canada. It will argue that Canada First men engaged in cultural and intellectual promotion of Canadianism as well as participated in the construction of cultural agencies designed to expand the knowledge of the new nation.

CHAPTER TWO

“CANADA FIRST” AND THE LITERARY AND INTELLECTUAL PROMOTION OF CANADIANISM

The previous chapter explored the emergence of the Canada First Movement, and argued that nationalist sentiment in Canada has historically taken a wide variety of forms and referenced many different visions of Canada. I attempted to situate Canada First within competing visions of the Dominion’s “new nationality,” visions that were at times contradictory. The present chapter will illustrate that, from the inception of the movement, Canada First members were engaging in cultural and intellectual promotion of Canadianism. Canada Firsters were excited by the possibilities of Canada, and picked up “the challenge that D’Arcy McGee had thrown down” (Berger, 1970: 52). Thomas D’Arcy McGee’s activities in the 1850s-60s, gave impulse to create a new literary nationality, directing literary efforts at the establishment of an authentic, recognizable voice of Canadian literature. Adopting McGee’s principle, of ‘No literature, no national life,’ the original members of the “corner room” set contributed in various ways to Canada’s emerging literary milieu, as well as being involved in setting up cultural agencies in order to promote Canada’s “new nationality.”

The decade of “new nationality” (1860-69) inspired the development of literary culture in English speaking Canada. This decade represented a wider shift in the frame of reference in Upper Canada, from being recognized as an extension of British civilization in an imperial province, to a community with a character and experience of its own (Smith, A. 1994: 253). Partly as a result of this, various editors, writers and intellectuals from Ontario became occupied with creating cultural agencies that would

expand their knowledge of themselves. Literary and scholarly journals saw the increase in volume of critical literature that advocated literary independence to coincide with the new political nationality.⁸

In addition, this chapter will argue that national literature, like nations, is created by the cultural works of specific people engaged in an identifiable set of activities. Literature is powerfully implicated in the process of “imagining” the nation. Consequently, as Corse (1997) pointed out, national literature does not passively reflect naturally occurring phenomena, but rather is an integral component in the process of national development.

Canada First and the Intellectual and Literary Promotion of Canadianism

As the brief biographies on the Canada First men in Chapter One indicated, all of the original members of the “corner room” set had already attained some distinction in literary expression and were extensively contributing in various ways to the emerging cultural agencies. It is clear, therefore, that for the original members of Canada First, the notion of nationhood was very much linked to achievements in Canadian cultural life, science, music and the arts. William Alexander Foster maintained that Canada First was an intellectual movement, “the revolt of educated and thoughtful men against the inanity, and worse than inanity, of what was offered to them as political discussion” (1875: 77). Furthermore, he saw Canada First as a direct product “of that higher culture which the

⁸ Although not discussed in this chapter, the patriotic societies that emerged in the mid and late 19th century also took up the cause of national literature. The Woman’s Canadian Historical Society of Toronto (WCHS), whose honorary members were Denison and Mair, claimed in its constitution that:

The unity of national purpose and a high ideal of loyalty and patriotism in her people will alone sustain her in such high position; that to this end a through acquaintance by her people, with her heroic past, is of the first importance; that her history, literature and archives, her poetry and art are yearly becoming more valuable in affording the necessary knowledge; that an intelligent and self-respecting national pride in Canadian literature needs to be awakened and encouraged (1896: 5).

WCHS was also involved in the collection and preservation of Canadian historical records and relics, in order to promote Canadian loyalty and patriotism. In addition, The Women’s Branch of the Antiquarian Society (1896) was also set up to collect historical relics and encourage the study of Canadian history.

universities and college of our land are steadily promoting" (Foster, 1875: 77). In 1874, Foster and William Howland (1844-?) were central in bringing about a weekly journal, *The Nation*, and played a large part in the formation of the *Canadian National Association*. Howland (who was to become the Mayor of the City of Toronto) was a public servant. He was the son of the Honourable William Pearce Howland (1811-1907), the first Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario. William Howland chaired the *Canadian National Association*, an organization composed of the most active members of Canada First. *The Nation* was meant to give the country a literary paper independent of party affiliation and it managed to sustain itself for two years. *The Nation* drew frequent contributions from Canadian intellectuals such as Goldwin Smith, an active sponsor and contributor. In 1874-5 Smith wrote leading editorials almost every week, in addition to articles and reviews (see Wallace, E. 1957: 74-77). Foster was also involved with the formation of The National Club, a "social club" originally formed to give the "Canada First" party a "local habitation" (N C, 1900: 5).

The significance of Charles Mair in the development of Canadian literature is almost unknown. According to Shrive (1974: 62), Canadian literary scholars either ignored Mair's contribution to Canadian literature, or dismissed him, preferring to name Duncan Campbell Scott (1862-1947), Archibald Lampman (1861-99), Bliss Carman (1861-1929) and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts (1860-1943) as their "Confederation Poets," despite the fact that none of them published anything until almost fifteen years after Confederation. Charles Mair, on the other hand, published in 1868 what was regarded as Canada's first significant collection of verse,⁹ *Dreamland and Other Poems* (1868).

⁹ The literary reviewers of *Dreamland* in 1868 welcomed the volume as the first significant collection of the new Confederation era (Shrive, 1965: 44). In addition, articles on Mair in newspapers and journals of the time depicted him as 'great singer of Canadian Literature,' 'saviour of Canada's nationhood.' Confederation poet Bliss Carman even stated that Mair was "the father of the present school of Canadian verse" (quoted in *WM*, 1926: 110).

Mair's work enjoyed widespread popularity in Canada towards the end of the 19th century.

Even before making the pledge with other Canada Firsters, Mair believed that he was writing Canadian poetry: "I have constantly advocated the growth of a native Canadian literature; indeed I think Charles Sangster and myself were almost the pioneers in that field" (MP, Mair to Lorne Pierce, n.d.)¹⁰. Shrive (1965) argued that Mair's poem "In Memory of Thomas D'Arcy McGee" could be considered his first "patriotic ode," written before his encounter with the Firsters. In addition, Mair made several references in his correspondence to Denison regarding his self-proclaimed role as a patriotic writer. Discussing his play *Tecumseh* (1886), Mair noted that his failure as a poet "shalt not be for lack of Canadian feelings for that is in my bones" (DP, Mair to Denison 8 November 1884).

Charles Mair (1875b: 164) argued that one of the infallible signs of "national sentiment" was the growth of a nationalistic literature:

The contemporary condition of a nation's literature, is of course, the touch stone and gauge of them; but they operate in all directions, cover the entire field of national progress, and more or less inform every branch of human speculation.

In addition, for Mair the best Canadian literature must be "autochthonous;" it "must grasp with its roots, and be nourished by, the inner and domestic life of the people" and thus to be characteristically Canadian "must taste of the wood, and be the genuine product of the national imagination and invention" (1875b: 164). Mair wrote from lived experience in every region of the country except Quebec and the Atlantic region, and as Gibson pointed out, "there is documented evidence that he intended to write as a political ideologue and with a 'native style'" (1992: 51). For Mair, national

¹⁰ Charles Sangster, is considered by some as Canada's first important national poet (see Lighthall, 1887)

sentiment was to be embodied in “our school-books,” needed to be “illustrated by the chisel and the pencil,” and had to “enter into the more thoughtful spirit of the press” (1875b: 164).

Even after the ‘fall’ of the Canada First organization, Mair’s lifelong commitment to his career as a poet and playwright, as well as to cultural and artistic development in Canada, was eloquently expressed in his correspondence with Denison. In one letter, from 20 August 1882, Mair commented on the demise of the new Dominion’s national magazine, the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*:

The death of the Canadian Monthly rather angers me with Canadians. I fear it is a nation without a country, and which consists mainly of intellectual cannucks. A community rather than a nation, which has run mainly to muscle, deprived of intellectual atmosphere and of a public moral sense. I am filled with shame and contempt and regret when I think that I am Canadian.

In correspondence from Denison, we also see the value Denison placed on the intellectual and cultural development of Canada, and the need for the growth of a Canadian literary and artistic milieu. Denison wrote, “I have compiled a book of Canadian poems, to encourage and arouse the patriotic feeling of people [...] in order to counteract the work of Yankee emissaries, and home traitors who are trying to weaken Canadian loyalty” (DP, 1890). It is very likely that the book Denison was referring to was *Raise the Flag and Other Patriotic Canadian Songs and Poems* published in 1891, compiled by “a few loyal Canadians” (iii). In addition, even though Denison was frantically anti-American, and implacable foe of free trade with the United States, he admired American flag practice. In 1890, he chaired a meeting of the IFL in which a letter was read from “the United States, mentioning the custom of flying the Stars and Stripes over the schools in that country, and suggesting that a like custom might be advantageous in Canada” (Denison, 1909: 134). Denison seized the idea at once. He led a deputation which persuaded the Ontario Minister of Education to institute the flying of

the national flag at the schools. In his memoirs, Denison proudly recollected that this “movement soon became general, and now in several Provinces the practice of displaying the flag is followed” (1909: 136). Denison and others regularly spoke of the national flag, however, after Confederation, several unofficial versions of the Canadian flag appeared and used design elements from the first official distinctively Canadian flag, the flag of Governor General of Canada, approved in 1870 (see Fraser, 1990). In addition, in the late 19th century, although not recognized as an official national flag, the stringent statement of Canadian identity was the seven-province red ensign created around 1873 (Fraser, 1990).

In 1868, months before Henry J. Morgan met with the Firsters, he wrote in the introduction to *Bibliotheca Canadensis*:

Now more than at any other time ought the literary life of the New Dominion to develop unitedly. It becomes every patriotic subject who claims allegiance to this our new northern nation to extend a fostering care to the native plant, to guard it tenderly, to support and assist it by the warmest countenance and encouragement (viii).

Henry J. Morgan wished to make Canadians aware of what was already produced by Canadians. Morgan’s *Bibliotheca Canadensis* (1867) was designed to acquaint young writers with the array of existing Canadian literary production, in the hope that it would encourage and stimulate further Canadian prose. Morgan spoke of his bibliography as “an effort in the cause of National Literature” (1867: ix) and having as its primary purpose the wish “to render some slight aid to the nascent Literature of the native country, by exhibiting [...] the extent of our intellectual development as evinced in the literary effort” (1867: vii). Morgan, like his Canada First counterparts, felt that literature was an important element in the creation of national feelings. He encouraged all Canadians to take advantage of the Confederation and to make the “new nationality” strong:

The present time is without doubt most opportune for such a movement. We are just entering upon the commencement of a new [...] – a bright and glorious epoch in our history – an epoch which now sees us firmly implanted on the American Continent as a vigorous and highly promising State, Federally constituted, full of brilliant hopes and fond yearnings for national greatness and renown – of important achievements to be performed – of high purposes and resolves to create for Canada an independent position (1867: viii).

Canada First members were not alone in their desire to extend a sense of national spirit into the new Dominion's literary and artistic scene. The following sections will examine the general awakening of national life which extended to literary spheres.¹¹

The Literary Promotion of Canadianism

Literary journals of the time took up the task of creating a sense of Canadian sentiment, evident in an increased number of publications dedicated exclusively to Canadian themes and national objectives. Founded in 1846, *Baker's Canadian Magazine* emerged with a purpose of informing Canadians about their community, and encouraged Canadian writing (Smith, A. 1994: 255). *The Maple Leaf, or Canadian Annual of Toronto* (1847-49) was set up to acquaint Canadians with their country. In the 1860s, the editors of the *Canadian Quarterly Review and Family Magazine* maintained that the magazine was founded in order to enhance understanding of:

national politics and interesting family literature. It will review and advocate, aside from party interest, those leading questions that affect the moral, political and mutual well-being of Canadians; and afford original and selected prose and poetry of a choice and useful character.

In early 1869, Henry J. Morgan announced his plans for a journal taking a perfectly independent position on current issues. It was not until 1872, however that The

¹¹ Although not discussed in this chapter, promotion of "national spirit" was also extended to scientific spheres. Allan Smith (1994: 261) argues that science "like education and literature, was conscientiously promoted as a nationalist tool."

Canadian Monthly and National Review (CM&NR) emerged on the Canadian literary scene, proclaiming itself to be the “organ – in the form of a periodical to the intellectual life in Canada,” with a tone “beneficial to the national character and worthy of the nation” (1872: 1). The *Canadian Monthly and National Review* (1872-1882) drew frequent contributions from Goldwin Smith, Charles Mair, George T. Denison, John George Bourinot, and many others. The trend toward extending national sentiment in literary journals persisted well until the end of 19th century. In the late 1800s, *The Canadian Magazine* of Toronto (1893-1924), appeared with a mission to:

stimulate and afford expression to the higher thought and tastes, to bring the country’s best thought, under the most favourable circumstances and in the most attractive form, before the best classes of the country’s readers – the classes upon whom the shaping of the political, social, intellectual and even industrial future of the nation most largely depend (Mowat, 1893: 196).¹²

In addition, newspapers played a crucial role in developing a Canadian frame of reference (see Smith, A. 1994; Ballstadt, 1959). Daniel Wilson (1816-92) professor of History and English at University College, anthropologist, and the editor of the *Canadian Journal of Science and Literature*, noted in 1860 that newspapers had great influence in shaping the outlook of those exposed to them. Bourinot argued that in the development of Canadian intellect “the newspaper press has had a very large influence” (1881: 52). In “The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion” (1867: 5-6), McGee argued that the principal form of indigenous literature in Canada was the newspaper. Canada Firster Henry J. Morgan was in accordance with McGee’s views on the importance of the newspaper in Canadian cultural growth. Morgan considered the newspaper an important element in Canadian literature, and included journalists in his bibliographies. In 1867, in the

¹² J. Gordon Mowat was the originator of *The Canadian Magazine*.

“Introduction” to his *Bibliotheca Canadensis*, Morgan noted that reading newspapers played a role in the rising of literary sensibility:

In a work of a bibliographical character it is somewhat anomalous to include notices of newspaper editors and writers. In our young country, however, our principal newspapers may be considered as holding no unimportant position in literature [...] The morning journal may be said to be as much a literary as it is a political organ, and newspaper [...] Besides, the majority of our journalists have been men of superior education and literary culture, who have themselves written works and pamphlets. A very distinguished author has recently remarked ‘that a hundred years hence the newspaper will be the only possible book.’ It is well then to preserve the germs of our future literature (ix).

The newspaper was also an important medium for the publication of poetry, and in some cases fiction.

The early expression of the desire for a distinctive literature was further demonstrated by a selection of essays and critical articles written in literary periodicals in the period between 1860-69 in which writers sought to foster original literature and lament the plight of writers in Canada.¹³ According to Ballstadt (1959; 1975), articles in the Journals indicated that there was a persistent and constant search for a distinctive Canadian literature in the 19th century. Journals provided a space where editors and contributors could address the problems of developing literature in the British North American provinces and in the new Dominion. Until the late 19th century, books were not a major part of the dialogue, with a notable exception of John George Bourriot’s *Intellectual Development of the Canadian People* (1881), which showed what Canada has done in the fields of literature and science. Literary critics of the time also pointed to the past as the repository of materials that would illuminate the Canadian experience and would provide ample resources for Canadian writers. By the mid 1850s, calls for an

¹³ For a good selection of early Canadian literary criticism and discussion on pre- and post-Confederation Canadian literary scene see Ballstadt, 1959; 1975.

indigenous literature were frequently being made. In 1856, Daniel Wilson called for a Canadian literature “which shall embrace independent representatives in each department of knowledge” (1856: 3).

As previously pointed out, Canada First members looked to Thomas D’Arcy McGee for inspiration, and for the most part they set out to continue McGee’s efforts in establishing a literary culture in Canada. According to Ballstadt (1959: xi), Thomas D’Arcy McGee was the most significant single advocate of a Canadian national literature. McGee’s call for the development of distinct prose for the growing country began in 1850s; his calls expressed a sense of destiny for the new nation. McGee felt that Canada was “one day be a great northern nation and develop within ourselves that best fruit of nationality, a new and lasting literature” (1858: vii). In addition, McGee (1857b) believed that literature was the vital atmosphere of nationality, and would tend the creation of a thoroughly Canadian feeling. Furthermore:

Without that all-pervading, indefinite, exquisite element, national life -- public life -- must perish and rot. No literature, no national life, -- this is an irreversible law. [...] Come! Let us construct a national literature for Canada, neither British nor French, nor Yankeeish, but the offspring and heir of the soil, borrowing lessons from all lands, but asserting its own title throughout all! (McGee, 1857b).

In “Protection for Canadian Literature,” (1858) McGee argued that, “every country, every nationality, every people, must create and foster a National Literature, if it is their wish to preserve a distinct individuality from other nations” (1858: 21). Furthermore, for McGee, literature was essential not only to the formation of national character but, more importantly, to the maintenance of it:

If precautions are not taken to secure this end, the distinctive character and features of a people must disappear; they cannot survive the storms of time and the rude blasts of civil commotion. The popular mind must be trained and educated according to the physical appearances and social condition of the country; and the people who are so unfortunate as to possess no fountain from which they can procure their elixir of their

existence, will soon disappear from the face of the earth, or become merged in some more numerous or more powerful neighbour (1858: 22).

Between 1860-69, McGee published several articles on literature in the *New Era*, and played an effective role as a poet and lecturer in inspiring national feeling and native literature.

Narrating the Nation

Romantic historicism inspired 19th century Canadians to aspire towards national literature. In addition, Upper Canadian writers offered encouragement to the idea that Canada was a society bound together by a common and meaningful past. Literature provided a means through which the culture-in-the-making contemplated itself, mythologized its history, and constructed a vision of itself. As in other nations, Canadian “national feeling” was expressed in myths and legends about the past. According to Schöpflin (2000: 80) myth is one of the ways in which collectivities [in this case nations] “establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own systems of morality and values.” In addition, myth is a key element in the constitution of collectivities (Schöpflin, 2000: 80).

Canada Firsters Charles Mair and William Alexander Foster envisioned the War of 1812 as a crucial time in Canadian history (see Mair, 1888; Foster, 1871). The myth of 1812 as the “true” birth of the Canadian nation gained its sanctification and possibly its most ambitious literary expression in the hands of Canada First.¹⁴ However, the making of a national myth is clearly seen in the writing of a variety early Canadian writers. William Canniff (1872) wrote in one of the first histories of Upper Canada of the loyalty and determination exhibited by the colonists during the War of 1812. The events leading up to and following the war of 1812, which was largely fought by people

¹⁴ In the “Preface” to the second edition of *Tecumseh*, Mair argued that the War of 1812 was the turning point of Canada’s destiny (1901).

of the two Canadas serving beside the British regulars was, more often than not, represented as the beginning of a sense of Canada as “a living community,” united in “sentiment and experience” (Woodcock, 1989: 3). By and large, this great myth about the ‘origin’ of the Canadian nation parallels the development of Canadian nationalist sentiment and further marks the beginning of notable anti-American attitudes.¹⁵ As A. Smith pointed out, the War of 1812 became the staple of Canadian historical writing, evident in the number of Canadian books written on the subject.¹⁶ Writing of Canadian history was undertaken as a nationalist project, as emphasized in *Anglo-American Magazine* in 1852 claiming that the purpose of historical writing should be:

the setting before Canadians, in a modest though spirited manner, the achievements of their fathers [...] The awakening the memory of their own past struggle in defense of the loved land of their adoption [...] such a review will, nay must, tend to foster in our day the same national feeling which at that time impelled every colonist to fly arms to repel the hated invasion of their republican neighbours [...] The real object of our undertaking [must be] the exposition of the loyalty, courage and energies of the brave yeomanry of Canada (553-4; cited in Smith, A. 1994: 258)

Another aspect of this nationalist undertaking was the contribution of ‘heroes’ to the nationalist pantheon. This was clearly marked in the writings and speeches of Canada First men. Henry J. Morgan in the *Sketches of Celebrated Canadians and Persons Connected with Canada* (1865) stated in the “Introduction:”

15 Woodcock (1987) argues that the war of 1812, a conflict between the United Kingdom and the United States could not have possibly been a Canadian ‘national effort’ since no Canadian nation existed. In addition, although both the British and the Canadians shared a common enemy, as the resistance to the Americans spread across British North America during and following the conflict the fear and actions against the Americans did not spark the beginning of a Canadian nation or national sentiments.

16 For example, David Thompson’s *History of the Late War between Great Britain and the United States of America* (1832); John Richardson’s *War of 1812* (1842) and G. Auchinleck’s *A History of the War between Great Britain and the United States of America* (1855).

From these annals it will appear that we have had and do possess men as truly great, talented and devotedly loyal as any other kingdom. [...] We may also be able to convince the youth of this rising nation, that their sires, grandsires, and great-grandsires, had names associated with great deeds and glorious efforts in the cause of freedom and loyalty (vii).

In order to further acquaint young British North Americans with the heroes of their land, and further intensify the pride and sense of accomplishment of their society, Morgan followed *Sketches of Celebrated Canadians* (1865) with “The Place British Americans Have Won in History” (1866), a lecture that sketched the ‘great’ men of all the provinces. Later on, in 1871, William Alexander Foster continued to bring attention to the “Canadian names known to the world” (1871: 28) by sketching the accomplishments of Canadian scientists, artists, poets, scholars, and the like.

For Morgan, the production of biographies was itself a nationalist undertaking. By the end of 19th century, biographies became the staple of Canadian literature. Some of the most well-known were, *The Canadian Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Eminent and Self-Made Men: Ontario Volume* (1880), and *Quebec and Maritime Provinces Volume* (1881); J. B. Kerr’s *Biographical Dictionary of Well-Known British Columbians* (1890), Maclean Rose’s *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography: Being Chiefly Men of the Time* (1886), G. Mercer Adam’s *Prominent Men of Canada* (1892), H. J. Morgan’s *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography* (1898), and specialized biographies such as William Canniff’s *The Medical Profession in Upper Canada, 1783-1830* (1894).

A similar nationalist project, albeit to further the pride in the accomplishments of French Canadians, was taken up in Quebec. A decade before Morgan’s *Bibliotheca Canadensis*, Maximilien Bibaud (1824-87), a French Canadian historical biographical and legal author, published *Dictionnaire Historique des Hommes Illustres du Canada et de L’Amérique* (1857), *Le Panthéon Canadien* (1858a) and *Tableau Historique des Progrès Matériels and Intellectuels du Canada* (1858b). In 1855, he published

Bibliothèque Canadienne, ou Annales Bibliographiques with a motto, “C’est de ses auteurs qu’une nation tire sa principale gloire.”

In addition, contrary to the popular belief that Canadians did not have a symbolic culture until the middle of 20th century (see for example Wayland, 1997; Widdis, 1997), by the 1860s, the tendency to epitomize the Canadian experience in symbolic terms was widespread.¹⁷ The maple leaf was singled out by the 1840s as an especially appropriate symbolic device for Canada.¹⁸ While the symbol had a long history in French Canada, it was adopted by English Canadians as the distinctive Canadian symbol only in 1848, when the Toronto literary annual *Maple Leaf*, referred to the leaf as the chosen emblem of Canada. A year after the Confederation, maple leaves appeared on the arms of Quebec and Ontario. In 1870, the first official distinctively Canadian flag, the flag of Governor General of Canada, contained a garland of maple leaves in the centre. According to A. Smith (1994: 268) the symbol [maple leaf] functioned “as a tool for the integration of the collective experience” and it “would overcome any tendency towards incoherence and division and obviate the need for an elaborate and detailed description of the national character.”

This section demonstrated that in identity formation, myth is one of a number of crucial instruments in cultural reproduction, and an instrument of self-definition, “in that those who accept the beliefs encoded in myth accept above all the particular world view it reflects as well as membership and the rules that go with the membership” (Schöpflin, 2000: 83). In addition, national myths are identity narratives; sets of self-conceptions and ideas about the nation. National symbols, on the other hand, are the building blocks of

¹⁷ For other symbols specific to pre- and post- Confederation Canada, see Fraser, 1990;1998.

¹⁸ The roots of this symbol, however, date back to the earliest settlements along the St. Lawrence (Fraser, 1998). At the beginning of the 18th century, the settlements of the New France adopted the maple leaf as an emblem in the settlements along the river. The symbol’s popularity with French Canadians continued, and at the inaugural meeting of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste in 1834, the maple leaf was one of the numerous emblems proposed to represent the society (Fraser, 1998). In 1835, the maple leaves made their first appearance upon the flags of the ‘Patriotes.’

mythology about the nation. National myths play a role in the maintenance of historical memory, and contribute to choosing which part of memory is made salient, what is to be remembered, and how, and what is to be forgotten (Martin, 1995; Schöpflin, 2000). Thus, the link between identity narrative and history is instrumental. In order to evoke collective sentiment, and aspire collective memory, identity narratives imagine a particular relationship to the past [in the form of myths of origin, mythical/historical figures and/or heroes, political triumphs, and so on]. Kertzer (1998: 9-10) examines the relationship between literature and historical writing and argues that in literature, historical attributes such as causality, agency law, social conflict, and the like, are treated as narrative categories. Conversely, according to Kertzer, in historical writing, narrative qualities such as dramatic conflict, moral purpose and heroic action are attributed to history. Thus, “for the nationalistic writer, intent on realizing the dream of a nation-state, the historical narrative quickly turns visionary” and “history turns into myth” (Kertzer, 1998: 10).

In addition, in the Canadian nationalist project, official history, or the national origin and development myth, served important definitional and legitimizing functions. History validated the present by glorifying the reconstructed past, in order to inspire collective identity and national identification among those included in the saga. Anglophone versions of Canadian history, distorted by the long-term colonial relationship between Britain and Canada, diminished the participation and the role of Francophones and First Nations in nation-building in Canada. The quest for a common approach to Canadian history, one that would be acceptable to French and English-speaking Canadians was undertaken between 1893 and 1895 when the *Dominion Education Association* sponsored a Dominion wide competition for the writing of a history of Canada to replace provincial histories which were not specifically “national.” The competition was won by W.H.P. Clement and his version of Canadian history entitled *The History of the Dominion Canada* (1897). In the preface to his book

Clement's language, charged with patriotism and loyalty to Canada, further emphasized how historical writing marked nationalist sentiments. The following section will further explore Canada's literary and cultural nationalism, by examining how poetry and songs which emerged after Confederation, were implicated in the process of "imagining" the nation.

Poetry and Songs for the New Nation

Daniel Wilson in 1858 wrote, "Poetry is the natural progeny of a nation's youth" (1858: 17). In 1860s, a new and significant note was struck in Canada with anthologization of Canadian poetry. E.H. Dewart's *Selection from Canadian Poems* (1864), the first anthology of Canadian poetry represented the earliest search for literature in Canada. Dewart (1828-1903) a Canada First supporter, and a later recruit was the editor of the *Christian Guardian*. Dewart, like Morgan, wished to make Canadians aware of what was already produced by Canadians. W.D. Lightall's later anthology *Songs of the Great Dominion* (1887) further represented the need to delineate the Canadian tradition.¹⁹

Canadian prose and poetry not only allowed Upper Canadians to distinguish their society from those across the Atlantic, but it also enabled them to place their emerging nation in a New World context. In Canadian prose, the decade of new nationality is marked by an increase in the interest in the elucidation of Canadian themes, with the Canadian environment leading the way. A. Smith (1994) argued that the belief that Canadian subjects should be explored, remained essential to the mark of a national poet.

Robert Grant Haliburton pleaded for a valid literary nationalism. Like his counterparts in the movement, Haliburton wanted to see Canadian prose. Referring to

¹⁹ William Douw Lighthall a poet and novelist, was also one of the founders of the *Society of Canadian Literature* and the *Canadian National League*. Lighthall was an independent Liberal, and a strong believer in the necessity and advantage of organizing the intellectual and higher interests of Canadian nationality.

ancient Old World poetry and attempting to inspire a distinctively Canadian prose, Haliburton made following statements:

The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome we may well admire and reverence, but give me the ruder strains of our Northern bards. They breathe forth a healthy vigour and a quenchless spirits of freedom, and there is a snuff of the north wind about them that is worth more than all the fragrant odors of all the flowers of ancient poesy [...] Let the dead bury their dead. This is a living age. We must think the thoughts, and speak the words of the living, not the dead (1869: 8).

In other words, Haliburton wanted to get away from competing literary models from the Old World, and strive to create a 'new' school of literature, one that would interpret the new life of a young nation. In correspondence to Mair, Haliburton wrote the following regarding his writing style in *Dreamland* (1868): "For God's sake drop the old style. You're living in a new world and you must write in the language of the living to living men" (CMP, Haliburton to Mair, 24 August 1870).

One way to encourage support of native poetry was to point out the need for poetry in the creation of patriotic feeling (Ballstadt, 1959). In the 1850s the link between the creation of poetry and patriotic feeling was stressed and strongly emphasized by McGee, in his articles in the *New Era*, as well as his own volume of poetry. McGee continued to stress his point in the 1860s, and in "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion" (1867: 2) he argued that mental self-reliance was an essential condition of the new Dominion's political independence and the new national character should be distinguished by mental independence. E. H. Dewar's sentiment paralleled McGee's. He wrote in the "Introduction" to *Selections from Canadian Poems* (1864) that national literature are instrumental in the creation of nations with distinct identities:

A national literature is an essential element in the formation of national character. It is not merely the record of a country's mental progress: it is the expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and the guide of national energy (ix).

In addition, Dewart added, "It may be fairly questioned, whether the whole range of history presents the spectacle of a people firmly united politically, without the subtle but powerful cement of a patriotic literature" (1864: ix). Dewart, Morgan and McGee stressed that the unity of the emerging country was not merely political, but derived from national character and mental progress of the nation. Dewart's anthology contained many patriotic poems including Charles Sangster's "Song for Canada," and H.F. Darnell's "The Maple." Shortly before Confederation, G. W. Johnson's own volume of poetry, *Maple Leaves* (1864) included several "patriotic" poems, including "Land of the Maple Leaf," "My own Canadian Home," and "Ode to Canada." In addition, poems such as A. L. Spedon's "Our New Dominion," (1870) and A. J. Ramsay's "The Dominion of Canada" (1869) extolled the virtues of Canada, in an attempt to fulfill the recommendation of men like McGee and Dewart (Ballastadt, 1957: 170).

Thus, characterized by a "tone of confidence" and "the buoyant faith in Canada's future," the poems and songs that emerged after Confederation illustrate a range of Canadian themes and subjects (Lighthall, 1889: xxxv). Canadian environment and history teemed with "noble deeds and great events" became important themes in post-Confederation poetry and song-writing. The poets filled the songs with "the consciousness of young might, public wealth, and heroism" (Lighthall, 1889: xxi). Inspired by "great personalities, high achievement, and noble character," Canadian songs were characterized by "a glowing devotion to native land and a loyal and loving reverence for our gracious Sovereign" (Rand, 1900: x). Lighthall's *The Songs of the Great Dominion* (1889), included sections on "The New Nationality," as well as "Imperial Spirit," illustrating that in some cases the chants of a new nationality were weaving in with the songs of the Empire (Lighthall, 1889: xxxiv).

For some advocates of literary culture in Canada, for example, the writer of "Canadian Poetry and Poets," the lack of distinctive Canadian characteristics in the

emerging poetry was attributed to the “mixture of heterogeneous races and nationalities” in the colonies (Anonymous, 1863: 638). The author, nevertheless, was confident that Canadians were beginning to realize that “true patriotism requires them to blend their separate customs, prejudices and ambitions” (638). Not all English Canadian critics, however, argued for assimilative nature of Canadian verse. The following section suggests that for some post-Confederation writers and critics, national feeling extended their interest in French Canadian culture and literature.

The Advantages of Two Cultures

Canada’s subnational division between the French and English founding traditions generated an inherent tension in the attempt to construct a unifying, fully national literature. The previous sections illustrated that the early Canadian literary criticism and studies of Canadian prose were in fact the study of Anglo-Canadian literary formation, with only occasional references to Francophone literature. Canada First’s rhetoric on Canadian nationality was laden with English Canadian bias. When Mair envisioned “a common cause, a common language and a common destiny” (1875b: 164) for the new Dominion, he clearly meant a common English Canadian cause and language. Consequently, some advocates of the “new nationality” who urged the creation of a national spirit meant by implication, the creation of an English-Canadian nation.

Even though Dewart (1864: x) recognized the contributions made by French Canadians to Canadian literature, and drew attention to the unity of “our French fellow-countrymen,” he felt that French Canadian literature was “more French than Canadian, and their bond of union is more religious than literary or political.” However, some English Canadians such as Thomas D’Arcy McGee, J.G. Bourinot, and G. Mercer Adam credited the accomplishments and took pride in the achievements of French Canadians in literature. McGee in his *New Era* articles as well as speeches advocating Confederation,

consistently espoused a vision of Canada that allowed for diversity in individuals and provinces and catholicity of outlook.

In the *Intellectual Development of Canadian People* (1881), Bourinot acknowledged the French Canadian tendency to value literary success as a matter of national pride. He noted that French Canadians were “stimulated by a patriotic love for the past history and traditions” of their country (1881: 94). Furthermore, Bourinot emphasized the advantages of two languages and two nationalities, and argued that these should develop in a spirit of co-operation.

Graeme Mercer Adam (1839-1912)²⁰ the founder of *British American Magazine*, (1863-4) asked Ontarians to take a lesson from the “sister Province.” For Adam, French Canada:

makes large use of the literary spirit, not only in the preserving national traditions, but in perpetuating racial ideas in religion, in politics, in her institutions, as well as in her language and literature ... [French Canada] not only honours her literary men, but maintains and nourishes her national life (1888: 118).

In 1865 George Thomas Lanigan (1846-1886) published a volume entitled *National Ballads of Canada*, in which he had “imitated and translated” from original French-Canadian lyrics, among others, “A la Claire Fontaine,” “Gai, gai le rosier,” and “A Saint Malo, beau port de mer.” The *Canadian Birthday Book* (1887), afforded a miniature survey of the chief verse-writers, both French and English.

²⁰ Graeme Mercer Adam (1839-1912) moved from Scotland to Toronto in 1858 to manage a bookselling firm. Soon after, he became a publisher, founding the *British American Magazine* (1863-4) and the *Canadian Monthly and National Review* (1873-8). From 1879-82, he was also the editor of *Canadian Monthly* in the early 1880s, and managed the *Bystander* for Goldwin Smith. Mercer Adam, who was a strong supporter of Canadian nationalism, evident in a series of articles on written for Canadian journal on literary topics, also produced several books such as *The Canadian Northwest* (1885) and *Illustrated Quebec* (1891).

In Quebec, cultural nationalism, the idea of the survival of an autonomous and self-determining French Canadian society within a Canadian federal structure, dominated Francophone nationalist thought after Confederation. In addition, Corse (1997) pointed out that nationalist assumptions were also at the core of literary development in Francophone Canada. Quebec literature and the Quebec literary tradition are almost always understood by French Canadians as originating within the French tradition, and deeply tied to issues of French Canadian development and nationalism (Corse, 1997; Cotnam, 1983). In the 19th century, the French speaking population of Quebec traced its origin to the permanent settlement of Quebec City by Samuel de Champlain in 1608. This population could trace its ancestry to a few thousand French settlers, most of whom had arrived in the 17th century under colonization scheme of Jean-Baptiste Colbert (Kaufmann, 1997: 113). In New France, ethnic consciousness began to develop vis-à-vis the metropole, accentuated by the fall of New France to Britain in 1763. In addition, the French literary project is perceived as not necessarily closely tied to English-Canadian literature and its development.

French Canadian literature began to appear shortly after the establishment of New France. The earliest French Canadian prose explored detailed journeys to New France in the late 1500s and 1600s. Annals detailing life as residents in New France were common (Warwick, 1983). The first volume of poetry written by French Canadian was published in 1830, by Michel Bibaud (1782-1857), the editor of *Bibliothèque Canadienne*, and *Le Magazin du Bas Canada*, two short lived French Canadian periodicals. Michel Bibaud also contributed to *Aurore des Canadas*, *Observateur Canadien*, and *Encyclopedie Canadienne*.

A new era in French Canadian letters was marked in the 1840s. *Le Repertoire National* (1848-50) contained the first efforts of pioneers of French Canadian literature. *Le Repertoire National* was followed by the *Soirées Canadiennes* and *Le Foyer Canadien*, journals which gave impulse to native talent. As previously pointed out,

Michel Bibaud's son, Maximilien Bibaud (1824-1887) published various biographies and histories between 1850s-1880s and contributed to his father's magazine, *Le Magazin du Bas Canada*.

In the 19th and early 20th century, literary critics Henry-Raymond Casgrain and Camille Roy considered literature to be essentially utilitarian and functional, "a vehicle for ideology and tool of propaganda" (Corse, 1997: 45). Casgrain's motto, "Notre littérature sera nationale ou elle sera pas," shaped the development of literature in Quebec. This view was based on a set of interrelated precepts including "Catholic morality, fidelity for the French heritage, nationalistic fervor, and idealized, romantic conception of traditional farm life" (Shouldie, 1979: 4; cited in Corse, 1997: 45). Consequently, in French Canada, "good novels were soon defined as [...] didactic, patriotic, and edifying ... [Therefore] historical novels and novels of the land -- that is, novels promoting an agricultural ideology and fidelity to traditions -- were largely favored in Quebec" (Cotnam, 1983: 595). The two main themes underlining early Francophone writing, were the *romans de la fidélité* and *romans du terroir* [novels of fidelity to tradition and novels of the land]. In addition, there was a strong emphasis in the French-Canadian literary world on the preservation of the French language. For example, institutions such as the "Ecole littéraire de Montréal," the "Société du parler français," and the literary magazine *Le Terroir*, promoted the preservation of the French language, the Catholic church, and the nationalist ethos through regionalist literature (Cagnon, 1986: 6). In 1895, the ultramontane nationalist Jules-Paul Tardivel wrote the first novel to promote a separatist ideology, *Pour la Patrie* (Corse, 1997: 37).

Although this exceedingly brief overview of literary development in Quebec hardly does the topic justice, it does point to two important points for a consideration of literature and the nation-building process in Canada. First, the project of constructing a unifying "national literature" in Canada was largely an English Canadian project, defined in Anglophone terms. Second, cultural practices, including literature and literary

criticism were among the earliest matters to be “nationalized” within two separate communities of Anglophone and Francophone Canada.

Inventing a “Nation”

The Canadian nation-building project involved the diffusion of a literature in which a new sense of national community could be imagined. The support for the arts was justified by national sovereignty. Literature promotes social cohesion by imagining a nation. This chapter attempted to illustrate that in Canada feelings of “nationhood” had to be invented. The shared cultural notions underlying the concept of “nationhood” gave meaning to events and discourses that were invoked in symbolic form. Discourse in this sense is socially constituted communication which leads to the production of texts and narratives about the nation, which can embody and locate myth. The deliberate development of a ‘national’ culture, focused on the production iconographical symbols of nationhood capable of inciting loyalty from its citizens. Thus, after Confederation, Canadian nationhood was facilitated by promulgation of ideological myths and symbols for the new nation, as myths and symbols attributed special qualities to [English] Canadians, and extended their distinctiveness.

National identities are purely discursive constructs, which are made up of specifically constructed cultural and national identity narratives. The particular national(ist) identity narratives that emerged after Confederation, attempted to legitimate the existence of the nation. These narratives however, were not constructed by the state, but by social actors who believed there needed to be a culture to fill the vacant spaces of the national social (Berland, 1997: 44). These social actors, Canadian intellectuals, writers and artists, helped to give expression, concern, and material form, to the nation’s claim to difference and autonomy. Consequently, as this chapter demonstrated, more often than not, culture was defined by Canadians not by what it was, rather as a declared absence, “as a natural resource needing to be processed” and consequently by what it

could become (Berland, 1997: 44). The cultural production involved the (re)construction of a national(ist) discourse by emphasizing the necessities of speaking and producing Canadian culture. The apparatus of agencies and institutions, created and owned by the Canadian intelligencia, sought to administer culture as part of the larger enterprise of defining the nation's borders. In other words, by identifying oneself in terms of "Canada," one distinguished oneself from the inferred positions of British, European or American subjects.

The intellectuals and aspiring state elites who pondered the Canadian Question, and ideologised national identities had important discretion and autonomy in terms of their choice of myths, interpretations of historical continuity, and their visions of the identity and destiny of the nation. Their manipulation of myths and historical memory contained important elements of invention. By contributing to the emerging literary and artistic milieu, the original members of Canada First were involved in the invention of Canadian culture, and helped to perpetuate a specific vision for a new nation. More often than not, this vision was directed toward, a British, English and Protestant Canada, with no room for the French Catholic Quebec.

This chapter also illustrated the particular relationship between new culture and its history. Some critics believed that the development of a Canadian tradition, and of a literature embodying it, was hindered by Canada's lack of a mythic and heroic past. However, as this chapter illustrated, the cultural production of literature in Upper Canada designed to inspire the feeling of Canadianism took part in inventing Canada's tradition laden with a set of mythology regarding its 'heroic' past. To borrow from Anderson (1991) the need for arbitrary beginnings is met in a new culture by its creation of myth and metaphor. In narrating itself, the imagined community creates itself.

The following chapter will further explore how Canadian "national feeling" is expressed in myths and legends about the past, by looking at Canada Firster Robert Grant Haliburton and his myth of the Northern Races. The myth of the Northern Race is

perhaps one of the most poetic representations of the notion of “Canadianess.” By about a half century after Confederation, the “northern” character of Canada was articulated in with images denoting both geographical location and racial character. It illustrates one of the first attempts to define Canadian identity.

CHAPTER THREE

NATURALIZING THE NATION: Northern Landscape, Forgotten Wilderness, and the Conspicuous Display of Naturalistic Nationalism.

The importance placed on the development of an indigenous Canadian literature was examined in Chapter Two by examining the works of Canada First members as well as other literary developments in Upper Canada. This chapter will further examine the development of Canadian prose by linking it to the development of a distinct Canadian identity that was advanced by Canada Firster, Robert Grant Haliburton (1831-1901). As this chapter will illustrate, the newly imagined Canadian identity was expressed by a burgeoning national enthusiasm and a conviction of moral purity and physical virility, all of which were supposedly motivated by contact with the cold climate of Canada. For members of Canada First, along with subsequent generations of writers who wrote about the northern environment, writing about the North had a rhetoric that conveyed the myth of northern pride and superiority, and for Canada First members, was designed to inspire a sense of “Canadianess.” Furthermore, as this chapter will argue, fictional and other literature is powerfully implicated in the process of “imagining” the nation.

Various scholars (see for example Widdis, 1997; Wayland, 1997; Jaenen, 1981) maintain that at the time of Confederation, English Canada lacked a sense of a strong indigenous national culture, both in the sense of literary and artistic milieu and shared heritage of historical memories and customs, and accordingly, Anglo-Canadians tended to see their heritage as derived from a British origin. Even in the post-Confederation period, as one scholar suggested, “colonial symbols continued to dominate despite increased efforts among Canadian writers to develop indigenous symbols, myths and

themes in novels and journals” (Widdis, 1997:54). This chapter, however, will argue that new forms of national identifications, in the form of myths, symbols and themes that emerged shortly after Confederation were directed toward inspiring the development of Canadianism. In addition, an argument will be made that regardless of the Romantic nationalist imagery of the homogeneous culture that underlines the polity and unites the population, most nation-states need to be created from disparate groups, and from populations with competing allegiances. Literature takes part in the creation of a unifying identity, as it allows the positing of, “a transcendent realm of essential identity,” a vision of unity rooted in a common national identity, overarching all subsidiary differences (Lloyd, 1987: x). The following section will consider the role of Robert Grant Haliburton’s prose in creating a unique Canadian character and sense of national purpose, by examining his lecture, *The Men of the North and Their Place in History* (1869).

Haliburton’s *The Men Of The North*: Creating the Northern Character of Canada

“To a Canadian, North is an idea, not a location; a myth, a promise, a destiny,” so declared Daniel Francis in *National Dreams; Myth, Memory, and the Canadian History* (1997). Furthermore, it is often mentioned in the literature surrounding of Canadian identity that Canada’s natural landscape is central to its self-conception. Historically speaking, Canadian literature has indulged in conspicuous display of naturalistic nationalism. Since at least Confederation, various writers, intellectuals, politicians and the like believed that it was Canada’s northern location which made it a distinct country. For example, Thomas D’Arcy McGee attempted to grasp the “northern-ness” of Canada in his writings from 1850s-60s. McGee was the first Canadian to recognize the importance of the ‘norland’ nature as a distinctive cultural trait, and realized this metaphor’s power to evoke common response. However, while there are references to the theme of “northern-ness” before Confederation (see Kaufmann, 1988; Kaufmann and

Zimmer, 1998), most scholars agree that the “cult of the North” gained its coherent expression for the first time through Canada First (Francis, 1997; Berger, 1966; 1970). As previously pointed out, the Canada First Movement expressed a form of Canadian nationalism that was remarkably free of either British or American influence. In addition, as the previous chapter illustrated, it is clear that the original members of the “corner room” set understood that history, myth and metaphor were the most important vehicles for expressing and maintaining a sense of national spirit and identity.

From its outset, the members of Canada First looked to the Dominion’s northern climate and location for inspiration. Historian C.C. Berger suggested that Robert Grant Haliburton was the first Canadian intellectual to apply the theme of northern superiority to the new Dominion, providing a long-enduring rhetoric about the ‘True North.’ In addition, as Gagan (1964) pointed out, although the rhetoric of a ‘true north’ is familiar in Canadian historiography, before Canada First it had rarely been accompanied by the vision of a “dominant” race of northern people. It was Canada First’s credo, after all, that the new Dominion’s most important feature was its northern climate, which as Robert Grant Haliburton, among other Firsters continually maintained, imparted to people living in Canada, the strength of character shared by other circumpolar “races.” “We are the Northmen of the New World,” exclaimed Haliburton in *The Men of the North*, an address to the *Montreal Literary Club*, “the inheritors of a long Anglo-Saxon tradition of liberty and racial superiority” (1869: 10).

Haliburton’s *The Men of the North* included all the romanticized accounts of Canada’s past that were used to establish a historical precedent for a prophetic and messianic vision of the Canadian future. The lecture attempted to sketch the history of Northern nations and their place in history, expressed in [pseudo] scientific language laden with rich imagery of Romantic history. “National wealth without public spirit is like capital without enterprise,” proclaimed Haliburton. As for all other Firsters, Haliburton contended that national spirit was of slow growth, unless it was an offspring

of a violent struggle, or of great sacrifice. According to Haliburton, history provided the rationale for civic ideology. Out of shared experiences of the past both national spirit and national identity were supposed to emerge.

In addition, for Haliburton, national spirit “can only spring from a faith in a bright future, or from the memory of a glorious past” (1869: 1) and, as he pointed out, Canada has come forth from no historical struggle and Confederation, Haliburton declared, “created as little excitement among the masses, as they would feel in the organization of a joint stock company” (1). “What is the stock from which we are sprung? Who are the men of the North and what is their place in history?” (1) “The peculiar characteristic of the New Dominion must ever be that it is a Northern country inhabited by the descendants of Northern races,” Haliburton exclaimed. “We are no nameless race of savages, who have no past which we can recall with pride, and no future which we can work out for ourselves and our children,” Haliburton reminded his audience, and added:

We are the sons and the heirs of those who have built up a new civilization, and though we have emigrated to the Western world, we have not left our native land behind, for we are still in the North, in the home of the Old Frost Giant,²¹ and the cold north wind that rocked the cradle of our race, still blows through our forests, and breathes spirit of liberty into our hearts, and lends strength and vigor to our limbs (1869:10).

Haliburton’s lecture represented an effort at formulating a new and distinct national mythology for the new Dominion. A large part of this formulation included the notion that a struggle with the stern cold North had predetermined the course of Canadian nationhood.

For Haliburton, the men of the North were the descendants of Teutons, Celts, Scandinavians and Ugrians – brave and virtuous “races.” “It is climate that produces

²¹ Here, and throughout *The Men of The North* (1869), Haliburton appeals to the ‘sagas of Northmen’ or Norman mythology. From Norman mythology, Haliburton borrowed Northern metaphors, such as the old Frost Giant, the Father of the Wind and of the Ocean.

varieties in our race,” Haliburton argued. With this argument, it is evident that Haliburton appealed to the “scientific” authorities of the time that maintained that diversities in language, temperament and capacities of nations are climate related. This point will later be addressed in this chapter, in the section on the “Formation of National Character.” Haliburton believed that the northern air stimulated intelligence and encouraged initiative, qualities necessary for the creation of political freedom and democracy. Thus, the Dominion’s cold climate, and forbidding terrain “our snow and frost” would give birth to a “healthy, hardy, virtuous, dominant race,” more valuable than gold or silver (Haliburton, 1869:1). Strongly supporting his fellow Firster Colonel Denison’s anti-American bias, Haliburton argued that the northern climate would weed out the weak and the lazy and discourage members of the ‘southern races’ from settling in the North. Furthermore, following the dominant Social Darwinist mode of thought of the time, Haliburton maintained that the ‘North’ imposed a form of natural selection, which was constantly reinforcing the quality of the nation, ‘the True North, strong and free.’ As will see in the next chapter, this type of logic was taken up by Charles Mair, John Schultz, and other members of Canada First in order to ‘restrict’ various groups from emigrating to the Northwest.

Thus, for the original members of Canada First, the new Dominion’s northern climate and icy land provided the core strength and spirit of Canada. The rhetoric of the “true north,” however, was not exclusively applied to Canada First’s vision of new independent nationality. Decades after Haliburton’s lecture, it was widely adopted by Canadian imperialists. George Parkin, a leading spokesman for the *Imperial Federation League*, contended that the severity of the Canadian climate would ensure vigour, order and strength since “it teaches foresight; it cures or kills the shiftless and improvident; history shows that in the long run it has made strong races” (Bashevkin, 1991:7). Parkin’s fundamental premise in his imperial thought was “the tendency to interpret geopolitics within the terms of social Darwinism” (Berger, 1970: 36), as he believed that

British peoples had assumed “vast responsibilities in the government of weak and alien races” (36).

In “ethically” and/or “culturally” divided societies, the use of myth and metaphor to illuminate national identity almost invariably enhances the division between groups, unless the myth deliberately attempts to unite the groups across the divide. The following section will examine how Haliburton’s concept of the Northern Races reconciled the “dilemma” of the two “founding nations.”

French and English Canadians: “One Common Northern Race”

Some scholars argue (for example Widdis, 1997) that the fact of being non-French and the perception of being non-American been the principal characteristic identifying Anglophone Canadians. However, as this section will assert, Haliburton’s *The Men of The North* (1869) presented an interesting point in the history of Anglophone Canadian identification, as it assumed the ‘equal’ origin of the French and English peoples in Canada. The notion that both French and English people were ‘in racial terms’ one people underlined the fundamental unity of the French and British Canadians in Haliburton’s *Men of the North*:

Here in the New World, we, who are sprung from these men of the North, are about to form a New Dominion in this Northern land, a worthy home for the old Frost Giant, and a proud domain for his royal descendant. We have here strangely united together all the original elements of the British race. We have the Celt [...] we have the Saxon or Teutonic element, and in Quebec we have a race that have come [sic] from Normandy and Brittany, the one the land of the Northmen or Normans, and the other inhabited by a Celtic race (Haliburton, 1869: 9).

Haliburton was the only Firster who attempted to incorporate Canada’s two founding cultures into his vision of “new nationality.” Consequently, one of the most interesting phenomena of Haliburton’s notion of the Northern Races was that it provided a basis for presupposed ‘racial’ unity between English and French Canadians. A real and true link

between English and French Canadians was based on the belief that both groups possessed Norman blood. As Berger illustrated, the “diverse nationalities within Canada all shared a northern ancestry, and that the climate tended to instill and maintain the strenuous attributes of Nordic races” (1970: 53). Furthermore, Haliburton maintained that:

As British colonists we may well be proud of the name of Englishmen; but as the British people are themselves but a fusion of many northern elements which are here again meeting and mingling, and blending together to form a new nationality, we must in our national aspirations take a wider range, and adopt a broader basis which will comprise at once the Celtic, the Teutonic, and the Scandinavian elements, and embrace the Celt, the Norman French, the Saxon and the Swede, all of which are noble sources of national life (1869: 9).

Likewise, for Haliburton, French Canadians by virtue of colonialization, and successful settlement in Canada, had demonstrated their ‘fitness’ not only to cope and survive but also to thrive in the inhospitable northern environment. Haliburton’s concept of the Northern race thus included the ‘Norman French.’ In addition,

The Norman French of Quebec may well feel proud when they remember that they can claim what no other portion of the Empire can assert, that they are governed by a monarch of their own race, who holds her scepter as the heir of Rolo, the Norman sea-king who first led their ancestors forth from the forests of the North to the plains of Normandy (Haliburton, 1869: 9).

Even though Haliburton was the only Firster who directly appealed to the French Canadian interests or concerns in his publications, and his lecture on the Northern Races was the only direct attempt to integrate French Canadians into his vision of new nationality, attempts to scientifically determine the common racial origin of the British and French Canadians gained some popularity in the mid 1800s. Bourinot (1837-1902), writer, historian and the *Honorary Secretary of The Royal Society of Canada*, argued that French and English shared the same racial origins that stemmed from their “Teutonic”

ancestry. Furthermore, in *The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People* (1887), Bourinot noted:

Nor should it be forgotten that the French Canadian is not a descendant of the natives of the fickle, sunny south, but that his forefathers came from the more rugged Normandy and Brittany, whose people have much that is akin with the people of the British islands (1887: 17).

Moreover, genealogists were attempting to demonstrate that the majority of the original French settlers had come from Brittany and Normandy, and since the Normans were descendants of the Scandinavian invaders, it could be claimed that both British and French contained elements of the northern strain (Berger, 1966; 1970). On the other hand, Bruce Curtis points out that the genealogical project that was taken up by French Canadians in 1871 was central to the fabrication of French-Canadian nationality. The construction of a genealogy of the French-Canadian population provided “the internally coherent imaginary of social subjects, territory and time needed to sustain systematic social observation” (2001: 11). Referring to Joseph Charles Taché’s genealogical project, Curtis argues:

For Taché, the making up of genealogy was central to the fabrication of French-Canadian nationality. [...] The genealogical practice he promoted was based on the tracing of matrilineal descent to the imaginary European country from which immigrants originated. This practice defined *canadiens* as the blood relations of the individual men from a mythical place called France, and excluded everyone else in the world from the imagined *canadien* community (2001: 250; emphasis original).

While Haliburton’s *Men of the North* (1869) incorporated the French Canadian culture into his vision of “new nationality,” as his other counterparts in the movement, the rhetoric of the North discursively constructed peoples of the South, especially Americans as “Others.” We must now examine the anti-Americanism that was inherent in the notion of Northern Races, and point out how it was adopted by both members of Canada First, and Canadian imperialists.

Maintaining the Border Between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Anti-Americanism in the ‘Cult of the North’

The anti-Americanism that was largely inherent in the “cult of the north” was clearly illustrated in Haliburton’s lecture *Men of the North*, and his subsequent poem *The Land of The North* (1868?). The following verses from *The Land of the North* (1868c?: 1,4) emphasize the dichotomy between the North and South, or Canada and the United States:

There’s a path in the air, man may not know,
That guides us o’er the main;
And a voice in the winds, man may not hear,
Will call us home again,
When the winter dies,
And the west wind sighs
To hear the linnet’s strain (verse 3).

In the South, the fierce the fickle South:
No voice of song is heard;
Though the oriole, like a sunbeam flits
With many a radiant bird
Through the mangrove’s shade
No leafy glade
By tuneful notes is stirred (verse 4).

We have come to the North, the stern cold North,
The home of the brave and the strong,
To the true, the trusting, tender North,
Dear land of love and song! (verse 10)

Consequently, Haliburton’s rhetoric of the North, while attempting to unite French and English Canadians, was used to maintain and distinguish ‘us’ – Canadians, ‘the northerners’ from ‘them’ – Americans, ‘the southerners.’ It is clear that Haliburton’s rhetoric indulged in a presupposed superiority of Canadians over the neighbouring south, stemming from the rigors of the northern climate and the pureness of its race. Haliburton (1869: 2) argued that “southern nations have almost invariably been inferior to and subjugated by the men of the North.”

Haliburton's notion of Northern Races was extensively utilized by other Firsters, and was almost exclusively used to distinguish Canada from the United States. Charles Mair wrote such rhetoric, examples of which are found in "The New Canada" (1875a,1875b) in a two-part article published in *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*. Much of Mair's "The New Canada" is a declamation about the United States. However, he concluded by emphasizing the importance of Canadian education and the creation of a literary and artistic milieu as the source of national sentiment. Mair invoked a sense of the vigour and stamina of the north-west in an attempt to stir Canadian pride and encourage migration. In addition, Mair expressed anti-American sentiment, arguing, that "whilst the south is in a great measure a region of effeminacy and disease, the north-west is decided recuperator of decayed function and wasted tissue" (1875a: 5). Similarly, Mair (1875b: 160-161) described the characteristics of American political and social life as "repulsive," presenting the reader with a clear dichotomy between the "young and vigorous Dominion" and "the moribund and unhealthy fabric of the huge Republic."

Colonel George Taylor Denison was militantly anti-American and forever distrustful of American policy and diplomacy. Denison professed to believe that Blacks of the South had a better lot under slavery than under freedom (Anonymous,1925: 49-51). When arguing against continental integration, Denison maintained that United States was an unstable, excessively democratic society, overrun with immigrants of southern origin. For Colonel Denison then, the assertion of Canadian distinctiveness and superiority vis-à-vis the Americans was linked to the celebration of the imperial tie. "The northern portion of this continent is destined to be the home of a great and powerful nationality," claimed Denison (1872: 53), in an article for *Canadian Monthly & National Review*. "It is our duty therefore, now in the youth of our Dominion, while it is gathering strength under the protection of the Mother-country to lay the foundations of military power" (Denison, 1872: 53). He further boasted in correspondence to Mair relating to Mair's

accounts of the conditions in the North-West, of “such good accounts [...] of the great North-West,” and added that “together we the Men of the North (as Haliburton says) will be able to teach the Yankees that we will be as our ancestors always have been the dominant race” (MP, Denison to Mair, 10 March 1869).

Canada First’s W.A. Foster continued Haliburton’s romantic nationalistic imagery, using it consciously to distinguish Canadians from Americans. In 1871 he wrote the now famous Canada First manifesto “Canada First; or Our New Nationality” where he argued:

The old Norse mythology, with its Thor hammers and Thor hammering, appeals to us, – for we are a Northern people, – as the true out-crop of human nature, more manly, more real, than the weak marrow-bones superstition of an effeminate South (1871: 25).

Foster’s “Canada First,” sums up Canada First’s ideals, and follows Haliburton’s emphasis on the romantic history of Canada.

Following Haliburton’s lecture, the rhetoric of the North was extensively used by Canadian intellectuals as the defining quality of Canada and a primary factor distinguishing the new Dominion from its southern neighbour. In 1884, G.D. Griffin wrote, “Northern nations always excel southern ones in energy and stamina, which accounts for their prevailing power” (1884: ii; cited in Berger, 1966: 6). “The intense heat of the sun,” Charles R. Tuttle (1848-?), a Nova Scotia school teacher and later journalist wrote, “debilitates the human frame, and renders man prone to inaction The prevailing characteristic of the inhabitants of tropical climate is indolence” (Tuttle, 1877: 28). Furthermore as Berger illustrated, the southern climate of the United States was constructed as “sapping the energies of even those descendants of vigorous races at the same time that it was attracting multitudes of weaker races from Southern Europe, in addition to providing a hospitable home to the large Negro population” (1966: 12). In this sense, it was further argued that the late 1880s immigration of people from Southern

and South-eastern Europe destroyed not only the homogeneity of the American people but its Anglo-Saxon values throughout the continent. In a letter to Denison, Mair wrote "A true homogeneity [that] is necessary for the preservation and the extension of liberty in the right sense" (DP, Mair to Denison, 29 October 1884).

While the glorification of the 'Anglo-Saxon' race increased pride in the British heritage, it also threatened national unity by disparaging French Canadians. In addition, the common term 'Anglo-Saxon Race' became problematic, as it could have been interpreted to imply that Canadians [conveniently minus the French] and Americans originated from the 'same great stock.' The Commercial Union Movement, championed by Goldwin Smith, viewed the Canada and United States border as artificially separating what they viewed to be the "common white race" (Samuels, 1997). Similarly, apart from the obvious economical benefits, Goldwin Smith argued that commercial union was desirable because it would facilitate the moral federation of the Anglo-Saxon race (Samuels, 1997).

The partitioning of the 'Anglo-Saxon race' was thus made possible with the metaphor of the North. The notion of strength and superiority implied in the concept of 'northern-ness' maintained the notion that the 'germs' of the institution of liberty originated among the northern peoples. For Haliburton, the original men of the North were the founders of civilization and champions of freedom in every land, and as for our ancestors, "the cold north wind that rocked the cradle of our race, still blows through our forests, and breathes spirit of liberty into our hearts, and lends strength and vigor to our limbs" (1869: 10). Furthermore, as Berger (1966: 13-14) pointed out, the equation of liberty with northern-ness gave intensity to anti-American sentiment in Canada, affirming that British liberty was superior to the uproarious democracy of the United States. In other words, Canada's institutional heritage helped it maintain a purer form of New World civilization, while its climate was held to reinforce the manner in which those institutions operated.

It is not surprising, then, that the Imperial Federation League, which arose as a direct response to the perceived 'American Threat' posed by the Commercial Union Movement, used the rhetoric on "the North" in order to partition the 'Anglo-Saxon race.' In a 1907 address delivered before the *Canadian Club and Board of Trade* in Saint John, Parkin announced that in the North "race is compelled by nature to maintain its robust attributes, mental and physical, whereas in more sunny countries like Africa and Australia the tendency of the climate is towards deterioration" (*Daily Telegraph* [Saint John], 6 March 1907).

As this section has illustrated, the notion of Northern Races was used both by the proponents of Canada First, in the interest of furthering Canada's "new nationality" as well as by the Canadian imperialists who used the rhetoric in order to partition the Anglo-Saxon race. However, as the following section will demonstrate, Haliburton was not the first intellectual to assume that 'race' possessed hereditary mental traits that were linked to climate and geographical territory.

Haliburton's *Men of the North* and the Formation of National Character

We now examine Haliburton's rhetoric on the "true north," and situate it within a larger field of intellectual discussion of the time regarding the formation of national character. Gagan (1964: 19) described Haliburton's "The Men of the North" as a "masterpiece of absurdity." However, 18th and 19th century historians and scholars assumed that 'race' possessed hereditary mental traits, and attempted to find the link between climate or geographical territory and 'racial' dispositions. Authors such as Montesquieu (1689-1755), Rousseau (1712-78) and Herder (1744-1803) made systematic efforts to illustrate the link between particular natural environments and alleged national characteristics. In addition, historically the ideas regarding the relationship between climate and the character of 'races' are rooted in the myths and stereotypes in classical, medieval and renaissance Europe (see Eze, 1997). Thus, the rhetoric regarding the

effects of climate on 'race' indicates a link between cultural nationalism and the intellectual thought of the time. Likewise, the writing of Canadian history has continually been preoccupied with the environment, and Canadian history is often seen as 'ecological' or 'environmental history' (see Cook, 1990). In addition, northern naturalization of the nation emerged strongly within English-Canadian historiography (see Kaufmann, 1988).

Levitt (1981: 3) suggests that an assumption that "racially induced mental traits" could be modified by culture and geography was also widespread. In other words, the assumption that the effects of 'race' could be modified by climate as well as culture persisted until the second half of 20th century. Charles R. Tuttle (1848-?) published a two volume history book in 1877, *Tuttle's Popular History of the Dominion of Canada*, in which he argued that the institutions, soil and climate of Canada would determine the character of the people (1877: 27-28). Goldwin Smith wrote of the formidable vigour and aptitude of the Northern races: "in the barbarous state the action of a Northern Climate acts as a force of natural selection [sic]" (1881: 39). Furthermore, he argued, "mental vigor, independence, and reasoning power are always ascribed to people of the North" (Smith, G. 1881: 40). That the debate was widespread is also evident from the scholars who argued that it is not the cold but temperate climates that develop more vigorous races. For example, in 1891, Bancroft (1832-1918) argued that temperate climates develop a more vigorous race "both in body and in mind." Bancroft, who was also following the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, argued that Canada's cold climate was the primary reason for its 'slow' social development.

The significance of Haliburton's project is apparent when we consider that the tendency of associating race and climate, to understand the Canadian condition and identity persisted well into the second half of 20th century. In 1920, Canadian historian A. Lower wondered whether "sooner or later [...] our rigorous climate working on sterling stock [will not] hammer out a vigorous and distinctive people, true men of the

north?" (1925: 24; cited in Levitt, 1981: 3). Similarly, in 1920, G. Wrong asserted that the environment could shape mental traits: the "moderate cold of the North stimulated man to overcome his natural indolence and make his greatest advances" (Levitt, 1981: 3). As late as 1965, Canada's "northern character," wrote historian W.L. Morton, "springs not only from geographical location, but from ancient origins in the northern and maritime frontier of Europe" (1965: 89). Akin to Haliburton's project, Morton attempted to articulate the Canadian identity by examining the historical characteristics of the northern frontier: "Canadian history is rather an important chapter in a distinct and even unique human endeavor, the civilization of the northern and Arctic lands" (1965: 93). The Northern quality of Canada, Morton wrote, is maintained by a factor of deliberate choice and natural selection: "Canadians become generation by generation more and more a northern people, either because northern origins have fitted them for northern life, or because they have become adapted to it" (1965: 110).

The use of the metaphor of the North, to describe the characteristic of Canadian populations, paralleled the shift in the conceptualization of Canadian landscape that occurred shortly after the Confederation. The following section will explore the link between environmental determinism and the development of specifically Canadian prose emphasizing Canada's northern landscape.

Environmental Determinism, Cultural Nationalism, and The Emphasis on Northern Landscape in Canadian Prose

In the New World, geography can substitute for felt lack of history, and can represent a visual and mythic force. In Canada, intellectual currents such as Romanticism played a vital role in altering perceptions of the landscape. The Romantic Movement developed in the latter part of 18th century mainly as a reaction to the rational and universalistic thought of the Enlightenment and its consequent modernization. The Romantics (the Expressionists, Vitalists, and the like) thus privileged the 'life force' of

nature, over the rational consciousness of civilization (Kaufmann, 1988: 667). Romantic nationalist thinkers, the earliest of which were German, in general advocated the notion that “nations were primordial, organic outgrowths of nature” (Kaufmann, 1988: 667). The nation and individuality were thus inextricably linked.

Haliburton’s new Social Darwinist vocabulary thus illustrates the close association between Romanticism that had begun to foster between Canada’s northern wilderness and its new national identity. Romantic nationalism developed out of strains of geographic nationalism, which tended to associate a particular landscape with a community and its historical past. Geographic nationalism thus constitutes the idea of “naturalization of the nation,” “praising the uncivilized, primeval quality of untamed nature and stressing its regenerative effect upon civilization” (Kaufmann, 1988: 668). Kaufmann (1988: 668) argues that this form of romanticism was channeled most vigorously into naturalistic nationalism in nations with an abundance of unsettled territories.

In Canada, the nationalist project of “naturalizing the nation,” a dynamic whereby nationalists came to view the nation as the offspring of its natural landscape (Kaufmann (1988: 690) did not occur until the middle decades of the 19th century. Consequently, the celebration of untamed nature and/or the North occurred after Confederation, as prior to the joining of the British North American provinces, English Canadians, generally viewed their new Canadian home, ‘the North,’ as nature that needed to be challenged and overcome. Before Confederation, the Northern landscape was largely considered “a vast, hostile, dimly seen, unpoetical mass” (Kaufmann, 1988: 682). Furthermore, Europeans often referred to the land occupied by aboriginal peoples as “Wilderness.” Kaufmann (1988: 679) further illustrated that this view emerged from the Protestant lens on the Old Testament: “their new Canadian home was interpreted partly as a foreboding Wilderness and partly as new Garden of Eden.” This view, prioritizing the advance of civilization over nature is consistent with what Kaufmann (1988: 690) refers to as the “narrative of

nationalization,” or “nationalization of nature,” the process whereby a nation creates a homeland by settling, naming, and historically associating itself with a particular territory. Thus, in Canada, the vision and the treatment of the ‘North’ in the early 19th century was traditionalist in tone, as “it treated nature as a challenge to be overcome” (Kaufmann, 1988: 679). However, as geographer David Hooson (1994: 1) pointed out, nations often reshape geographical images and historical memory for present self-respect and future hopes.

As previously mentioned, the integration of romanticism into political nationalism also ran parallel to a cultural nationalism centred on the arts, taking the Canadian landscape as its subject matter. Haliburton’s vision of the Northern Races found an echo in the poetry of the Dominion, as illustrated by a poem by W.T. Urquhart:

Over the waters sounding right lustily,
 Borne on a breeze from the Northern Sea,
 Down from the floes and the wicks of Norland
 Where the Storm King reigns, mighty monarch is he;
 Where ships are stranding,
 And tempests are banding
 Together, to work his wild behest;
 From the storm’s habitation
 Comes the song of a nation
 To us sons of Old Norland out here in the West!
 (verse 1; cited in Haliburton, 1869: 10)

The first verse from “Canada,” a poem written by Herbert L. Manks also illustrate the link between Canadian environment and its new “northern” identity:

Arise and stretch thy sinews, thou young giant of the North;
 Arise and in the fullness of thy youthful strength come forth
 And stand among the nations by the greatness of thy worth;
 Assume the place appointed unto thee!
 (verse 1; Manks, 1893)

In addition, as Maia Bhojwani illustrates, interest in Norse literature increased in the 1880s when it became a subject of academic study in American universities.

Haliburton even suggested that Canada change its name to the more auspicious name of “Norland” (taken from Old Norse, because “We are the Northmen of the New World”).

Looking at the poetry emerging after Confederation, Bhojwani (2001) argues that:

The Confederation poets’ interest in folklore and myth is partly the widespread movement towards national self-definition, but it cannot be said that they solved the problem once for all and produced a full-fledged, systematic mythology which could be compared with their models. They thought of themselves as a new and Northern nation that had racial affiliations with the Old World, and were quite satisfied with analogies expressing a sense of their own history and geography.

“Confederation Poets” in the latter years of the 19th century focused on the identity of location and asserted that “the self” was rooted in Canada rather than elsewhere. In addition, Confederation Poets, by using poetry, attempted to justify the validity of their newly national Canadian perspective. Sir Charles G.D. Roberts’ poetry altered the perception of wilderness. He re-wrote the trope of wilderness as a natural setting for the evolution of virtue and as a test of the civilized intellect (New, 1997). Charles G.D. Roberts struck the supreme note of Canadian Nationality in his “Ode for the Canadian Confederacy,” focusing on Canada’s environment and its northern location:

Awake, my country, the hour is great with change!
 Under this gloom which yet obscures the land,
 From ice-blue strait and stern Laurentian range
 To where giant peaks our western bounds command,
 A deep voice stirs, vibrating in men’s ears
 As if their own hearts throbbed that thunder forth,
 A sound wherein who hearkens wisely hears
 The voice of the desire of this strong North,-
 This North whose heart of fire
 Yet knows not its desire
 Clearly, but dreams, and murmurs in the dream.
 The hour of dreams is done. Lo, on the hills the gleam!

Awake, my country, the hour of dreams is done!
 Doubt not, nor dread the greatness of thy fate.
 Tho’ faint souls fear the keen, confronting sun,
 And fain would bid the morn of splendour wait;

Tho' dreamers, rapt in starry visions, cry,
 "Lo, yon thy future, yon thy faith, thy fame!"
 And stretch vain hands to stars, thy fame in nigh,
 Here in Canadian hearth, and home, and name;-
 This name which yet shall grow
 Till all the nations know
 Us for a patriot people, heart and hand
 Loyal to our native earth, -our own Canadian land!
 (Verse 1-2; Roberts, 1889)

It is clear that the Canada's northern environment supplied the note of inspiration to the emerging literary expressions in the post-Confederation period. Haliburton's emphasis on the northern character of Canada, echoed his predecessor D'Arcy McGee's earlier northern emphasis (see McGee, 1857, 1858, 1860). Thomas D'Arcy McGee, was the first to assert that Canadian nature would bring forth cultural greatness. In 1858, McGee insisted that, "We have the materials -- our position is favourable -- northern latitudes like our have been famed for the strength, variety and beauty of their literature." McGee made reference to the northern location of Canada, in his own patriotic poem, "Freedom's Journey":

Back to her native scenes she turn'd,
 Back to the hardy, kindly North,
 Where bright aloft the Pole-star burned,
 Where stood her shrine by every hearth;
 "Back to the North I will repair,"
 The Goddess cried, "my home is there."
 (verse 4, 1858: 50)

Furthermore, in his article "Who Reads a Canadian Book?," McGee (1857) stated:

Every literature would seem to begin with poetry, and no region of the New World is fitter for the habitation of the Muse, than the wide and wondrous North --

"stern and wild
 Meet muse for a poetic child."

The Northmen of the Old World have struck the harp with a skill that still rings through the heart of Time [...] And why not our North, as well as theirs. Why not, if we crave the renown of song, and seek it sincerely, why should it not come?

Reference to Canadian northern location and character was also made by Goldwin Smith, who in a letter to the Editor of the *Daily News*, on 21 March 1862, arguing for Canadian independence and desiring that Canada should be a separate Nation from the Americans, declared that “the Northern people are brave, full of power, and formidable if provoked” (Smith, G. 1863: 100). Following Haliburton’s address, the Canadian press also emphasized Canada’s northern character. *The Weekly Globe* in 1869 declared that our “bracing northern winters will preserve us from the effeminacy which naturally steals over the most vigorous races when long under the relaxing influence of tropical or even generally mild and genial skies.” In the same year the *Ottawa Times*, proclaimed that the men of the North have ever been “the scourge of God” upon the sunny South.

“I AM CANADIAN:” The Myth of The North

By examining the works of Robert Grant Haliburton, as well as the subsequent rhetoric on the north, this chapter attempted to demonstrate an early phase of the Canada First organization whose primary objective was to create a unique Canadian nationality and sense of national purpose. For Canada Firster Robert Grant Haliburton, the national project included the creation of national identity complete with its own symbols and myths. For Haliburton, and the other founders of Canada First, the greatness of Canada lay in its untamed landscape and its vigorous northern climate.

Consequently, the establishment of a national image was founded on symbols drawn from romanticized landscapes and environments distinctive to Canada. “Canadian national feeling,” Berger writes, “like the national impulse in other countries, has expressed itself in myths and legends about the past and anticipation of noble mission in the future” (1966: 5). In other words, national self-image or identity intercepted with the broader concept of cultural mythmaking, and build its identity around a body of notions about its history and status with respect to ‘Others.’ Tiffin and Wallis (1989: 34) define

cultural mythology as “the body of codes and conceptual patterns according to which all experience is ordered, described, explained and communicated within any ethnic, religious or national group.” “The myth of the North,” illustrates how the rhetoric of [English] Canadian nationalism attempted to focus on ‘the climate’ since it provided one of the few experiences common to most Canadians. Haliburton’s notion of a “Northern Race” found intellectual and scientific support in a variety of theories that were both popular and accepted at the time. In addition, the concept of the “Northern Races” quickly found expression in the artistic milieu, through literature and the arts. Therefore, as Francis eloquently explained, with repetition myths “come to form the mainstream memory of the culture, our national dreams, the master narrative which explains the culture to itself and seems to express its overriding purpose” (1997: 10).

As this chapter has illustrated, a whole series of desirable national characteristics were derived from Canada’s northern location. In addition, this chapter has demonstrated that the early Canada First “movement” and its subsequent rhetoric on the North represented a moment in time soon after the Confederation, where Canadian national feeling began to express itself in myths and legends about the past and predictions of grand future for the new Dominion. These were myths and legends that for the most part represented a move towards Canadianism, and these ‘core’ myths become crucial in Canadian consciousness as they replaced the lack of common religion, language and ethnicity. In addition, for Berger, “such myths and symbols nourish and sustain the emotional taproot of nationalism, and impart to it an intellectual content which itself has an attractive power” (1966: 5).

The images perpetuated by members of Canada First denoted not only the geographical location and climate of Canada but also, more importantly, the presumed “racial” characteristics resulting from Canada’s northern location. As this chapter has demonstrated, Canada First’s emphasis on cultural identity carried through to subsequent generations of nationalists in English Canada, as the physical and intensely landscape-

oriented definition of identity retained a pivotal place in the Anglophone Canadian worldview. Subsequently, Canada's land received attention from poets and novelists alike, and was immortalized on canvas by Canada's foremost artists. One just has to look at the emphasis on the northern location of Canada and its climate as the artistic focal point of the *Group of Seven*, "whose visual representation of the physical landscape constituted a 'national movement' in Canadian painting" (Bashevkin, 1991: 7-8; Konrad, 1986).

The rise of northern consciousness in English Canadian art, literature, and political oratory proved strong enough by 1906 to influence the first English-language Canadian national anthem, *O Canada*, which described Canada as 'the true north strong and free.' More importantly, Canada's 'northern-ness' represents a powerful myth that was related and sustained by the faith in the progress of the new Dominion. It simultaneously created borders both internal and external, geopolitical and psychological, that played an important role in the development of Canadian identity, especially but not exclusively for Anglophone's Canadian self-identification.

The following chapter will grapple with the shift in Canada First from a largely intellectual movement to a militant and aggressive organization. It will demonstrate that the new "nationalist" vision that emerged in the movement during and following the Red River Uprising (1869-70), equated "Canada First" with "English Canada First," a vision which excluded Canada's First Nations as well as Canadian Francophones. Natives and French-Canadians were discursively constructed by various Canada Firsters as obstacles to progress, not as partners in a new Canadian nationhood.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RED RIVER REBELLION AND THE SHIFTING RHETORIC OF CANADA FIRST'S NATIONALISM

The previous chapter explored the writings and speeches of Canada Firster Robert Grant Haliburton, and attempted to point to the earlier phase of the Canada First organization exclusively concerned with the preparation and presentation of articles and speeches intended to arouse nationalistic feeling. This chapter will illustrate a major shift in the movement, and point out that the group's activities were also directed to more concrete objectives, emphasizing an increasingly practical and militant aspect of Canada First. As Gagan (1970: 36) illustrated, the members of Canada First were "Quite capable of composing romanticized paeans to the visionary promises of a 'new nationality.'" However, they were "equally versed in the meaning of aggressive nationalism" (Gagan, 1970: 36)

As the members of Canada First were apprehended by the vision of the Dominion's westward expansion, and struck by the general apathy of eastern Canada toward the expansion project, they set out to publicize and popularize the Canadian West (See Denison, 1909). Furthermore, this chapter will illustrate that the new "nationalist" vision that emerged in the movement during and following the first Riel Rebellion, the Red River Uprising (1869-70), equated "Canada First" with "English Canada First," a vision which excluded Canada's First Nations and Canadian Francophones. Natives and French Canadians were discursively constructed by various Canada Firsters as obstacles to progress, not partners in a new Canadian nationhood. This is evident in the literary campaigns waged by Canada Firsters William Alexander Foster and Charles Mair.

Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to deal with the many complexities of the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70, some historical background is essential, since it involves the activities of Canada First's Charles Mair and John Christian Schultz, the leader of the "Canadian Party," who as many historians have pointed out (see Shrive, 1965; Berger, 1970; Begg, 1870; Morton, 1964) were central in the controversy leading up to the Métis rebellion. The following section will briefly outline the events that led to the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70.

The Red River Rebellion of 1869-70

With the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, English and Scottish traders moved in to the North-West territory. By the 1860s, the North-West territory was populated by approximately twelve thousand people, with one half representing the Métis population, followed by a third of English speaking "mixed bloods," and fewer than two thousand white settlers. By 1869, Red River was settled and formed a "civilized society" (Morton, 1956). Red River was not a frontier, but "an island of civilization in the wilderness" (Morton, 1956: 3); a community unique both in history and character. The Métis of Manitoba and the North-West were a "mixed-blood" population that had arisen out of early fur trade contacts between the French and Aboriginal peoples.

In July 1867, the Imperial Parliament issued the proclamation whereby Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were united in the Dominion of Canada. While Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia remained outside the federation, a considerable degree of attention was placed on the largest territorial area of British North America, an area which remained under the suzerainty of the Hudson's Bay Company. One of the first acts of the new Parliament was to provide for the transfer of the North-West Territory, formerly known as Hudson's Bay Territory, or Rupert's Land, to the Dominion of Canada. Thus, the Canadian government applied to Great Britain to

arrange the transfer of most of the Hudson's Bay Company's lands in North America to the Dominion. The acquisition of the lands in the North-West was seen as crucial for the new nation because it provided a rich source of agricultural land for development, and an incentive for British Columbia to enter the Dominion by promise of a railway link with the East. In 1869, Hon. William McDougall (1822-1905) and Sir George E. Cartier (1814-1873), Dominion Government commissioners, were successful in their negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company, and in the fall that same year, McDougall was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories and headed west to assume his duties.

The Red River Rebellion occurred in 1869 and 1870 when settlers of the Red River Valley, of what is now Manitoba, resisted steps to put the valley under Canadian government control. Métis settled in the Red River district found themselves caught in the middle of a mounting rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Company for control over the Western fur trade. The settlers farmed land to which they held no formal title. They feared that the transfer of the valley to the Canadian government would threaten their land rights and their distinctive culture. Over generations, the Métis had come to consider themselves a "new nation," or as Louis Riel (1844-85) termed it "peculiar people" with a sense of identity and claims to the land they inhabited. The Métis claimed "as their birthright the civil and political rights of British subjects" (Morton, 1969: 2). Morton further states: "Neither French nor Indian, but intermediate, they claimed to unite the civilization of their fathers' with the rights of their mothers' people in a new nationality of the North West" (1969: 3). The Métis at Red River slowly gained representation and a voice in the government of their district, known as Assiniboia. After 1836, the Métis were represented on the Council of Assiniboia which functioned as a legislature for the Red River people.

The British government, without any consultation with the inhabitants of the Red River, transferred control of the Hudson Bay Company territories to the newly formed

Canadian government. On October 1st, Louis Riel (1844-85) Louis Riel, a young man of French, Irish, and Aboriginal descent came from a prominent local family and John Bruce organized the National Métis Committee, where Riel assumed the position of Secretary and Bruce acted as President. A month later, Louis Riel led the Métis in a successful attempt to capture Fort Garry, at what is now Winnipeg. On November 23, Riel proposed the formation of a provisional government to replace the Council of Assiniboia. By December 7, the Provisional Government's own flag -- with a fleur-de-lis and a shamrock on it -- was flying from Fort Garry. The Métis declared Provisional Government in Red River on December 8th, and Riel issued the "Declaration of the People of Rupert's Land in the Northwest." Riel, who had previously only been the Secretary of the Métis movement, formally assumed the mantle of leadership on December 27th when President John Bruce resigned.

On April 8th, Fort Garry was returned to the control of the Hudson's Bay Company until a formal transfer to Canadian authorities could be arranged. As a result of the Métis resistance, the Canadian government decided not to take control of the area on the 1st of December as it had planned.

The Red River Rebellion of 1869-70 secured a temporary triumph for the Métis. Under the leadership of Louis Riel, the Métis proposed a "List of Rights," and in negotiations with Canadian government won major concessions to end the conflict. The Canadian bargaining with Riel led to the passage of the Manitoba Act, establishing French language rights, securing the admittance of a small portion of the present province of Canada with provincial status and stating that 1, 400,000 acres would be allotted to the Métis.

The Métis rebellion of 1869, especially the role of Louis Riel (1844-85) in the uprising, is encrusted with popular and historical mythology, and a variety of views regarding the roots and nature of the Red River Rebellion have been put forth by historians and scholars alike; consequently, a wide range of primary and secondary

sources are available for inspection (see, Boulton, 1886; Begg, 1870; Stanley, 1936; Morton, 1969; Howard, 1974). For the purpose of this thesis, the sources most utilized in this chapter, are those written by members of Canada First Movement and their sympathizers as they shed light on Canada First's interpretation of the events leading up to the Métis resistance, as well as clearly demonstrate the activities of the organization during the conflict (see Mair, 1873; Denison, 1873, 1909). The next section will explore Canada First's interest in the Dominion's acquisition of the North-West.

Canada First's Response to the Dominion's Acquisition of the North West

Shortly before the transfer of Rupert's Land to the Canadian government, road builders, surveyors, and officials of all kinds from the east entered the territory. In the summer of 1869, in preparation for the December 1st transfer, Ottawa sent out survey parties under Colonel John Stoughton Dennis (1820-1885) then the Deputy Minister of the Interior. In the fall of 1868, an advance party had been commissioned by Canada's first government to survey and map out an immigrant road -- a first link to connect the great East with what was then the "unknown West." During his employment at the Parliamentary Library Charles Mair prepared materials to defend the Canadian government against possible litigation on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company. Charles Mair was once again appointed by McDougall to act as a paymaster and accountant on the Fort Garry Road and sent along with J. A. Snow to the North-West. Canada First members were well aware of the significance of Mair's appointment. "At once we saw the great opportunity" recollected Denison, "of doing some good work towards helping on the acquisition of the territory" (1909: 13-14). From the beginning, Canada First's accounts of the situation in Red River suggested that the news of the transfer of the territory to Canada was "hailed with universal joy by all classes of the population," including French and English settlers, who looked upon the transfer "as the consummation of the hopes and wishes for years," and petition after petition was sent

“praying for escape from Hudson Bay servitude and for annexation to Canada” (Denison, 1873: 3).

Denison and Mair continually maintained that the Hudson’s Bay Company adopted a policy of doing everything possible to create the belief that the North West was a “barren, inhospitable, frozen region, unfit for habitation” (Denison, 1909: 12). The “luxuriant richness” of the soil in the North West was denied; “early frosts and eight months of winter were assumed to exist” (Denison, 1873: 2). Furthermore, the Firsters claimed that the general belief regarding the “uselessness” of the North-West prevented “any full information being gained as to its real capabilities [...] making people doubtful as to its value and careless as to its acquisition” (Denison, 1909: 12).

William Alexander Foster quickly arranged with George Brown (1818-1880) of the [Toronto] *Globe*, who had been strongly in favour of securing the North-West, for Mair to become the paper’s North-West correspondent. Mair was to write letters to the *Globe* at “every available opportunity,” giving a “true account of the capabilities of the territory as to the soil, products, climate, and suitability for settlement” (Denison, 1909: 14). Mair accepted the position, and became the first overt proclaimer of the principles of Canada First on this issue, shifting Canada First from the “secretive” to an open phase of the organization. In Red River, Mair was reacquainted with John Christian Schultz, a Canadian with whom he had previously corresponded. It was not long after when John Christian Schultz became the sixth member of Canada First.

John Christian Schultz and the Formation of the “Canadian Party” at Red River

The growth of support for the principles advocated by Canada First was illustrated in Red River, where the organization found a group of English Canadian settlers who vigilantly advocated the transfer of territory to Canada. Among the group of settlers was John Christian Schultz (1840-1896), who became Canada First’s first recruit,

and as various scholars have pointed out (see Shrive, 1965; Berger, 1970; Begg, 1870; Morton, 1964), played a central role in the events leading up to the Métis Uprising.

In 1869, with the gradual entry of English Canadian immigrants from Ontario to the Settlement, Schultz gained some support and it was not long after that, with a handful of Canadians, Schultz and Mair were at the centre of the newly formed nucleus of a “Canadian” party, dedicated to the annexation of the territory to Canada. The “Canadian Party,” or “loyalists” as they often described themselves, openly advocated the necessity of the transfer. The Canadian Party consisted of Anglo-Saxon newcomers, many of them Orangemen from the province of Ontario,²² and although the group was small in number, its members were well connected.

John Christian Schultz (1840-1896) was a physician in the Red River who was also engaged in the fur trade (he was later to become Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba). Born in Amherstburg in Upper Canada, Schultz studied medicine at Queen’s College in Kingston and afterwards at the Medical Department of Victoria College in Toronto. Schultz arrived in the Red River Settlement in 1859, with his half-brother Henry McKinney. Within a year, Schultz abandoned his medical practice and established a lucrative fur trade and a thriving general store.

Charles Mair entered into correspondence with Schultz long before arriving in the Red River Settlement. Mair referred to Schultz as a prominent member in opposition to Riel who dared to stand up for Canada and Canada’s cause and who, throughout the rebellion, remained true and loyal to his country (1873: 12). G.T. Denison (1909: 15-18) described Schultz as a “loyal and patriotic Canadian,” an “able man of great courage and strength of character as well as sound judgment,” and added that “Mair soon became

22 The Orange Order Grand Lodge (OOGL), a movement that grew from the Tory Irish Celtic Protestant immigration from Britain, was pivotal in the defence of Britannic Canada from ‘contamination’ from foreign influence. Born of conflicts in the Irish countryside, the Order gained immense popularity in Canada that peaked during the Macdonald reign but was still influential into the 1950s.

attached to Schultz. They were about the same age and possessed in common a keen love for the land of their birth." Mair had corresponded with the Firsters in Ontario, speaking highly of Schultz and advising that he should be enrolled in the Canada First organization. At this point Canada First was "quietly making recruits, considering very carefully each name suggested" (Denison, 1909: 15). In March 1869, while passing through Toronto, Schultz visited G.T. Denison, who in turn introduced him to W.A. Foster and R.G. Haliburton, and he officially became Canada First's first recruit. In a letter to Mair, Denison wrote the following regarding Schultz, "When I meet a damn good 'Kanuck' like him [...] I would like to see more of him -- for that is the side I am on" (MP, Denison to Mair, 29 March 1869).

Historical sketches of Schultz, however, are less favourable. Joseph Kinsey Howard (1974: 88) described Schultz as "ruthless and bigoted." Gagan described Schultz as "self-seeking, vindictive, arrogant, Canadian, Protestant, racist," who "was the very epitome of a civilization which Westerners, particularly the Métis, were economically unprepared, and spiritually unwilling to accept" (1964: 12). Schultz, according to Morton (1969: 22), "had become the focus of all the dislike and distrust of Canadians and things Canadian in Red River." His activities confirmed a growing suspicion amongst the Roman Catholic clergy and the Métis that "English, Protestant, Orange Ontario, not the Dominion of Canada, was to annex the North-West" (Morton, 1969: 23). Prime Minister John A. Macdonald (1815-1891) stated in a private letter to John Rose, that the French greatly dislike "Schultz and that small section who published the *Nor'Wester* and are opposed to the Company [...]. It appears that the half-breeds have been soured by all kinds of stories as to the intention of Canada to deprive them of their land and to govern them without any reference to the residents" (1869: 106). He further added, "I fear that the people McDougall sent up there -- Snow and Mair and Stoughton Dennis have not helped at all to smooth matters [...] I am afraid that Snow and Dennis fraternized too much with that fellow [Schultz]" (1869: 106). Alexander Begg's unsympathetic

portrayal of Schultz and his Canadian Party in his *Red River Journal* (1870) earned him the label of “a Canadian traitor” (McVicar, 1873: 12). Alexander Begg (1840-1897), author and the pioneer of Canadian trade in Manitoba and the North-West Territories, entered into partnership with A.G.B. Bannatyne, a fur trader in Winnipeg and brother-in-law to Governor McTavish (of Assiniboia). During the Rebellion, Begg took a prominent stand on behalf of the settlers in Red River and aided the Métis to obtain representative government. In addition, Begg, who was known around the settlement as an “Anti-Canadian Party” free trader further antagonized the Firsters by using the alias “Justitia” to correspond with the [Toronto] *Globe*, giving the Hudson’s Bay Company’s view of the affairs in Red River. McVicar, who was an open advocator of the Canadian Party, stated in correspondence with Canada First that Begg was “sadly degenerate,” and led by “a clique of traitors” had certainly lost all the loyalty characteristic to all true Canadians (1873: 12).

In order to understand Schultz’s unpopularity in the settlement, a brief summary of the affairs developing in Red River prior to Mair’s arrival is necessary. In the autumn of 1868 the Red River settlement was already a divided community, divided among those inhabitants who favoured the transfer of the North-West from the government of the Hudson’s Bay Company to that of the Dominion of Canada, and those who opposed it. On the one side were the Métis, led by Louis Riel, the Roman Catholic clergy, the officials of the Hudson’s Bay Company, and a small number of American settlers who favoured annexation to the United States. By 1868, the Métis accounted for about one-half of the population of Red River, and they foresaw the endangering of their cultural and political rights by the impending transfer of the North-West. Since there had been no attempt on the part of the Imperial or Dominion government’s or Hudson’s Bay company to inform the Métis of their place in the new province, anxiety arose following strong indications that the terms and conditions by which the transfer was to be effected would seriously affect the Métis as a corporate entity. Furthermore, the Métis questioned

the right of the Canadian government to survey the land before the transfer was completed. They challenged the authority of the Canadian government to conduct any survey in the North-West, particularly of the block of land between the Assiniboia and the border, which they regarded as belonging by custom to their nation (Morton, 1969: 46-47). To prevent McDougall from entering the Settlement, the Métis erected barriers across the roads to Fort Garry, challenging the right of the Canadian government to send officials before the transfer was complete.

The Roman Catholic clergy in the Red River worked valiantly towards extending the formation of French culture in the West. The Métis were seen by the clergy as a potential cornerstone of faith and French culture in the new North West, and the clergy feared that immigration from Ontario “would disrupt the work of missionaries and expose their hitherto sheltered charges to the pressures and temptations of a secular, commercial and callous Anglo-Saxon civilization” (Morton, 1969: 5). The Hudson’s Bay officials opposed the transfer as it would create competition in the fur trade, ending their long-standing trade monopoly and secure supremacy in the North West. The last group, a small number of American settlers, who, in general, did not engage in the fur-trade but were saloon keepers in the settlement, were non-committal yet sympathetic towards the Métis, perhaps with the hope that Métis resistance to the transfer would end in the territory’s annexation to the United States (Shrive, 1965; Morton, 1969).

Free traders of Red River and English speaking settlers of both white and mixed descent were divided on the issue of transfer. The few Canadians at Fort Garry who composed the “Canadian Party” were enthusiastic over the transfer of the territory to the Dominion, and Schultz, as Major Boulton (1841-1899) recollected, undoubtedly represented this feeling at the time and was most popular among the Canadians (1886: 6-7). Schultz was the most outspoken of the Canadian free traders, who not only approved of the transfer but openly and publicly advocated it. In 1865 he acquired control of the *Nor’Wester*, the only newspaper in the settlement before 1870, and used it as an anti

Hudson Bay's Company organ. As Alexander Begg recollected, "Our community has been cursed instead of blessed through the medium of the press" (1870; in Morton, 1956: 158). In the hands of Schultz and his partner W.R. Brown, Begg continued, the *Nor'Wester* was "one-sided" and "unpopular" among the settlers, and

it has endeavored to mislead the minds of the people abroad regarding the true state of affairs in the settlement -- it has maligned the Hudson Bay Coy [sic] by asserting statements of tyrannous actions on their part--actions that never took place except in the brain of the editor -- it has uttered the falsehood that the people of Red River have been groaning under the yoke of oppression when in fact we have been all along blessed with the greatest of freedom (1870; in Morton, 1956: 159).

The *Nor'Wester*, increasingly argued for the necessity of ending the Hudson's Bay Company's rule and for opening the North-West to settlement. In 1864, Schultz was one of the main organizers of a local branch of the Free Masons and soon became Worshipful Master. The Métis and the Roman Catholic clergy disliked his Masonic Protestantism and feared his bold expansionist policies. He further antagonized the clergy in the Red River by marrying a Miss Farquharson and preventing her intended conversion to Roman Catholicism.

When the group of Canadian Surveyors, led by Snow and Mair reached Red River, both Snow and Mair stayed with Schultz. The Canadian group of Surveyors employed some of the Métis and other settlers, but their wages, [fifteen dollars a month] were paid not in money but in provisions that could be obtained only from Schultz, who owned a store. The prices of the provisions increased and resentment over the prices and the method of payment grew among the Métis. Snow drove his men hard and the road building crew finally rebelled against him over wages and working conditions, resulting in a short strike.

The “Canadian Party” and its Involvement in the Rebellion

As the previous section illustrated, Charles Mair and John Christian Schultz formed the nucleus of the “Canadian Party,” whose main policy was the annexation of Rupert’s Land to Canada. In the fall of 1869, on his second journey coming to Fort Garry, after marrying Eliza Mackenney, a niece of Dr. Schultz, Mair returned to find that the settlement was ‘in possession of the rebels’ (Mair, 1925a: xxxviii). The Métis captured Fort Garry and established a provisional government. The seizure of Fort Garry by the Métis, was meant to bring about a political union of the various groups in the settlement to negotiate the terms on which the transfer would be completed with McDougall or with other representatives of the Canadian government. After the seizure of Fort Garry the ‘loyal’ Canadians of the settlement were placed under surveillance. About fifty of these assembled in Schultz’s house and there they were besieged by several hundred of Riel’s followers. Mair recollected:

In a very short time the rebellion took aggressive shape, and seventy loyal Canadians, determined to make a stand, collected in Dr. Schultz’s home. We were surrounded by Riel and his men, and provisions giving out were forced to surrender. We were then imprisoned in Fort Garry (1925a: xxxviii).

Alexander Begg’s *Red River journals* describe in detail the role Schultz’s and Mair’s Canadian Party played in agitating the conflict:

The guard around the house of Dr. Schultz and at the avenues to the Town were [sic] larger than yesterday and an attack by the French on Dr. Schultz’s house was feared. Mr. Bannatyne, John Burke & Baptiste Morin went down to see Mr. Riel whether anything could be done to prevent bloodshed-but nothing further than the Schultz party laying down their arms and dispersing would be satisfactory. A party of gentlemen...met in the office of Bannatyne & Begg and determined on going to Schultz and telling him how he was endangering the whole settlement by the course he was pursuing and to ask him to withdraw his men (7 December 1869; in Morton, 1956).

Mair and Schultz opposed the formation of the Provisional Government of Riel and both were captured in the siege of Schultz's house, imprisoned in Fort Garry, and sentenced to be executed.²³ Mair spent several months in prison, and along with other Canadian prisoners decided to escape. Schultz and Mair escaped from prison at about the same time. Schultz escaped Fort Garry on 23 January 1870; however, his plot to escape had previously circulated amongst settlers. As Begg (1870; in Morton, 1956: 256) noted in his journal, "a plot was discovered that the other day [January 8th] between Dr. & Mrs. Schultz to aid it is supposed in the release of Schultz [sic]." The same day the news of escape of five other prisoners, amongst others Mair was delivered. It was also assumed that Mair with the others headed to Portage la Prairie and Riel's men were after them. With Mair in Portage la Prairie, Schultz went to the Lower Red River where he began to organize an armed force to attack Fort Garry and release the Canadians who were still imprisoned. On 10 February a report came into Red River that among 50 and 200 men were on the way from the Portage to attack Fort Garry and release the prisoners (Begg, 1870; in Morton, 1956: 303). Schultz mobilized about six hundred Orangemen and Masons, and Mair, under the command of Major Charles Boulton, had about sixty. On 12 February, Riel freed the other prisoners on the condition that they not interfere with the politics of the Settlement. Schultz's "Canadian Party," along with Major Boulton and Thomas Scott (1842-70), an Ontario Orangeman, continued its march on Fort Garry, and on 18 February while passing near the Fort, were arrested by Riel's men. After Scott's second arrest, under pressure from advisors, Riel set up a court martial which sentenced Scott to death for "insubordination" in captivity. Scott was shot on March 4th, 1870. A few days after the execution of Thomas Scott, the provisional government released most of their remaining prisoners in exchange for a promise that the

23 In an interview with the editor of the *Toronto Star Weekly*, Mair stated that Riel called him out of his cell one night to tell him that he was to be shot. "He would assuredly have shot both Dr. Schultz and myself had we not escaped" (Mair, 1925a: lix).

rights of the Red River settlers would be protected. The following section will consider the significance of Scott's execution by considering the activities of the Firsters in Ontario.

Canada First: Ontario's Response to the Red River Insurrection

The militant impulses of Canada First found their practical expression in the response to the Red River uprising. While Mair was in Fort Garry mobilizing "loyal" Canadians,²⁴ Firsters in Ontario were waging their own literary and "action oriented" campaigns. In addition, as this section will illustrate, with the help of Schultz who returned to Ontario after his escape, the Firsters embarked on a crusade throughout Ontario that received the backing of the Orange Lodge.

During the Red River Rebellion, the membership of Canada First increased to approximately thirty, and it acquired a more formal but still quite secretive organization. Among the recruits were William Canniff (1830-1910), medical doctor and writer, George Kingsmill, the editor of the *Toronto Daily Telegraph*, Joseph McDougall, J.E. Edgar, a young lawyer (later the Dominion plenipotentiary to British Columbia), and Hugh Scott [the brother of Thomas Scott]. When the news of imprisonment of "loyal" Canadians reached Ontario, the Canada First group was keenly aroused especially, as Denison (1909: 19) recollected, by the imprisonment and dangerous position of Mair and Schultz. Disillusioned by the general apathy and indifference of the public, the Firsters used the news of Schultz and Mair's escape and their return to Ontario, to excite the interest of Canadian public. Denison further stated:

Up to this time it had been difficult to excite any interest in Ontario in the fact that a number of Canadians had been thrown into prison. Foster and I, who had been consulting almost daily, were much depressed at the apathy of the public, but when we heard that Schultz and Mair, as well as Dr. Lynch, were on the way to Ontario [...] it was seen at once that there

²⁴ Ontario men were referred by Firsters as "loyal" and "respectable."

was an opportunity...to draw attention to the matter...and foment a public opinion that would force the Government to send up an armed expedition to restore order (1909: 22).

Furthermore, when the news of the execution of Thomas Scott reached Ontario late in March 1870, Firsters hailed him as a martyr. Following the execution of Scott, the Firsters who were jocularly called among themselves “The Twelve Apostles” (for the Canada First organization was quite secret so far as the public was concerned) led the agitation in Ontario against the Métis, where they were able to “galvanize public opinion into a bloodthirsty demand for revenge through a series of public meetings, demonstrations and fanatical newspaper articles” (Gagan, 1970: 38).

George Kingsmill was a close friend of both Denison and Foster. Foster had known Kingsmill in a journalistic capacity for some time, and on occasion had contributed articles to the *Telegraph*. When George Kingsmill joined the growing Canada First Organization, the *Telegraph* became a vehicle for the opinions of the Firsters (Gagan, 1964: 43). Foster soon began a series of articles which were published by Kingsmill as editorials and he was successful in generating attention from the readers. It was thus Foster who denounced in the *Toronto Daily Telegraph* (4 April 1870) Scott’s “cold-blooded murder,” and Sir John A. Macdonald for treating with the “emissaries of murderers.” Furthermore, Foster denounced the “monster” that had committed the “horrible butchery” and urged Canadians never to forget Scott’s words:

They are the last words of the one who nobly died, a martyr for his devotion to our flag and our country; the last utterance of a man who faced death rather than turn traitor [...] Young Scott’s only crime appears to have been his loyalty to his country (*Daily Telegraph* [Toronto] 4 April 1870).

R.G. Haliburton did his part in evoking public support by writing “A Voice from a Prairie Grave” a powerful poem on the death of Thomas Scott:

‘Twas an old, old, tale! For the peoples’
good

'Tis meet that he should die,
 And they led him forth to a lonely spot
 Under a wintry sky;
 To a lone, lone spot, through the trackless snow,
 No help, no pity near;
 The very messenger of peace
 A minister of fears
 But God is just, and heaven is nigh.
 And the cry of the slain
 That haunted Cain,
 Will rise to a God on high.
 (Verse 1; cited in Denison, 1901: 127)

On April 2nd Denison and Foster, along with new recruits, held a secret meeting to decide on a public demonstration. The arrival of Mair and Schultz at Toronto would ensure that a large number of sympathizers would be present at the demonstration. S.B. Harman, the mayor of Toronto, was asked by Canada First members to give the proposed meeting his official blessing, and by April 5th a proclamation signed by thirty-three prominent citizens of Toronto appeared in the *Globe* (5 April 1870) calling a meeting to be held the following day “for the purpose of expressing popular indignation at the murder of Scott.” Foster’s articles in the *Telegraph* were influential, and a crowd of “about one thousand” met Schultz along with other North-West “refugees” at the train station. The meeting was supposed to take place in the St. Lawrence Hall, but Denison (1909: 15-26) noted that when the party arrived, they found the hall crowded and nearly ten thousand people outside. Denison’s estimate was perhaps exaggerated, and a more conservative estimate of more than five thousand people was claimed in the *Globe* (6 April 1870) adding that the Hall “was packed from roof to ceiling.” The meeting was therefore adjourned to the Market Square, the space in front of the City Hall. The meeting resulted in a resolution advocating the adoption of decisive measures to suppress Riel’s insurrection and provide protection to the “loyal” subjects in the North West. In addition, a declaration moved by Capt. James Bennett and seconded by Denison stated,

This meeting expresses the strongest indignation at the cold-blooded murder of poor Scott, and sympathizes deeply with his relatives and friends, and considers that it would be a gross injustice to the loyal inhabitants of Red River, humiliating to our national honour, and contrary to all British traditions for our Government to receive, negotiate, or treat with the emissaries of those who have robbed, imprisoned, and murdered loyal Canadians, whose only fault was zeal for British institutions, whose only crime was devotion to the old flag (Denison, 1909: 26).²⁵

Following the meeting in Toronto, Foster and Denison decided that their group should go to Ottawa to state the group's views before the Canadian government. Their trip coincided with the arrival of Abbé Ritchot, the Roman Catholic curé of St. Norbert, and Alfred Scott, Riel's representative, and Denison's plan was to stop their negotiations with Sir John A. Macdonald. With Foster staying in Toronto, Denison, Schultz, Mair, Lynch, a "Canadian Party" supporter from Red River, and others headed to Ottawa. Upon their arrival they prepared a petition to the Governor-General, Sir John Young (1807-1876), protesting any moves to negotiate with Riel's representatives, and suggesting that "the rebels" be arrested as murderers upon their arrival in Ottawa. Denison went to see Sir John A. Macdonald, who was already well acquainted with him. "To my astonishment he [John A. Macdonald] said he would have to receive them [Ritchot and Scott]," wrote Denison, and added that "I urged him vehemently not to do so, to send someone to meet them and to advise them to return" (1909: 28).

Back in Toronto, Foster and a recent Canada First recruit Hugh Scott managed to secure a warrant from a Toronto magistrate for the arrest of Ritchot and Alfred Scott on a charge of murder. Foster and Hugh Scott were old friends who in the past worked together to help to establish the *Monetary Times*. The warrant was forwarded to Denison in Ottawa, and when Father Ritchot and Alfred Scott arrived on April 11, they were incarcerated (Gagan, 1964: 47). Ritchot and A. Scott were imprisoned for twelve days and were released because the warrant was ruled invalid outside Toronto.

25 A complete account of the meeting and resolutions appeared in the *Globe*, April 7, 1870.

The Apostles managed to sustain Ontario's desire for revenge for three months following Scott's execution. In an obvious appeal to public sympathy, Schultz set out to raise enough money to erect a statue of Thomas Scott on the place where he was killed. Foster continued using his editorials in the *Telegraph* to keep up the agitation. One editorial exclaimed, "The Messengers of the Murderer -- Are They To Be Received?" (*Daily Telegraph*, 8 April 1870) The Orange Lodges of British Loyalists in Ontario sprung into aggressive action demanding no negotiations with the Métis, calling them "half-breed murderers," "rebels" and "traitors." With Schultz at the forefront, Orange rallies were arranged at Ottawa, Kingston, Windsor and London. In Toronto, on July 12, 1870, at a parade attended by nearly four thousand Orangemen, Firsters' placards ("Shall French Rebels Rule Our Dominion?," "Men of Ontario, Shall Scott's Blood Cry in Vain for Vengeance?") and other slogans aimed at evoking Ontario's public sympathies were seen on the streets of Toronto, hundreds "from every fence in the city" (Gagan, 1964: 49-50). Schultz, at the end of each rally, closed his crusade by exhibiting the rope that bound Scott's hands when he was shot. The following week Denison organized a successful demonstration in Toronto against Sir George Cartier, and Archbishop Taché and went as far as to threaten civil insurrection if Macdonald pardoned Riel and abandoned the West to the Métis (Gagan, 1970: 38).

Canada Firsters, along with a number of their sympathizers, met on 3 August 1870 to organize the North-West Emigration Aid Society.²⁶ The society was formed to encourage English-speaking, Protestant emigrants to settle the West and, as Berger illustrated, "to provide a channel through which propaganda was conveyed to the public" (1970: 59).

The Firsters' activities in Toronto were instrumental in providing the political justification for an expeditionary force in Red River. Canada Firsters' writings and

26 The complete account of their meeting appeared in [Toronto] *Globe*, 4 August 1870.

speeches, along with the Orangemen of Ontario, so galvanized the Canadian public that the government was compelled to dispatch the military expedition under Colonel Joseph Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913) that recaptured Fort Garry and ended the rebellion (Cogswell, 1980- 89?).

We must now further explore the activities of Charles Mair by focusing on his writings during the Red River Rebellion. As in all prior publications by Canada First members, Charles Mair maintained his emphasis on evoking national sentiment, and used his writing as a means to accomplish this goal.

Populating the North-West; Charles Mair's literary propaganda and his vision of the North-West

This section will explore the writings of Charles Mair during the Métis Uprising, and point to Canada First's increasingly aggressive literary campaigns designed to delineate a new nationalist vision, a vision in which Natives and French Canadians were discursively constructed as obstacles to progress, not as partners in a new Canadian nationhood.

For a long time in Canadian historic memory, the North-West territory was considered *terra incognita*. The movement toward the settlement of the North West, however, substantially increased the literary and popular focus on Red River and its inhabitants, especially the Métis. Although narratives of the North West existed prior to Mair's accounts, it is not too far fetched to suggest that it was Mair who "poetically" popularized the North West and left the people of Ontario with a romantic and idealistic vision of the territory.

From the outset, Mair's correspondence to the [Toronto] *Globe* included lengthy personal accounts of the situation in Red River that clearly contained appeals to the anti-French Canadian and anti-Roman Catholic prejudices of the audiences. In many ways, Mair's letters to the *Globe* served as a form of 'recruitment literature,' initiated to

encourage Anglophone, Protestant emigration to the North-West (Shrive, 1965). To Mair, and the rest of Firsters, however, letters to the *Globe* were seen as acts of patriotism, designed to encourage support for the government's attempt to annex the territory. According to Denison (1909: 14), the letters were "filled with the Canadian national spirit, and had a great effect in awakening the minds of the people to importance of the acquisition of the country." Denison added that Mair "pictured the country in glowing terms, and practically preached that a Crusade of Ontario men should move out and open up and cultivate its magnificent prairies," and boasted that Mair's letters attracted a great deal of attention, and were copied very extensively in various newspapers in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces (1909: 14). Even the *Globe* on 28 May 1869 noted, "The very clever and interesting letter of our correspondent [Mair] in the North-West is animated by a spirit of Canadian patriotism worthy of animation."

Mair's literary depiction of the North West began with a private letter to his brother Holmes Mair, who lived in Perth, Ontario. Although clearly not intended for publication, Mair's letter was submitted by Holmes Mair to the *Perth Courier*, and was soon copied by the *Toronto Globe* [on 4 January 1869], the *Montreal Gazette* and other Canadian newspapers. In the letter, Mair described his impressions of the settlement. "So far as I have yet seen, the country is *great*- inexhaustible-inconceivably rich [...] The climate is delightful," wrote Mair. His comments on the settlement, however, were written with amusement and condescension, attempting to ridicule its inhabitants. Mair moved from his hotel to Dr. Schultz's house, he wrote, to escape "from the racket of motley crowd of half-breeds, playing billiards and drinking." While poetically depicting the potential of the "new West, Mair also tended to indulge in his Eastern prejudices:

Many wealthy people are married to half-breed women, who having no coat of arms but a "totem" to look back to, make up for the deficiency by biting at the backs of their "white" sisters. The white sisters fall back upon their whiteness, whilst the husbands meet each other with desperate courtesies and hospitalities, with a view to filthy lucre in the back-ground

Mair's impression of the Métis, as self-indulgent and lazy was further exemplified in the following comment, "the half-breeds are the only people here who are starving. Five thousands of them have to be fed this winter, and it is their own fault, they won't farm." When copies of the *Globe*, containing Mair's letter reached Red River, the community was outraged. The letter further increased the unpopularity of the English Canadians in Red River. In addition, the letter resulted in Mrs. A. G. B. Bannatyne,²⁷ the wife of a prominent citizen of Red River, publicly horsewhipping Mair. Referring to the letter in question, Begg noted that Mair, "who after having received the hospitalities of many families in the settlement saw fit to ridicule in public print those who had entertained him to speak and write disparagingly of the settlers as a body and the ladies in particular" (1870; in Morton, 1956: 156-157). Begg later used the "letter incident" in his satirical portrayal of Mair in *Dot-it-Down; A story of life in the North West* (1871).

A reply signed "L.R." [most certainly Louis Riel]²⁸ to Mair's letter from a correspondent of *Le Nouveau Monde*, on February 25, 1869, attempted to protest against the "falsehoods" written by Mair. The letter received from Red River by "a half-breed who is rightly indignant at the stupidities which a certain Mr. Mair has just published," stated that "it is my duty to protest against the impression elsewhere that there was no need for relief in Red River. L.R wrote:

The country, he [Mair] adds, is of an inconceivable richness: those who wish to farm are all rich; only the half-breeds are in distress [...] I am a half-breed myself and I say that there is nothing false than those words. I know almost all the names of those who received help this winter, and I can assure you that they were of all colours. There are some half-breeds who do not ask for charity, as there are some English, some Germans and some Scots, who receive it every week (in Morton, 1956: 399).

27 Mrs. Bannatyne was the wife of A.G.B. Bannatyne, brother-in-law to Governor McTavish of Assiniboia.

28 See Morton's, *Begg's Journal*, 1956:399.

Furthermore:

Be it said in passing, Mr. Mair, if we had only you as a specimen of civilized men, we should not have a very high idea of them. If I wished to amuse myself by wielding the pen as you do for the sole pleasure of uttering follies to the world, I should have some amusing things to say on your account (in Morton, 1956: 399).

Clearly, while Mair's letters to the *Globe* were remarkable for their influence in attracting attention to the North West, they also contributed to the increasing tension between Canadian settlers and the Métis at Red River. Furthermore, in the correspondence to the *Globe*, as well as the articles published in *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, Mair described the physical conditions and climate of the North West, in ways akin to a recruitment pamphlet. Portage la Prairie was not just a settlement. For Mair it was really a portal, through which will flow "the unspeakable blessings of free government and civilization." "Do we faint at the portals of a realm so vast, or does the possession of so much material grandeur lift our minds to the plane of more strenuous efforts and higher duties than have enriched our past?" asked Mair (1875b: 160).

Mair, like his counterparts in the movement, did not directly appeal to the French Canadian interests or concerns in his publications. In Canada First's literature, Haliburton's speech on the Northern Races was the only direct attempt to integrate French Canadians into his vision of "new nationality." In Mair's accounts, however, the information regarding the 'greatness' of the new land in the form of 'immigration literature' (Shrive, 1965) emphasized the comfort a settler would experience once he left Ontario:

An atmosphere of crystal, a climate suited above all others to develop the broad shoulder, the tense muscle, and the clear brain, and which will built up the most herculean and robust nation upon earth (1875b: 164)

Furthermore:

the average Canadian is satisfied with the winter of the North-West and not only tolerant of it, but delighted with it. As regards the animal economy of our race, it is enough to know that its is suitable to it, and temperate enough to conserve the highest physical development of the European, be he Teuton or Celt”(Mair, 1875a: 6-7).

While promoting the settlement of the North-West, Mair’s rhetoric in this passage, echoed the words of his fellow Firster Haliburton. The Northern character of Canadians was again emphasized, however this time attributed exclusively to the Teuton and the Celt. In the later article written for the *Canadian Monthly & National Review*, Mair took the theme of the northern races of Canada further, this time making it clear that the “French races” were deficient in physical and mental characteristics, and were thus excluded from the “virtuous” characteristics of the Northern Races:

it must be remembered [...] that, with many social and domestic virtues, the French husbandman is averse to grappling with the stern conditions of success in a new country. It is not he who will subdue the ‘silent spaces of the West’, but the Celt or Teuton who speaks our language, and the ‘many-tongued’ peoples of Northern Europe”(Mair, 1875b: 160).

Thus, for Mair the settlement of Northwest was to be done exclusively by Canadians, a narrow definition including only Anglo-Saxon Ontarians:

Canadians must project into the fertile immensity of the west [...] It is not they only, but they first, who should carry to Saskatchewan and the Athabasca our language and our laws, establish our Provinces and lay the groundwork of that national feeling without which we can never become eminent as a nation (1875b: 164).

Mair’s efforts paid off, and the *Globe* on June 11, commenting on Mair’s letters, exclaimed: “We hope to see [...] a new Upper Canada in the North-West Territory -- a new Upper Canada in its well-regulated society and government -- in its education, morality and religion.”

Quebec for Mair was characterized by a great measure of mediaeval inertia and trammelled enterprise. "To build up a great nation," Mair wrote, "minor nationalities are no doubt called upon to make heavy sacrifices" (1875b: 161). On the one hand, Mair claimed that French Canadians ought to be respected and "no Canadian of tolerant spirit dreams of interfering with the Lower Canadian's rights and privileges, his language or his laws, as limited and established by the Treaty of Quebec" (Mair, 1875b: 160). On the other hand, in Mair's journal notes and other writings regarding the Red River Rebellion he argued that the differences of character between the English and the French are most marked, and conveniently contrasted, in Red River. Mair, while describing the population of the Red River Settlement, noted that "the distinct character of race has remained unchanged" (1873: 3). For Mair, these differences were marked in the following ways: "The instinct of the English speaking native," Mair (1873: 3) argued, led him to the farm and the instinct of the French-speaking native "urged him to the chase." Furthermore,

The reciprocal effect of character upon the savages with whom they intermingled, exhibits a difference in mental constitution, not owing to external circumstances or altered modes of life, but radical and innate (Mair, 1873: 3).

"In general," Mair wrote, "the Frenchman married the Indian and sank to the level of her tastes and inclination." On the other hand, the Englishman who married the Indian "raised her to the level of his own" (1873: 3). It was this divergence of character and impulse, Mair argued, that planted the "British colonist all over the earth, and which with all his refinement, all his science, all his philosophy, confines the Frenchman to the continent of Europe" (1873: 3).

The rest of the Firsters shared Mair's sentiments regarding the call to Canadians. At a meeting of the North-West Emigration Aid Society John Schultz and J.D. Edgar made their views regarding the immigration of North-West very clear. Schultz proposed

that if Ontario did not do something about the immigration issue “somebody else” would. J.D. Edgar added that it was the duty of Ontarians to see “that the land is peopled and settled by a population liberal and intelligent, and in sympathy with her own language and traditions” (*Toronto Globe*, 4 August 1870). It was further claimed that the political and cultural sympathies of “another element” would be “a bar to progress, and to extension of a great Anglo-Saxon Dominion across the continent. [and] This attempt could be counter-acted only by the people of Ontario” (*Toronto Globe*, 4 August 1870).

As this section argued, Mair’s accounts of the North-West clearly established a dichotomy between Canada’s two cultural groups, the English and the French, reviving the older racial and religious prejudices of pre-Confederation Canada West. In addition, as the next section will illustrate, the vision of the “new nationality” which emerged from Canada First’s accounts of the North-West was consistent with popular representations of Canada’s First Nations and the Métis as “Others” and as obstacles to progress of the Anglo Saxon Dominion.

Constructing the Other: The Accounts of the North-West and the View of the Métis

“With a simple ignorant people it was but a short step from mere excitement to open rebellion,” so wrote Mair (1925a: xxxv) in his memoirs and reminiscences. In “Insurrection in Red River,” a letter written to the *Toronto Globe*, Mair argued that the Métis were “subject to some of the galling influences, though in their case the grievances were more theoretical than practical, grew wildly turbulent and disorderly, and the presence of troops became necessary to repress them” (Mair, 1873: 4). The English, on the other hand, “with instinctive addiction to constitutional methods, petitioned England and Canada for relief, and by calmness, yet firmness, did most to reduce a government by force to a series of expedients”(Mair, 1873: 4).

The interest in the Métis can be illustrated by the growing number of editorials, and articles written for the Canadian audiences before and after the occurrences in Red

River. The Métis were referred to as “half-breeds” or *Bois Brulés*, and more often than not, subjected to ethnocentric and patronizing representations by English Canadians. An anonymous article published in the *Canadian Monthly & National Review* in 1872 was entitled “The Half-Breeds of Red River, Their Habits and Customs” illustrated the rise in the curiosity of both the North-West and its inhabitants. What is more important, the article illustrated a deliberate attempt at the construction of the Métis as Other, consistent with the earlier attempts by Charles Mair. Concerning the literary representation of the Métis, the tendency towards classification of various kinds of “half-breeds” prevailed in most accounts describing the North-West. Early scholarly and literary classification of “mixed-blood” Natives, tended to split the peoples into “two large classes”. English, as most articles generalized took “more after the white,” and the French who descended “more to the Indian level,” illustrated by the “fact” that “he” cares less about cultivating the soil, eats coarser and plainer foods, and has a great “fondness for buffalo and gypsy life”(Anonymous, 1872: 304). “The Half-Breeds of Red River” described the Métis, as “the illegitimate progeny, chiefly, of the Indian traders and others in the service of the North-West Company, by Indian women” (1872: 303). The article goes on to say that the “half-breeds,” particularly the French are an “intemperate race” and are “given to gambling and horse racing ... and drink a great deal They can frequently be seen coming out of Hudson Bay’s Company’s store with small bottles filled with rum, which they proceed to empty before leaving the yard” (305). Furthermore, under the influence of liquor, their “Indian passions appear for the time to predominate” (305). In Canada First accounts, the Métis were more often than not constructed as “excessive drinkers.” McVicar, Canada First’s “loyal Canadian,” a member of Schultz’s Canadian Party at Red River, described Riel as “cut throat [...] Bloated and disfigured by excessive drinking” (McVicar, in Denison, 1973). Furthermore, the Ottawa Times on 8 April 1870, described the “half savage rebels” as “gorging to sickness, and drinking to madness.”

New “Canadian” Nationality

“Canada First never for a moment recognized the existence of French nationality, or assumed that taking possession of the Northwest might be an act of partnership,” wrote historian W. L. Morton (1964: 237). As this chapter has demonstrated, the action of Canada Firsters during the Red River Rebellion, illustrates a major shift in the Canada First organization. The shift from the intellectual to the practical aspect of the organization realized Denison and Haliburton’s romantic notion that national sentiment properly ought to be the product of a “violent struggle for political existence” (see Denison, 1909: 52-3; Haliburton, 1869: 1).

In addition, the combined action of the Firsters in Ontario following Thomas Scott’s execution demonstrated in the minds of the Firsters that united action was more rewarding than individual activity. The Canada First movement and its adherents among Canada’s English speaking elites managed to force Francophone Quebec into a defensive position. The Movement’s support for John Christian Schultz and his “Canadian Party” in Red River divided the settlement and provoked some of the violence of the Red River Rebellion. Mair’s correspondence with the Canadian press relentlessly advocated British-only immigration, and was deeply offensive to Canadians of both French and American origin. Canada First historian Gagan (1964: 55), commenting on the activities of the Firsters during and following the Red River Rebellion argues that “from an inauspicious beginning, the group had become a well-oiled machine, capable of influencing public opinion, and of marshalling popular sentiment in directions favourable to the interests of the young nation.”

While this chapter explored the practical aspect of Canada First’s nationalism, it also pointed out to the shifting rhetoric of Canada First’s notion of “new nationality.” Gagan clearly illustrates this point:

Gone from the Canada First catechism was any pretence of reconciliation between Canada's two founding cultures. French Canadians, whose 'Norman' ancestry previously had been adequate proof of their inherent racial superiority, now became a national liability in the eyes of the Apostles (1970: 38).

Thus, Canada First's activities in 1869-70 represent a time in the short life-span of the movement in which Canada First managed to gain momentum and to grow in size to form a militant organization with concrete objectives and goals. The following chapter will consider the role of Canada First in the discursive construction of national identities. In addition, in the next chapter an analysis will be made with respect to the Self/Other relations inherent in the rhetoric of Canada First members.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUSTAINING THE BORDER BETWEEN THE 'SELF' AND THE 'OTHER'

Canada First: Pan-Canadian Nationalism as English Exclusivism

The Canada First Movement, composed of a few members of Canadian intellectual and social elites, was not a fully cohesive movement. Individual members of Canada First, had not only different visions of a "new nationality," but also, more importantly, different objectives and tactics for achieving their visions. George T. Denison was the only Firster who openly and actively supported the Imperial Federation; the other four neither endorsed a United Empire, nor advocated severing the British ties. While for many Canadians imperialism had long encapsulated pride of place within the British Empire and a reverence for the ideals of the British heritage, not all Canadians argued for Imperial Federation as the only means of envisioning the Dominion's new nationality. For some Canadians, Imperialism was one way to reconcile the self/other relation inherent in the process of identity formation.

It is clear, however, that even though original members of Canada First attempted to define the boundaries of a new Canadian nationality and constantly re-examined their premises, they all shared an idealistic sense of the past, present and potential of the country. In addition, recognizing that the mythic roots of Canadian identity are situated in culture, Canada First's project was the purposeful development of a national culture that largely focused on the production of iconographic symbols of nationhood capable of evoking loyalty from citizens. In Canada First rhetoric ideas of "Canada" were characterized by the accentuation of difference, whether geographical, racial or mythological. One major line in North American geopolitical visions has been the

relation between North and South [Canada and the United States], North and West [Canada and Europe, or New World and Old World], and the internal relations between Upper and Lower Canada.

Writers, poets, and Canadian intelligencia played a leading role in promoting the idea of a national sentiment in post-Confederation Canada. The Canada First organization drew most of its members from Ontario and much of its literature, which attempted to delineate the character of the new Dominion, was produced there. As the early attempts by Canada First members to articulate a new identity for the new Canadian nation illustrated, various members of Ontario's social and cultural elite began to see themselves, less as an extension of British civilization in an imperial province but as a community with a character and experience of its own.

Through the first half of the century, Ontarians became steadily more preoccupied with the vocation of creating cultural agencies that would expand their knowledge of themselves. Newspapers and literary journals played a central role in developing a Canadian frame of reference. For E.H. Dewart, a later Canada First recruit, the act of bringing a body of literature reflective of, and based upon, the Canadian experience was in itself a nationalist undertaking. It is clear that all original members of Canada First, as well as later recruits were all engaged in an attempt to further Canada's (or Ontario's) literary scene, as well as contributing to the emergence of "patriotic" magazines. How deeply the national(ist) rhetoric penetrated into the life of Upper Canadians, and how prevalent and influential it was to typical Canadians, is not known and is subject to an informed speculation. What is evident though, is that the idea of "new nationality" for the new nation, as well as the vision of the future that it entailed, was widespread and influential within the Canadian intelligencia, who by-and-large, dominated the debate on the Canadian Question.

How a particular socio-cultural group "imagines" their community is linked to how the group's members speak and think about their community. Following the lead

from Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Canada First men upheld the belief that Canada, as a nation, must be distinguishable, in several ways, from all other nations. At the initial phase of the Canada First movement for Henry J. Morgan and Charles Mair, the basis of differentiation for Canada could not be "race," nor could it be religion, language, or natural barriers of geography. However, Morgan and Mair realized that a unique literary culture could provide the essential, 'true' basis for "new nationality."

The principal problem for the English-Canadian intellectuals who narrated Canadian identity was the French-English divide. At the level of conceptualization, the Post-Confederation imagining of the "new nationality" and "Canada's destiny," envisioned by members of Canada First, as well as other writers, poets and literary critics, was an English-speaking one -- in which French-speaking inhabitants of the new Dominion hardly had a place. Ontarians played a role in defining the national idea, and constructed the agencies required to sustain it. Early Anglo-Canadian conceptualizations of the "new nation" ignored Quebec, or assumed implicitly that Quebec was always there, subsumed under the label Canada. Generally, Canadian "National literature" contained no reference to Quebec, or to French-Canadian history or culture. The absence of French Canadians was accompanied by the absence of Aboriginals, and other minority groups and their role in the Canada's nation-building.

Canada First and the Discursive Construction of National Identity

If we consider national identities purely as discursive constructs that are made up of specifically constructed national identity narratives, then we can point to the ways Canadian national identity was discursively constructed by the members of the Canada First Movement. In addition, such conceptualization of national identities allow us to analyze written and spoken discourse as a form of social practice.

Nationalism in its modern cultural forms attempts to create a new kind of spatial and mythopoetic metanarrative. National narratives seek to define the nation and to

construct its narrative past. In addition, national narratives or mythologies are deeply implicated in forms of inclusions ['us'] and exclusions ['them' or 'others'] that produce particular moral truths and values. It is often claimed in the literature regarding Canadian nationalism and national identity that Canada has no viable narrative or common symbolic culture to legitimate its existence as a nation. However, as Chapters Two and Three have illustrated, contrary to the prevalent Canadian mythology, the Canadian passion for symbol, myth and metaphor was historically deep and abiding. Chapters Two and Three also illustrated that nations are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions, such as cultural narratives, imaginative literature, myth and metaphor. Nation, history, narrative and rhetoric confirm each other (Kertzer, 1998). Since identity is a concept that is both discovered and invented, Canada First members were keen to formulate a new mythology for the nation at its inception.

In the rhetoric of Canada First members, the discursive construction of Canadian identity included the following categories: 1) the narrative of collective history; 2) the discursive construction of common culture; 3) the discursive construction of a collective present and future; and 4) the discursive construction of a "national body." In addition, Haliburton's "Men of the North" (1869) combined at least three key elements necessary for the discursive construction of national identities, elements which also served an important function due to each's capacity to evoke national sentiment: 1) Relationship to the past; 2) Relationship to space; and 3) Relationship to Culture.

Identity is often associated with 'regions' and 'places' the social actors inhabit. For Charles Taylor (1989, 1994), questions of identity are bound up with the spaces we inhabit, and they assign meaning to the places with which we identify. In addition, as Paasi (2001) has pointed out, identity is also a spatial category. In a nation-state, the imagining of the "Self" and "Us" requires not only symbolic and socio-cultural but also physical dividing lines with the Other. According to Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998), the key concept with regard to national identity is authenticity. The authentication of a

national culture entails two processes: the construction of continuity with a nation's alleged ethno-historical past (historicism), and the creation of a sense of naturalness (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998: 485).

Historicism and the creation of a sense of naturalness can be seen as focal points of Haliburton's project, which set out to conceptualize Canada's "new nationality" by creating a new mythology regarding both the emergence and the future of Canadian identity. The Haliburton project, and the subsequent rhetoric on "the North" illustrated that in Canada, the physical landscape and environment were important factors in both the conceptualization of the national 'self' and the formation of a specific sense of 'national' self or character.

As previously pointed out in this thesis, the task of constructing an identity is given from within any people's mythology. Cultural mythology denotes the body of codes and conceptual patterns according to which all experience is ordered, described, explained and communicated within any group (Tiffin & Wallis, 1989: 34). Clearly, such a prescriptive system of values and beliefs finds a multi-faceted expression in the group's art and literature, rituals, political ideology, historical memory and the like. Myths attribute special qualities to social and cultural groups, extend their distinctiveness and create boundaries within a community, and also with respect to other communities. In addition, myths are articulations that express how any particular reality came into being. Myths can be also be seen as instruments of identity transfer (Schöpflin, 2000: 83). They enable a new identity to be superimposed on an older one, so that the collectivity sustains itself by creating an identity homogenous enough to survive. To Francis (1997), 'core myths,' or 'master narratives' became crucial in Canadian consciousness because they replaced the lack of common religion, language and cultural/ethnic identity.

In Canada, the mythology and self-image of a nation were closely related to its history and physical geography. Myth transcends social division by establishing an

illusion of community (Schöpflin, 2000: 83). Believing that Canada lacked such mythic structure, Haliburton attempted to construct an overarching mythology about Canadian identity in order to set the foundation of the Canadian notion of the 'self.' With the concept of the northern races, Canada First foresaw the coming of a new ethnic group. Haliburton's nationalism was expressive of the essentially romantic ideal of a national community, or to borrow from Anderson (1991) "imagined community," solidified by a sense of 'Northern' kinship, a presumed racial predisposition. Haliburton conceptualized the Canadian "new nationality" and identity within the geographical context of the nation and attempted to construct a frame of reference for Canadians based on 'The North,' Canada's geographical position, in order to facilitate the development of attachment to a place. The North denoted not only a geographical position, but more importantly a symbolic and socio-cultural division with the Other. Spreading the message that the new Dominion must ever be a "northern country inhabited by the descendants of 'Northern Races'," free of vagrants like those in America, and those derived from tropical climates, Canada First attempted to construct Canada as a "white man's country" in order to preserve its "racial purity."

Haliburton's *Men of the North* (1869) can be seen as an example of a national origin or development myth, as well as myth of kinship and shared descent, that served an important definitional and legitimating function. It validated the present by glorifying the reconstructed and imagined past. It was meant to inspire collective identity and national identification among those included in the saga. Likewise, the English Canadian discourse on "new nationality" as attempted by the members of Canada First situated a large number of peoples at the periphery of what constitutes our notion of identity in Canada.

A good starting point for understanding the various self/other relations that historically shaped notions of Canadian identity is to borrow from Widdis (1997) a metaphor of "borders" to explain the Canadian situation. Widdis (1997) examines the

relationship between space/place and identity. He argues that borders (internal and external, socio-economic, geopolitical and psychological) have always played a role in developing Canadian identity. As Widdis points out, these include “borders, the one shared with the United States and those created internally form the Canadian identity”(1997: 51). According to Rose (1995; cited in Passi, 2001: 17) boundaries and borders play a dual role in the construction of the “sense of place.” Boundaries and borders work to establish insiders who belong to the play, by simultaneously establishing outsiders, who do not belong. In the narratives of the nation, boundaries and borders are social and political constructs which are established by social actors.

Haliburton's *Men of the North* (1869), and subsequent rhetoric on Canada's 'North' was an effort in the creation of socio-political and psychological boundaries or borders that delineate territory that, for Haliburton, was deemed necessary for the physical and psychological survival of the young nation. These borders and boundaries clearly separated Haliburton's conception of Canadians [us] 'Northmen' and them [others] non-Northerners. In Haliburton's conceptualization of the new Canadian nationality, peoples from non-North European backgrounds stood beyond the parameters of what constituted the new Canadian cultural identity. Thus, excluded from the new national narrative were those peoples whose origins were not Northern European or Anglo-Saxon. Furthermore, peoples who could link their origins to “Northern” ancestry, but now resided in the Southern portion of the North American continent, were also conveniently discursively excluded. Finally, conspicuously missing and excluded from Haliburton's vision of the Northern races, were the actual, “original” inhabitants of the North American Continent and the Canadian North, the Aboriginal peoples.

According to Passi (2001: 17), symbolic shaping is crucial in signifying territoriality and in the institutionalization of all regions. By “labeling” concrete and symbolic ‘landscapes,’ the social, intellectual and political elites “control space and people” (17). The nation's narratives in songs, poems, literary works, as well as symbolic

devices such as coats of arms, flags, and rituals, make spatial symbolism part of daily life of social actors (Passi, 2001: 17). Thus, spacial and territorial dimension come together in the symbolic narratives and material iconographies of the nation. Haliburton, as Chapter Three suggested, was successful at cohering symbolic and aesthetic life of the new nation, evident by the tradition of cultural environmentalism in Canadian literature and historiography that persisted until the middle of the 20th century. As chapter Three also illustrated, Haliburton's rhetoric also served as a powerful framework for popular oppositional fronts, especially the anti-Americanism present in the Imperial Federation League. In addition, the notion of the Northern Races was taken up by Canadian Imperialists to conceive of Canada as a melting pot of French and British peoples. Ironically, at the end of his career, Haliburton's ill health prevented him from living in the 'North,' and he subsequently spend the end of his years in a tropical climate (Denison, 1901).

The constant theme in Canada First writings was that of anti-Americanism. Once again, this theme in the rhetoric of Canada First men was consistent with broader public and social sentiments present in Canada during that time. Canadian anti-Americanism was a central buttress of the national identity. After Confederation, anti-Americanism became the key tool in the maintenance of the established political and economic order. In late 1800s, anti-Americanism was a powerful weapon for Sir John A. Macdonald. Macdonald called the Liberals' policy of Unrestricted Reciprocity with United States treason and a betrayal of Canada's British destiny. The economic policy of free trade was seen by some Canadians as promoting the physical and psychological absorption of Canada by the United States.

In Mair's rhetoric, the self and other relations were even more exclusivist in defining who constituted the new Canadian nationality. In the main, Mair's rhetoric on new nationality signaled a shift in the Canada First organization, from an intellectual organization to a militant practical movement. For Mair, both the Francophone and

Métis culture were regarded as standing outside the boundaries of an emerging Canadian cultural identity. For Mair, Canada's new nationality consisted only of those people whose background was Anglo-Saxon Protestant, especially those originating in Ontario.

During and following the Red River Uprising, French Canadians, whose "Norman" ancestry previously provided proof of their inherent racial superiority, became a national liability in the eyes of the Firsters. Mair's accounts of the Red River before and after the Rebellion supplied the necessary evidence of the "mediaeval inertia" and indolence assumed to be the characteristics of the Francophone population. The *Toronto Globe* in August 1870 declared that the priest-ridden French society in the north-West was the principal "bar to the progress, and to the extension of a great Anglo-Saxon Dominion across the Continent." Canadian Western expansion was thus a Protestant English-Canadian vision of transplanted Anglo-Saxon Ontario culture, a rural Ontario West, an English Canadian vision which persisted long after the demise of Canada First, and which has influenced subsequent Canadian immigration policies.

Later on during his profession, Mair began to see virtue in the Métis and aboriginal way of life, as well as in the contributions made by French Canadians to nation building of Canada. In an unpublished manuscript, "A Message to the Youth of Canada (1925b), Mair wrote at the age of eighty-seven that:

we are made of two great races, and that the Frenchman's love for this country is not second to our own. We should make the union between us stronger than it has ever been in the past, till the tie of kinship is not less than brotherhood. They have been co-workers, co-builders with us through all the centuries, and our interests are identical. I should like to see the French language taken up in the primary grades of every school throughout the Dominion, for to understand the language of a people is to understand the people's soul. And a soul must speak to soul if we would build for God and Canada.

As this chapter illustrated, the ongoing dichotomy of 'self' and 'other' in the construction of Canada First's "new nationality" was evident in the group's rhetoric, symbols and rituals as well as in its social relations.

In the conclusion, I will very briefly reflect on the significance of this study to the history of Canadian nationalism and popular understanding of Canadian Identity.

CONCLUSION

“FORGOTTEN MEMORY” AND THE SEARCH FOR CANADIAN IDENTITY

This thesis attempted to demonstrate that in mid to late 19th century, questions regarding Canada’s “new nationality” and its national identity were prominent in various social and intellectual circles. In addition, by examining the rhetoric of Canada First members, this thesis attempted to demonstrate that particular identity narratives that emerged shortly after the Confederation, were initiated not by the state, but by members of the nation, by particular social actors who believed that there needed to be a culture to fill the vacant spaces of the national social life. Thus, in Canada, the early efforts at the construction of viable narrative and symbolic culture sought to legitimate the existence of the nation.

This thesis focused on the discursive construction of a Canadian nation and its national identities. That is not to say, however, that the discursive construction of boundaries, symbols, myths and metaphors are enough in making a nation and national identities. Also needed are cultural, political and economic institutions, as well as formal organizations that are capable of maintaining and reproducing the narratives of the nation and their inherent symbolism. Consequently, this thesis illustrated that in the decades following the Confederation, Ontario saw an increase in the apparatus of cultural and social agencies and institutions, which sought to administer culture as part of the larger enterprise of defining the nation’s borders. In 19th century Canada, the cultural production focused on (re)construction of a national(ist) discourses that emphasized the necessities of speaking and producing Canadian culture. In identifying oneself in terms

of “Canada,” one distinguished oneself from the inferred positions of British, European, or American.

The scholarly and popular mythology that constructs Canadians as “immune” to the wider manifestations of the nationalist impulse and rhetoric is common, and it results in “cultural amnesia” that tends to “forget” the tradition of cultural racism and a falsified but glorious past, tendencies that were the invariable by-products of early Canadian nationalism. In the identity narrative, cultural history and imagination contribute to choosing what is to be remembered, and how it is remembered, and what is to be forgotten (Martin, 1995).

In the imagination of some Anglophone Canadians, the movement for independent Quebec is seen as a narrow, ethnicity-based nationalism. However, as this thesis has strongly suggested, “The Rest of Canada” saw this sort of nationalism in the mid 19th century, and English Canadians, like Québécois have constructed their “imagined communities.” Both have articulated their goals through an emphasis on preserving themselves.

Canadian scholars remain obsessed with articulating Canada’s national and cultural identity. It seems that even now, scholars and historians are unable to articulate Canadian Identity, and only agree on common negative characteristics of Canadians – who “we” are, and who we are not: Not British; Not French; Not American. In Canada, the appeal of the imagined kinship community is as strong as before, however, the old imagined “nation” invented by discredited elites is under challenge from a new imagined “nation.” As the appeal of a nationalist vision of “Canada First” declined, a new mythology for Canada, a society characterized by socio-economic complexity and cultural diversity is being promoted. Nevertheless, in the context of popular culture, it is sometimes proposed that Canada has a “weak” sense of national identity. With two charter groups (British and French) officially recognized, plurality, it is argued, is built into the national consciousness of an average Canadian citizen. Adding to this equation,

a commonsense (liberal) assumption that the 'mosaic' is built into our sense of national consciousness results in a fairly common narrative about Canadian national identity (or a lack of it). By dismantling the earlier myths of assimilation and replacing them with symbols of multicultural nationalism that celebrates cultural diversity, the new Canadian narrative depicts the nation as an "umbrella of cultural community" (Brown, 1998:13).

However the representation of Canadian Identity in popular culture is often reduced (or trivialized) to a glimpse of a 'typically Canadian' representations ranging from Bob and Doug McKenzie on SCTV (eh!); the construction of hockey as the 'all Canadian' sport (any red blooded Canadian who was around at the time could tell you what they were doing when Paul Henderson scored a winning goal against the Soviet Union in 1972); familiar Molson Canadian "I AM CANADIAN" Beer Ads; "Peacekeepers" – the Canadian view of its own international reputation; lumberjacks; poutine and beaver tails; maple syrup; Moose and of course, the "all Canadian" Mounties! Popular Canadian symbols and myths, as trivial as they may appear in popular culture, have a long socio-cultural history, and are often re-shaped and imposed in the form of a unifying narrative on very heterogeneous subjects.

In Canada nationalism will continue to play a strategic role in the cultural sphere, however, it can no longer be attached to a particular definition of culture or cultural identity. The old myth of the Northern races, is being replaced by the acceptance of cultural heterogeneity, and a strengthening of the vision of the nation as a political community which is based on myths of constitutional consent (Brown, 1998: 13). Consequently, how Canadians perceive and construct their national identity constitutes one of the most critical pedagogical questions of the time. The information regarding what constitutes a common culture, allows for a critical assessment of dominant and subordinate traditions (so as to how they narrate themselves). Consequently, challenging the narratives of national identity and culture, can be seen as part of a pedagogical effort

to provide dominant groups with the knowledge and histories to examine, acknowledge, and unlearn their own privilege.

In addition, an understanding of how social and cultural identities are produced, reproduced, transformed and destroyed allow us to understand the construction of ideas of a “natural” nation by selectively reinterpreting historical symbols, so as to portray the society within the state in largely mythical terms of historical continuity. Invented or imagined society can be disguised as natural or biological. In addition, by looking at the discursive constructions of national identities, we may interpret history not a closed singular narrative, but as a construct with different cultural codes and contested interpretations of social events.

In anthropology questions of culture are increasingly interlaced with the issues of power, identity and representation. Likewise, as current anthropological studies indicate (for example, see Gupta & Ferguson, 1997), questions of identity are at the forefront of contemporary dialogues on culture, power and allegiance. For anthropology, the discursive nature of national, social and cultural identities challenge the commonsensical notions of “rooted” localities and communities. These commonsense knowledge imply a primordial and essential group identity and notions of identity which rely on the sovereign individual subject. Identity neither grows out of rooted communities, nor is a thing that can be possessed or owned by individuals or collective social groups. Rather, it is mobile, unstable and often contradictory relation of difference.

It is clear, that the critical interrogations of identity constitute an important terrain for discussions among scholars and activists concerned with the politics of social change. It must be remembered that the focus of this thesis was to examine the discursive construction of Canada’s national identity by looking at the ways Canadian identity was conceptualized by the members of Canada First. Canada First’s conceptualization of Canadian identity was exclusively white, Anglo-male centered. However, if we insist that ‘identity’ is relational, and individual subjectivities occupy a multiplicity of often

contradictory subject positions, there exists limitless possibilities in the construction of de-centered discourses(s) based on the exploration of the experiences of 'Other' Canadians from previously excluded positions. Consequently, ample of research remains to be done in the field of early Canadian nationalism. For example, the gendered nature of Canada First's rhetoric specifically, as well as the gendered nature of nationalism in general would further add to our understanding of Canadian identity formation.

Likewise, a emphasis on the politics of identity, and, borrowing from Hall (1990: 225), on "mapping the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" in the formation of identities can illustrate key insights into larger questions of social transformation. I believe that questions of identity are fundamental to cultural politics that link personal experience to collective forms and action.

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