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**PARODY AND THE HORIZONS OF FICTION
IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH CANADA**

by

Klay Dyer

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the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Ph.D. degree in English Literature

University of Ottawa

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Abstract

One of the key characteristics of the comic discourse of parody is a complex double-structuredness that allows it to inscribe a sense of difference at the heart of the similarities often informing constructions of literary traditions and cultural continuities. Parody is, to use Mikhail Bakhtin's terms, a vari-directional double-voiced discourse that simultaneously draws on a reader's familiarity with textual and discursive antecedents while at the same time encouraging a dialectical reconsideration of the appropriateness and relevance of those models in light of the cultural milieu into which such models were imported.

Victorian Canada was a culture defined by such a period of transition. Dedicated to inscribing a sense of common heritage with Old World traditions, most writers and thinkers in Victorian Canada aimed for the creation of a unifying national culture that they believed could distinctively and appropriately represent Canada to itself in terms of familiar Old World conventions. Such key concepts as land and landedness, and such vital activities as reading and writing, came to be defined within such arguments according to Old World codes and standards.

For prominent Canadian fiction writers of the nineteenth century, parody was understood as an appropriate discourse for exploring more fully both the aspirations and anxieties burdening an emerging nation struggling toward cultural self-definition. Avoiding a monologic transplantation of Old World textual models or cultural presumptions, these writers, while acknowledging the acceptance and appeal of such Old World benchmarks within a still nascent culture, challenge their contemporaries to reconsider this inhibitive reliance on textual and discursive structures imported from other places and other times. They encourage an imaginative exploration of other ways of representing Canada's distinctiveness, insistently laying bare the limitations inherent in a naive confidence in the portability of literary conventions and cultural presumptions. Including as part of their own narratives the very structures they set out to question, Canadian parodists emphasize how identity is the product of testing rather than accepting preestablished imaginative and literary boundaries.

The rise to prominence of Stephen Leacock in the early decades of this century signals both an epistemic shift in Canada and a radical transformation of this country's parodic spirit. Moving in his parodies toward a more transnational vision of Canada and Canadian concerns, Leacock at the same time recognizes in the parodic a vital source of kindliness. Whereas parody is for his Victorian counterparts a strategy for defining and nurturing a sense of distinctly Canadian culture, for Leacock it becomes vitally allied to survival in a world of crumbling foundations.

Bibliographic Note

The following is a list of abbreviations used for nineteenth-century Canadian magazines, periodicals, and newspapers cited frequently in chapters one through four inclusive:

<i>AA</i>	<i>The Acadia Athenaeum</i>
<i>Aa</i>	<i>The Anglo-American Magazine</i>
<i>AR</i>	<i>Acadian Recorder</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>The British American Magazine</i>
<i>BNA</i>	<i>British North American Magazine</i>
<i>CEMSC</i>	<i>The Canada Educational Monthly and School Chronicle</i>
<i>CIN</i>	<i>Canadian Illustrated News</i>
<i>CJS</i>	<i>The Canadian Journal of Science, Literature, and History</i>
<i>CMNR</i>	<i>Canadian Monthly and National Review</i>
<i>CM</i>	<i>The Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, Art and Literature</i>
<i>CMM</i>	<i>Canadian Methodist Magazine</i>
<i>DI</i>	<i>The Dominion Illustrated</i>
<i>DR</i>	<i>The Dominion Review</i>
<i>LG</i>	<i>The Literary Garland</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>The Maritime Monthly</i>
<i>Mm</i>	<i>Massey's Magazine</i>
<i>MLM</i>	<i>The Montreal Literary Magazine</i>
<i>MR</i>	<i>The Monthly Review</i>
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Montreal Witness</i>
<i>NDM</i>	<i>New Dominion Monthly</i>
<i>NE</i>	<i>New Era (Montreal)</i>
<i>SLQ</i>	<i>Stewart's Literary Quarterly</i>
<i>TUR</i>	<i>Trinity University Review</i>
<i>QQ</i>	<i>Queen's Quarterly</i>

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Preface

"---- All my heroes are off my hands; --- 'tis the first time I have had a moment to spare, --- and I'll make use of it, and write my preface."
(Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*)

If the increasing prominence of the words "parody" and "parodic" in recent explorations of English-language writing in Canada can be read as any kind of indicator, Canada is a national culture blessed with an abundance of readers and writers who appreciate the richness and complexities of parodic discourse. From such book-length studies as Linda Hutcheon's influential and patently multidisciplinary *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (1985) and Martin Kuester's *Framing Truths: Parodic Structures in Contemporary English-Canadian Historical Novels* (1992) to the growing number of more narrowly focused essays exploring novels by English-Canadian authors from Paul Hiebert¹ to Margaret Atwood,² parody has been conceptualized and theorized in Canada in recent decades into a kind of proof of the willingness of Canadian writers to

¹ See for instance Elizabeth Porter, "Sarah Binks: Another Look at Saskatchewan's Sweet Songstress," *World Literature Written in English* 21.1 (1982): 95-108; and Carole Gerson "Sarah Binks and Edna Jacques: Parody, Gender, and the Construction of Literary Value," *Canadian Literature* 134 (1992): 62-73.

² See for instance Elspeth Cameron, "Famininity, or Parody of Autonomy: Anorexia Nervosa and *The Edible Woman*," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20.2 (1985): 45-69; Barbara Godard, "Telling It Over Again: Atwood's Art of Parody," *Canadian Poetry* 21 (1987): 1-30; and John Thieme, "A Female Houdini: Popular Culture in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*," *Kunapipi* 14.1 (1992): 71-80.

approach new and challenging dimensions -- imaginative, social, theoretical -- in their fiction making. It is this commitment to the testing of conventional boundaries that such critics as Hutcheon and Kuester are eager to celebrate, suggesting that in their dedication to engaging the parodic as a means of testing our assumptions and preconceptions of art and literature, this country's writers are producing a powerful testament to the maturity and "progressiveness" of Canadian culture in general and of Canadian fiction in particular.³

Despite the elegance of these individual arguments and the valuable insights that will continue to be accrued through this increased attention to the role of the parodic in our recent cultural history, there remain a number of troubling assumptions enabling what is gradually becoming a standardized and restrictive view of parody as it has been practiced in Canada. Foremost among these is the implicit assumption that Canada's parodic spirit is, depending on one's theoretical inclination, primarily the product of either an early modern, a post-modern, or even a post-colonial episteme. As Hutcheon's express emphasis on twentieth-century art forms and Kuester's on contemporary Canadian fiction imply, parody has gradually come to be seen in Canada as one of the most significant discursive forms contributing to this century's general interrogation of the cultural imagination. As Hutcheon declares with confidence in her introduction to *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction* (1988), parody is "a typical postmodern paradoxical form" due to its increasingly prominent role as one of the "major forms of both formal and ideological critique in feminist and Canadian fiction alike."⁴ Connected throughout the body of Hutcheon's work with discussions

³ Martin Kuester, *Framing Truths: Parodic Structures in Contemporary English-Canadian Historical Novels* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1992), 152.

⁴ Linda Hutcheon, *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1988), 7, 8.

of such contemporary theoretical keywords as metafiction, auto-referentiality, intertextuality, and self-reflexivity, this sense of parody as post-modern gesture has become the model from which most discussions of parody and the parodic in Canada now feel obligated to begin.

At the broadest theoretical level, this general acceptance of the important similarities linking parody with the post-modern has taken place at the expense of any thorough consideration of the equally significant and important differences that might suggest a relationship that is much more intricate and much less stable than Hutcheon and subsequent critics tend to make it out to be. One effect of this acceptance of particular importance to this study is the weakening within these theories of parody's traditional association with comedy, an association that has been recognized as a defining characteristic of the parodic since the writings of such ancient scholars as Aristotle and Quintilian. As Margaret A. Rose notes in her *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* (1993), Hutcheon is one of the most influential of contemporary critics to "have reduced the traditional linkages of parody with comedy" to the extent that by the time she identifies parody with the post-modern" via their apparently common reliance on sophisticated metafictional and intertextual strategies, "the distinguishing peculiarity of parody as a *comic* form ... has conveniently gone missing."⁵ Although ancient concepts and uses of parody related it to applications that would now be considered *both comic and* metafictional or intertextual, the reconceptualizing of parody as a paradigmatic post-modern discourse has come by way of a modern reduction of the parodic to a simply binary that sees in parody *either* a meta-fictional/intertextual gesture *or* a comic form. The organization being advanced, that is, is of the sense of a higher-order parodic form which can be linked with other non-comic intertextual forms and

⁵ Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 239.

a form which is often diminished through association with such lower-order literary activities as burlesque and farce.

Underlying this emphasis on parody as a typically post-modern discourse, too, is the more troubling suggestion that in nineteenth-century English Canada, parody, if practiced at all, remained "still rather crude" or, worse still, merely "inadvertently parodic,"⁶ lacking the reflexivity and sophisticated intertextual or trans-contextual play that distinguishes its more urbane twentieth-century cousins. Indeed, the assumption of most contemporary studies is that nineteenth-century Canada produced little in the way of parodic writing that might be seen to have contributed significantly to the evolution of the Canadian imagination or the maturation of a distinctly Canadian culture. If not overlooked altogether in contemporary studies, parodic writing produced in Canada prior to the turn of the century is generally dismissed as ephemeral, inconsequential, unsophisticated, or merely the stuff of popular entertainment.

My intention in this study, then, is threefold: to counteract the growing tendency of Canadian critics to subordinate their discussions of parody and of specific parodic texts to much broader theoretical discussions of Canadian post-modernism and post-modern fictions; to dispel the common misconceptions about the popularity, relevance, and sophistication of parody as it came to be practiced in nineteenth-century English Canada; and to explore how a number of writers working within a nascent and anxious culture engaged parody as a means of promoting a fuller understanding of Canada as a distinct place and as a distinct national culture. I will explore how parody emerged in Canada from about 1843 onward as a means of inviting native readers and writers to explore Canadian culture as a site within which Old World epistemologies and narrative traditions

⁶ Kuester, 149.

brush up against the vital impulse to establish and nurture a national culture and identity that is at once similar to and distinct from those of other places and other times.

Taking as my central metaphor Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's description of parody as a double-structured discourse that serves as both light and mirror of the textual models and discursive practices circulating within a culture at a given historical moment, I advance in my introduction to this study a working concept of parody that is different from those that have come to shape the majority of recent discussions in Canada. Tracing the historical derivations and mutations of the classic sense of parody as a discourse that inscribes difference at the heart of similarity, I set out in this chapter to meticulously relocate humour as a distinguishing characteristic of the parodic reflection. From its etymological roots in ancient Greece through to its reconceptualization at the beginning of this century in the seminal writings of the Russian Formalists and Mikhail Bakhtin, the history of parody has been one in which the structural use of comic incongruity has been foregrounded, not only as a means of distinguishing parody from other forms of intertextual activity (quotation, imitation, plagiarism) but also as a means of showing the function of parody to be more than imitation alone. Taking my cues from Bakhtin's modification of the early formalist emphasis on parody as an important catalyst of innovation and literary evolution, I will advance an understanding of parody as an act of comic and critical refunctioning that serves a dialectical and renovative as well as creative function within Victorian Canadian culture.

As Michel Foucault has suggested through his analysis of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* in *Les Mots and les Choses* (1966), there exists a significant role for parody in the transformation of the discourses of an age, and in this study parody will be considered as a reflexive "archaeology" of the historical, social, and institutional

conditions that coalesced to shape the cultural attitudes and anxieties of Victorian Canada. More specifically, I seek to establish in the corpus of parodic writing that emerged in Canada from mid-century onward the basis for a reconsideration of the multiplicity of literary, philosophical, and social assumptions that informed a culture preoccupied with the task of nationmaking and struggling toward a sense of identity. To those who lived through them, these years were seen as formative moments in the development of Canada's national character, moments during which questions of similarity and difference, tradition and renovation came to take precedence in the Canadian imagination.

Establishing this understanding of parody as cultural dialectic as the framework for my critical enquiries, I turn my attention in chapters two through four to a consideration of some of the most persistent complexities and contradictions underlying this Victorian Canadian struggle toward nurturing a confidence in cultural distinctiveness and identity. In chapter two, I combine this understanding with copious references to historical documents and contemporary literary criticism in order to explore the complex ways that such writers as Abraham S. Holmes and James De Mille engage parody to reflect the preconceptions encumbering the Canadian imagination as it worked to come to terms with the geocultural uncertainties of living in a new land. Engaging the double-structuredness of parody to reflect a persistent and potentially inhibitive reliance on familiar, though obviously inappropriate, Old World topographic codes, these writers invite, too, a reconsideration of Victorian Canada's myopic preoccupations with what I call the designation of "landedness." Connected to conceptualizations of the land as physical space through such terms as culture and cultivation, this inherently Old World ideal of "landedness" was understood as a kind of aesthetic and intellectual authority that was seen as essential to the development of the New World as a refined and cultured place.

To Canadian parodists, this process of cultivating the culture of the New World is shown to be as much one of *un*learning a burdensome reliance on Old World standards as it is of setting new standards and new goals. By at once engaging and straining to the limits of the familiar the elements of these Old World designations that had degenerated into burdens on the Canadian imagination, the parodists explored here suggest that questions about the future of a New World culture were not questions that could be answered simply by looking to another place or another culture. While drawing on the topographic codes and discursive conventions that were familiar and comforting to Canadian writers and readers, these writers ask the New World community to think again about their imaginative and cultural relationship with the geography of this still new land, a geography that would continue to play a primary role in the shaping of a distinctly national culture and national character. Exemplifying Bakhtin's definition of parody as a double-structured discourse capable of unsettling commonly held assumptions, of challenging the governing authority that had guided the original mapping of Canada's cultural geography, and of dislocating stagnant or stultifying cultural assumptions from their position of centrality, these works move to provoke a fresh response to this new and diverse land.

Subsequent chapters pursue this course of enquiry farther, looking in detail at the illuminating relationship in Victorian Canada between indigenous parodic writing and this preoccupation with the Old World designation of landedness, specifically at how these parodies came to explore two important issues that reinforced this deeply held belief in the portability of Old World standards and systems of value. Chapter three explores how Canadian parodists reflect the narrower constellation of epistemic anxieties and presumptions surrounding the cultivation of what contemporary critics called the country's reading habit. Choosing to focus in this chapter on texts by Robert Barr, May Agnes Fleming, and

the Reverend Robert Jackson MacGeorge, I show how each of these authors engages the double-structuredness of parody to construct explicitly literary fictions. Like Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, these are popular and entertaining stories about books and book-readers, fictions that explore as part of their narrative structures the attitudes and judgments of fictional readers who serve as narrativized analogues to the reader outside the text. Revealing an intimate and sophisticated understanding of the complex nature of the relationship between readers and texts, of the often restrictive expectations exerted on readers within a Canadian culture seen by many critics and thinkers to be still emerging into maturity, and of the importance of the roles played by Canadian politicians, publishers, and other such figures of authority in shaping (or attempting to shape) the reading habits of a literate Canadian public, these parodies encourage Canadian readers toward a dialectical reconsideration of the expectations and attitudes (both individual and collective) shaping Canada's future as a reading culture.

I turn in chapter four to a similar organizing structure to consider Canadian parodists' reflexive explorations of the second key issue reinforcing the Victorian preoccupation with the Old World designation of landedness: the question of how to foster the development of a national literature and literary spirit that would fulfill the aspirations of self-definition. Asserting their belief that a "nation without a native literature is like a body without a soul,"⁷ the country's most prominent critics and thinkers regularly promoted the cultural benefits to be realized through the integration into the New World context of those traditional narrative models that would hasten the pulse of patriotism and national pride perceived to be lacking from the Canadian spirit. As a number of critics have ably argued, one model author in particular caught the attention of these critics: Sir Walter Scott, a writer

⁷ Anon., "Editorial," *Saturday Reader* 1 (1865): 26.

whose personal life and novelistic renderings of Scotland's gallant past were seen to possess the ideal symmetry of noble character, nationalistic enthusiasms, and cultivated literary sensibilities needed in the New World. Endorsing, in particular, what these critics came to celebrate as Scott's impartiality in dealing with events and characters from Scotland's hoary past, such prominent writers as Goldwin Smith and John George Bourinot suggested that Canadian writers could find in Scott and, to a lesser extent, in such historically-minded writers as Maria Edgeworth and Walter Besant, models of the literary and imaginative qualities that should be integrated into Canadian writing in order to produce a body of native literature that would weld the geographically and denominationally distinct regions of the New Dominion into a coherent cultural community.

To Canadian parodists, though, this insistent and uncritical promotion of Scott's impartiality and historical-mindedness, while not without its benefits to the literary culture of a young country, was seen at the same time as potentially inhibitive to the development of a literature which by reason of its distinct character could be designated Canadian. Reflecting in their parodies the cultural assumptions underlying such preoccupations, De Mille and various anonymous parodists whose work found its way into the pages of such popular periodicals as *Grip* and *Diogenes* angle the mirror of their parodies to reflect, too, what they perceived to be the myth of impartiality. Each of these writers, in choosing to populate fictions with a familiar assortment of intensely subjective and reflexive writers and re-writers, invites Canadian readers to reconsider such seemingly unquestionable beliefs in simple referentiality and authorial impartiality. At no time challenging the assertion that Canada possess distinctive stories sufficiently colourful and dramatic to inspire a national literary spirit, these writers remind readers that such stories are inevitably constructions of a partisan imagination, constructions that have traditionally been used to shape the ways a people see themselves and are seen by others.

I conclude this study with a chapter dedicated to a reconsideration of the position of Stephen Leacock, the writer whose rise to prominence as Canada's best-known humorist marked the beginning of what I call modern parody in Canada. Showing how in *Literary Lapses* (1910) and *Nonsense Novels* (1911) Canadian readers found in Leacock a writer and thinker whose understanding of parody and humour was firmly rooted in the parodic tradition established in Victorian Canada by such writers as De Mille and MacGeorge, I advance a reading of the man who is generally considered the father of Canadian humour and parody that emphasizes his dramatic refocusing of that tradition toward a more modern constellation of cultural anxieties. It is a shift, I suggest, that also marks a radical epistemic shift in Canada's cultural history.

While parody understood as a cultural dialectic functions as light and mirror both to the content and to the form of the various textual and discursive models on which each of the texts explored here draws, the primary goal of this study is not a systematic identification of the copious quotations, allusions, and sometimes furtive intertextual glances that accrete within these intensely coded fictions. Indeed, given the breadth of reading each of these authors exhibits, the task of such source-hunting would inevitably be doomed to leave many important avenues unexplored; tracing the various intertextual threads weaving through each of these texts is another study. Nor has it been my purpose in this study to give an exhaustive account of every occurrence of parody that appeared in Victorian Canada; indeed, I am aware that this study leaves many such occasions uncovered and many opportunities for further exploration. What this study does set out to accomplish, though, is to introduce into future discussions of Canada's literary history a sense of the complex and important ways in which parody raises questions not only about the aesthetic and imaginative processes involved in the defining and nurturing of a national literature but also about the sociology of that national

literature, questions that probe, that is, the role of institutions and authority in the control of both the production and the reception of texts in their social context. Illuminating a particular cluster of relationships between a nascent Canadian culture and its sense of history and identity, parody points, in other words, to a relationship that had been constructed up to this time on a steadfast belief in the appropriateness of Old World models and ideals, a belief that continued to haunt the language and cultural imagination of Canadian writers through to century's end.

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Above all, I must thank my wife, Kathy, for her patience and reassurances. As always, for everything.

INTRODUCTION

**LIGHT AND MIRROR:
UNDERSTANDING PARODY AS CULTURAL DIALECTIC**

Introduction

Light and Mirror: Understanding Parody as Cultural Dialectic

In *Humour and Humanity* (1937), Stephen Leacock notes that "among the greatest ornaments and best benefactors of our kind" one man stands alone for having created "the first of the great characters of modern humour." The man about whom Leacock speaks with such high praise is Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra; the character is the famous tilting knight Don Quixote. Explaining that Cervantes had emerged at a point in Spain's history when chivalry had filled its purpose as an "animating spirit" and moral compass, the writer long considered the father of Canadian humour suggests that it is with *Don Quixote* and "the glorious humour that lies at the base of it" that the discourse of parody became firmly established as "a social force" that might guide toward "sanity the mind of a [culture] still a little delirious" with outmoded ideas and stale customs. But, as Leacock also reiterates, the important and complex humour involved in the shaping of *Don Quixote* "cannot be understood without the background" in full view.¹

In "The Author's Preface" that introduces the prototypical parodic novel *Don Quixote de la Mancha*,² the figure of Cervantes gives some indication of the richness

¹ Stephen Leacock, *Humour and Humanity* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1937), 128-9.

² Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Charles Jarvis (1605; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 15-21.

of this required background when he is discovered by a friend (and by readers) not laughing but labouring over his prefatory remarks. Sitting in deep thought, with paper before him, pen behind his ear, elbow on the table, and cheek in hand, Cervantes contemplates with growing unease the unrelenting whiteness of the blank page: "I often took pen in hand, and as often laid it down," he laments, "not knowing what to say." Surprised by the approach of his friend, "a pleasant gentleman, and of very good understanding," Cervantes does not hesitate in laying the difficulties of his current task before him, having resolved himself to the fact that the story of Senor Don Quixote might be doomed to "remain buried in the records of La Mancha, until heaven sends" a writer with the literary and intellectual skills demanded by such a multifaceted tale. Frustrated, too, that he might well have spent his own youthful days "slept away in the silence of oblivion" with nothing to recommend his grey hairs to the world but a "legend as dry as a kex," the authorial figure of Cervantes catalogues to his attentive friend what he himself sees as the flaws in his narrative. It is, he complains, "empty of invention, the style flat, the conceits poor, and void of all learning and erudition; without quotations in the margin, or annotations at the end of the book."

Converting the monologue that was to be Cervantes's preface into a dialogue,³ the friend, always ready to oblige those at a loss for words and commenting on a text that apparently has already been completed and read,⁴ proffers a series of recommendations by which the author will lift from his imagination the various troubles "that suspend and deter [him] from introducing into the world the history of this ... famous Don Quixote, the light and mirror of all

³ Ruth El Saffar, *Distance and Control in Don Quixote: A Study in Narrative Technique* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 1975), 34.

⁴ John G. Weiger, *In the Margins of Cervantes* (Hanover: UP of New England, 1988), 2.

knight-errantry." With a typical Cervantine twist, the central thrust of his readerly advice is at once insightful and arrogantly misguided: to ignore the expectations of readers and remain fixed on what the friend perceives to be the principal end of the *Quixote* project, namely "to destroy the authority and acceptance the books of chivalry have had in the world." "Carry your aim steady to overthrow that ill-compiled machine of books ... abhorred by many, but applauded by more," the sympathetic advisor concludes, and the task at hand will be accomplished.

With the words of this amicable second voice providing much of the substance of the requisite preface, the author of *Don Quixote* effectively completes a book that is consciously patterned as both the light *and* mirror of the immensely popular and varied corpus of imaginative literature to which he is drawn both as a reader and as a writer. On the one hand, his story of the diligent pilgrim is a narrative that reveals important and complex levels of correspondence with the "ill-compiled" books of chivalry which his friend suggests he set out to discredit. Constructed with a detailed and careful attention to creating a conventional panorama of almost legendary settings populated with giants, enchanters, damsels in distress, dwarfs, and princesses, the novel illuminates the various creative advantages of working within an established literary and cultural tradition: the access to a proven and familiar catalogue of narrative conventions, the reassurance of ideological certitudes, and the stability of social identities to name just a few.⁵

It is this presence of cultural forebears within his own narrative that Cervantes foregrounds at various moments in his tale. For instance, when the Curate and the Barber descend upon Quixote's library determined to consign to flames the hundreds of volumes of chivalric romances that have been the source of their neighbour's woes, Cervantes has the duo hesitate at declaring *all* the books

⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1966; New York: Random House, 1970), 50.

guilty of either aesthetic or moral failure. Pulling the first of these volumes from the shelf, the Curate pauses, insisting on taking the opportunity to peruse its opening pages. Tellingly, he is searching not for passages or images that he feels might be corruptive but for examples of what might have had or yet have some positive influence on readers and writers who turn to such texts for instruction and entertainment. When he hesitates in rendering his decision on the fate of the four-part *Amadis de Gaul* (1508), the book from which "all the rest" of the chivalric romances "have had their foundation," the Barber is quick to support its reprieve from the blaze. "I have heard," he explains, "that is the best of all books of this kind; and therefore, as being singular in his art, he ought to be spared" (I.vi.53). The Barber's point is a neat summation of Cervantes's own argument; the fact that all books of chivalry "have amounted to much less than superlative art" does not necessarily mean that the form of the genre excludes the possibility of producing "an admirable specimen" that might enrich Spain's culture and language "with the pleasing and precious treasure of eloquence."⁶ Later, when the Canon of Toledo adds his voice to the critical chorus that punctuates Cervantes's text, he must admit that though such works of imagination must in principle be seen as "prejudicial to the common weal," they can in practice (and when administered in controlled dosage) provide a balm of "innocent amusement, not only of the idle, but also of those who have most business." There is a place in even the most mercantile spirit for diversion, he suggests, "for the bow cannot possibly stand always bent, nor can human nature or human frailty subsist without lawful recreation" (I.xlvii.472; xlviii.480).

But as the prefatory advice of the friend foreshadows, Cervantes at the same time uses the *Quixote* to hold up a mirror to the traditions of "innocent

⁶ Felix Martinez-Bonati, *Don Quixote and the Poetics of the Novel*, trans. Dian Fox (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992), 182.

amusement" and "lawful recreation" associated with the chivalric romance, creating a book in which there seems to breathe an ambiguous yearning for a novel that is the same but not the same as those which it acknowledges openly as forebears. Attracted as both reader and writer to "the whole aim and idea of a chivalric story: to give pleasure, to entertain, to give release to an inspired imagination," Cervantes uses his own imaginative fiction to express his frustration with those authors past and present who have failed to engage the full possibilities of the rich tradition of the chivalric romance. The problem is not the form or the tradition, he asserts, but a failure of imagination "to take on and command the resources of prose and all that they rendered possible or impossible for a chivalric romance written for modern times."⁷

Indeed, it is the quixotic quest to find only total and unyielding correspondence with what has come before and to imitate past narrative models rather than to create new and original ones that becomes associated in the Cervantine imagination with a stultifying sense of stagnation and cliché. The culture of seventeenth-century Spain had become to Cervantes a structure within which imaginations had become closed and enclosed by a conspicuous belief in the continued vitality of literary and cultural discourses that had over time and through habitual usage become pre-ordered and restrictive. Not unlike Quixote's ill-fated quest to live his life according to the old ways of chivalric knights, such unquestioning attachment to past models can be only "tainted with negativity"⁸ when confronted by an imagination that aspires to an understanding of life and culture that remains open to all possibilities and contradictions. Cervantes's creative yearning in this sense is for a text that is at once attendant to but not bound by any

⁷ L.A. Murillo, *A Critical Introduction to Don Quixote* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 201-02.

of the stylistic constraints and inflexible patterns associated with the convention-laden styles on which he draws.⁹

Neatly avoiding allowing his own work to become either mere translation or straightforward imitation, Cervantes reflects the traditions of the chivalric romance in the mirror of his parody, revealing in his work a familiarity with and similarity to its obvious antecedents while at the same time never assuming the full modalities of these models. His is a work in which an ironic distance is always maintained, a distance established through the parodic recoding of the texts and conventions of the tradition so as to demand recognition of both sameness and difference. With his hero sallying forth aboard his personal mount, with no fixed destination, and accompanied by a "trusted" companion in Sancho Panza, Cervantes calls forth a plethora of chivalric conventions. In this case, however, the generic assumptions signalled by the sudden appearance of bifurcated roads, fearsome giants, tournaments and battles of honour, and the threat of enemy magicians are systematically called into play only to be reflected through the fun-house mirrors of humorous exaggerations, stylistic ruptures, insuperable paradoxes, and internal inconsistencies. Indeed, readers come to realize that the chivalric world never can exist as part of the basic worldly stratum of *Don Quixote*. Instead, such a world is "merely evoked, especially by the protagonist's mistaken interpretation of his surroundings [but also] by the well- or ill-intentioned lies and fabrications of friends and strangers" who undertake their artful perpetrations to humour the knight errant, to effect a cure, or simply to entertain themselves. "Within the fiction that is the *Quixote*," as Felix Martinez-Bonati stresses, "the chivalric world [remains] only a fantasy, constantly present but nothing more than imagined and bookish"; it remains

⁹ Martinez-Bonati, 201.

a world recalled only in the imaginations of the characters and in the memories of the readers.¹⁰

It is this intricately complex Cervantine question that remains at the centre of parody studies today, the question, that is, of how to produce a work that is at once the same as and different from those works that comprise the tradition with which any writer inevitably engages. As critics and theorists undertaking a discussion of parody are wont to acknowledge, one of the essential problems in formulating any answer to such a question lies in the fundamental act of definition, of "evolving a description that is broad enough to cover the range of activities implied by 'parody' but rigorous enough so that the term does not lose meaning altogether."¹¹ Despite routine assertions that "there are probably no transhistorical definitions of parody possible,"¹² writers interested in this complex discourse invariably set out to establish that "there are common denominators to all definitions ... in all ages,"¹³ in other words, that there does exist a shared sense of the word that allows scholars to speak with a modicum of confidence of a community of writers that includes both Aristophanes and Robert Kroetsch, and a corpus of texts that extends from *The Frogs* (c.405BC) to *The Studhorse Man* (1970).

Problematic, too, and somewhat curious given that parody has come to be seen as one of the major forms of artistic and inter-artistic discourse "in the context of [a] general modern interrogation of the nature of self-reference and legitimacy,"

¹⁰ Martinez-Bonati, 179-80.

¹¹ Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* 27-8.

¹² Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 10. See also Kuester: "The meaning of the term *parody*, more than that of many other literary notions, depends very much on the historical situation in which it is used" (4).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 10.

is the fact that parody still "has need of defenders."¹⁴ A legacy of contemptuous dismissals of parody as the mortal enemy of genius and originality has a long life which has left many general definitions of the term coloured by various and familiar derogations: "derivative," "plagiaristic," "parasitic," and "vampiric" to list but a few of the more familiar. Writers of and about parody seem forced to resign themselves to the need to justify their work in light of persistent suggestions that such practices are normally relegated "to the basement of low-grade literary activity"¹⁵ along with other impulses that are "surely little more than the sophisticated exercise of the primitive impulse to imitate and jeer."¹⁶

Accepting Joseph A. Dane's caveat that each definition of parody should be recognized as one of many "working hypotheses toward a history"¹⁷ of its theory and practice, I set out in the first section of this study with a twofold goal: to provide some sense of the most persistent notional and terminological confusions that have come to burden critical writing about parody in general and discussions of Canadian parodic writing in particular, and to establish a point of stable ground from which to begin reconsideration of parody in nineteenth-century English Canada. While in no way to be considered a history of parody -- for, as Linda Hutcheon observes, "many such histories already exist for each of the major national literatures"¹⁸ -- and taking as due warning Dane's observation that any definition of parody will be doomed at some point to "fail when confronted with particular texts and with their particular

¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵ Malcolm Bradbury, "An Age of Parody," *No, Not Bloomsbury* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1987), 53.

¹⁶ Barbara Hardy, "Parody," *Cassell's Encyclopedia of World Literature*, 3 vols, ed. S.H. Steinberg (London: Cassell, 1973), 416.

¹⁷ Joseph A. Dane, *Parody: Critical Concepts Versus Literary Practices, Aristophanes to Sterne* (Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1988), 10.

¹⁸ Hutcheon, *Theory* 19.

literary and cultural context,"¹⁹ the overview that follows does continue the critical practice of trying to skirt the Scylla and Charybdis of parody studies: definitions that become "so broad as to be virtually meaningless or so narrow as to preclude any common denominators."²⁰

Beginning in ancient Greece, this theoretical survey will end with a discussion of parody as it was reconceptualized through the theories of the Russian Formalists and of Mikhail Bakhtin; the terminal point of this overview is appropriate, I think, given both Bakhtin's emergence as one of the leading contributors to parody studies in the twentieth century and, as I will show, the relevance of this particular constellation of theories to Victorian Canadian culture. As Martin Kuester elucidates in introducing his study of English-Canadian parody of this century: "'Young' literatures such as the English Canadian one ideally illustrate such literary dependencies and parodic counter-reactions as they may be explained by a theory based on the Russian Formalists' interpretation of a literature as an evolutionary series."²¹

¹⁹ Dane, *Parody* 10. He notes that "[t]o be useful, a definition of parody must be what it describes -- a parody" (207), which might explain Dwight Macdonald's gamboling "definition" in *Parodies: An Anthology from Chaucer to Beerbohm -- and After* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960): "Parody belongs to the family of para-words: parasite, parapsychology, paratyphoid, paranoia (against mind), paradox (against received opinion), paraphrase, paranymp (bridesmaid). It is not related to Paraguay, although that country is beside and against Uruguay" (559).

²⁰ Ulrich Weisstein, "Parody, Travesty, and Burlesque: Imitations with a Vengeance," *Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association II*, ed. F. Jost (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), 802.

²¹ Kuester, 24. This connection between Bakhtinian theories and Canadian literature is not without precedence. A number of critics have in recent years explored the implications of Bakhtin's notions of dialogism and carnival through readings of contemporary Canadian fiction, notably Robert Kroetsch's "Carnival and Violence: A Meditation" (*Open Letter* 5th ser. 4 [1983]: 111-22), Sherrill Grace's "Listening to the Voice': Dialogism and the Canadian Novel" (*Future Indictive: Literary Theory and Canadian Literature*, ed. John Moss [Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1987]: 117-36), and Melanie Sexton's provocative, though yet unpublished, discussion of the Bakhtinian concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia in "The

What will emerge from this journey will be an understanding of parody as a cultural dialectic. That is, an understanding of parody as an act of comic and critical recombination or recontextualization that serves a dialectical and renovative as well as creative function within a culture. Allowing the parodist an opportunity to refunction established texts and generic models into new and liberating forms, parody manages, in general terms, "to inscribe continuity while permitting critical distance and change."²² More specifically, parody creates a dialectic of imitation and transformation that promotes a synthetic recoding by which the parodist reconsiders the epistemological processes and cultural assumptions that informed the writing and reception of its models without obliterating all traces of its kinship with them. Establishing "difference at the heart of similarity,"²³ parody is, in short, a practice that allows a writer to locate his or her work in relation to another textual and cultural tradition while "at the same time changing the direction of this tradition through [a] refunctioning of its model[s]."²⁴

Although critics continue to argue that the early history of the word "should not necessarily carry final authority in the dispute over what parody is,"²⁵ it remains essential to recognize that "[o]f all the terms still used to describe comic quotation,

Woman's Voice: The Post-Realist Fiction of Margaret Atwood, Mavis Gallant, and Alice Munro (Ph.D. diss, 1993). Examples of more specific applications of a Bakhtinian approach have been a number of articles reconsidering the novels of Robertson Davies, including Stephen Bonnycastle's "Robertson Davies and the Ethics of Monologue" (*Journal of Canadian Studies* 12.1 [1971]: 20-40) and Barbara Godard's "World of Wonders: Robertson Davies' Carnival" (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 30 [1984-85]: 239-86).

²² Hutcheon, *Theory* 102.

²³ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁴ Margaret A. Rose, *Parody//Metafiction: An Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reading of Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 158.

²⁵ Michele Hannoosh, *Parody and Decadence: Laforgue's Moralites legendaires* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1989), 11.

imitation, or transformation, parody alone is named in the classical literature and poetics of the Greeks."²⁶ Many modern discussions continue to suffer from a lack of sufficient attention to this etymology. In part a reflection of the obscurities and uncertainties that have prevailed in descriptions of the ancient uses and meanings of words for parody, this want of attention also attests to the complexity of the "nature and purpose of [the parodic], the techniques which it employs, and [its complicated relation] to other literary forms."²⁷ Two articles in particular, Fred W. Householder Jr.'s "Parodia" (1944) and F.J. Lelievre's "The Basis of Ancient Parody" (1954), remain seminal attempts at clarifying parody's provenance. And although there are reorganizations necessary when establishing a classical poetics as the foundation on which to construct modern multigeneric understandings, both discussions do illustrate a number of points central to an understanding of parody as cultural dialectic, specifically the nature of its relationship with the original or model text and its essential comic character.

Taking as his starting point the old Liddell and Scott definition of *parodia* as "a song or poem in which serious words are changed to as to become burlesque," Householder suggests that a thorough reconsideration of the history of the Greek word is in order, notably one that begins with what he identifies as the earliest use of the word in Aristotle's *Poetics* to describe the mock-epics of Hegemon and continues through to the later application of both a noun and a verb form used by the Aristophanic scholiasts. Acknowledging some connection between Aristotle's usage and an even earlier term, *parados*, which conveys "some such notion as 'singing in imitation'," he asserts that "the earliest attested sense" of *parodia* is as "a narrative poem of moderate length, in epic meter, using epic vocabulary, and treating a light,

²⁶ Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* 6.

²⁷ F.J. Lelievre, "The Basis of Ancient Parody," *Greece & Rome* Second Series 1.2 (June 1954): 66.

satirical, or mock-heroic subject." From this word, he continues, comes the verb *parodeo*, meaning "to sing, compose or write in the manner of mock-epic, to apply serious verses to humorous ends."²⁸

Echoing Householder's basic etymology and acknowledging that *parados* is "*prima facie* sufficiently straightforward" in its connection with verse composition, Lelievre extends his study to emphasize, first, that "parody ultimately comes to include prose" as well as verse, and, second, that elements of the Greek term are ambiguous. The word may be said, he suggests, "to develop two trends of meaning, being used to express such ideas as nearness, consonance, and derivation" (the sense of "parodia" as existing "by the side of" or "near to" the original) as well as the sense of "transgression, opposition, of difference."²⁹

It is important to note that while both scholars emphasize the parodic text's semblance with its model, neither goes so far as to suggest that parody is *only* a form of conscious imitation or that its semblance to past works is meant to signal similarity alone. Rather, both suggest that though parody maintains many of the essential structural and stylistic elements of the original to which it looks as a model, it must be conceived as distinct from such strictly imitative practices as plagiarism and forgery in that it is composed "conformably to an original but with a difference."³⁰ Both argue, too, that parody marks this difference through the introduction of alterations that may vary in degree from the "substitution of one or more words" to rendering the model text "so changed as to be little more than an imitation of [its original] grammar and rhythm."³¹ As critics have continued to

²⁸ Fred W. Householder Jr., "Parodia," *Journal of Classical Philology* 39.1 (1944): 8, 3.

²⁹ Lelievre, 66.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Householder, 5.

emphasize, although the parodist is "capable of insinuating himself into his model, of assimilating and reproducing its most striking features" as a means of inscribing a sense of continuity with previous works, he or she must always do so "without ever *becoming* his model. That is, in order to remain effective as parody, parody should not come too near its original,"³² should never be perfect imitation but rather produce similarity with a "critical difference." Whether we call this differentiation "imitation with a vengeance"³³ or "ironic trans-contextualization and inversion,"³⁴ the result is a work that is at once recognizable when standing alongside the original but which has also been rendered recognizably different.³⁵

Given that parodic refunctioning gains its effect through establishing a sense of difference or incongruity between itself and an original, an affiliation with the comic seems natural.³⁶ Indeed, most critics and writers considering the comic from Aristotle to Nash have assumed that some form of incongruity is the technical

³² J.G. Riewald, "Parody as Criticism," *Neophilologus* 50 (1966): 127.

³³ Weisstein, 808.

³⁴ Hutcheon, *Theory* 15.

³⁵ Riewald, 129.

³⁶ See, for instance, Rose's suggestion in *Parody//Metafiction* that if "incongruity or discrepancy will be taken as a significant distinguishing factor" in a definition of parody then an attribution of comic effect "to the perception of [this] incongruity" is unprompted. Moreover, she suggests such an attribution "may bring us closer to the classical understanding of parody as a device for comic quotation, without obscuring the changing historical nature of both the subject-matter of the parody and the form itself" (22-3).

Granted, not all modern critics have found such an attribution amenable to their working definitions of parody. Gary Saul Morson, for instance, argues that while "[p]arody recontextualizes its object so as to make it serve tasks contrary to its original tasks ... this functional shift need not be in the direction of humour" ("Parody, History, and Metaparody," 69-71), while in Canada both Hutcheon and Kuester work from the assumption that "humour is a possible quality of parodies but not a necessary prerequisite" (Kuester 3). I generally concur with Rose that such attempts to erase the comic from parody may be attributed to theoretical demands to "stretch" the meaning and function of parody to cover an ever-expanding body of "fashionable" and by implication more sophisticated metafictional and intertextual forms (*Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* 28).

and affective basis of comedy. Quintilian, for instance, draws attention to this relationship in his discussion of laughter, wit, and humour in the sixth book of his *Institutio Oratoria*. Having established a taxonomy of humorous forms, he turns to a discussion of what he considers the finest of these forms: "Superest genus decipiendi opinionem aut dicta aliter intelligendi, quae sunt omni hac materia vel venustissima" ["There remains the prettiest of all forms of humour, namely the jest that depends for success on deceiving anticipations or taking another's words in a sense other than he intended"].³⁷ Aligning his "prettiest of all forms of humour" with the practice of refunctioning previously written texts toward an end other than that originally intended, Quintilian details some of the various techniques by which such humorous effects may be accomplished, noting in the process that such strategies have long been associated with parody: "Adiuvant urbanitatem et versus commode positi, seu toti ut sunt (quod adeo facile est, ut Ovidius ex tetrastichon Macri carmine librum in malos poetas composerit)... seu verbis ex parte mutatis... seu ficti notis versibus similes, quae dicitur" ["Apt quotation of verse may add to the effect of wit. The lines may be quoted in their entirety without alteration, which is so easy a task that Ovid composed an entire book against bad poets out of lines taken from the quatrains of Macer... or the words may be slightly altered... or again we may invent verses resembling well-known lines, a trick styled parody by the Greeks"].³⁸

Although neither Householder nor Lelievre comments directly on this sense of parodic refunctioning as a source of comic incongruity, both do suggest that the majority of works to which words for parody are attached by the ancients were understood as being humorous in the sense of producing effects characteristic of the

³⁷ VI.iii.84. Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

³⁸ VI.iii.96-7.

comic. Beginning his discussion of parody's comic nature somewhat tentatively, observing that *parodia* soon came under the "influence of [an] etymological consciousness" from which emerged "the nonhumorous application of the rhetoricians," Householder does recognize with Lelievre that in practice the scholiasts applied the term "to the insertion in comedy of a brief tragic, lyric, or epic passage" and, more generally, to "comic quotation."³⁹ Lelievre is less equivocal in forwarding his view that "in addition to the basic sense" of the classical understanding of *parodia* as both imitation and differentiation the word acquired in general usage "a humorous connotation." The ancient reader, "finding parody mentioned or discussed in, for example, the *Poetics* or in Athenaeus, would naturally think in terms of humorous imitation."⁴⁰ It is this essential connection between parody and humour that Lelievre concludes can be used to delineate the boundaries of ancient parody in those instances when its practice overlaps with classical forms frequently considered kindred, notably "cento" and "siloi."⁴¹

It is important to note that in tracing this affiliation between parody and humour, both scholars are quick to establish that though ancient parody was linked with humour, it was not in its original context considered synonymous with malicious diminution or ridicule of the original author or work. Moreover, both go so far as to stress that it is misleading to equate the laughter created in parody with any sense of derision. "[I]n fact," they agree, "it would *not* be true of most ancient parody to claim that it is so used" given that there "does not seem to be a grain of evidence that any ancient [parodies] were designed to ridicule" either specific authors or

³⁹ Householder, 5.

⁴⁰ Lelievre, 71.

⁴¹ For more on the relationship between parody, cento, and sillo, see also Weisstein, 806.

specific works.⁴² From Aristophanes onward, however, the understanding of parody's comic nature has been obscured to varying degrees by this persistent sense of ridicule or, at best, of comic diminution.

One of the earliest and perhaps the most influential Renaissance discussion of parody, Julius C. Scaliger's *Poetices Libri Septem* (1561), reveals a key source of the problematic legacy of considering parody as synonymous with ridicule or attack. Basing his description on his own interpretations of the writings of Atheneaus and Aristotle, Scaliger highlights parody in terms of the various songs sung in imitation of the Homeric rhapsodists: "Rhapsodia inversa mutatis vocibus ad ridicula sensum retrahens" ["An inverted rhapsody taking on a ridiculous sense through word changes"]. Despite Kuester's recent acknowledgement that Scaliger saw humour as an element inherent in parody,⁴³ the most notable effect arising from Scaliger's text has been to link parody with a sense of "ridicula," a word that can be translated as laughable in the sense of being "funny" or "amusing" (*rideo*) but which also carries the Horatian sense of "laughing at" from a position of perceived superiority. As Margaret Rose summarizes:

while Scaliger cannot be held responsible for all of the negative connotations attributed in recent centuries ... his use of the Latin word 'ridiculous' to describe the comic aspects of parody may be said to have led some English critics at least to view the latter in a more negative light than was necessary because of the associations of the word ridicule with mockery in English.⁴⁴

⁴² Lelievre, 71 (italics mine). See also Householder, 3, 6.

⁴³ Kuester, 8.

⁴⁴ Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* 9-10. See also Henryk Markiewicz, "On Definitions of Literary Parody," *To Honour Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, 3 vol. (The Hague: Mouton, 1967): "The authority and popularity of this book may have influenced the propagation of the term" parody at a time when it seemed to be falling from usage (II: 1265)

Indeed, Scaliger's definition gained authority with subsequent writers on parody, informing much of their critical language as late as 1895, when an anonymous essayist in *The Quarterly Review* argued that it was still the most acceptable general definition of parody available.⁴⁵

Not surprisingly, when John Dryden discusses parody in his "Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1693), his understanding is nearer to that of Scaliger than to the more contemporary and benign definition of a writer like John Florio, who advances a relatively classic understanding of parody in his *World of Wordes, Or Most copious, and exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* (1598).⁴⁶ Defining parody in broad terms, Dryden attempts to align it with *silloi*, the often non-humorous epic poems written in mock-heroic hexameters that attack philosophical arguments:

The *Grecians* ... had another kind of Poem, which they call'd *Silli*; which were more of kin to the *Roman* Satire: Those *Silli* were indeed Invective Poems, but of a different Species from the *Roman* Poems of *Ennius*... *Horace*, and the rest of their Successors From some Fragments of the *Silli*, written by *Timon* [of Phlius], we may find, that they were Satyrique Poems, full of *Parodies*; that is, of Verses patch'd up from great Poets, and turn'd into another Sence than their Author intended them Of the same manner are our Songs, which are turn'd

⁴⁵ Anon., "Parody," *The Quarterly Review* (July 1895): 7-9.

⁴⁶ Florio's definition of parody as "a turning of a verse by altering some words" (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1972: 259) was echoed 150 years later by Samuel Johnson in his two-volume *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). Although Johnson bases his derivation of parody on French rather than Greek sources, his sense of parody remains true to the classical spirit of it as "[a] kind of writing in which the words of an author or his thoughts are taken, and by a slight change adapted to some new purpose." Subsequent Johnson-derived dictionaries, including the popular Canadian edition of Alexander Reid's *A Dictionary of the English Language, containing the pronunciation, etymology, and explanation of all the words authorized by eminent writers: to which are added a vocabulary of the roost of English words, and an accented list of Greek, Latin, and Scripture proper names* (1871), continue this tradition.

into Burlesque; and the serious words of the Author perverted into a ridiculous meaning To these *Silli* consisting of *Parodies*, we may properly add, the Satires which were written against particular Persons.

Citing as particular examples such "parodic" writings as the *Odes* and *Epodes* of Horace and "the Invective of *Ovid* against *Ibis*," Dryden compounds his terminological slackness by subordinating parody within a broader category of satiric literature, calling it specifically "the Under-wood of Satire, rather than the Timber-Trees."⁴⁷

As Judith Priestman concludes, Dryden's explicit linking of parody with *silloi* proved to be the next significant step in the process by which parody came to be understood as a mocking counterpoint to an original, as a refunctioning undertaken by a writer who was working "'against' his model in the sense that he might want to make it look absurd" or ridiculous.⁴⁸ In his "Apology" for *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), for instance, Jonathan Swift suggests a certain objectionable quality inherent in what he calls the "exposure" brought to bear on a subject through parody, warning that "[t]here is one Thing which the judicious Reader cannot but have observed, that some of those Passage in the Discourse, which appear most liable to Objection are what they call Parodies, where the Author personates the Style and Manner of other Writers, whom he has a mind to expose" for their "Errors, Ignorance, Dullness and Villany."⁴⁹ Alexander Pope uses the word parody in much the same way when he attempts to describe those occasions in his writing when the

⁴⁷ John Dryden, *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis Translated into English Verse* (London: Printed for Jacob Tomson at the Judge's-Head in Chaucery-Lane, 1693), xx-xxi.

⁴⁸ Judith Priestman, "The Age of Parody: Literary Parody and Some Nineteenth-Century Perspectives" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kent at Canterbury, 1980), 10.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Swift, *The Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg and William Bowman Piper (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), 266-7.

particulars of style from well-known extracts from Virgil and Homer are engaged to ridicule contemporary subjects of less than epic proportion.

It was around the eighteenth century, too, that definitions of parody, already burdened by a persistent synonymy with ridicule, became increasingly intertwined with the ongoing debates over the nature and moral implications of burlesque. A term "of more recent origin than the Greek words for parody"⁵⁰ and imported into the English tradition from French through the sixteenth-century Italian term *burla* (to ridicule), burlesque had, by this time, acquired a diversity of meanings. Most of these were pejorative, with a noted emphasis on comic diminution, as in application of a "high" style to a "low" or trifling subject.⁵¹ Despite these distinct lines of descent, the terms parody and burlesque soon came to be understood as interchangeable, with their synonymy grounded in a common propensity for negativity or even destructiveness. Joseph Addison, for instance, applies the term burlesque to two works often cited as exemplars of ancient and modern parody, Lucian's *Gods* and *Don Quixote*.⁵² Indeed, the practice in such notable lexicons from this period as Cotgraves's French dictionary of 1611, the 1694 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Academie Francoise*, and Thomas Nelson's expanded

⁵⁰ Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* 54.

⁵¹ Markiewicz, 1266.

⁵² Joseph Addison, "Laughter and Ridicule," *The Spectator* #249, 15 December 1711; rpt. in *Addison's Essays from The Spectator* (London: George Routledge, 1886), 305-7. There are "two great Branches of Ridicule in Writing," he suggests, and they are "Comedy and Burlesque." Whereas "[comedy] ridicules Persons by drawing them in their proper characters," burlesque raises laughter "by drawing them quite unlike themselves," by representing them through effects that render the target transformed but recognizable.

1707 and 1719 editions of Thomas Blount's *Glossographia*,⁵³ was to subsume parody under broader definitions of burlesque, travesty, cento, or silloi.⁵⁴

Another unfortunate effect of this persistent conflation of parody and burlesque has been the tendency to advance a definition of parody grounded in an oversimplified and often reductive division of form and content. Such structural definitions of parody have been established according to a fairly standardized set of criteria which ultimately limit parody to "a kind of literary mimicry which retains the form or stylistic character of the primary work, but substitutes alien subject matter or content."⁵⁵ Within this paradigm, the parodist "proceeds by imitating as closely as he can the formal conventions of the [particular] work being parodied" (taking into consideration the countless "elements subsumed under the word *form*") while establishing the "jarring incongruity" traditionally seen to lie at the heart of the comic text by "substitut[ing] subject matter, or content ... which [is] entirely alien to

⁵³ Interestingly, the earlier fifth edition of Blount's book hints of an allegiance with Florio in his notation for the the verb "parodize": "to change the signification of a Verse by altering some words."

⁵⁴ See also Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee's chapter on translation in *Essays on the Principles of Translation* (1813). As I have suggested, modern compilers and critics have perpetuated this conflationary practice. In introducing his *A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English*, George Kitchin argues that "[f]or the sake of variation" the terms parody and burlesque would be considered synonymous. "[T]he use of the one or the other continuously," he suggests, "would have been monotonous" (1931; New York: Russell and Russell, 1967, *xxii*). More confusing still has been the critical reliance on the tradition established by Richmond P. Bond's classic study of *English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750* (1932; New York: Russell and Russell, 1960) which limits parody within the broader and more sophisticated class of burlesque. In Bond's schema, parody is a specific application of a "high" style (3-5). John D. Jump's *Burlesque* (London: Methuen, 1972) reiterates Bond's distinction, as do such prominent literary dictionaries and handbooks as the *Dictionary of World Literary Terms* (1972) and the enlarged edition of the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1974). See also Joe Lee Davis, "Criticism and Parody," *Thought* 26.101 (1951): 181; and John A. Yunck, "The Two Faces of Parody," *Iowa English Yearbook* 8 (1963): 30.

⁵⁵ G.D. Kiremidjian, "The Aesthetics of Parody," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28 (1969): 232.

that form."⁵⁶ More restrictive still within this view is the fact that parody becomes limited to the refunctioning of a specific identifiable work or author whereas burlesque is considered a freer form "modeled on a whole class of works or no particular work."⁵⁷ Other critics, more hesitant to rend form and content in such an explicit fashion, develop elaborate typologies of the parodic that differentiate it according to its emphasis on *either* the transformation of the formal elements of its model *or* a refunctioning of its content.⁵⁸

This troublesome conflation was reiterated by Henry Fielding in his famous "Preface" to the earliest English parodic novel, *Joseph Andrews* (1742).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Householder, 1. Although parodic refunctionings of a model's content may prove more difficult to detect and reconstruct than those focusing singularly on the formal elements of a particular text, such rewritings have a long and active history. Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), with its unexpected comic juxtapositions of the usually harmonious elements of a story of a gentleman's "grand" tour of France and Italy, is an example of parody which imitates and then changes both the form and content of its model. Indeed, part of what parody does in the process of generating similarity and difference is to raise "the question of what the relation is between form and content," forcing us in the process "to become aware of the manner in which we experience a work of art as a fusion of form and content" (Kiremidjian, "Aesthetics" 233).

⁵⁸ Even a partial survey of recent examples of this typographical impulse gives some sense of both its persistence in parody studies and its potential for adding to the terminological haze. Carolyn Wells's *A Parody Anthology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904) opens this century with a designation in terms of word-rendering, form-rendering, and sense-rendering parodies (xxv), a structure that carries with some slight variation through such subsequent works as Christopher Stone's *Parody* (London: Martin Secker, 1914) and John Olin Eidson's entry on "Parody" in the *Dictionary of World Literary Terms* (1970). Literary critics are by no means immune. Yunck simplifies his distinction to what he calls "the two faces of parody," specifically what he calls exemplary as opposed to stylistic parody (30-1), while Archibald Bolling Shepperson dedicates nearly an entire chapter of his *The Novel in Motley: A History of the Burlesque Novel in English* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967) to descriptions of his various layerings. Adding more distinctions still are such important critics as Ziva Ben-Porat, who distinguishes between purely comic, instrumental/satirical, and serious parody in the important "Ideology, Genre, and Serious Parody" (1985), and Henryk Markiewicz, who posits a distinction between what he calls parody *sensu largo* (comical recasting of a literary model) and parody *sensu stricto* (comical exaggeration and condensation of the features of a literary model) in his "On Definitions of Literary Parody" (1967).

Acknowledging openly his debt to Cervantes, Fielding promises readers a tale "Written in Imitation of The *Manner* of CERVANTES, Author of *Don Quixote*" and the writer from whom one of the great English parodists "learned more than any other."⁵⁹ Appropriately, Fielding delivers on this promise, reconfiguring the madness of Cervantes's knight errant into the naive, and endearingly comic, idealism of Parsons Adams.⁶⁰ Problematic, though, is Fielding's insistence that parody and burlesque can be understood as synonyms:

In the Diction, I think, Burlesque itself may be sometimes admitted, of which many Instances will occur in this Work, as in the Descriptions of the Battles, and some other Places, not necessarily to be pointed out to the Classical Reader; for whose Entertainment those Parodies or Burlesque Imitations are chiefly calculated.

Moreover, Fielding separates these "parodies or burlesque imitations" from the more pleasing and gentle spirit associated with what he calls great comic writing. Burlesque, as he sees it, "is ever the exhibition of what is monstrous and unnatural, and where our delight, if we examine it, arises from the surprizing absurdity, as in appropriating the manner of the highest to the lowest, or *e converso*."⁶¹

Although the tendency of the day was to conflate parody with burlesque, not all writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw the parodic as "the

⁵⁹ Anthony Hassall, "Fielding and the Novel as Parody," *Southern Review* 13.1 (1980): 22. Hassall suggests that Fielding saw "in *Don Quixote* not merely a *sui generis* masterpiece, but the model for the novel as the new comic epic."

⁶⁰ Fielding's allegiance with Cervantes has generated extensive literature. Important recent discussions that bear witness to Fielding's position in the Cervantine tradition include Stephen Gilman, "On Henry Fielding's Reception of *Don Quijote*," in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honour of Robert Brian Tate*, ed. Ian Michael (Cambridge: Oxford UP, 1986): 27-38; Anthony Mortimer, "The Manner of Cervantes': Some Notes on *Joseph Andrews* and *Don Quixote*," *Colloquium Helveticum* 16 (1992): 69-83; and Ian A. Bell, *Henry Fielding: Authorship and Authority* (London: Longman, 1994).

⁶¹ Henry Fielding, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (1742; London: Penguin, 1977), 26.

offspring of a dangerous spirit of ridicule, and the malicious amusement of superficial minds."⁶² For the French critic and parodist Louis Fuzelier, whose four-volume edition of *Les Parodies du Nouveau Theatre Italien* (1738) became a key source for such important nineteenth-century English critics writing on parody as Francis Jeffrey and Isaac D'Israeli, parody was seen as a "useful ridicule." Writing to justify his controversial parody of Antoine Houdart de la Motte's *Inez de Castro* (1723), Fuzelier argued that "far from converting virtue into paradox and degrading truth by ridicule," parody "will prompt reconsideration only of that which "is chimerical and false." It "is not a piece of buffoonery," he concludes, "so much as a critical exposition" that serves to "unmask" those works which have become stale or which serve only to "disguise vices into virtues."⁶³

Quoting Fuzelier's French text at length, and looking to such classic prose parodists as Cervantes and Fielding as exemplars, D'Israeli advances a similar case for parody in the second series of his *Curiosities of Literature* (1823). Beginning with the observation that "[p]arodies were frequently practised by the ancients, and with them, like ourselves, consisted of a work grafted on another work, but which turned on a different subject by a slight change of the expressions," he notes that it is through the introduction of "human nature" that such compositions take on "variable character"; the resultant parody might be celebrated as "the sport of fancy, the innocent child of mirth; or a satirical arrow drawn from the quiver of caustic criticism." On a less positive note, D'Israeli cautioned, it may also deteriorate to "that malignant art" often called parody but which, in fact, "only studies to make the original of the parody, however beautiful, contemptible and ridiculous."⁶⁴

⁶² Isaac D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, Second Series (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1823), 347.

⁶³ Translation quoted in D'Israeli (347) and Priestman (14).

⁶⁴ D'Israeli, 345.

Given that both mere imitation and open hostility toward one's model were generally unacceptable to the Victorian mind,⁶⁵ for what is such an attitude, as George Meredith queried, but "an excuse to be idly minded, or personally lofty, or comfortably narrow, not perfectly humane,"⁶⁶ D'Israeli's general approval of parody as a genial and "refined instructor for the public, whose discernment is often blinded by ... prejudice"⁶⁷ proved a useful justification for the practice of parody by those

⁶⁵ It was the persistent perception of parody's diminishing aspect that was to be the focus of a number of prominent mid- and late Victorian writers and critics. In the third volume of his *Modern Painters* (1856), for example, John Ruskin addresses imitative arts in general as a movement away from the virtues of "genuineness" and imagination. Whereas the genuine writer "depends on [the] single glorious faculty of getting to the spring of things and working out from that," the unimaginative writer works only on pre-existing surfaces: "The unimaginative writer ... as he has never pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it. If he has to paint a passion, he remembers the external signs of it, he collects expressions of it from other writers, he searches for similes, he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold disjointed heap." The byproduct of such unimaginative endeavour is more akin to "the thick, hot, unrefreshing drainage from other men's meadows" than to "the coolness, and clearness, and deliciousness of the water fresh from the fountain head" (*The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn [London: George Allen, 1903], 252-3).

Others chose to state similar charges against parody in more direct terms. George Eliot launches a vehement attack against what she sees as "the damaging tendency" of the spirit of burlesque/parody, with its reliance on "contempt and exultant gibing." Described variously as "a new Famine, a meagre fiend, with lewd grin and clumsy hoof," parody is presented as "breathing a moral mildew over the harvest of our human sentiment," a pernicious and insatiable presence that takes as its fuel those works of literature which communicate to a culture "every sacred, heroic, and pathetic theme which serves to make up the treasure of human admiration, hope, and love." Suggesting that parodic writing caters to "degraded appetites," debasing the works of Shakespeare and Dante "to the taste of rich fishmongers in the stalls and their assistants in the gallery," Eliot ponders the future such debasement may promise. Her conclusion bristles with class as well as literary implications: these are "premonitory signs of a hideous millennium, in which the lion will have to lie down with the lascivious monkeys, whom (if we may trust Pliny) his soul naturally abhors" ("Debasing the Moral Currency," *George Eliot's Works*, vol. 10 [Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1894], 103-8).

⁶⁶ George Meredith, "On the Idea of Comedy and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit," in *The Works of George Meredith*, vol. 32 (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1898), 48. See also Walter Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (1957; New Haven: Yale UP, 1970): "The hostility to derisive mockery, and to wit and ridicule in general, was strongly impressed on the Victorian mind" (300).

⁶⁷ D'Israeli, 345-46.

Victorian writers who continued to see it as one of "the most ancient of comicalities."⁶⁸ Indeed, as an anonymous essayist noted in *The Saturday Review* in 1885, "the art of parody" must be recognized as "a method, often more truly efficacious than more serious castigation, of exposing incompetence and affectation" in the modern world.⁶⁹ It was this sense of parody as useful ridicule that was for many writers a welcome model that persisted well into the next century, informing such general studies as Arthur Shadwell Martin's *On Parody* (1896), Christopher Stone's *Parody* (1914), and Mrs. Herbert Richardson's monograph of the same title published under the auspices of The English Association in 1935.⁷⁰

Of the three, the most representative emphasis on parody as "useful ridicule" can be found in Stone's book. Seeing in the parodic a vital expression of "the nervous energy of the age," Stone acknowledges parody's status by this time as "a department of pure criticism'." Providing commentary "of a most pungent quality; revealing to the reader peculiarities of style and thought which could hardly

⁶⁸ Anon., "Parody," *The Westminster Review* 62 (July 1854): 52.

⁶⁹ 14 February 1885, 204. Rpt. in Walter Hamilton, *Parodies of the Works of English and American Authors*, 6 vols (1884-89; New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), II.105.

⁷⁰ Arthur Shadwell Martin *On Parody* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1896), Mrs. Herbert Richardson, *Parody* (London: The English Association, 1935). Martin was also characteristically late Victorian in his reiterations of the view that parody was to considered as a mirror revealing more of the mental and moral characteristics of the poet than we could gather from an hour's lectures. It betrays his literary style, his ultra-simplicity, not to say commonness of diction, his dwelling upon unnecessary details, his almost driveling over trivialities, his intimate knowledge of, and sympathy with, the workings of Nature, his slimness of incident and puerility of narrative. All of these are pointed out one by one, but without comment. (99-100)

Despite the efficacy of his critical discourse, however, the parodist must always attend to a strict decorum when it comes to his comic touch: "Parody should smile, not sneer," he is reminded. The "province" of his refunctioning "is to criticise and to amuse, but not to disfigure and to debase" through "vulgar abuse" or "ill-natured personal attack." With such standards maintained, Martin concludes, parody "needs no apologist" since "[i]ts aim is a reforming and purifying one" (95, 116).

be detected under a less searching light,"⁷¹ parody functions "[i]n the sphere of Letters" as "the quizzical art, the art of the man with the eyeglass, quick to seize the mannerisms of his betters and to raise a laugh by a piece of outrageous fooling, or by whiff of gentle malice."

Often substituting the more evocative and troublesome "ridicule" for "gentle malice," Stone concludes that it is through this critical aspect that parody might become a "society's most effective means of curing inelasticity. It explodes the pompous, corrects the well-meaning eccentric, cools the fanatical, and prevents the incompetent from achieving success. Truth will prevail over it, falsehood will cower under it."⁷² He sees in parody a critical counterpoint to one particularly popular form of pseudo-criticism, namely that practiced by the majority of contemporary book reviewers, "who [having] learned that the tests of [their] competence are a quick grasp of superficialities, a well-stocked memory within reach of [their] arm-chair, and a power of compressed utterance, [are] never likely to develop into a critic of any weight." In the light of such a bewildering and irritating "turmoil of cleverness," who better than the parodist, Stone asks, "to guide the taste of an ever-increasing mob of readers intent on some new thing?"⁷³

Parody came to be understood within a Victorian milieu, then, as discourse that fulfilled "a fundamentally critical act of assessment and acclimatization"⁷⁴ and functioned in more subtle and inevitably more entertaining ways than ordinary

⁷¹ Stone, 18, 52.

⁷² Ibid., 7-8.

⁷³ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁴ Priestman, 1. As Robert Alter notes in his *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1975), "parody is precisely the literary mode that fuses creation with critique" (25). Emphasizing the parodic strategies of Sterne over those of Cervantes, Alter argues that in "all [the] cap-and-bell antics" of *Tristram Shandy* readers see "one of the shrewdest literary critics of his century" (33).

literary criticism. Neither inclined toward "a confrontation with the original" nor freed toward an "uncontrolled modulation" that would rend it from any contact with preexisting patterns, parody is a controlled transformation that engages comic incongruity as a means by which to "criticize obliquely by suggestion or implication." Foregrounding as part of its own act of creation the "most striking peculiarities of subject matter and style of a literary work, an author, or a school or type of writing," it uses a comic shorthand that is able to cloak in humour "what the judicial or academic critic must write out at length."⁷⁵ Importantly, it is this late Victorian emphasis on parody's commingling of imitation, transformation, criticism, and humour that led the Russian Formalists to turn their attention to parody at the beginning of the twentieth century and to reconceptualize it as an important catalyst of cultural innovation and literary evolution.

Although many of his statements on parodic refunctioning are brief and not consistently developed, Viktor Shklovsky is perhaps the best-known of the early formalist theorists to write about parody. Indeed, it is from the essays that came to constitute his influential *Theory of Prose* (1925) that a number of general literary characteristics have been extrapolated from readings of parodic texts and applied to literature in general, most notably those characteristics subsequently considered in discussions of "discontinuity" (through the writings of Foucault) and "intertextuality" (through the writings of Bakhtin and Kristeva).

Generally concerned with the processes by which language and literary conventions become "algebrized" or "automized" to a point at which usage and reception permit "the greatest economy of perceptual effort,"⁷⁶ Shklovsky advances the concept of "defamiliarization" as a means of counteracting the effects of what he

⁷⁵ Riewald, 127, 129, 131.

⁷⁶ Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (Elmood Park: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990), 5.

sees as a regressive, habituated usage. By refunctioning otherwise familiar narrative devices "in such a way that the perceiver, pausing in his reading, dwells on the text," the strategy of "laying bare"⁷⁷ those elements of narrative building which have become outmoded or clichéd, effectively draws attention to their accepted petrification within a reading culture. As Shklovsky's contemporary Boris Tomashevsky observed in his extended discussion of such techniques, this "play upon generally known literary rules firmly entrenched in tradition and used by the author in other than their traditional ways is indispensable for parody."⁷⁸

Noting that the "functions of parody are many," both Shklovsky and Tomashevsky reiterate the significance of parody's transformative function, seeing in it an opportunity for a refreshed *critical* as well as creative view of the "old and habitual as if it were new and unusual."⁷⁹ It is at the point when a reader is prompted to pause to consider and reconsider the familiar pushed to the limits of familiarity that the literary work in general, and the parodic in particular "attains its greatest and most-long lasting impact."⁸⁰ As Tomashevsky notes:

Thus devices are born, grow old, and die. To the extent that their use becomes automatic, they lose their efficacy and cease to be included on the list of acceptable techniques. Renovated devices with new functions and new meanings are required to prevent techniques from becoming mechanical. Such renovation is like the use of a quotation

⁷⁷ Ibid., 147.

⁷⁸ Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1965), 80. And later: "in conventional parodies, where we see a deliberate display of techniques... the so-called 'laying bare' of a device (its use without the motivation which traditionally accompanies it) is an indication of the literariness of the literary work" (84).

⁷⁹ Ibid., 94, 85.

⁸⁰ Shklovsky, 12.

from an old author in a new application and with a new meaning.⁸¹

Sharing much of Shklovsky and Tomashevsky's basic understanding of the role of parody in the transformation of algebrized conventions and literary devices, Yury Tynyanov expands this general interest into a more systematic consideration of parody as a catalyst of literary change in his influential *Dostoyevsky i Gogol [K Teorii parodii]* (1921). Echoing the earlier formalist emphasis on defamiliarization as a means of counterbalancing the algebrization of literary devices, he points to two distinct yet related strategies by which such transformation of the familiar can be effected: stylization and parody. Closely related in that "[b]oth live a double life" as imitation and creation of a text, parody is distinguished from stylization on the now-familiar basis of incongruity and differentiation. Whereas stylization is defined by "a correspondence of the two levels" of this double life by which "the stylizing [refunctioning] level and the stylized [model] level"⁸² are rendered congruous, parody is defined by "an 'obligatory' (*objazatel'na*) discrepancy (*nevjazka*)"⁸³ between the two levels. Marked not only by similarity but by sameness and difference, parody foregrounds "the palpability of the disjunction" between the parodic stylization and its original. It is important to note that even when palpable, the refunctionings introduced by the parodist cannot be of such a degree as to render the original unrecognizable. "Parody exists," Tynyanov concludes, "insofar as

⁸¹ Tomashevsky, 95. See also Tzvetan Todorov's discussion of these notions of renovation in "The Origins of Genres," *Genres in Discourse*, trans. Catherine Porter (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990), 13-26.

⁸² Yury Tynyanov, *Dostoyevsky i Gogol [K Teorii parodii]* ["Dostoyevsky and Gogol: Towards a Theory of Parody"], *Dostoyevsky and Gogol: Texts and Criticism*, trans. and ed. Priscilla Meyer and Stephen Rudy (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 104.

⁸³ Tynyanov, 104. In an article "Towards a New Understanding of Parody" (*European Studies Journal* 2.2 [1985]: 7-13), Maja Herman-Sekulic suggests that Tynyanov's emphasis on this obligatory discrepancy as "one crucial difference" distinguishing parody from stylization (the other is parody's comic nature) leads to a new understanding of parody as "not only discrepancy, but also a shift and displacement (of foreground and background material) within its dual structure" (8).

a second level of the work parodied is visible through the surface of a work. The more narrow, definite and limited this second level is, the more all the details of the work carry a double nuance and are perceived from a double standpoint, and the stronger the parody will be.⁸⁴ As in *palimpsestus codex*, a trace of sameness must remain at the heart of the parodic work.

Noting that the effect of this disjunction is perceived only if the convention that is refunctioned has become overly familiar to readers, Tynyanov suggests that it is through this attention to the renovation of such devices that parody becomes the catalyst of literary change, a process of critical renewal that leads to "the organization of new material, in the presence of which the old device" is not erased but is renovated.⁸⁵ Parody in this sense works by means of what Robert Scholes has called "a dialectic of defamiliarization"⁸⁶ to represent to a culture a potential new stage of its literary-historical development, one that is at once respectful of the traditions and models from which the present emerged while struggling to break free from the burden of those traditions in order to create and explore new imaginative opportunities.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ibid., 104, 109, 117.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 114. See also Boris Eichenbaum's "O Henry and the Theory of the Short Story" (1925; Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1968):
Stages in the evolution of every genre can be observed when the genre, once utilized as an entirely serious or 'high' one, undergoes regeneration, coming out in parodic or comic form ... Local and historical conditions bring about the most diverse variations, of course, but the process itself is a sort of *sui generis* law of evolution, maintains its effects.... It is this way that the regeneration of a genre comes about -- a transition from one set of possibilities and forms to another. (7)

⁸⁶ Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1974), 185.

⁸⁷ See also Herman-Sekulic, 7; and Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* 120.

Often critical of the early formalist ideas which he adopted and further developed, it is Mikhail Bakhtin whose work has emerged as "one of the most detailed, however unsystematic, discussions of parody that has been written in modern times."⁸⁸ Whereas such formalist predecessors as Shklovsky and Tynyanov considered parody in an isolated literary context, moving only in their later writing toward a formalistic-sociological approach, Bakhtin advances even in his early essays an understanding of parody within a sociocultural context, specifically as a manifestation of what he calls variously "polyglossia" and "heteroglossia" -- the struggle of discourses within a single text.

Like Tynyanov, Bakhtin sees in parody a double structure, in his case a "double-voiced" discourse that "has a twofold direction ... directed both toward the referential object of speech, as in ordinary discourse, and toward *another's discourse*"⁸⁹ within a historical and cultural context. Parody reveals to Bakhtin a marked tendency to engage in a dialogue with other, often single-voiced or monologic discourses, evaluating them against its own double-voicedness in order to reveal their conventionality and algebrized limitations. Although he never refers directly to Tynyanov's emphasis on disjunction between the various voices engaged in such a dialogue, Bakhtin establishes a sense of difference as the aspect of parody that distinguishes it from such other double-voiced discourses as stylization and *skaz*. Again, the expression of voices found in stylization is ultimately corroborative and consonant with the model discourse, while that which occurs in parody introduces

⁸⁸ Clive R. Thomson, "Parody/Genre/Ideology," *Le Singe a la porte: Vers une theorie de la parodie*, ed. Groupar (New York: Lang, 1984), 100. Dane, concurs, calling Bakhtin's writing on parody "unquestionably the most important and influential to appear in this century" (*Parody* 8).

⁸⁹ Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* 126.

incongruity, what Bakhtin characterizes as a semantic intention in opposition to that of the original.⁹⁰

Parody also distinguishes itself from stylization through the diversity of its potential effect. Whereas the original "can be stylized essentially only in one direction," namely in a direction consonant with its original task or intention, parody can refunction "[t]he other's style ... in various directions." It can, in formalist terms,

⁹⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* (1929) [*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*], trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis P, 1984), 193-4. Although much has been made by critics attempting to align the Bakhtinian sense of "struggle" among voices with the habit of viewing parody as a destructive device or as an arena of hostile battle between voices, he remained focused on the potential of parodic refunctioning to express diversity and challenge while retaining the integrity of the parodied discourse within the parodic text. As his formalist predecessors had explained, the sense of "struggle" among discourses is not necessarily synonymous with destruction or even submission. Rather it is more akin to a sense of repelling than of erasure. As he often does, Tynyanov provides some clarification with his suggestion that discourses "do not even struggle" in the sense of conflict or confrontation; rather "they simply bypass each other, negating each other or paying each other homage, and they are antagonistic only by the fact of their existence" (101). "Struggle" results, then, from contemporaneity not conflict. The fact that parody invokes a "struggle" for independence from existing literary forms and models does not suggest that the "vanquished" discourse or genre is obliterated or ceases to exist. "It is only knocked from the crest," as Shklovsky explains in his *Romanov* (1921); "it lies dormant and may again rise as a perennial pretender to the throne." Like any "revolution," such parodic renewal or revival of literary forms will always be "made more complex by the presence of features of the younger schools and with features, now secondary, inherited from its predecessors on the throne" ("Quoted in Boris Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'" in Lemon and Reis, 135).

Moreover, in both his "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" and "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin reiterates that a central characteristic of "authentic and productive" parody comes from the fact that it "must be precisely a parodic *stylization*, that is, it must re-create the parodied language as an authentic whole, giving it its due as a language possessing its own internal logic and one capable of revealing its own world inextricably bound up with the parodied language." As he notes of the parodic sonnets with which Cervantes's *Don Quixote* begins, "we must first recognize a sonnet, recognize its form, its specific style, its manner of seeing, its manner of selecting from and evaluating the world -- the world view of the sonnet, as it were" before the parody can be recognized. To be anything less than a detailed representation of the form *and* content of the model to be parodied, he argues elsewhere, is to degenerate into "a gross and superficial destruction of the other's language," a malicious diminution that he calls, in an admittedly problematic choice of words, "rhetorical parody" (*The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist [Austin: U of Texas P, 1981], 51, 364). Subsequent references to these texts will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

make the original defamiliar by introducing into it new and varied "accents," a key point Bakhtin emphasizes in a statement that reiterates the interdependence of form and content in parody:

Parodistic discourse can be extremely diverse. One can parody another person's style as a style; one can parody another's socially typical or individually characterological manner of seeing, thinking, and speaking. The depth of parody may also vary: one can parody merely superficial verbal forms, but one can also parody the very deepest principles governing another's discourse. Moreover, the parodistic itself may be used in various ways by the author: the parody may be an end in itself (for example, literary parody as a genre), but it may also serve to further other positive goals But in all possible variations of parodistic discourse the relationship between the author's and the other person's aspirations remains the same: these aspirations pull in different directions, in contrast to the unidirectional aspirations of stylization. (*Problems* 193-4)

Bakhtin schematizes these variations, classifying parody as a "vari-directional double-voiced discourse," the second type of his third class of discourse ("discourse with an orientation toward someone else's discourse"); stylization, in contrast, is classified as "unidirectional double-voiced discourse," the first type of this third class (*Problems* 199).

In a shift that makes his theory of parody especially valuable when considering nineteenth-century literature, Bakhtin breaks with the classical limiting of parody to a comic "turning of a verse by altering some words." Instead, he suggests that the "internally dialogized interillumination" characteristic of "authentic and productive parody" finds its most vital expression in the novel, the literary form with a "peculiar ability to open a window in discourse from which the extraordinary

variety of social languages can be perceived."⁹¹ "The novel," he argues, "parodies other genres (precisely in their role as genres); it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language, it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and re-accentuating them." It is through the emergence and development of these "novelistic tendencies" within a culture, and in particular when those tendencies emphasize such vari-directional, double-voiced discourses as parody, that "the establishment and growth of a generic skeleton" of a distinct and renovated literature takes place (*Imagination* 5).⁹²

Significantly, it is through his consideration of the deliberately double-structured and "hetero-voiced" (*Problems* 107-8) novels of such comic writers as Fielding and Sterne (writers of particular importance in histories of English parody and whose common debt to Cervantes has generated extensive literature⁹³) that

⁹¹ Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 1990), 72.

⁹² As Anthony Hassall points out in his essay "Fielding and the Novel as Parody," the novelistic form has produced a parodic reflection "as regularly and as inevitably as a government produces an opposition. Cervantes began *Don Quixote* by parodying the chivalric romances. Fielding's novel-writing began with parodies of Richardson... Sterne parodied, among other things, the well-made novel of Fielding. Jane Austen parodied the excesses of Mrs Radcliffe and the Gothic novelists in *Northanger Abbey*" (*Southern Review* 13.1 [1980]: 21).

⁹³ Hazlitt pointed to many of the subtleties of this affiliation as early as 1819 in his lecture "On the English Novelists" (208-65). Critics interested in Sterne generally agree that he was familiar with Peter Motteux's 1719 translation of *Don Quixote*, which he considered a favourite text; indeed, in the second instalment of *Tristram Shandy* he turns to two authors who figured prominently in his life and writing, invoking "the ashes of my dear *Rabelais*, and dearer *Cervantes*" (3.19.151). Important among recent studies exploring this literary relationship are Ian Watt, "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction before 'Tristram Shandy,'" *PMLA* 67 (1952): 163-85; Alan B. Howes, "Laurence Sterne, Rabelais and Cervantes: The Two Kinds of Laughter in *Tristram Shandy*" in *Laurence Sterne: Riddles and Mysteries*, ed. Valerie Grosvenor Myer (London: Vision, 1984): 39-56; Edward L. Niehus, "Quixote Figures in the Novels of Sterne," *Essays in Literature* 12.1 (1985): 41-60; and Donald R. Wehrs, "Sterne, Cervantes, Montaigne: Fideistic Skepticism and the Rhetoric of Desire," *Comparative Literature Studies* 25 (1988): 127-51. I have discussed the Cervantes-Fielding axis earlier (see n54).

Bakhtin connects parody to his much broader conception of "heteroglossia." Defined as the presence in a novel of "*another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way," heteroglossia is affiliated with parody through the latter's potential as "a special type of double-voiced discourse" to serve "two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author" (*Imagination* 324). A "form for appropriating and organizing heteroglossia that is both externally vivid and at the same time historically profound," parodic novels exploit the genre's conventions and preexisting potentialities in order to penetrate "the deepest levels of literary and ideological thought itself" (*Imagination* 301). Not limited to mere imitation, parody facilitates a dialectical reconsideration of all levels of cultural discourse, bringing together within a single text "a mixing [of the] various 'languages' coexisting within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, a single branch, a single group of different branches or different groups of such branches, in the historical as well as paleontological past of languages" (*Imagination* 358-9). Thus "every parody," Bakhtin reiterates, "is an intentional dialogized hybrid [within which] language and styles actively and mutually illuminate one another." It is as if, he concludes, "they actually hold a conversation with each other" (*Imagination* 76, 324).

This reconceptualization of parody in terms of its fundamental and constant interaction not only with an original (which it imitates and transforms) but also with the greater whole of the heteroglossia has significant implications for an understanding of parody as cultural dialectic. Offering a provocative and useful counterpoint to approaches which attempt to limit parody to a special type of intertextual event dealing solely with textual norms and models,⁹⁴ Bakhtin marks

⁹⁴ See, for instance, Tuvia Shlonsky, "Literary Parody: Remarks on its Method and Function," *Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International*

parody as an ideological discourse in the richest sense of the word and as a vital participant in the full range of discursive exchange that takes "meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific society" (*Imagination* 276). Unable to remain isolated from the cultural circumstance in which it is produced and consumed, parody "cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads," each "indissolubly tied up with each other and ... in continual mutual interaction" (*Imagination* 276, 254). Deeply embedded in the fundamental diversities of a social heteroglossia and "pregnant with potential for new world views, with new 'internal forms' for perceiving the world in words" (*Imagination* 360), parody in its fullest dialogic implications can be understood as a significant "force [in] revealing, inverting or subverting, the conventions and constraints" (*Problems* 108) that come to burden readers and writers within a culture. Released from the restrictions associated with the simple imitation of preexisting literary forms, parody engages the densities and textures of the diverse cultural voices "shaping reality [in] the *living* present ... the plane of the present day, in the zone of immediate and even crudely familiar contact with living contemporaries" (*Problems* 262).⁹⁵

As one might expect, the nature of the laughter associated with such an interilluminating discourse is an important and complex one. It is an understatement to suggest that laughter was essential to Bakhtin, to whom it "has a deep philosophical meaning" as "one of the essential forms of the truth concerning the world as a whole, concerning history and man; it is a peculiar point of view relative to the world; the world is seen anew, no less (and perhaps more) profoundly than when seen from the serious standpoint." Moreover, he suggests, "[c]ertain

Comparative Literature Association II, ed. F. Jost (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), 797-801; Dane, "Parody and Satire: A Theoretical Model," *Genre* 13 (1980): 145-59; and Rose, *Parody//Metafiction*, 44-9.

⁹⁵ See also *Imagination*, 262-3.

essential aspects of the world are accessible *only* to laughter."⁹⁶ Bound as he is to incorporate into his own creation the narrative conventions and traditions he sets out to refunction comically, the parodist produces a laughter that is best described as irreducibly reflexive, a laughter that can suffer from no self-delusion, from no presumption of "laughing *at*" the model that is part of the parodic text's own past *and* present. As Hannoosh explains:

Parody's basic definition as a comical rewriting of another work prevents it from proposing itself as definitive. Implicating itself in its challenge to the parodied work, it suggests its own potential as a target or model text. From a theoretical perspective, it suffers from no self-delusion but rather flaunts the fact that it is as vulnerable and tenuous as the parodied work.⁹⁷

Parody, in other words, "lets nothing rest secure, including what it seems to endorse."⁹⁸

Indeed, parody's double-structured inventiveness thrives on this reflexive laughter. The more believable and alive Don Quixote becomes, for instance, the more he draws readers into the chivalric adventures for which he quests and the more he produces a laughter that can never become wholly dismissive. Cervantes as parodist ultimately contrives a situation whereby his hero's nobility and the energies of his adventures are grounded firmly in their proximity to the ideas which render him a fool and the chivalric romance "a stagnant form that could no longer address

⁹⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable [Rabelais and His World]*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (1936; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), 66, emphasis mine. Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

⁹⁷ Hannoosh, *Parody and Decadence* 18.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7. See also her "The Reflexive Function of Parody," *Comparative Literature* 41.2 (1989): "the parody actually rebounds upon itself, calling itself into question as it does the parodied work, and suggesting its own potential as a model or target, a work to be rewritten, transformed, even parodied in its turn" (114).

itself to the problems of the day."⁹⁹ Readers of the *Quixote* are themselves inevitably drawn toward this self-reflexivity, made to realize that the madness at which they laugh is never merely a device for amusement but that it "will increasingly command attention in its own right and, in effect, becomes a mantle of comedy behind which Cervantes conceals his witty lunges at the reader's common sense."¹⁰⁰ "[V]ery few readers, amidst their mirth or pity," as Dr. Johnson observed, "can deny that they have admitted visions of the same kind" as the knight errant at some time in their reading lives, "though they have not, perhaps, expected events equally strange, or by means equally inadequate. When we pity him, we reflect on our own disappointments; and when we laugh, our hearts inform us that he is not more ridiculous than ourselves."¹⁰¹ Even readers who remain aloof from these quixotic errors, certain that Cervantes's novel is to unfold as a consistent parody of tales of chivalric knights, are not safe. Confronted with a second book embedded within the *Quixote*, written by a second fictionalized author in which readers of the first tale now appear as characters, even the most confident readers are soon implicated in the foolishness they have been so willing to attribute to the erratic knight but a few pages earlier. Parodic laughter is, as Cervantes and Bakhtin remind us, "like an entire system of crooked mirrors, elongating, diminishing,

⁹⁹ Edwin Williamson, *The Half-Way House of Fiction: Don Quixote and Arthurian Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 203.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁰¹ *The Rambler* No. 2 (24 March 1750), *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven: Yale UP, 1969), 3.11. See also his *Lives of the English Poets*, in which he suggests that "Cervantes had so much kindness for Don Quixote, that, however he embarrasses him with absurd distresses, he gives him so much sense and virtue as may preserve our esteem; wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchless dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible" (London: J.M. Dent, 1925: I.119). Meredith, among others, concurs with Johnson's observation, noting in *An Essay on Comedy* that: "Heart and mind laugh out at Don Quixote, and still you brood on him" (136-7).

distorting in various directions and to various degrees" (*Problems* 126-7). It is a laughter that without contradiction can be understood as an expression of the vital dialectic of imitation and change, *admiratio* and criticism, respect and humour.

It is this comic balancing of *admiratio* and criticism coupled with a steadfast "refusal to pose mutually exclusive alternatives" that distinguishes parody from the genre with which it is most often confounded: satire. As many of the critics cited in this chapter acknowledge, parody and satire have a natural though not unproblematic affinity for each other; "mutually illuminating," they are "difficult at times to unravel."¹⁰² Indeed, it is a kinship that has been explained and reconfigured by writers according to a veritable catalogue of sympathies, notably a shared reliance on the rhetorical trope of irony,¹⁰³ the inappropriate perception of their common attitude of derision toward their target,¹⁰⁴ or according to the aforementioned view that such diverse writers as Aristophanes, Fielding, and Austen used parody as one of the more (or less) important mechanisms of their

¹⁰² Michael Issacharoff, "Parody, Satire and Ideology, or the Labyrinth of Reference" *Rivista di Letterature Moderne e Comparate* (Pisa, Italy) 42.3 (1989): 211, 214. As Linda Badley notes in her "The Aesthetics of Postmodern Parody: An Extended Definition," there is a long tradition in which "parody is classified as a minor form of satire, from which it derives its attack function, humor, and unreliability" (*The Comparatist* 7 [1983]: 37). Issacharof provides the following synopsis of this complex relationship: "Satire can ... include parody in its critical arsenal; parody, on the other hand, does not have to comprise satire. From this it can be concluded, perhaps, that parody is subordinate to satire. Yet (and to complicate still further), parody can have a satirical intent -- so that the deliberate distortion of an intertext may be intended to have a social, political and philosophical impact more profound than the immediate purpose of undermining a specific textual target" (216).

¹⁰³ See, for instance, Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974), 71-2; and Hutcheon, *Theory* 50-55.

¹⁰⁴ See, for instance, Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1962), 67-147.

satire.¹⁰⁵ Although I must acknowledge the complexity of the interaction between the two discourses as well as the fact that "the transmissions of literary satire through the medium of parody has, of course, been common practice,"¹⁰⁶ the works explored in this study are unique in so far as their primary gesture is the less tendentious double movement of parody; satiric undertones, if they do appear in these works are incidental when considered in terms of what each writer establishes within the broader and dialogized framework of his or her parody.

In short, where parody is inherently ambiguous in its relationship with its textual and cultural antecedents, satire "seizes the right of self-assertion,"¹⁰⁷ assuming "a critical attitude, and at least implicitly, the will to reform the world by castigating its vices."¹⁰⁸ Openly taking sides in the cultural and intellectual debates of the day, and shaped by assumptions of "an audience less learned, less intellectually committed, than himself,"¹⁰⁹ the satirist "remains, above all, convinced of the authority of [his] own message. [He] carefully divides wrongs from rights and puts everything [he] denounces on one side" of an equation that can then serve as a measure against which future issues can be discredited or validated.¹¹⁰ There is little chance, for instance, that readers of Thomas Chandler Haliburton's

¹⁰⁵ See, for instance, Hardy, 417; and Kiremdijan, *A Study of Modern Parody: James Joyce's Ulysses, Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus* (New York: London, 1985), 5-6.

¹⁰⁶ Rose, *Parody//Metafiction* 43.

¹⁰⁷ F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith, *The Blasted Pine: An Anthology of Satire Invective and Disrespectful Verse Chiefly by Canadian Writers* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), xviii.

¹⁰⁸ Weisstein, 804.

¹⁰⁹ Eugene P. Kirk, *Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism* (New York: Garland, 1980), xi.

¹¹⁰ Marthe Robert, *The Old and the New: From Don Quixote to Kafka*, trans. Carol Cosman (Berkeley: U of California P, 1977), 25.

satiric *Clockmaker* sketches (1835-36) will miss or misunderstand the writer's position on those issues with which he agreed (the validity of constitutional monarchy and support for railway construction) or those with which he disagreed (the influences of unchecked American republicanism and Old World paternalism).

Important is the recognition that in those instances when satire invokes laughter,¹¹¹ it is a laughter firmly grounded in this assumption of superiority, a mocking and at times even hostile rejection of the targets of the satire.¹¹² Unlike the reflexivity of parodic laughter, which Meredith describes as enfolding those who laugh "with the wretched host of the world ... in an ignoble assimilation," the laughter generated by satire appeals "because, like the beak of the vulture, it smells of carrion."¹¹³ Sterne goes so far as to establish this distinction between parodic and satiric laughter as part of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1760-7), which takes as its target exactly the sense of superiority that informs the ridiculing laughter of satire: "'tis wrote, an'please your worships, against the spleen; in order, by a more frequent and more convulsive elevation and depression of the diaphragm, and the succussions of the intercostal and abdominal muscles in laughter, to drive the *gall* and other *bitter juices* from the gall-bladder, liver, and sweet-bread of his majesty's subjects, with all the inimicitious passion which belong

¹¹¹ Kirk, for instance, dedicates a whole section of his annotated *Catalogue* of Menippean satire to the laughter associated with what he calls "Ancient Parodic Menippean Satire." See also E. Courtney's "Parody and Literary Allusion in Menippean Satire," *Philologus* 106 (1962): 86-100.

¹¹² Booth, 71-2.

¹¹³ Meredith, 64, 19. He reiterates this point later, stating that "[i]f you detect the ridicule, and your kindness is chilled by it, you are slipping into the grasp of satire" (270).

to them, down into their duodenums" (IV.xxi.225). The laughter of satire is, Bakhtin argues, "a laughter that does not laugh" (*Rabelais* 45).¹¹⁴

As "an historical and a cultural as well as a formal event" that looks "to the pervasive fictions of the world, the vacancies and deadened codes of [a] system-ridden ... social order,"¹¹⁵ parody becomes an appealing discourse for a culture in a state of transition and flux.¹¹⁶ A mode of "imitation with a difference" that becomes a culture in which preexisting literary forms and cultural discourses can no longer be understood in the generally accepted way, parody opens a dialogue with past models and cultural assumptions. It is a dialogue, more specifically, that promotes a synthetic refunctioning by which similarity and difference can coexist; those discursive practices that serve the merely imitative or that perpetuate what has stagnated within a culture are seen to fall away when reflected in the mirror of parody.

Certainly Canadian culture as it came to be shaped and reshaped from about the middle of the nineteenth century onward proves a fine testing ground for such a theoretical claim. Faced with a social and cultural reality defined increasingly by patterns of urbanization and industrialization, and with a cultural landscape openly and explicitly shaped by issues of language, gender, socioeconomic privilege, and regional disparities, not to mention a persistent and pervasive uncertainty about the definition and role of culture in the New World, English Canada was characterized by its unstable "heteroglossia." Moreover, it was a culture that knew and appreciated parody. Extended and sophisticated genre parodies by

¹¹⁴ He states earlier in this book that "one of the essential differences" of parodic laughter from that raised through satire is that the "satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it" (12).

¹¹⁵ Bradbury, 64.

¹¹⁶ Kiremidjian, "Aesthetics" 242.

such writers as Cervantes, Sterne, Jane Austen (*Northanger Abbey*, 1818), William Makepeace Thackeray (*Novels by Eminent Hands*, 1847), and Bret Harte (*Condensed Novels*, 1867) were joined on the shelves of private and circulating libraries by such immensely popular anthologies as the Smith brothers' *Rejected Addresses: or the New Theatrum Poetarum* (1812)¹¹⁷ and Walter Hamilton's six-volume *Parodies of the Works of English and American Authors* (1884-89). Reaching an even more diverse reading audience were such internationally recognized magazines as *Punch* and *Blackwoods*, both of which promoted the works of such notable practitioners as J.K. Stephen, Arthur Quiller-Couch, and Barry Pain. Widely available throughout English Canada, these magazines were complemented by such popular local comic publications as *Grip*, *Diogenes*, and *Grinchuckle*, all of which continued the English tradition of adopted casual verse and prose parodies as a regular feature and of sponsoring regular competitions for parodies on set subjects.

Victorian English Canada offers, too, a rich context for a reconsideration of parody as a catalyst of literary and cultural change, for, as Bakhtin notes, "[o]nly that which is itself developing can comprehend development as a process" (*Imagination* 7). The second half of the nineteenth century in Canada was a period during which, to borrow Hugh Stowell's description of mid-nineteenth century England, "[o]ld formula, old opinions, hoary systems [were] being thrown into the smelting-pan ... [to be] cast anew."¹¹⁸ As most cultural historians agree, collectively these were

¹¹⁷ Considered by many critics of the day as "the most felicitous example we possess of skilful Parody" (Anon. "Parody," *The Westminster Review* [1854]: 58) and spawning numerous imitations (*Notes and Queries*, 7 Jan 1871: 15-16), *Rejected Addresses* attained immediate success, with at least five editions appearing by the end of 1812 and thirteen by the end of 1813. New editions, including a pocket version (Routledge, 1888), continued to appear on both sides of the Atlantic well into the twentieth century.

¹¹⁸ Hugh Stowell, "The Age We Live In," *Exeter Hall Lectures* 6 (1850-51) 45-6; cited in Houghton, 9.

some of the most important "transitional decades"¹¹⁹ in Canada's social, cultural, and economic history. Spurred forward by the same spirit of expansion and economic promise that the British North America Act would situate firmly in Canadian hands, Victorian Canada was shaped by the political and social discourses that coalesced to fire the imaginations of the Fathers of Confederation. With their dedication to such nation-building policies as westward expansion, transcontinental railway construction, and protective tariffs, this group of men was dedicated to "transform[ing] a disparate collection of superfluous British colonies into a prosperous, integrated, and modern society."¹²⁰ Balanced against the pervasive and at times even ebullient optimism that accompanied this belief in the boundlessness of Canadian material progress was an undercurrent of concern, a persistent sense to those who lived through them that the events leading up to the declaration of "the union of 1867 did not appear to be an accomplishment ringing with finality and conclusiveness."¹²¹ Prominent among these persistent reservations was an oft-articulated sense that the longstanding "faith in the existence of ultimate truths in religion and ethics, in politics, economics, and aesthetics (as well as in the natural sciences), and in the capacity of the human mind to discover them, by some form of reason or of intuition"¹²² was being challenged by the ascendance of less stable and even confrontational modes of inquiry.

¹¹⁹ Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 15.

¹²⁰ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1989), 3.

¹²¹ Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1970), 4.

¹²² Houghton, 14.

Parody offered writers a viable and popular strategy for exploring such deeply rooted cultural tensions,¹²³ providing an imaginative and narrative framework with deep classical roots for understanding how semblance and difference can coexist within a given cultural framework "without being swallowed up or losing their singularity."¹²⁴ Increasingly forced to acknowledge the influences -- formal, cultural, and ideological -- of not one but two powerful national literatures and cultures (English and American), Victorian Canadians were becoming increasingly sensitive to their own emerging status in relation to the extra-literary forces pulling from without and, more importantly, from within. As Kuester notes:

These influences, which [were] often accompanied by extra-literary and extra-cultural -- political and economic -- pressures [had] to be adapted to the new, Canadian environment. Literary models may be imitated or emulated, and experiences may be repeated in a new country and a new literature defining their independence; but they have to be repeated with a difference, if not with a vengeance.¹²⁵

Questions about where to look for cultural models and, moreover, what role literature had at this juncture in a young country's cultural development became questions often raised and increasingly difficult to answer. Forced, on the one hand, to appeal to that segment of the Canadian population for whom culture and literature were generally seen as tools of edification and moral instruction, critics and thinkers were, on the other hand, acutely aware that the reading public cared less about edification than about the business of building a prosperous life for

¹²³ Forwarding a structural model of modern Canadian parody, Kuester agrees with this understanding of parody "as a progressive literary modality that becomes useful and effective in the self-definition of a 'new' literature that is situated between the influential poles of the European and the American traditions" (5).

¹²⁴ Foucault, *Order* 24-5.

¹²⁵ Kuester, 23.

themselves and for a new country. Free to test, to critique, and even to subvert in a sharp and clearly marked manner the disparate voices circulating within a given culture at any historical moment, parody provides these writers with the opportunity to celebrate the diversities of their contemporary culture and to probe the distinguishing characteristics of their creative genealogy, to explore with the freedoms of the parodic spirit the multitudes of contiguous and interweaving forms and styles of narrative, archetypes, imaginary regions, and views of the world and of art that lingered tantalizingly on the not-too-distant horizon of the Canadian imagination.

To the modern reader, exploring parody as a cultural dialectic offers an unusual critical perspective on the period in which such vitally dialogized texts were produced and consumed. Offering insights into contemporary opinions relating to the major literary figures, forms, and movements of a period, parody also encourages wider speculations about the cultural and ideological status invested in literature and literary texts during the period in question. To the parodist, as to the critic, questions of text and culture are of interest because they are seen to illuminate the values, the motives, and the assumptions of those who would use or respond to those components of an original in that social circumstance. In this sense, parody historicizes, shining a light on the social, historical, and even geographical forces at work on texts and readers at the moment in cultural history when they meet.

Although some attention has been paid to this notion of parody as dialectic in terms of contemporary Canadian fiction, notably Kuester's insightful study of how what he calls "progressive parody" comes to structure such contemporary Canadian historical novels as Timothy Findley's *The Wars* (1977) and *Famous Last Words* (1981), George Bowering's *Burning Water* (1980), and Margaret Atwood's *The*

Handmaid's Tale (1985),¹²⁶ little attention has yet been paid to parody in nineteenth-century Canada, that juncture in Canadian history that marked the emergence of many of the state and cultural institutions that continue to shape and influence social and cultural dynamics even today. In general, the critical assumption has been to dismiss nineteenth-century Canadian parodies as "still rather crude."¹²⁷ Although more respectful and positive in its treatment, Balisch's recent doctoral study, "Scrub Growth: Canadian Humour to 1912" (1994), fulfills its promise to be "an exploration" which includes parody within its scope, but offers little in the way of sustained critical analysis.¹²⁸ The following chapters will demonstrate that in a number of important ways parody and novelistic parody in particular were especially well suited as a means of expressing and exploring both the vitalities and the ambivalences that came to define this period in Canada's literary history.

¹²⁶ See also Carole Gerson's "Sarah Binks and Edna Jacques: Parody, Gender, and the Construction of Literary Value," *Canadian Literature* 134 (1992): 62-73.

¹²⁷ Kuester, 148-49.

¹²⁸ Loretta Faith Balisch, "Scrub Growth: Canadian Humour to 1912 -- An Exploration" (Ph.D. diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland 1994).

CHAPTER ONE

**"A VERY GREAT CHANGE HAS TAKEN PLACE":
PARODY AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF CANADIAN CULTURE**

Chapter One

"A Very Great Change Has Taken Place": Parody and the Geography of Canadian Culture

In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin makes the one reference to Canada that appears in the body of his work. Discussing the French humanist's comic rendering of Pantagruel's northwesterly journey to the icy underworld (itself a parodic stylization of Dante's *Divina Commedia*), he points to the various levels of correspondence between Rabelais's text and Jacques Cartier's journal account of his 1540 voyage to Canada; it was Cartier's colonial venture, Bakhtin suggests, that had a particularly complex and important effect on the European *Weltanschauung*. For Bakhtin, this effect was felt most tellingly on what might be best described as the geocultural dimensions of the Old World imagination, for it was Cartier's discovery of the New World that occasioned an Old World reevaluation of the representation and conceptualization of land and place, prompting a reconsideration of the frames and structures that had until this point guaranteed to the Old World imagination a sense of geocultural centrality and topographic certainty (*Rabelais* 397-400). So radical were the intellectual and imaginative restructurings necessitated by the new geocultural information that throughout the earliest explorations of the New World

whole editions of journals and maps were destroyed or bought up and hidden "because they were thought to disseminate the wrong kind of information."¹

In Canada, this moment of contact between Cartier and the shores of the New World proved even more resonant. As Carole Gerson notes, from this pivotal sighting came the "first literary artifacts arising from the European encounter"² with this new land, anecdotal and narrative descriptions that functioned as verbal parallels to the topographical illustrations that were some of the first visual records of what Rabelais had designated as a vast and frozen land. The journals of Cartier and his crew were followed through the eighteenth and nineteenth century by an extensive "documentation of travel and settlement: visitors' narratives, pioneers' letters home, and settlers' guides -- word sketches often accompanied by pictorial sketches ... produced by British officers and their wives."³ But as journeys and journals accumulated, so, too, did the notions of Canada as a problematic new land, as a site at which the Old World topographic certainties were confronted by a geography that refused to be fixed, refused to accommodate its particularities and paradoxes to the tropes or metaphoric possibilities privileged by familiar verbal or visual codes. "[E]very journey across [this new land] or through it" became "another reading," another imaginative "mapping" of what were at once the known and the radically unknowable realities of the place the earliest cartographers had labeled, somewhat ominously, *terra incognita*: the unknown land.⁴ Such mappings were "not

¹ Graham Huggan, *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994), 7.

² Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1889), 37.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Robert Kroetsch, *Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch*, ed. Shirley Neuman and Robert Wilson (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982), 8-9. In their introductory note to *The New Land* (1978), Richard Chadbourne and Hallvard Dahlie suggest that the names of Canada's regions -- New France, New Brunswick,

a luxury," Margaret Atwood observes, "but a necessity," for without the sense of certainty they provided, these early Canadians would "not survive."⁵

Such observations have been echoed by numerous critics, most notably Northrop Frye, who saw in "the imminence of the natural world" and our deep terror regarding it the sources of our national myths and mythic patterns,⁶ and Desmond Pacey, who defined "the Canadian imagination" as "mainly a function of a landscape and climate, and only secondarily of a society. When one thinks back over the history of Canadian art and literature..." Pacey elucidates, this land and climate "are so inescapably impressive that it was inevitable that the first efforts of Canadian artists should be to come to terms with them. The land so various that in itself it offers an inexhaustible challenge."⁷ More recently, W.H. New has invited a full rethinking of the most basic terms of this inexhaustible challenge, suggesting that from Cartier's earliest contact the word "land"

has to be seen as a verbal trope in Canadian writing, not simply as a neutral referent. While the word *land* often functions as a familiar synonym for *dirt* or *earth* or *ground* or *loam* (and can be emotionally charged even in this context), it sometimes also resonates with notions of ownership or social attachment (*territory, home, property, estate, plot, yard, grounds, region, nation, world*). In such conditions the constructed or customary relations between land and class, land and gender, land and ethnicity, land and capital, all become more

Nova Scotia -- are testimony to "how pervasive the concept of a new land [was] in the consciousness of its explorers and settlers" and to the unwillingness of these early communities "to surrender completely their Old World heritage and connections" (*The New Land: Studies in a Literary Theme* [Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier P, 1978], vii).

⁵ Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), 18-9.

⁶ Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," *Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1965), 826.

⁷ Desmond Pacey, "The Canadian Imagination," *The Literary Review* 8 (1965): 437.

apparent than if *land* is constructed as a neutral or objective term. Yet *land* can also function not just as the revelation of the status quo, but also as the *space* or *place* or *site* of challenge to the accustomed borders of power. It shifts, in this context, from a designation of locality to a (perhaps more abstract) designation of activity. Land functions in cultural discourse, therefore ... both as an icon of stability and as a medium of change. Fixity vies recurrently with fluidity, position with positionality, the place of social residence with the condition of being there.⁸

Land and landscape have long been conceptualized within a Canadian context as a kind of "cultural geography," a "*discursive terrain*" that "slides," at times almost furtively, from designations of locality toward designations of discursive activities and cultural practices, some of which are obvious (farming, mining, gardening) and other less so (recreation, occupation, meditation). Designations of this new land must be seen, accordingly, as "a ground of contestation" in which "an ongoing history of a culture's relations with place and space" plays out.⁹

It was in and against this unstable and even contentious geocultural terrain that the pseudonymous Canadian writer A.S.H., now known to be Abraham S. Holmes, set his *Belinda, or the Rivals*,¹⁰ one of the earliest parodic novels in Victorian Canadian literature. Published in 1843 by A.S. Bagg and John H.

⁸ W.H. New, *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997), 5-6.

⁹ *ibid.*, 9, 8. Other important works that have been particularly influential in shaping this discussion of the land as both a constant in Canadian life and a major and ambiguous theme in nineteenth-century Canadian literature include Wilfrid Eggleston's *The Frontier and Canadian Letters* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1957), Susan Joan Wood's *The Land in Canadian Prose, 1840-1945* (Ottawa: Carleton Monographs in English Language and Literature, 1978), and D.M.R. Bentley's *The Gay/Grey Moose: Essays on the Ecologies and Mythologies of Canadian Poetry 1690-1990* (Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1992).

¹⁰ Abraham S. Holmes, *Belinda; or The Rivals. A Tale of Real Life* (1843; Toronto: Anansi, 1975). Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

Harmon, proprietors of Detroit's Democratic newspaper the *Free Press*, the novel is openly double-structured in its exploration of Canada as distinct geocultural place. With a sense of New World cultural geography invoked through its setting of a small community in Canada West of the 1840s it is also a novel with a textual history rooted deeply in the Old World soils of such diverse antecedents as Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1749), and Jane Austen's novels of English ladies and gentleman in their elegant but confined country houses. Focusing on the rise and fall of Miss Belinda Howard, "a young lady of uncommon personal beauty and of many accomplishments" (*Belinda* 4) who is described by all who meet her as "the paragon of women -- whose face expresses the perfection of beauty [and] whose form is dignity" (*Belinda* 9), the story traces the familiar narrative trajectory of a youthful life prior to marriage. That is, the period when a young woman is to spend her time, according to generic traditions, undergoing the tests of travel, occasional adventure, and chastity heroically defended.

On the one hand, Holmes's novel respects all the generic codes that Victorian Canadian readers had come to expect of such tales, including his protracted representation of an idealized and romanticized geography within and against which events can unfold. Coloured by the familiar and generically appropriate alignment between topographic features and descriptive language, Holmes's text fulfills Bakhtin's condition that the dialogized interillumination characteristic of parody give full due to the parodied discourse as a whole. Never diminishing his romantic or sentimental models so as to render them as gross or superficial distortions, Holmes readily engages what one anonymous Canadian reviewer later described as the sentimental novelist's standard "palette [of] scenes of

... dashing waves, lowering skies, brilliant sunsets, and the simple life"¹¹ far removed from the mercantilism and moral corruption seen to characterize the urban-industrial centres of the day. Appropriately, the centerpiece of this landscape is the Howard family estate, Clifton Hall, an architectural feature set amidst luxuriant meadows, meandering rivers, and sublime panoramas in which the "shrill chanticleer proclaim[s]" the presence of "aurora already streaking the east" (*Belinda* 25). As an anonymous contributor to *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* (1872-1882) would later suggest of such topographic designations, this is a landscape of conspicuously Old World nuances and accents, a world familiar to those with memories of the "old English home" and garden estate:

the mind at once travels thousands of miles across the sea, and a vision rises before the eyes of some old English home, with its miles of park land, its magnificent timber, its bracken and underbrush, with rabbits scudding across the road, or a pheasant whirring overhead while down a distant glade is a herd of red deer quietly browsing.¹²

Appropriate, too, is Holmes's designation within this idyllic setting of an Old World topography that neatly and easily reiterates the commingled notions of expansiveness, design, and ordered progress that had by this time taken on almost iconographic status within the Canadian imagination. It is a designation, as Susan Wood explains, that "combines [a] response to untouched natural beauty with a desire for the cultivated, garden-like nature of the old world 'civilization' which will eventually replace the wilderness with manors and market towns."¹³ It is exactly this prospect that *Belinda* wonders at one evening when, riding in an open carriage

¹¹ Anon., "Rev. of *The Dark Colleen: A Love Story*," *CMNR* 11.6 (June 1877): 679.

¹² Anon., "Round the Table," *CMNR* 13.1 (January 1878): 88.

¹³ Wood, 102.

with her father, she comes to a point on the roadway that affords her an unencumbered view of the valley in which her family estate is nestled.

Encompassing telescopic distances, Belinda admires the full perspective of a New World that is neither "wild" nor even "natural" in its beauty but is as neatly cultivated as an English garden in which the plan of human provision and the presence of the tools of human industry serve only to enhance not diminish the symmetrical beauty of some Divine design:

Nothing could surpass the beauty of the prospect that now presented itself to their view; for the works of nature very far exceed those of art, not only in the largeness of the whole, but in the variety of the parts, and both nature and art appeared to have done their best for the romantic valley.... A noble river, on which steamers were continually plying, calculated to strike beholders with their exterior beauty and rapid motion, seemed just then to be motionless, like a serpent basking in the summer sun. Here and there stood a stately brig or schooner, with all its wingy sails extended, waiting the soft breezes to waft it to its destination. Equa-distant on each bank, were neat and comfortable mansions; and the spaces between them filled with orchards of all kinds of fruit trees in full bloom, and flapping their foliage with pure delight. The whole country round, as far as the eye could reach, covered with fields of richest hues, without one isolated spot of stony ground to spoil the scene. Every garden, and every grove, betokened plenty, and whispered peace. (*Belinda* 42)

As Susanna Moodie would celebrate in her introduction to the 1871 edition of *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852), this is a sublime landscape in which the "rough has become smooth, the crooked has been made straight, [and] the forests have been converted into fruitful fields."¹⁴ It is this designation of a New World in which nature and industry can coexist in apparent harmony that would retain currency well

¹⁴ Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush; or, Life in Canada* (1852; Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1988), 287.

into the later decades of the century through the works of such prominent imaginative artists as William Wilfred Campbell, Frederic Marlett Bell-Smith, and Homer Watson. (Appropriately, in 1970 when The Alcuin Society of Vancouver chose to reissue Holmes's text, they did so with a complement of sixteen period watercolours by Lieutenant P.J. Bainbrigge and J.P. Cockburn that accentuate both dimensions of this complex topographic code: images of the New World as pastoral *and* in the variously harmonized stages of industrial improvement that marked the cultural geography as distinct and progressive.)

As an early Victorian Canadian novelist, though, Holmes must also confront a question that continued to burden English-Canadian imaginations throughout the nineteenth century: how to negotiate a new vocabulary of topographic codes and descriptive language that at once retains creative ties with the highly sophisticated and familiar Old World generic traditions with which Canadian readers were familiar and had come to expect while at the same time depicts the distinct specificities of "a political, psychological, and geographical place"¹⁵ still relatively unknown to the colonial imagination. Holmes was being asked, in other words, to answer what New suggests (in an appropriate renovation of Frye's famous question "Where is here?"¹⁶) proved to be some of the most persistent and illusive questions to perplex writers in Victorian Canada: "What happens when writers and readers in a society such as Canada's want to acknowledge established traditions yet to resist simply reinscribing them ... or to devise variant forms of convention in the name of greater accuracy or greater

¹⁵ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 38, 36.

¹⁶ Frye, "Conclusion" 826.

freedom? And what in any event do these questions have directly to do with space, place, and land?"¹⁷

The answer, Holmes suggests, lies in the mirror of parody, for despite the numerous convention-laden depictions of an idyllic pastoralism and sublime landscape that punctuate his novel and mark its continuities with the earlier romanticized topographies of another place, this is at the same time a narrative mapping of place marked by difference; as Carl Klinck points out, "[n]othing is quite what it professes to be"¹⁸ in the land of *Belinda*. In a statement that can be read as Holmes's own declaration of his sense of affiliation with the Cervantine tradition of parody, the narrator of the novel accentuates the vital difference that lies at the heart of his familiar narrative. "In the days of chivalry," he notes, "it was nothing strange or uncommon for Knights errant to quarrel about the possession of the heart; to challenge to single combat; and at last to enter the lists and settle the dispute in the most gallant style." "But," this distinctly local narrator continues, such practices, as well as the narrative structures and cultural codes they support, are of the past: "a very great change has taken place in society," he announces, a "rapid movement has been made." Whether such change marks an improvement "upon the wisdom of our ancestors" or an advancement "in the scale of being; or whether the march has been a retrograde one" the narrator does not hazard an opinion. Of "[o]ne thing" he "is certain," though, and that is "that mighty revolutions have taken place in the world, not only in the civil constitutions of the nations, or in the religious establishments of different countries, but in the manners and customs of the people generally" (*Belinda* 1-2). And like the figure of Cervantes before him, he

¹⁷ New, 16.

¹⁸ Carl F. Klinck, "Introduction," *Belinda; or The Rivals. A Tale of Real Life* (Vancouver: The Alcuin Society, 1970), [i]. See also Marilyn I. Davis, "Anglo-Boston Bamboozled on the Canadian Thames -- Holmes' *Belinda; or, The Rivals*," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 2.3 (1973): 56-60.

is certain, too, of his ultimate goal in telling the story of Belinda: this will be, he states explicitly, "a record of events which have transpired *in our own country*, during *our own* recollection; and have come under *our own* observation" (*Belinda* 3, emphasis mine).

Nowhere is this dedication to a sense of distinctiveness accentuated more clearly than in Holmes's parodic stylizations of the topographic codes that mark the second of Belinda's two principal residences in the novel, her uncle's country home. Known to the surrounding communities as The Castle, it seems at first glimpse an architectural complement to the Old World sanctuary of Clifton Hall:

The Castle stood upon a gentle declivity, in the midst of one of the most beautiful and fertile valleys in the world -- hence sometimes called 'the garden of British America.' The Thames, a noble river, found its winding way, shaped by the willows which hanged from its banks, and ploughed by the numerous craft which were entrusted with her wealth.... Through an opening in the wood a distant plain, speckled with thousands of cattle and horses grazing, was full in view. The respectable character of the neighborhood, the peaceable and accommodating disposition of the people, and its distance from the bustling city, all combined to make it a place to which Charles fifth of Germany himself, might have retired with pleasure. (*Belinda* 16)

A familiar and densely coded topographic feature, the Castle is a veritable treasure-house of familiar images, motifs, and themes upon which a colonial imagination might draw. As Bakhtin notes, since the early romantic writers turned to the castle as a means of delineating a specific and comprehensible locality, it had become "saturated through and through" with implications of Old World tradition and culture (*Imagination* 246-7). Fully comprehensible, and therefore productive as a narrative device that would appeal to readers in Victorian Canada, the castle functions in the context of Holmes's novel as a topographic palimpsest; an awesome physical marker of a specifically Canadian place ("the county of Kent, in Canada"), it

is at the same time overwritten with still vital traces of a geocultural past, the narratives of other (Old World) places and other geocultural realities in which castles figure prominently. The New World story of Belinda Howard is linked through the high walls and turrets of her uncle's home with the imaginative terrain of Hugh Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Walter Scott.

To many English-Canadian writers and readers, such densely coded, Old World features were seen as a much needed and particularly welcome addition to New World topography. Convinced that "[t]he few local traditions haunting any particular spot" of the new country could not possibly signal for "posterity the stirring legends or the bright episodes ... which usually descend from a period of chivalrous or civilised warfare," these critics longed for the aspect of a castle or even a ruined abbey or charnel house that might "give to the ingenious novelist a store of materials from which to mould the pleasant tale or sparkling romance." With "[n]o ruined castle, clothed in the wayward folds of the glossy ivy, and tenanted by the hooting owl, frown[ing] from the pointed rock, or gaz[ing] on its own melancholy shadow on the free waters of the passing river,"¹⁹ there was no way for settlers of this vast new land to behold daily "a crystalized history which thrills the soul with a presence and power before unimagined."²⁰ Some imaginative artists, including

¹⁹ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country," *MR* 1.1 (January 1841): 61. See also John George Bourinot, "Canadian Materials for History, Poetry, and Romance," *NDM* (April 1871): 193.

²⁰ William Withrow, *A Canadian in Europe: Being Sketches of Travel in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and Belgium, Great Britain and Ireland* (Toronto: Rose-Belford, 1881), 17. Among the specially priced books that Withrow, a well-known bookseller, highlighted in his offerings to Canadians as part of his "Holiday Book List" (1866-67), special attention was given to one book of interest here: *Ruined Castles and Abbeys of England, Illustrated by Photographs*, which sold to Canadians for the rather hefty sum of \$12.00. Such travel pictorials remained popular with Victorian audiences, with travel pictorials of single castle or of a number of castles appearing in Canadian illustrated magazines regularly. See, for instance, two anonymous pictorials: "The Castles in Europe and Asia," which appeared in Toronto's *Maple Leaf* (1.1 [January 1847]: 5-8) and the *Methodist*

many whose fictions and sketches found their way into the pages of the celebrated *Literary Garland* (1838-1851) and, later, the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, turned to such indigenous, though nonetheless conventional, analogies as mountains, churches, or the citadels of Halifax or Kingston as ready substitutes to fill this perceived lacunae in the new land. With such descriptive titles as "Canadian Legends: The Ruined Cottage" and "The Fort of St. Johns, A Tale of the New World," these are fictions "to be admired," as Gerson notes, "more for the ingenuity of their author's importation of [Old World] literary conventions than for their faithfulness to the Canadian scene."²¹ Still others attempted to reconceptualize the castleless New World expanse as a potentially Edenic or Arcadian counterpoint to what Susanna Moodie described as an Old World geography tainted by the consciousness of postlapsarian guilt:

The unpeopled wastes of Canada must present the same aspect to the new settler that the world did to our first parents after their expulsion for the Garden of Eden; all the sin which could defile the spot, or haunt it with the association of departed evil, is concentrated in their own persons. Bad spirits cannot be supposed to linger near a place where crime has never been committed. The belief in ghosts, so prevalent in old countries, must first have had its foundation in the consciousness of guilt.²²

Magazine's popular series of pictorial "castle visits" that began in May 1897 with "A Visit to Balmoral Castle" (414-17).

²¹ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 45. See, for instance, Clarence Ormond's "Canadian Legends: The Ruined Cottage" appeared in *LG* (April 1846): 177-79 and Mrs. Harriet V. Cheney's "The Fort of St. Johns, A Tale of the New World" in the same magazine from January to July 1849. The narratives that accompanied these and similar descriptive titles were representative, Gerson suggests, of the desire of many English-Canadian writers to devise "local counterparts to the romantic narrative of the European past, thereby colouring the Canadian landscape with tinges of legendary tradition" (45-6).

²² Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush* 287.

But as Holmes's reflexive narrator asserts in establishing the defamiliarizing frame that radically stylizes his seemingly conventional description of the Howard's "ancestral" Castle, such imported narrative conventions and topographic codes cannot be considered intrinsically appropriate to designations of "our own country" because of their architectural mass or the perceived weight of their geocultural pedigree:

Every body knows that there is not in all these provinces an edifice which might properly be called a castle. But as strict propriety of language is not always consulted, things often take names to which they are not entitled. Thus, the house of Belinda's uncle, from its imposing structure and antique appearance, was called THE CASTLE; and he, perhaps from his manners and dimensions, *the old Burgher*. These convenient appellations being furnished to my hand, I shall make use of them without any further explanation of apology.

(*Belinda* 16)

As Holmes's stylizations effectively underscore, the incorporation of such Old World markers is often little more than a matter of narrative "convenience" or, worse still, the result of an algebrized usage.

Holmes's parodic stylizations of Old World topographic codes as they came to be applied to New World designations of cultural geography were reiterated in various ways by a number of prominent Victorian Canadian parodists. Some of these works, like the unattributed "The Brainless Footman; Not By the Author of the 'Headless Horseman'" (serialized in the comic paper *Diogenes* from December 1868 to January 1869) and William Edward Hunt's "A Tale of Ter-rew Love Triumphant. An Extravaganza in eight chapters" (*Canadian Magazine*, 1895), found a wide audience through the pages of popular magazines and periodicals. Hunt, an editor for John Dougall's *Montreal Witness* who published his parodic novelette under the pseudonym "Keppel Strange," engages parody's mirror to repeat Holmes's

point that though Canadian writers and readers may, and probably always will be tempted to draw on familiar Old World pastoral and romantic codes to describe the Canadian geography, they must be conscious, too, of the limitations associated with such uncritical importation of conventions that by this time were already algebrized. As inspired as Hunt's intrusive narrator may be to describe his heroine, Ida, as a Canadian beauty "[a]s graceful as a 'douce et belle Marguerite,' as fragrant as wild sweet clover, [as she] glided Sylph-like through the meadows," even he finds such an algebrized Old World rendering difficult to imagine. "Never having seen a Sylph" during his wanderings in his native landscape, he suggests that he cannot even "pretend to be an authority upon the 'glide'" or the sense of Old World grace it denotes. Accordingly, he offers a revised rendering of Ida's passage through the New World field, one that is notably more of his own place and in which the now defamiliarized "glide," though still part of his narrative, is subordinated to a brief parenthetical aside that restructures this convention as syntactically equivalent to a compound adjective used to describe cut grass: "Having succeeded in walking (beg pardon -- gliding) through two small fields, our heroine, accompanied by our hero, naturally felt worn and weary, and sank down to rest upon a bundle of (new-mown) hay."²³ As one Victorian writer put it, the Canadian imagination must soon come to see that "Oberon and Titania [hold] no sway over the Canadian forests."²⁴

²³ Keppel Strange [William Edward Hunt], "A Tale of Ter-rew Love Triumphant. An Extravaganza in eight chapters," *CM* 5.6 (October 1895): 525. The unattributed parody "The Brainless Footman; Not By the Author of the 'Headless Horseman'" is best described as the product of an authorial imagination so wholly overwhelmed by a romanticizing fervour as to be driven blindly toward paradox. Opening "[o]ne sultry evening about noon, in the commencement of December, when the summer sun was beginning to tinge with a cerulean hue the withered and verdant surface of a street not a thousand miles from the capital of the Dominion of Canada," the narrative is replete with similarly exuberant descriptions of the Canadian flora, fauna, and climate. The novelette closes with the suggestion that the wonders of such a geography "may be more easily imagined than described."

²⁴ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country," 61.

Defined by a castle that is at the same time not a castle, a glide that is in reality a walk, and a garden-like landscape in which the image of the serpent appears basking in the sun, this New World rural paradise offers little if any of the tranquility associated with the familiar ordering of natural and social space of Austen's Pemberley. This New World landscape is very much one in which natural and social disorder and conflict have long had, and continue to have, a palpable presence. As Holmes's narrator notes, it is a disruptive presence that illuminates another side to these idyllic New World panoramas of settlement and progress, a side much darker and less harmonious than expected:

Half a century ago, this delightful valley was all one dense wilderness. The walnut and the oak have left their enduring stumps in the earth to evidence their former majesty; a solitary wild deer may yet be seen bounding across the fields, followed by his deadly foe, the wolf; but the tens of thousands of aborigines, where are they? Why, their bones enrich the soil which we occupy -- their dead carcasses lie scattered up and down, and we, like so many cannibals, are eating them whenever we partake of any thing prepared from our boasted wheat and corn.

(*Belinda* 16-7)

Significantly, when Holmes's New World characters do seek respite or release from the troubles of their lives, they do so in a place distanced from these familiar Old World rural enclaves. When Belinda's brother Brock is driven from his family's country estate, he seeks refuge not in another rural setting but in the mercantile world of Detroit: heading across the river, he finds "safe retreat" in the shadow of the "eagle's spreading wings and crooked beak" (*Belinda* 69) and far removed from the Old World countryside of Canada West. Soon thereafter, when another character leaves her family's rural estate, Holmes suggests that Canada, too, has similar urban-industrial refuges within her border, cities which, not

coincidentally, are also designated as places brimming with the potential for steady and profitable commercial growth:

Juliet, the next morning, left for Chatham, a beautiful and rapidly increasing town, situated upon the two banks of the Thames, and at nearly equal distances from the three lakes Erie, St. Clair, and Huron. This town, having every advantage from its location, in the centre of the most fertile district in the Province; and, from the nature of the country, being of more easy access than any other part or point whatever, with an enterprising population, is plainly destined to become, at no distant period, a place of immense business and importance. (*Belinda* 105)

Other Canadian writers like May Agnes Fleming and Robert Barr turned to the novel as the primary form for their stylizations of those Old World typographic codes that might be seen to be burdening the Canadian imagination. To both Fleming and Barr, these algebrized designations of cultural geography were the expression of monologic presumptions seen to lie primarily along a north-south axis. Recognized by Canadian critics for her "excellent descriptions of Canadian life and scenery,"²⁵ Fleming opens her *The Twin Sisters; or, The Wronged Wife's Hate* (1864), for instance, in the elegant New York mansion of Hugh Hazelwood. Living near the heart of this great city's theatre district, the Hazelwood family soon find themselves immersed in a gothic web of long-buried secrets and bloody feuds that has within the intensely compressed opening chapters of the novel already led to a murder by poison, two kidnappings, and two suicides.²⁶ Suddenly leaping ahead fifteen years in her narrative, Fleming relocates her "patient" readers (to whom she apologizes in a narrative aside) to a small village in a land far removed from the geoculture of the

²⁵ Anon., "Rev. of May Agnes Fleming's *Kate Danton; or Captain Danton's Daughters*," *CMNR* 11.4 (April 1877): 455.

²⁶ This novel, like so many of Fleming's fictions, was republished under several titles, including *The Rival Brothers* (1875) and *A Wronged Wife* (1883).

United States with "its busy railway stations" and "its streets all life and bustle, and the sign of the almighty dollar everywhere." The new, distinctly Canadian setting within and against which this tale will continue is presented according to algebrized perceptions of the New World as ordered pastoral alternative to American disorder, as a "voiceless village [that] lies under the shadow of giant pines and towering tamaracs, hushed in stagnant stillness ... where purple lilacs and golden laburnums bloom" and "the beautiful St. Lawrence" sparkles in the distance.²⁷ Despite this shift in geocultural terrain, there is little reduction in the sensational events or melodrama of a story that follows the machinations of a poor and vengeful cousin who inverts the stereotype of the gentle and submissive caregiver familiar to readers of the day.

Similarly algebrized geocultural preconceptions are refunctioned in Barr's novel, in which the north-south axis is personified in the figures of two recently reunited friends: Richard Yates, a brash New York city newspaper reporter, and the more subdued Stillson Renmark, a professor at Toronto's University College. With a "humorous byplay" that reminds one of the exchanges between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Holmes and Watson or among Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* (1889),²⁸ Yates and Renmark spend a good deal of the novel in a verbal jousting over the similarities and differences at the heart of the US-Canada relationship. To Yates the most obvious distinction is one of topography: compared to the elegance of an American city like Buffalo, where the duo's adventures begin, Canada appears as a land where a man ventures only when he wants "to go off to the

²⁷ *The Twin Sisters; or, The Wronged Wife's Hate* (New York: Beadle & Adams, 1864), 90.

²⁸ Paul Stuewe, "Robert Barr: An Appreciation and Some Bibliographical Additions," *Canadian Notes and Queries* 44 (1991): 3. This latter influence is more likely given Barr's close personal and professional relationship with Jerome before and through their founding of the popular periodical *The Idler* in 1892.

woods somewhere," to return to "the forest primeval, with murmuring pines and the hemlock, bearded with moss and green in the something or other." To cross the border into the rural tranquility of Canada is, Yates suggests, to be "as far away as possible" from the glamour and hustle of life in the urban United States.²⁹

It is James De Mille,³⁰ though, who remains the most representative of this group of Victorian parodists in his dedication to both the question "Where is here?" and to the use of the parodic as a primary gesture of response. A prolific and immensely popular comic writer and a well-respected scholar who demonstrated throughout his life "a wide-ranging intellectual curiosity," he was also an "omnivorous and voracious reader"³¹ whose novels reveal both the rich allusiveness and deft irony of the best parody. Indeed, as a young man at Brown University in Providence (where he received an M.A. in 1854), De Mille was a regular visitor to both the general university library and the well-stocked, members-only library of the Philermenian Society. Complementing the copious volumes of fiction, history, and philosophy that he withdrew for study and pleasure were two seminal books on the theory and practice of comedy, parody, and satire: Isaac D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature* and William Hazlitt's *Lecture on the English Comic Writers*.³² Given the focus of this study it is intriguing to speculate, too, on the impact on the young De Mille of one of the few books he withdrew on more than one occasion during his

²⁹ Robert Barr, *In the Midst of Alarms* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1894), 22. Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

³⁰ Although the family name was Demill, James added the final "e" after 1865; it was this configuration that appeared on the more than forty novels he wrote during his lifetime and will be retained throughout this study.

³¹ Patricia Monk, *The Gilded Beaver: An Introduction to the Life and Work of James De Mille* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1991), 125.

³² *Ibid.*, 71-72.

stay at Brown: Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, which he later described as a comic masterpiece that could be credited with having "laughed Spain's chivalry away."³³

Counter to the curious claims of a few critics who argue that he wrote "only of foreign scenes and incidents"³⁴ or that "the settings of his novels and tales are not Canadian" and therefore "in nowise express anything of the growing sense of the Canadian national spirit"³⁵ or of "the Canadian novel in particular,"³⁶ a number of De Mille's more popular novels rely heavily on a distinctly Canadian cultural

³³ De Mille, *The Elements of Rhetoric* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), 420. Following graduation from Brown, De Mille went on to establish a solid academic career, first as a professor of classics at Acadia College, and later as a professor of history and rhetoric at Dalhousie College; it was also during his tenure at Dalhousie that De Mille produced his only academic text, "a solid and carefully constructed textbook"(Monk, 135) called *The Elements of Rhetoric* (1878). Two years after this book's release, following a trip to a Saint John Mechanics' Institute where he had delivered a lecture on satire, De Mille was taken ill with what was at first thought to be a cold. His condition deteriorated rapidly into pneumonia and he died early on the morning of 28 January 1880 at the age of forty-six.

Although De Mille had never been a man of robust health, many friends and colleagues believed that it was his dual life that had contributed in no small way to his early passing. Beginning when as a student at Brown he dashed off short fictions for submission to various American story papers, De Mille's other life was as a popular writer of what Logan and French described in their *Highways of Canadian Literature* (1924) as mysterious, thrilling, extravagant, and sentimental fiction" (95). To describe him as a prolific writer would be an understatement; his was a frenzied writing career that saw him publish more than twenty-five novels (the vast majority in the decade prior to his death), as well as numerous poems, short stories, and essays; indeed, for one six-year period he was producing almost three novels a year. (In 1870 alone, for instance, four of De Mille's novels appeared: two directed at the adult market, *The American Baron* and *The Lady of the Ice*, and two which were included as part of his extremely popular B.O.W.C. ("Brethern of the White Cross") series of children's adventure books.)

See also Gerson's "Three Writers of Victorian Canada: Rosanna Leprohon, James De Mille, Agnes Maule Machar," *Canadian Writers and Their Works*, Fiction ser. ed. Robert Lecker, Jack David, and Ellen Quigley (Toronto: ECW, 1981), 195-256.

³⁴ S.E. Dawson, "Rev. of J.G. Bourinot's *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness*," *The Week* 11.18 (30 March 1894): 424.

³⁵ J.D. Logan and Donald G. French, *Highways of Canadian Literature: A Synoptic Introduction to the Literary History of Canada (English) from 1760 to 1924* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1924), 95.

³⁶ Lorne Pierce, *An Outline of Canadian Literature* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1927), 165.

geography. Although his multi-plot and transnational thriller *Cord and Creese* (1869), for instance, sweeps readers from Australia to Hong Kong to England to San Salvador, it also includes two key narrative elements set in Canada: a recounted ghost tale set on "the far-famed Sable Island, which lies off the coast of Nova Scotia, in the direct track of vessels crossing the Atlantic between England and the United States,"³⁷ and a key plot line that pivots on the forced emigration of the hero's family to plague-ridden Quebec aboard the *Tecumseh*. Recounted four times during the course of the novel through retellings, diary entries, and a formal "history" of the deadly cholera epidemic that swept through Lower Canada during the 1840s, the story of the family's voyage and subsequent disembarkation at Grosse Isle in the spring of 1847 is interwoven in a sensational story of deception and intrigue. Similarly, *The American Baron* (1872) includes among its numerous romantic entanglements a story that begins when the heroic Lord Harry Hawbury, an English sportsman touring the "[g]lorious country" of Canada accompanied by the requisite company of "two or three Indians,"³⁸ rescues his future wife from a forest fire sweeping through the Ottawa Valley.

More important is the fact that in a number of what De Mille called his "Satirical Romance[s]"³⁹ (a terminological imprecision that may be explained by his

³⁷ De Mille, *Cord and Creese: A Novel* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), 30. Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

³⁸ De Mille, *The American Baron* (New York: Harper, 1871), 25. Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

³⁹ Letter to "Editor Blackwood's Magazine," 23 July 1879. National Library of Scotland, MS.4389, folio 156. Explaining in *Elements*, for instance, that parody is "[a]t the present day ... but seldom used, except for literary satire", he goes on to suggest more accurately that *The Rejected Addresses* of James and Horace Smith, *Punch's Prize Novelists* (readily available in Canada), and various works by Thackeray and Browning should "all be regarded as parodies" in which reflexive humour rather than satiric diminution are the dominant mode (417).

characteristically Victorian predilection to conflate casually such distinct terms as parody, satire, and burlesque) he engages his self-acknowledged "extravagant humour" and "highly elaborated" plots⁴⁰ to foreground parodically stylized encounters between Old World imaginations and New World geographies. Of these novels, it is *The Lady of the Ice* (1870) that provides the best example of his attention to the particularities of Canada's cultural geography. Generally considered to be one of his "most accomplished piece[s] of fiction,"⁴¹ *The Lady of the Ice* opens "during the winter of 18--"⁴² with a declarative statement that marks this as a story of what Holmes would call "our own place." "This is a story of Quebec," the first-person narrator Alexander Macrorie notes, adding by way of evaluation that "Quebec is a wonderful city" (*Lady* 5). Expanding on this assessment in subsequent paragraphs in which he details with admirable skill some of the geological specificities of the city and its environs while at the same time offering the self-effacing admission that "[i]t must not be supposed from this introduction that I am a geologist," Macrorie situates himself not as a native storyteller but as a man of another cultural geography and, implicitly, of another narrative tradition. He is, he states proudly as he "passes" the reader his card, a lieutenant in Her Majesty's 129 Bobtails, a military affiliation that serves as a reminder of Canada's still visible and tangible connections with the Old World and aligns him with such notable fictional antecedents as John Richardson's Captain de Haldimar (*Wacousta*, 1832) and Rosanna Leprohon's Colonel Evelyn (*Antoinette De Mirecourt*, 1864).

⁴⁰ Letter to Messrs. G.H. Harnes and Co., 31 May 1878, cited in Monk 207.

⁴¹ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 48.

⁴² De Mille, *The Lady of the Ice: A Novel* (New York: Appleton, 1870), 6. Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

But Macrorie proves to be a familiar Old World presence marked by difference. Returning in his second chapter to a description of the time and place in which his story will unfold, he quickly dialogizes his description of his temporary Canadian home. "I'll never forget the time" of the adventure, he begins his tale. "It was a day in April. But an April day in Canada," he is quick to point out, "is a very different thing from an April day in England," a difference signalled most obviously by the inappropriateness of the romanticized "palette" engaged by would-be bards setting out to express the sights, sounds, and emotions traditionally associated with an Old World spring day:

In England all Nature is robed in vivid green, the air is balmy; and all those beauties abound which usually set poets rhapsodizing, and young men sentimentalizing, and young girls tantalizing. Now, in Canada there is nothing of the kind. No Canadian poet, for instance, would ever affirm that in the spring a livelier iris blooms upon the burnished dove; in the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. No. For that sort of thing -- the thoughts of love I mean -- winter is the time of day in Canada. The fact is, the Canadians haven't any spring. The months which Englishmen include under that pleasant name are here partly taken up with prolonging winter, and partly with the formation of a new and nondescript season.

(Lady 6)

Having established a distinct sense of New World difference at the heart of this seasonal similarity, Macrorie goes on to contrast in minute detail various other conditions by which New World winters are distinguished from those in his Old World home, notably the quality, texture, and amount of snow that falls; the foliage, or lack thereof, that adorns the trees; and the clothing needed to survive the changing seasons in both Canada and England (*Lady 6-7*). Having firmly established this sense of a New World geography at once the same as but distinct from its Old World counterpart, De Mille constructs a sparkling parody of

sensational tales of love, adventure, and misadventure that pivots on a familiar indigenous catastrophe: the rescue of a beautiful and mysterious woman trapped on the ice of the St. Lawrence River during spring break-up. As Gerson notes, such a scene had by 1870 become "(with a little assistance from Harriet Beecher Stowe) ... a convention in nineteenth-century Canadian fiction."⁴³

Whereas De Mille positions Macrorie as an Old World narrator who proves himself at least partially conscious of his role in the construction of images that might either reinforce or challenge algebrized perceptions of his newly adopted land, other Canadian parodists were quick to point to the role of less self-conscious Old World writers as central to the perpetuation of this potentially burdensome habit. Their parodies suggest such a habit might itself be the result of an imported geocultural myopism. It is this myopic persistence that is foregrounded in the lengthy serial parody "The Junior Pickwicks, and Their Memorable Trip to North America," which appeared from June 1886 to May 1887 in the pages of the popular paper *Grip: An Independent Political and Satirical Journal*.⁴⁴

Opening in the London meeting rooms of the four-year-old Junior Pickwick Club, a group "of milksops and humbugs" who appear before the Canadian reader

⁴³ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 48-9.

⁴⁴ The partisan vehicle of noted illustrator J.W. Bengough, who called his magazine after the namesake raven in Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), *Grip* regularly included as part of its varied repertoire a number of prose and verse parodies, including a Popular Series of Pirated Romances, none of which drew on distinctly Canadian geographies. These included "'Clara De Lacy Rochfort' from Miss Br--dd--on's Latest Advance Sheets" (1.16 [13 September 1873]); "'The Woman in -- What?' by M. Collie Willkins" (1.18 [27 September 1873]); "'A Very Strange Story' by John (Bulwer) Smith" (1.20 [11 October 1873]); and "'Sillybub Conningsly, or the Second-Hand Clothes Shop' by Ben Disraeli" (1.23 [1 November 1873]). Of the various English and American novelists whose works were parodied, Rider Haggard proved to be a purveyor of especially popular models, with three parodic revisions of his works appearing in 1887 alone: "He -- She -- 'It: A 'Story' of Adventure -- Rather! By Ride Him Haggard," 28.17 (23 April 1887); "Allan Dollarmain," 29.13 (24 September 1887) and 29.14 (1 October 1887); and "Brother Jonathan's Dimes," 29.15-17 (8-22 October 1887).

with a clearly marked comic heritage already established for them, this generic hybrid (part travelogue, part adventure tale) begins with the decision to send four members on a grand tour of North America; each will be responsible for "taking faithful notes of all they see, to be reported to [other Clubbers] on their return." The purpose of such a journey, the Club's perpetual President Granby Simmers explains to his constituents, is twofold. The first goal is to reaffirm the Club's correspondence with the group on which this version of the club, and this parody, is modelled; the trip, in this sense, will recognize a precedent established by members of "the original Pickwick Club, [who] urged by sense of duty, deputed four of their number to travel throughout the length and breadth of this country in pursuit of knowledge and information." More important still is Simmers's conviction that such an undertaking will address a longstanding gap in the Junior Pickwickians's knowledge: the fact that "at this time we know little of Canada and North America generally," a lack of understanding perpetuated by the fact that "[w]hat little [the Clubbers] do read" about Canada they "are unable to implicitly believe, for those who have written upon the subject, or some of them at least, appear to be entirely ignorant of what they are writing about."

On this point of narrative misrepresentation, the President saves his most pointed attacks for Dickens's close friend Wilkie Collins, whose anti-vivisectionist novel *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time* (1883) includes a prominent subplot in which a key character is forced to take an extended trip to Canada's drier climes in order to recover his health. At once registering his concern over the misdesignations of the New World by such a prominent novelist as Collins, the unnamed parodist at the same time raises some questions about the intellectual rigour that might be brought to the Club's newly launched "fact"-finding journey. Apparently having never read *Heart and Science*, Simmers seems perfectly

comfortable launching into his denunciation on the recommendations of others. "I am credibly informed that in Wilkie Collins' latest work," he suggests,

he exhibits an unfamiliarity with the country in which some of the scenes of his work are laid that is actually appalling. What we require are facts, gentlemen, facts, and how can we better obtain those facts than by sending some of our number to collect them? When a gentleman of Mr. Wilkie Collins' general information and intelligence tells us that -- that -- I forget exactly what he *does* tell us, but it is something, I am informed, so terrific in its inaccuracy that it must cause us to doubt the statements of all writers except those whom we can trust and rely upon, I say that when such a man deceives us it behoves us to bestir ourselves and obtain some information that we can place confidence in respecting those countries which lie toward the setting sun.

Despite such noble claims, not all Club members are convinced of the wisdom of such a journey in the first place. Club member Sploggs, "who was believed to be a profound student of the art of chemistry, from the fact that his lodgings were crammed with crucibles, retorts, and all manner of villainous smelling compounds," warns that the air "very prevalent in low, flat countries such as Canada" will be "saturated with noxious vapors" akin to those that had recently killed a cat that had fallen into a well in central England. Given that Canada must abound "in miasma and poisonous exhalations,"⁴⁵ he recommends that the Junior Pickwickians be supplied with respirators, which they are to wear at all times during their adventures: following a heated debate between Club factions, the recommendation is voted down.

With issues of Canadian air quality resolved, and with a quartet of "exceedingly proper and well-conducted young" Pickwickians selected to leave

⁴⁵ *Grip* 26.23 (12 June 1886): [4-5].

Liverpool for Canada aboard the steamship *Chinaman*,⁴⁶ the Club spends the days before departure in discussions of the multitudinous dangers of the Canadian landscape, emphasizing in particular the perils associated with its harsh climate and ubiquitous savage beasts. And while it is "true that the greater portion of [the Junior Pickwickians] appeared to hold most hazy opinions about the country to be visited by their four gallant representatives," the anonymous parodist steps back from his parody to assure readers that such "opinions were not a whit more hazy and undefined than those held by a vast number of Englishmen, whose vague notions concerning Canada may be sometimes seen expressed in the public press and other literature of England."⁴⁷ It was this same literature that, in turn, provided the models for so many Canadian writers of the day. Arriving in the New World, the four immediately "[i]nveigh against the various writers" who had come to Canada before them and whose works had led [the Pickwickians] to believe that they "should find Canada to be a wild, semi-barbarous country."⁴⁸ Setting out to rectify these

⁴⁶ With the exception of Vereker Yubbits, a sporting spirit, the quartet of Junior Pickwickians selected to make the journey to Canada is, appropriately, a group of men notable for their "literary" character. Led by Algernon Caddleby, a Pickwickian who "has already contributed to the literature of his country" with such works as "Cabbage Stalks as a Marketable Commodity" and "Life in a Toll House Gate," the group includes Thomas Bramley, whose life has been spent "in taking notes on all imaginable subjects, having in contemplation, it was whispered, a literary work which was to embrace all subjects," and C. Hyperion Crinkle, "the poet of the Club" who had given "full swing to his poetic fancy and at the age of nineteen, composed a volume of poems." Representative of the cumulative success of this literary cadre is Hyperion's famous (to fellow Clubbers) decision to eschew established publishers (many of whom had already rejected his manuscript) in favour of self-publication and self-promotion. As the unnamed narrator of the tale notes, "'Flights into the Realms of Poesy, by C. Hyperion Crinkles,' elegantly bound and beautifully printed came to be found on the tables of most of the friends of the author, a gift from him to them." The two copies that had been sold "were purchased by a couple of envious critics, who slashed most bitterly at the wings of the aspiring bard and effectually prevented him from attempting another flight, either in the realms of poesy or elsewhere for a long time to come" (26.24 [19 June 1886]: 4-5).

⁴⁷ *Grip* 27.1 (10 July 1886): [5].

⁴⁸ *Grip* 27.12 (25 September 1886): [5].

narrative misdesignations, the pen-wielding Pickwickians dutifully accumulate notes and stories of their (mis)adventures for use later in front of a home audience.

Soon, though, they find themselves trapped in an authorial dilemma that Holmes and De Mille have suggested face all New World authors: they must decide whether to narrate authentically the relatively prosaic terrain that they encounter on their decidedly unheroic journey or to reimagine their stories of Canada in terms of the more familiar, though inauthentic Old World models they had earlier dismissed as misleading and appalling. This crisis peaks when Caddleby, the group's leader, is butted into a slow-moving river by a goat; these literary men agree that "the hideous reality" of the event will never be divulged, lest the home audience "should ever come to hear that [their] leader was ignominiously hurled into the river by a -- by a common goat." Considering a number of possible revisions, including intensifying the nature of the conflict by reimagining the goat as "a Canadian buffalo" or a band "of midnight assassins," changes that they all agree would colour the whole disappointing affair "with a tinge of romance; nay, it would have been an adventure,"⁴⁹ the group settles on a much simpler though nonetheless troublesome solution: they will omit the event from their notes. Erasing the Canadian river and goat, the Pickwickians re- and misdesignate the new land once again, this time in terms of ellipsis rather than algebrized topographic codes.

The persistent and apparently unavoidable impulse of gentlemanly Old World settlers (the Burgher) and travellers (the Junior Pickwickians) to attempt to redesignate the cultural geography of the New World in terms of familiar though inappropriate topographic codes reminds us of the assertion that the new land as discursive terrain was never a particularly stable site, never a point at which designations of locality (topographic codes, generic patternings) could be accepted

⁴⁹ Grip 27.18 (6 November 1886): [5].

as fixed. As the parodies discussed here make clear, the fundamental acts of reading and narrating the new land were never straightforward. Old World aesthetic preconceptions interacted in complex ways with the geocultural realities of the new land to configure representations that were, as New suggests, imagined and reimagined through various "filters." Canadian writers setting out to represent the New World to themselves and to others necessarily drew "on overt associations (at once personal and political, cultural and historical) that derive[d] from experience and training; they [drew] directly on an aesthetics of arrangement; and they [drew] on the numerous sets of socialized assumptions (about knowledge, about nature) that -- simply because they [were] so wholly absorbed -- [were] unlikely even to have been consciously examined"⁵⁰ for appropriateness or, more importantly to the parodist, for the tinges of algebrization.

But as New also suggests, these filtered representations can never be construed only as tests to a referentiality grounded in the relationship between Old World assumptions and a resistant New World geography. Questions of topographic designation tend always to "slide" toward questions of discursive activities and cultural practices that are themselves embedded in the sociocultural terrain of the times. In Victorian Canada one such "slide" was of particular importance to the still nascent New World imagination, specifically that movement by which designations of land (the geographic and topographic) became overwritten with designations of what I describe as a sense of landedness (the cultured and the cultivated). Raymond Williams elucidates in his revised *Keywords* (1983) how such a slide might take place. Examining the etymologies of the Latin roots *cultura* (cultivation or tending) and *colere* (inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship), Williams notes that the word "[c]ulture in all its early uses was a noun of process"

⁵⁰ New, 5.

that designated "the tending of something, basically crops or animals." Tracing how over time and through the vicissitudes of living language (variant spellings, habituation to the metaphoric) the term was extended "to a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development," he suggests, too, that with such change came a flexibility of boundaries that allowed this new sense of culture to encompass individuals, communities, and nations.⁵¹ Culture and cultivation understood in this social and aesthetic sense became interconnected with designation of land through a familiar vocabulary of binary codes: those that marked a place and/or person as "cultured" or "cultivated" as opposed to wild, natural, or untamed; as "refined" as opposed to coarse, vulgar, or uncouth; and as "civilized" as opposed to primitive or intemperate.

To be landed in the sense advanced here, then, was to have achieved, and to be recognized within a community as having achieved, a level of cultural authority, of aesthetic, intellectual, and even moral enlightenment and excellence that could be acquired only through the privileges of birth, education, and training. Acknowledging an obvious overlap with the adjectival "landed," as in wealth derived from real estate, I want to suggest that this New World designation of landedness was at no time resolved to synonymity with proprietorship. Although ownership and control over the land was seen as "a tacit demonstration of success" which reiterated the Victorian Canadian ethos of independence and progress, the link between the privilege of land ownership and moral and cultural superiority was never, despite some claims otherwise, a "simple syllogism."⁵² Mere possession of land was itself neither a condition nor a guarantee of acquiring the distinction of New World landedness, though, as will become clear, the title of landholder or landowner may

⁵¹ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976; New York: Oxford UP, 1983), 87-93.

⁵² New, 79.

well have brought certain sociocultural privileges that led to presumptions (often misguided) of landedness.

As the eldest daughter of "J. Howard, Esq ... a wealthy landholder in the county of Kent, in Canada," a "gentleman of high standing in society -- a man of enlarged views and a liberal mind" who openly dismisses the material spirit as the uncultivated enthusiasms of "what Shakespeare calls the 'hold door trade'," ⁵³ Holmes's Belinda appears at first glimpse to be the ideal New World embodiment of this landedness. Respectful of Old World distinctions of social standing and rank, she is "a young lady" whose "uncommon personal beauty" is matched only by her many cultivated accomplishments "both natural and acquired":

She was the pride of her parents and the brightest ornament of the circle in which she moved. Her education was solid as well as ornamental; her manners were easy and unaffected; her conversation animated and interesting; her air modest and unassuming. And above all, she possessed a calm, unruffled mind -- always willing to forgive, and presuming upon the charitable judgment of others in return. The future, to her imagination, was all one unclouded day -- one continued sunshine, where pleasures would succeed pleasures in unbroken succession forever. (*Belinda* 4)

Indeed, to most commentators of the day there was little question that in such a model of landedness as Belinda there existed "an inseperable [sic] connexion between virtuous feelings and mental vigor," between "the steady contemplation of truth" and an "unwearied" ⁵⁴ dedication to culture that would ennoble Canadian society with "all the endowments" of the Old World: "the mental faculties, the moral

⁵³ Cf. *Troilus and Cressida* V.x.51

⁵⁴ Reverend David Rintoul, *Two Lectures on Rhetoric delivered in the Mechanics' Institute, Toronto* (Toronto: Hugh Scobie, 1844), 21.

attributes, the physical powers, the finer tastes and feelings."⁵⁵ Such refined feelings, these arguments inevitably asserted, would serve as a societal salve, soothing the excessive "animal energies and passions" of that "ignorant and indifferent ... class that in cities and villages and rural districts give the greatest trouble, because, destitute of all intellectual tastes, weak in moral principle ... [they] find their excitement and a relief to their passions in lawless disorder, intemperance, and even violence."⁵⁶ A refined life lived large could serve as a beacon and guide to those less cultivated members of a society; such a model as Belinda could teach those around them, it was believed, to "look at things from a comprehensive and unselfish point of view"⁵⁷ and to move beyond the current emphasis on the materialist spirit in order to explore "the conceptions of a grander theme and a more subtle music than now satisfies humanity, the ideality of a loftier virtue and a nobler genius than now actuates this most truly prosaic age."⁵⁸

Writing at the midpoint of the 1870s, James Douglas could argue without hesitation, for instance, that "[i]n this new land of ours" in which "every man is struggling for a living; or, if that has been secured, for a competency; or, if this has been gained, for wealth," there is a "very small class [with the privilege of] inherited wealth, and the culture, which across the Atlantic, so often accompanies it -- a culture derived from generations of highly-educated well-bred ancestors."⁵⁹ Even

⁵⁵ J.A. Long, "The Age in Which We Live and Our Duty Towards It," *CMNR* 11.2 (February 1877): 144.

⁵⁶ Richard Lewis, "Mechanics' Institutes and the Best Means of Improving Them: II," *CMNR* 10.3 (September 1876): 230.

⁵⁷ Anon., "Canadian Universities," *The Week* 5.48 (25 October 1888): 762.

⁵⁸ A.H. Morrison, "The Decay of Ideality," *CEMSC* 10 (1888): 8. See also John B. Peaslee's "Moral and Literary Training in Public Schools," *CEMSC* 5 (1883): 55-61.

⁵⁹ James Douglas, "The Intellectual Progress of Canada During the Last Fifty Years and the Present State of Its Literature," *CMNR* 7.6 (June 1875): 466.

two decades later, the tenor of this argument would change little. When A.H. Morrison articulates his concern for "the masses, their squalor, their ignorance, their crassness, their ignoble prostration beneath the wheels of the hereditary Juggernaut of birth, wealth, and fashion," his argument remains firmly fixed on the central role to be played in this cultural rejuvenation by the landed-class exemplars of a "reverence for age, worth, and ability; true altruistic love for beauty of converse and elevation of soul; just appraisal of scholastic, literary, or artistic excellence." In other words, of "the culture which makes the true gentleman, not gent -- the true gentlewoman, not lady; the inner morality which sublimates the grossness of the flesh and raises the spirit, irrespective of bible-class bankrupts and professing hypocrites, a step nearer the Divine."⁶⁰

Poised on the brink of what was generally viewed by those living through it as "a new era" of "intellectual as well as material activity,"⁶¹ Victorian Canada was entering a period of transition when such models of Old World landedness were considered crucial to the future growth of Canada's cultural geography. With the newly formed Dominion evolving from a land-based culture and economy in which "farming and staples production predominated" to a point by the end of the century when secondary and tertiary "industry and finance" would predominate, the future was at once full of potential and anxiety.⁶² In the minds of many Canadians, whatever the future might hold would be best served by remaining true to the designations of land and landedness that had brought the country to its current stage

⁶⁰ Morrison, "The Ghost of Education." *The Week* 11.11 (9 February 1894): 251. See also Edward Hagarty, "Culture as an Element of Education," *CEMSC* 13 (1891): 8-12.

⁶¹ John George Bourinot, *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness: A Short Historical and Critical Review of Literature, Art and Education in Canada* (Montreal: Foster Brown, 1893), 14.

⁶² Valverde, 15. See also Houghton, 110.

of development. Social stability and economic prosperity would be secured by staying the course, by ensuring that notions of cultivation and progress remained in the foreground of the Canadian imagination and that agricultural production increased, mineral resources continued to be brought to light, and commerce was extended. As John George Hodgins argued in his pre-Confederation "Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada," such a land-based route of development seemed especially well suited to the Canadian personality and to the spirit of the times:

[t]he very end of our being is practical; and every step and every branch of our moral, intellectual, and physical culture should harmonize with the design of our existence. The age in which we live is likewise eminently practical; and the condition of interests, the pursuits and duties of our new country, under our free government, are invested with an almost exclusively practical character.⁶³

To others, though, the path to the future was not so clearly defined. Granting that "[i]n a new country, like Canada, material must precede intellectual progress"⁶⁴ and that a "country must make material headway before it will give heed to [cultural and] intellectual wants,"⁶⁵ a number of prominent Canadian commentators voiced their concern about the long-term effects of the monologic emphasis on industrial expansion and material gain that was seen increasingly to dominate Canadian culture. When "[a]ll the strength of mental invention and

⁶³ John George Hodgins, "The Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 26 March 1846," *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada from the Passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791 to the close of the Reverend Doctor Ryerson's Administration of the Education Department in 1876*, Vol. VI [1846] (Toronto: Belford, 1876), 147.

⁶⁴ Charles G.D. Roberts, *A History of Canada* (Boston: Lamson, Wolffe, 1897), 417.

⁶⁵ Graeme Mercer Adam, "Nationalism and the Literary Spirit," *The Week* 5.8 (19 January 1888): 119.

assiduity is devoted to the advancement of pecuniary interests, and ... exercised in extending the arm of commercial enterprise unto some quarter it never reached before," the argument was generally made, "a population assumes a great commercial or manufacturing character, a tone of mind" that might over time stagnate into a social malaise "highly unfavourable to [cultural] progress."⁶⁶ Left to develop without the counterbalancing influences of what were broadly labelled "cultural pursuits," such a tone of mind would lead (inevitably it was believed) to an unchecked "spirit of all-surrounding materialism" that would in turn "stifle those generous intellectual" and cultural "aspirations which are best calculated to make a people truly happy and great."⁶⁷ Buoyed only slightly by the "quiet but questioning hope"⁶⁸ that Canada's material progress will be matched by "a corresponding intellectual development,"⁶⁹ there was, as Thomas D'Arcy McGee articulated on the eve of Confederation, a deeply-rooted fear among many observers that such great cultural expectations may never be realized: "God speed the trowel and the plumb-line, as well as the loom, the plow and the anvil," McGee cautioned. "But dream not, my dear neighbour, that great cities are built chiefly by stone masons."⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country" 54.

⁶⁷ Bourinot, *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness* 48, 3.

⁶⁸ Roberts, *A History* 417.

⁶⁹ Bourinot, *The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People: A Historical Review* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1881), 125.

⁷⁰ Thomas D'Arcy McGee, "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion," *MG* (5 November 1867): 2. An anonymous commentator at century's end would suggest, too, that if Canadians "have struggled with natural obstacles and conquered; if we have enlarged our domain till it is coterminous with either ocean; if we have pushed the bounds of habitation farther and farther, till the ends of the earth acknowledge our mastery and the riches of land and sea are at our disposal, and have brought east and west into proximity for our convenience; if we have given laws to the wilderness and fought the battle of freedom, so that we sit fearless, as it were, under our own vine and fig tree, there is surely still something ungrasped, the thought of which quickens our aspirations. We have, indeed shown that we long for something more than big farms, and busy marts of trade, and fleets of merchant

Sharing in this sense of anxiety, and united in their common emphasis on the need to cultivate both the land and the landed appreciation "for things and thoughts not altogether concerned with bread and butter, but beautiful in themselves and ennobling to the spirit,"⁷¹ such diverse critics as James Douglas, William Dawson LeSueur, Graeme Mercer Adam, and John George Bourinot, along with a loose network of organizations and individuals, engaged in an often vigorous campaign to improve what they saw as the moral and cultural condition of the nation.⁷² Despite appropriate complaints that "a certain widespread cant use of the word" had tended to cloud the "common mind," hampering the general apprehension "with clearness what is meant by culture in the true sense,"⁷³ these landed men and women of letters remained clear in one aspect of their definition: landedness meant at least a partial break with the land, a move away from a singular attachment to loom, plow, and anvil toward a life lived in more refined ways and with an appreciation and cultivation of such cultural achievements as painting, literature, or history. The landedness personified in such a character as Belinda and

ships and the amassing of wealth" ("Literature in Canada," *The Dominion Illustrated* 5.119 [11 October 1890]: 243).

⁷¹ Roberts, *A History* 417-18.

⁷² Civil servant and constitutional expert John George Bourinot was one of the more adamant and recognizable critics of what he called the Canadian absorption "with the care of our material interests" at the expense of "those things which give refinement and tone to social life." Citing as his primary source the American poet James Russell Lowell's *Democracy and Other Addresses* (1887), he warned against an overconfidence and overestimation of the material spirit and of the perceived "success" that many dreamed would accompany it. Noting that Lowell "did not deny that wealth is a great fertilizer of civilization and of the arts that beautify it" or "that wealth is an excellent thing since it means power, leisure and liberty," Bourinot quotes directly from Lowell to warn that these accomplishments "'divorced from culture ... become the very mockery of their own essence, not goods, but evils fatal to their possessor.... Material success is good, but only as the necessary preliminary of better things. The measure of a nation's true success is the amount it has contributed to the thought, the moral energy, the intellectual happiness, the spiritual hope and consolation of mankind'" (*The Intellectual Development*, 2-3).

⁷³ Rev. A.H. Reynar, "Literature and Culture" *CEMSC* 11 (1889): 125.

her community was not to be found, according to such a vision, in neatly plowed furrows or a cleared wood lot; on the contrary, it was to function as a revitalizing counterpoint to the spirit of utilitarianism and the "slough of materialism"⁷⁴ that was seen to define such narrowly defined, land-based achievements. "I [cannot] imagine any good reason," Egerton Ryerson proclaimed in a statement that resonated in writings on issues of culture and taste throughout the nineteenth century,

why the *Farmer* -- the lord of the soil -- should be destitute of the nobility of knowledge; nor why the *Mechanic* -- so essential a contributor to the riches, comfort, power and grandeur of a nation -- should be a mere operative at his bench, or anvil, when, by the higher powers of a cultivated mind, he might equally contribute to the country's intellectual wealth and civil advancement. The accessibility of all public situations in this country to merit, and talent and learning, is a beacon to guide and prompt the exertions of every aspiring youth, and an admonition to every parent not to doom his children to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water,' by denying to them an education suitable to the exigencies of our age and country. No patrimony can equal in value an education which expands the mind, exalts the faculties, refines the taste of pleasure, opens numerous sources of intellectual enjoyment, and qualifies for the civil and social duties of life.⁷⁵

Appropriately, when a commentator like Graeme Mercer Adam set out in 1879 to explore "The Promotion of Culture" in Canada, one of his primary concerns

⁷⁴ Pelham Edgar, cited in Margery Fee, "English-Canadian Literary Criticism: Defining and Establishing a National Literature" (Ph.D. diss. U of Toronto, 1981), 240.

⁷⁵ Egerton Ryerson, *Inaugural Address on the Natural Advantages of an English and Liberal Education* (Toronto: Printed at the Guardian Office, 1842), 25-26. See also James Williams's *A Lecture on Self-Education delivered before the Church of England Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association of Quebec on Wednesday Evening, 28th December, 1864* (Quebec: George T. Cary, 1865) and William Dawson LeSueur's "The Intellectual Life," *CMNR* 7.4 (April 1875): 320-30.

came to be the question of where the landed sensibilities necessary for such advancement were to be found and, more importantly, how such cultivated tastes were to be disseminated. "[W]e look expectantly to the professions for evidence of sympathy with culture, and for practical results in its promotion," Adam posited, despite the fact that from this community there have as of yet been few, if any, fully realized "efforts in its behalf." The reasons for this failure according to Adam are varied:

In Law, perhaps from the fact that the social status of its members is more favourable to its unselfish pursuit, the recognition of culture is more general.... The Clerical and Medical professions on the other hand, do not, as professions, give practical encouragement to its promotion. The former, in neither its professional curriculum, nor in its Church Assemblies, encourages that benignant breadth of tone favourable to its existence. As a class, moreover, 'the peril of committing themselves' is too characteristic of the profession to give aid to its expression, while the asperities of religious controversy too often drive culture from their midst. Among ministers, as among doctors, culture has, individually, to look for that generous, eager, and ambitious life which woos it to a home, and for that student-temper which, in the circle of its influence, best promotes it.

If these traditionally landed communities of English-Canadian society were perceived to be adding little or nothing to the practical dissemination and promotion of culture, the growing merchant or commercial class, what Adam called "the trading community of the country," had achieved little more. The problem, as he discerned it, was clear:

With wealth has come indifference to the weal of the community, and with comfortable circumstances that selfishness which felicitates itself in isolation. Formerly lectures, readings, literary and debating clubs, 'socials' for mental improvement, and other schemes of an educating

and improving character, were wont to be patronized, but of these one hears little now-a-days. It would seem as if we had retrograded greatly from these times, while the apathy that now reveals itself, in matters that concern the intellectual life and public culture, leads us almost to despair of a revival of interest.⁷⁶

These concerns are in substantial ways representative of those articulated by many of the most prominent and powerful English-Canadian commentators of the day, men and women to whom this designation of landedness functioned as the cultural reinforcement of what Wendy Griswold describes generally as a kind of cultural archive, a belief in "a repository of symbolic forms and works accumulated" within a society over time as "a great treasury that can be drawn upon, is occasionally replenished, is never exhausted."⁷⁷ Although forwarding arguments that were often remarkably disparate in tone and scope, these advocates of a Canadian landedness also shared a belief, though not always explicitly articulated, in what can be best described as an Arnoldian psychology of the ideal of liberal culture: the conviction that society is culture and that culture is the only sure moral authority that can harmonize the totality of human affairs through the stimulation and enhancement of a core of life firmly grounded in well-established notions of class, custom, and social responsibility. It was this view of culture visited and revisited in essays by many of Adam's contemporaries, including I. Allen Jack ("Canadian Aristocracy," 1874), LeSueur ("The Intellectual Life," 1875), and W.J.

⁷⁶ Graeme Mercer Adam, "The Promotion of Culture," *CEMSC* 1 (1879): 67. "Nor is the press, in the main, more helpful to culture, or influential in the formation of an elevating public taste," Adam continues. Providing a "daily bill-of-fare" dedicated almost singularly to "[p]olitics, controversy, trivial occurrences, and gossip," these admittedly popular publications "with some few exceptions, make no original provision for the serious student" of culture. Most obviously lacking in such papers are discussions of art, music, literature, and literary criticism; "[l]iterary excerpts, save of the most fluid character, find little representation in their pages, and literary criticism is almost unknown."

⁷⁷ Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre 1576-1980* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), 6.

Alexander ("The Study of Literature," 1889), writers who shared a deep concern for what they perceived to be the serious geocultural limitations on the Canadian intellect and imagination.

Accompanied in individual cases by anxieties over the dissolution of imperial affiliations or by fears of the rumblings of economic expansionism and annexationism sounding from south of the border, these writers promoted the benefits of the "moulding influence"⁷⁸ to be found in an Old World cultural archive. Although most critics were quick to assert that Confederation brought with it a release from a "state of mere colonial pupilage,"⁷⁹ far fewer were ready or willing to cut altogether the cultural ties. The accepted truth was that the cultivation of New World culture was to come from those "persons of taste and education in Canada" whose own cultivation had occurred in another geocultural place, specifically those landed "emigrants from the Old Country, whose tenderest affections cling around the land they have left."⁸⁰ As an anonymous editorial writer declared in 1889, the cultural heritage seen to be linking Canada to England was, even as the century neared its end, considered a "magnificent" achievement; moreover, the perceived ease with which this heritage could be transported across the Atlantic promised that "the culture and refinement of the English gentleman is not confined to any special part of our Great Empire." The cultural geography of "Canada is simply Britain in the West."⁸¹

⁷⁸ Adam, "Nationalism and the Literary Spirit" 118.

⁷⁹ Bourinot, *The Intellectual Development* 3.

⁸⁰ Edward Hartley Dewart, *Selections From Canadian Poets; With Occasional Critical and Biographical Notes, And An Introductory Essay on Canadian Poetry* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864), *xiv*.

⁸¹ Anon., "Editorial Notes," *CEMSC* 11 (1889): 71.

Although it would be well into the closing decade of the nineteenth century before there would be any sustained critical rethinking of what one critic described as the propensity of the self-proclaimed "smart set" to identify culture with "the externals of English civilization ... with certain conventional ways of speaking and behaving, with dress, equipage and manners,"⁸² Canadian parodists were from mid-century onward engaging the double-structuredness of parody to invite a dialectical reconsideration of what, for some, appeared to be a cultural path steered near a monologic and even myopic reinscription of Old World ways. For when reflected in the mirror of Holmes's parody, Belinda as paragon of Old World landedness appears quite differently. Steeling herself against the "dull monotony, and cramped vexatiousness" (*Belinda* 55) she sees awaiting her in married life, and undaunted in her resolve to live until that fateful moment as "free as any bird that flies the air" (*Belinda* 62-3), she overturns with exuberance the cultural and generic anticipations of readers who had come to expect in her the great archetypal victim of the sentimental tradition or the New World exemplar of culture and moral certitude. A personification of the conventional tension between pious morality and sexual titillation that continued to draw Victorian readers to the sentimental romance, Belinda fluctuates "betwixt the two extremes" of the traditional cultural-moral binary from which she has emerged: "coquetry on the one hand and prudery on the other." Whereas such prototypic antecedents as Clarissa Harlowe and Elizabeth Bennett are models of moral constancy born, respectively, out of geocultural backgrounds of puritanism and rural gentility, Belinda is decidedly chameleonic, possessing "a great facility in changing her external appearance and conversation to suit the temper of the company in which she happened to fall." When "[a]mong the

⁸² John Marshall, "Archibald Lampman," *QQ* 9.1 (July 1901): 65.

good," the narrator observes, "she was the most religious person in the world -- among the bad, her principles were dubious" (*Belinda* 5).

Neither chaste nor suffering during her life, Belinda is remarkable for her willful and at times even capricious manipulation of the seemingly endless string of Old World suitors attracted to her overwhelming beauty: the Scotsman McLeod, the young Jew Barnabas, the German Van Corts, the Irishman Rev. Fitz Rowland, a corp of lesser lights (including two, Messrs S. and K., who warrant only single initials), and the two ultimate rivals: the slanderous adulterer Bickerstaff and the naive, though appropriately landed Theodore Unwin, "a young gentleman of a cultivated mind and polished manners" who looks upon this New World lady "like Adam, when he first saw Eve" (*Belinda* 88-9). Stylizing "the hypocrisy which frequently underlies moralistic tales of seduction and betrayal,"⁸³ Holmes emphasizes at the same time that it is this combination of coquetry and inconstancy that gives rise to Belinda's growing international reputation as "the *Canadian coquette*" (*Belinda* 94).⁸⁴

Reflecting in the mirror of parody both generic conventions and New World expectations of the stabilizing and harmonizing model of Old World landedness envisioned by commentators of the day, Belinda subjects the evergrowing cast of male characters who fall under her sexual spell to a series of trials designed to test their chastity, their fidelity, their intelligence, and their wit. Sitting like an Old World "queen on her throne" (*Belinda* 3), she is, like her famous namesake from Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*,⁸⁵ demonstrably democratic in her

⁸³ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 144.

⁸⁴ A marked textual allusion to Hannah (Webster) Foster's immensely popular English novel *The Coquette, or the History of Eliza Wharton* (1797).

⁸⁵ Holmes underscores this lineage with a number of unmarked allusions to Pope's poem. Belinda's democratic treatment of her various lovers is described at one point, for instance, as her ability to show "'Favors to none, / to all she smiles

dispensation of both rewards and banishments to this community of courtiers, with "no particular class of persons" excluded from garnering "an equally flattering reception" (*Belinda* 6) or equally harsh dismissal. Appropriate within this refuncioned world, it is the Old World men of the novel, not the New World heroine, who feel slighted when their lover casts them aside for her next conquest, and who inevitably and passionately declare themselves ruined when her intentions (or lack thereof) are discovered.

When Belinda breaks her engagement to Fitz Rowland, for instance, the young man is driven to a melodramatic contemplation of suicide that hints at more than a passing allegiance to Thomas Love Peacock's dual parody of the Byronic hero and Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) in *Nightmare Abbey* (1818):

With a heavy sigh he sat down with his back against the trunk of a spreading oak. That was an awful moment! His agitated nerves relaxed -- became powerless, and neglected to obey the call of his unflinching will. His hand, holding the deadly liquid, rested upon his knee, and refused its needed aid to the most horrid act of suicide. -- Thought, imperishable thought, began to return; reason again resumed its lofty seat. (*Belinda* 65)

Following a lengthy introspection characterized by the highest rhetorical flourish, the episode ends when Rowland pours the vial of laudanum on the ground and removes himself from the shadow of the towering oak. Holmes again stylizes the traits usually attributed to the troubled though virtuous hero of sentimental romance. As the narrator emphasizes, there is little, if any, moral or heroic impulse shaping Rowland's final decision: "It was not because he was tenacious of life, nor

extends; / Oft rejects, but never once offends" (6), a description taken directly from *The Rape of the Lock* [II: 11-12]). Holmes turns to a slightly modified borrowing from Pope's "Epistle II: To a Lady" (157-60) to conclude that though Nature "'erred not'" when forming Belinda's physical charms "'without a spot,'" there remains the question, posed and answered through the allusion proper, of an equilibrating conscience: "With every pleasing, every prudent part / What can 'Belinda' want? -- She wants a heart" (19).

because he thought there remained any thing in this world worth the trouble of gaining, but because he was afraid to die that he had consented to live" (*Belinda* 66).

Holmes's refunctioning of Belinda's tearful deathbed scene ends the novel with a clearly marked reflection of the implied guarantees of Old World landedness. Beginning with the narrator's warning that those readers "who have read this far, and think that a more improbable story than has yet been told cannot possibly be true, had better not look at this chapter at all," this parodically stylized denouement recounts how Belinda falls genuinely ill only six weeks after her marriage to Theodore Unwin. Although his new bride is "violently opposed" to the decision, Unwin summons a doctor; the pronouncement he hears is neither reassuring, nor consistent with Old World notions of landed moral standards, nor congruous with generic expectations: "I think the symptoms, at present, more the sign of life than death," the doctor concludes. "Instead of a coffin, you may procure a cradle -- and, instead of powerful medicines, which undermine the constitution and rack the frame, a little *panado*, and perhaps a little *pap*, might be prepared" (*Belinda* 114).⁸⁶

Although Belinda's son, Ichabod, is delivered in fine health, the Canadian coquette's condition declines rapidly. Following a brief, and well-scripted, moment of contrition that secures not only the forgiveness and affections of her husband and tormented family but also the adulation of the local population, who act "as if some patriot hero, the pillar and support of his community, had fallen" (*Belinda* 121), Belinda prepares herself for a passing that becomes a heroine of her stature.

⁸⁶ Theodore's reaction is, as might be expected, both richly allusive and comfortingly myopic:

Like Thomas, he refused to take any thing for granted upon the testimony of others. "I will not believe," said he, and withdrew. But sleep forsook his pillow. This was, he thought, a confirmation of his hopes; "for Solomon says, 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband,' and Shakespeare adds, 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.' My head lies uneasy -- *ergo*, I wear a crown; but that crown is Belinda -- *ergo*, Belinda is a virtuous woman." (*Belinda* 115)
Cf. *Henry IV, Part II* (III.i.30-1).

Divesting herself of her worldly possessions, she revives her trademark spirit of assurance and irreverence; indeed, the Canadian coquette dies with a smile, unwaveringly confident in her "expectation of being welcomed to the realms of bliss immediately upon her dissolution" (*Belinda* 119). Following funeral preparations that last three days, Belinda's "splendid covered coffin, with the initials B.U., in gilt, upon each side of it" (*Belinda* 121), is lowered into the ground replete with a Richardsonian accompaniment of "a gentle shower of crystal drops from many hundred eyes, [which] bedewed the unconscious earth" (*Belinda* 122).

This willingness on the part of parodists working within Victorian Canada to reflect in the mirrors of their parody both the appeal and dangers of an attachment to what had become by the mid-nineteenth century an algebrized (and often discredited) conjunction between an Old World sense of landedness and sense of moral-cultural authority is evident, too, in De Mille's adventure romance *Lady of the Ice*. During his search for the beautiful and mysterious Lady from whom his tale takes its title, Macrorie meets the Irishman O'Halloran, yet another personification of Old World landedness with his "unmistakable signs of culture and refinement" he has accumulated through a lifetime of formal and informal study. Invited to the older man's home for drinks, Macrorie is most affected by the auspicious markers of "Culture, Polish, Education, Rank, Style, [and] Attainments" that define the library of his new friend's home. A large room, with "a huge grate filled with blazing coals [that] diffused a cheerful glow," this cultural mausoleum is full of artifacts signalling to Macrorie and to readers the richness and diversity of the Irishman's cultivated passions:

Magazines and periodicals lay on the table. Pictures illustrative of classical scenes hung round the walls, done in the old-fashioned styles of engraving, and representing such subjects as Mutius Scaevola before Porsenna; Belisarius begging for an obolus; Aeneas carrying

his father from Troy; Leonidas at Thermopylae; Coriolanus quitting Rome; Hamilear making the boy Hannibal swear his oath of hate against Rome; and others of a similar character.... Beside me were two bookshelves crammed with books. A glance at them showed me that they were largely of a classical order. Longinus, Aeschylus, Demosthenes, Dindorf, Plato, Stallbaum -- such were the names that I saw in gilt letters on the backs of the volumes. (*Belinda* 50-51)

Analogous lists proliferate in the novel as Macrorie's friendship with O'Halloran progresses and their informal conversations on cultural topics become more frequent. The Bobtail is at times overwhelmed by the sheer scope of "literary and scholastic" (*Lady* 118) topics upon which O'Halloran's mind can light, albeit fleetingly, during any single "symposium," the classical term that Macrorie comes to apply to these conversations: "theology, literature, science, the weather, the army, the navy, music, painting, sculpture, photography, engraving, geology, chemistry, and on a thousand other arts and sciences, in all of which he showed himself deeply versed" (*Lady* 50).

Tellingly, O'Halloran soon reveals himself to be a man whose landedness is accompanied by an abhorrence of dialogue. A bearer of Old World cultural standards who "know[s] nothing but monologues" (*Lady* 118), he has the singular effect of leaving his listeners feeling variously "overwhelmed," "suppressed," "caved in," "beyond [their] depth," or "simply paralyzed." His vast store of Old World cultural capital, though revealing an intellectual energy that the professorial De Mille undoubtedly appreciated, serves only to cripple dialogue within a New World context. This landed beacon of cultural conscience is patently unable to communicate to his New World community an appreciation of the ideals of art and literature he holds dear. When Macrorie discovers O'Halloran's ultimate passion, the translation of Homer into Irish dialect, he is "treated" to two lengthy symposia during which he is regaled with the justifications and results of this lifelong project.

Both monologues conclude with lengthy reproductions of one of O'Halloran's translations-in-progress. Represented here by the selected opening lines from his lengthy "revision" of Homer's description "of the palace of Antinous in the 'Odyssey'," the "translations" are forwarded as "evidence" of his landed status: "'For benchus hoights ov brass aich wee vos firrumlee buildid, / From the front dure till the back, an' a nate blue corrinis filled it'" (*Lady* 69-70). Faced with such "evidence" of O'Halloran's treasured "culture," Macrorie dozes off, failing to see either the humour or the futility of his new friend's obsession.⁸⁷

But this New World overvaluation of Old World landedness is refunctioned in an even more significant fashion when Macrorie, having innocently mistaken O'Halloran's wife Nora for the mysterious Lady of the Ice, openly declares his love for his friend's spouse. It is a misplaced declaration that leaves little choice for these Old World men of "high chivalric sentiment, and lofty sense of honor": bound to their Old World codes, they hesitatingly agree that their only option is to arrange "pistols for two" (*Lady* 89) and venture forth to the "the field of honour,"⁸⁸ an

⁸⁷ See also O'Halloran's "original" latin song, "Phellimii Halloranii Carmen," which is reproduced as part of De Mille's text "*verbatim et literatim*, notes and all" (119).

⁸⁸ One of the many "customs" that had been "imported [into] that part of British America which was to become Upper Canada," duels were informally tolerated in Canada well into the 1840s, despite the written laws declaring them illegal. See, for instance, Anon., "Duelling Anecdotes," *LG* 3.9 (August 1841): 423-25, and Blanche Bishop, "Correspondence," *AA* 15.6 (April 1889): 71-2.

Honourable Justice William Renwick Riddell notes in his pamphlet, "The Duel in Early Upper Canada" [1915], that although "undoubtedly the law" of the country barred such activities, there was an implied acceptance in both the law court and court of public opinion that "if the duel was fair in all respects, the survivor and the seconds could not be convicted" (4). He explains that there "were three -- or perhaps four -- [fatal] duels which made considerable noise in their day and are not yet quite forgotten" (4): the White-Small duel of 1800, instigated when White, the first Attorney General of the Province of Upper Canada, "spoke slightly of the wife of Major John Small," the Clerk of the Executive Council; the Weekes- Dickson duel (1806), in which two prominent lawyers called each other out following a series of virulent attacks made during a court trial; the Ridout-Jarvis duel (1816), a protracted affair that originated when a mishandled business transaction led to public slander, and the singlemost notorious case in this country of one man drawing

encounter that De Mille saw as rich in parodic potential. As a cultural ritual that had long been seen to protect, and ideally to nourish, the "thoughts, habits, and culture"⁸⁹ perceived to inform Old World designations of landedness, the duel held an imaginative appeal for many members of the New World landed class. Lifting individual resentments above the merely personal level, the practice allowed for an exclusive defence of honour to evolve into a joint, ritualized homage to a broader, class-based sense of landedness shared by both combatants. Rich with a morbid irony that itself might prove appealing to the parodist, the duel in this sense becomes "an index of [cultural] vitality," with each real, exaggerated, or fictitious encounter providing fuel for future narrative amplifications of "the determination of a [landed class] not, under any threat, to abdicate its leading position" in society.⁹⁰ To turn from the challenge of a "calling out," either through flight or through seeking the protection of the court, rendered an individual no longer worthy of the designation of landedness and at the same time compromised the reputation and stability of that cultured and inherently privileged community.

Important, too, was the fact that by the mid-nineteenth century the duel and its attendant rituals (the etiquette of the seconds, the selection of weapons and the site of engagement) had, like the topographic feature of Holmes's castle, accrued a dense layering of narrativized codings and recodings upon which the parodist might draw. From Quixote's honourable, albeit comic challenges to fight all comers in order to make them acknowledge the charms of his Dulcinea through Dr. Slammer's calling out of Mr. Winkle in *Pickwick Papers* (1836) to the stories, and sometimes

his pistol well before the fire sign was given (the perpetrator, Ridout, ultimately missed, ran, and was killed when Jarvis placed his "entitled shot" with more effect); and the comparatively tame Wilson-Lyon duel, which took place near Brockville in 1833.

⁸⁹ V.G. Kiernan, *The Duel in European History: Honour and the Reign of the Aristocracy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989), 42, 7.

⁹⁰ Kiernan, 110, 115.

even the lives, of such literary figures as Byron, Scott, and Smollet, imaginative representations of duels and of duellists provided an abundance of intertexts on which the parodist could draw. On more familiar geocultural terrain, Major John Richardson's *The Guards in Canada* (1848) had taken as its subject an affair of honour involving the Grenadier Guards stationed in Montreal.⁹¹ Indeed, the ways by which the cultural codes and rituals of the duel had been imagined and reimagined by this time offered more "in the way of insight into the manners, the social or moral atmosphere, the self-picturing" of the culture in question than the duels themselves.⁹²

An erudite man who saw in "culture ... the refining and humanizing influence of art or letters, through which one attains to a more delicate sensibility of taste, and a higher and purer stage of intellectual enjoyment,"⁹³ De Mille was obviously bemused by the less-than-genteel maneuvering of the duel. While recognizing the need for and the benefits of having ritual and custom within a society, he saw in the cultural codes of the duel an outdated and irrelevant vestige of the discourses of Old World militarism and privilege of landedness that had little place in a New World society in which points of gallantry and the chivalric image of a man standing alone to meet his fate had little currency. Anticipating by more than forty years the comic duel scene that structures the plot of fellow Canadian Robert Barr's *An Unsentimental Journey: An Extravaganza* (1913),⁹⁴ itself a novel that

⁹¹ As Patterson traces in his discussion of "Three Famous Duels," Nova Scotian history was as rich in popularized "duel lore" as that of Upper Canada, stories that De Mille may well have heard during a lifetime spent on the eastern coast (*More Studies in Nova Scotian History* [Halifax: Imperial, 1941], 71-89).

⁹² Kiernan, 9.

⁹³ De Mille, *Elements of Rhetoric* iv-v.

⁹⁴ Barr's novel, released as #368A in Hodder and Stoughton's popular Sixpenny Novels series, was released in England by Everleigh Nash under the less allusive title *My Enemy Jones: An Extravaganza*.

serves as both light and mirror of Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), De Mille provides in *Lady* a duel that is, as his chapter title promises, "A Very Singular and Very Obstinate Dispute."⁹⁵

With the "preliminaries of the duel neatly arranged" by the relevant seconds, the four men depart by sleigh early one morning for a certain point of land located "many miles out of town" where the confrontation can take place clear of interference (*Lady* 107). Even on his way to the field of honour, Macrorie takes a moment to reiterate the distinct specificities of the Canadian landscape in winter: "There was nothing but a general mixture of ice heaps, slush, thawing snow-drifts, bare ground, and soft mud.... Added to this, the weather was abominable. It was warm, soft, slimy, and muggy" (*Lady* 101). Reaching the selected field of honour, O'Halloran in turn reiterates his attachment to landed notions of honour and culture and the fact that they are patently (and legally) out of place in this New World setting; it must be a land of "the barbarous legisleation," he observes derisively, "that throis to stoifle and raypriss the sintimints of honor, and the code of chivalry" (*Lady* 107).

⁹⁵ The full title of the chapter reinforces this sense of the battle that follows and represents neatly De Mille's fondness for word play, puns, and spirited reconfiguring of chapter headings:

A Friendly Call. -- Preliminaries of the Duel Neatly Arranged. -- A Damp Journey, and Depressed Spirits. -- A Secluded Spot. -- Difficulties Which Attend a Duel in a Canadian Spring. -- A Masterly Decision. -- Debates About the Niceties of the Code of Honor. -- Who Shall Have the First Shot, Struggle for Precedence. -- A Very Singular and Obstinate Dispute. -- I Save O'Halloran from Death by Rheumatism

In a 1868 letter to Harper Brothers concerning his lost, and likely never completed novel known only by its working title "America Dissected," De Mille notes his intentions of exploiting the comic potential of this particular cultural ritual even before *Lady of the Ice*: "The first half [of the story] refers to New York, Boston, & and Philadelphia," he notes. "The remainder takes in the West, & consists of duels in Canada, extravagant adventures, and whimsical impressions...." (cited in Monk, 199).

But it is the land not the laws of the New World that are shown in De Mille's parodic mirror to have the greatest impact on this attempt at settling the scores of an Old World dishonour. Unable and unwilling to step out of the sleigh for fear of "plung[ing] into an abyss of freezing slush," the four men attempt to solve the logistics of battle by arranging the sleighs "so as to bring [their] backs ... at the requisite distance from one another." After some argument about the definition of "twelve paces" in such an arrangement (equine or human), the quartet pause to "take somethin' warrum" in an attempt to hold off the penetrating cold of the Canadian winter; a flask is duly produced, "and some minutes were passed in a general, a convivial, and a very affectionate exchange of courtesies" (*Lady* 108). More debate ensues: about the wording of the command or, alternatively, about who should fire the first shot; about "the noiceties and the dilicacies of the jooling code," as O'Halloran calls them; and about the "punctillio of honor" that had brought them to this point. As these issues grind towards resolution, and the weather grows colder and colder, the four men return regularly to the flask from which New World courtesy seems to pour. Thoroughly benumbed by the Canadian cold, the two combatants finally arrange matters to mutual satisfaction. Hampered by trembling hands and a fairly well-progressed state of intoxication, neither hits his intended target and both agree to retreat to the confines of O'Halloran's library in an attempt to ward off permanent damage from the cold. The old duellist's catchphrase, "Pistols for two and champagne for one,"⁹⁶ has been parodically reconfigured so as to reflect the realities of a new land: "Pistols for two, whiskey all around."

By 1887, when the pseudonymous author of the unsigned parodic novelette "Claude Coursol, The Great Canadian Novel by A Haggard Writer" (1887) turns

⁹⁶ Kiernan, 144

again to the duel, the Old World tradition has been reunderstood as simply one of many available, and equally algebrized, narrative devices used to move a New World story towards closure. When the tale's two heroines have mysteriously though "gracefully perished" at the midpoint of the closing chapter, the "Haggard Writer" must find an equally accommodating means of dispensing with his two heroes, and so he does by having them partake in a duel that is notable as much for its brevity as for its parody: "They held their pistols to each other's heads and blazed away." With this densely coded Old World ritual refracted as a comic *deus ex machina*, the anonymous novelist is free to move towards a sense of closure familiar to, and demanded by, readers of the day: "Heroes and heroines, the fair, the brave, the innocent, had vanished like postage stamps. Thus, kind reader, ends this classic tale, which for grace, pathos, dramatic incident, and local coloring has never been equalled and never can be equalled in this or any other country."⁹⁷

From the vast and frozen lands of Cartier and Rabelais to the ice heaps, slush, and thawing snow drifts of De Mille and "dramatic local colouring" of a haggard Canadian writer, the relationship between New World designations of cultural geography and Old World notions of land and landedness had by the second half of the nineteenth century already proven themselves to be durable and complex ones. By at once engaging and straining to the limits of the familiar the elements of these Old World designations that had degenerated into algebrized burdens on the Canadian imagination, the parodists explored here suggest that questions about the future of a New World cultural geography were not questions that could be answered simply by looking to another place or another culture. While drawing on the topographic codes and discursive conventions that were familiar and comforting to Canadian readers and writers, these writers ask this New World community to

⁹⁷ *Grip* 29.21 (19 November 1887): 5.

think again about their imaginative and cultural relationship with the geography of this still new land, a geography that would continue to play a primary role in the shaping of a distinctly national culture and national character.

Exemplifying Bakhtin's definition of parody as a double-structured discourse capable of unsettling commonly held assumptions, of challenging the governing authority that had guided the original mapping of Canada's cultural geography, and of dislocating stagnant or stultifying cultural assumptions from their position of centrality, these works move to provoke a fresh response to this new and diverse land. As De Mille's near-frozen duellers remind readers, the enterprise of living in a new world involves some degree of dialogic engagement, some willingness to modify and renovate attitudes and practices that prove themselves over time to be out of place, to be inhibitive rather than creative and single-focused in their attention to past models rather than forward-looking. Parody understood in the sense explored here is neither a luxury nor an attenuated cultural discourse but a matter of survival, a potential catalyst in the transformation of New World designations of a distinct geocultural terrain. The dialectical gesture of parody enables the parodist to posit a vital difference at the heart of the Canadian experience while at the same time acknowledging both the presence and the benefits of a marked similarity with the terrain from which so many Victorian Canadians had ventured.

It is this renovating spirit that allowed these parodies to introduce into the Canadian imagination, too, a sense of the horizons open to a culture that might move toward a dialectical reconsideration of those Old World, and often algebrized, preconceptions and presumptions about reading and writing that informed the Victorian designation of landedness. Both diachronically, as the exploration of the cultural attitudes and anxieties pertaining to these "cultivated" activities as they came to be practiced within Victorian Canada, and synchronically, as an open

statement of their own relationship to these attitudes and practices, these parodies contain within themselves the potential to promote the benefits of considering again the aims and roles of the consumption and production of literature within the geographic and cultural realities of Canada. Like Cervantes's representation of the self-conscious authorial figure named Cervantes toiling over the prefatory comments to his already written and already read tale of another reader, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, Canadian parodists illuminated the complex struggles and sociocultural burdens awaiting those readers and writers who might take it upon themselves to look beyond the comfortable designations of land and landedness that continued to define Canadian culture during the second half of the nineteenth century. They remind us, in short, that the cultural activities of reading and writing are themselves historically and geographically located. They serve, too, to locate the specificities of the New World geoculture in the imaginations of the people who live there and to contribute in complex and important ways to that culture's self-understanding.

CHAPTER TWO

"AN APPRECIATIVE TASTE FOR READING": PARODY AND A CANADIAN CULTURE OF READING

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"An Appreciative Taste for Reading": Parody and a Canadian Culture of Reading

When Graeme Mercer Adam paused in 1890 to reflect upon the level of cultural cultivation that had been achieved in Canada in the preceding years, what he saw left him less than optimistic. Noting with some sadness that serious literature dealing specifically with Canada and Canadian concerns was "seldom ever written" as the century entered its final decade, he was even more troubled by the fact that what little was produced was "never read."¹ The problem, as an anonymous contemporary of Adam's elucidated, was not that citizens of the young country could not read but that the country itself remained unsettled and unfocused in its cultural ideals. Still only a "mere collection of provinces, with conflicting and diverging interests, held together mainly by money considerations and an act of parliament," Canada had yet to produce a general populace instilled with what had long been celebrated as a key attribute within the designation of landedness, namely "an appreciative taste for reading."²

¹ Graeme Mercer Adam, "Canadian Literature," *The Week* 8 (4 July 1890): 486.

² Anon., "Rev. of Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty*," *TUR* 9.5 (May 1896): 64.

As writers who depended on a literate and sophisticated Canadian public and a vibrant reading culture within which their own texts as well as their textual models could find an audience, Canadian parodists were naturally interested in the intense and often polarized debates that emerged in Canada from mid-century onward over the cultural benefits to be realized from the promotion and cultivation of an appreciative taste for reading. Such concern on the part of writers of parody was not unusual. As Margaret Rose explains, any study of parody and its role in the renovation of a culture struggling toward a new level of self-understanding necessarily raises questions of reading as a vital cultural activity, questions concerned with "a sociology of reading" that take into account the full range of societal attitudes and anxieties as well as the material conditions and institutions affecting the appreciative consumption of books within a culture at a given moment.³

Rose's observation is well founded. Indeed, from parody's novelistic blossoming in *Don Quixote*, parodists have displayed an intense dialectical interest in the ways by which readers as individuals and communities, the act of reading, and contemporary concerns over such issues as the propriety or social value of consuming specific genres have come to be conceptualized within cultures in transition. With frequent and open glances back to Quixote's text-inspired wanderings, Sterne's heroic autobiographer Tristram Shandy coincidentally expresses great concern about his reader's qualifications and acuity while leaving blank lines and marbled pages in order to promote reader involvement. Fielding, having declared openly his respect for tales "written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes," sets out, on the one hand, to educate his readers as to the skills and attention necessary when consuming his narrative feasts (*Joseph Andrews*), while, on

³ Rose, *Parody//Metafiction* 167.

the other, targeting with the satiric overtones of his parodic *Shamela* that community of readers whose emphasis on the morality and propriety of reading he saw as little more than a transparent and sanctimonious excuse for titillation. And Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, one of the best-known English parodies of the naive reader who conflates the worlds of fiction and "reality," includes as part of its remarkable ensemble an elegant defense of novel readers.⁴

Appropriately, one of the more carefully delineated characteristics distinguishing the first "heroine" of Canadian parody, Holmes's Belinda, from the community around her is the prominence and eclecticism of her reading habit. A colonial reader who is "better acquainted with the bible, and had read more novels ... than any other female of her age" (*Belinda* 5) that Holmes's narrator has ever known, Belinda often retires to her room, exhausted from yet another round of her seemingly endless flirtations, in order to console herself with a book. Consistent with the inconstancy of her moral and emotional character, her sense of reading culture is remarkable for its range and temper:

Miss Howard retired to her room, spent a turning of the hour-glass with Mr. S, wrote a letter to Barnabas, took up lord Byron's poems, sung one of Wesley's hymns, read a page or two in Don Quixote, and a chapter in the New Testament ... knelt down and prayed for the spread of the gospel truth and knowledge in every part of the world, for success in all her enterprises, protection through the night, a long and agreeable life, an easy transit, and a happy eternity. (*Belinda* 10)

Despite Holmes's marked emphasis on Belinda's reading habit in this early Canadian parody, a convention-laden book that is itself a testament to the accessibility of sentimental novels in mid-century Canada, modern Canadian critics have continued to suggest that the subject of reading was "usually regarded with

⁴ See also Boris Eichenbaum's particularly lucid treatment of similar concerns in *O. Henry and the Theory of the Short Story*, 4.

solemn concern"⁵ by Victorian Canadians. It has become fairly well recognized through the scholarship of such critics as Carole Gerson and Margery Fee that of the various cultural activities and practices seen to support the New World designation of landedness, the activity of reading was most often singled out for particular consideration by Victorian Canadian critics and commentators. If culture in the aggregate was seen to be the refining and humanizing influence through which an individual and a society could attain a more delicate sensibility of taste and a higher stage of intellectual and moral development, then reading was acknowledged to be the most accessible and most effective means of such acquisition. As an anonymous observer had noted as early as 1863, reading was accepted without question within the cultural geography of Victorian Canada as "among the greatest consolations of life; it is the nurse of virtue; the upholder in adversity; the prop of independence; the support of just pride; the strengthener of elevated opinions; it is a shield against the tyranny of all petty passions; it is the repeller of the fool's scoff and the knaves [sic] poison."⁶

Exuberant catalogues aside, the reading "habit," as it was frequently described, had by this moment in Canada's history moved well beyond being considered a skill possessed solely by the landed elite. Increasingly it was seen as a cultural activity that, if nurtured with due diligence by all members of Canadian society, would provide a broadly based foundation upon which "a strong and symmetrical moral and religious [national] character"⁷ could be constructed. "As a missionary of civilisation and refinement," reading was seen to be an enlightening habit that would and could raise Canadians "above the petty passions and

⁵ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 24.

⁶ Anon., "Reading," *CIN* 2.14 (15 August 1863): 166.

⁷ Baie Chaleur, "Study of English Literature," *CEMSC* 10 (1888): 168.

[mercantile] interests of the hour"⁸ towards an appreciation of what LeSueur and other writers characterized as the "true ideal of [a] life"⁹ lived in harmony and common prosperity. As commentators continued to reiterate through to century's end, what a people read could "never cease to be one main element in the moral atmosphere"¹⁰ of the national life; as William Kingsford summarized in 1892, "[t]he whole hope of the future of Canada" was very often seen to lie "in the sound, sober sense of the community, by which opinion is influenced. It is by reading and thinking that men of this character are moulded."¹¹

The moulding influence of reading was understood within the Victorian milieu, in large part, as a socially affirmative one that served to preserve the sociocultural harmonies that were sacrosanct among the landed upper and middle classes, those communities especially anxious about the social and economic tensions that seemed to tighten their grip on the Canadian geoculture as the century progressed. Within these groups, the promotion of wide-reaching social programmes aimed at improving both the reading literacy and the reading habits of the general populace was seen as a necessary step in securing a prosperous future, given that the image of a literate individual was largely synonymous in Victorian Canada with the image of an educated individual. Education, so the argument advanced, "makes a man a better citizen, and helps him form correct opinions of what is transpiring around him," namely the cultivation of the cornerstone Canadian

⁸ Alexander McLachlan, "Books," *CMNR* 1.5 (May 1872): 422.

⁹ LeSueur, "Reading and Intelligence," *The Week* 3.24 (13 May 1886): 381. See also Adelaide L. Carruthers, "Literature Studies in Public School," *CEMSC* 19 (1897): 81.

¹⁰ Roy D. Kinmont, "The Friendship of Books," *The Week* 7.2 (15 December 1889): 25.

¹¹ William Kingsford, *The Early Bibliography of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: Rowsell & Hutchison, 1892), 128-29.

virtues of peace, order, and good government.¹² As one anonymous contributor to the *Toronto Globe* elucidated in 1880, the connection between functional literacy and the future stability of a youthful country like Canada was patently clear: "In a country like ours, where so much depends on the intelligence of the public, anything that would tend to make the people a reading and thoughtful community should be attempted."¹³

If cultivation of the reading habit was advanced as a central step in securing social harmony and perpetuating a cultured or polite society, it was also easily reconcilable with the whole system of power, status, and exchange that was central to the Victorian Canadian dedication to nation-building. Considered, on the one hand, an effective antidote to the endless routine of "the mill and the counting-house, the office and the work-basket" that "hardens and degrades" the human spirit,¹⁴ reading was seen, on the other hand, as an essential complement to the discourse of ordered progress that Belinda saw spread before her in the panorama of the valley in which her family lived. More accurately, a functionally literate populace was seen as a valuable resource within an industrializing society determined to shape itself in response to and in anticipation of the demands of emerging market economies. With an attendant emphasis on work-force adaptability, the expansion of secondary and white-collar sectors of the marketplace, and the increasing reliance on advertising, these economies assumed, and therefore

¹² John Hallam, *Notes by the Way on Free Libraries and Books with a Plea for the Establishment of Rate-Supported Libraries in the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: Globe Printing, 1882), 28.

¹³ Anon., "Teacher's Convention," *Globe* (11 August 1880): 3.

¹⁴ Mrs. Holiwell, "Holiday Musings of a Worker," *BNA* 2 (January 1864): 270.

required, fairly substantial pools of labourers and consumers who had at least a basic reading literacy.¹⁵

As literacy levels gradually improved in Canada so, too, did Canadian readers' access to books, "the most innocent, the most delightful of all luxuries"¹⁶ and the single most important "instrument of culture"¹⁷ available in the new land. As early as 1850 commentators were celebrating the expansion of both wholesale and retail bookselling in the colony and the benefits, both cultural and pecuniary, to be derived from such a profusion of textual riches. Pointing out that "[i]n no period since the discovery of the printing press, have books been poured forth in such

¹⁵ Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1982), 25-6. As Rutherford notes, Victorian confidence in the ability to promote this most basic level of reading skill among English Canadians was statistically well founded if one considers the significant improvements in reading literacy from about mid-century onward. Analyzing data gathered from church and census records, he concludes that at the beginning of this period fully "one-quarter to one-third of the adults in the mainland colonies could not read." Such a high percentage of reading illiteracy among the adult population "placed British North America behind such front-runners as 'white' America and Sweden (at 10 to 15 per cent illiteracy), or Scotland and Prussia (almost as accomplished), but on a par with England and Wales (25 to 30 percent) and well ahead of Catholic Europe where illiteracy rates ranged from France's estimated 40 per cent to Italy's 75 to 80 per cent." Improving steadily as the century progressed, with the most significant gains appearing in the decades immediately following Confederation, Canada had by the end of the 1890s attained a level of adult reading illiteracy that hovered between nine and ten percent. Achieved through a variety of strategies, including the systematic centralization and reorganization of the common school infrastructure and the promotion of adult education, and through the influences of popular movements such as the National Council of Women's fostering of reading circles, this decrease in the number of adult Canadians unable to read is remarkable. Even with such gains, though, century's end found the still-young dominion "ranked slightly behind France as well as England and Wales" in terms of overall adult levels of reading literacy (26-27). Still, as Gerson concludes, "[b]y the end of the nineteenth century most adult Canadians could read [and] many valued the notion of literary activity" (*A Purer Taste*, 7).

For the sociocultural benefits to be had from the promotion of such grassroots movements of reading circles, see also S.A.C., "On the Formation of Reading Circles in Canada," *The Week* 13.44 (25 September 1896): 138-140.

¹⁶ Daniel Wilson, "Free Public Libraries," *CEMSC* 6 (1884): 145.

¹⁷ W.J. Alexander, "The Study of Literature," *The Week* 6.52 (29 November 1889): 824.

abundance, as at the present,"¹⁸ these writers were unabashedly optimistic about the future of a Canadian society in which the culture of reading was to be nurtured by a ready supply of inexpensive books and generally high-quality, though often short-lived, literary periodicals and magazines. "Incalculable are the benefits that Canada derives from her cheap reprints of all the European standard works, which," an ever-frugal Susanna Moodie was quick to point out, can be bought in the colony "at a quarter the price of the English editions."¹⁹ As an unidentified editorialist in the *Canadian Monthly and National Review* noted some two decades later: "in this nineteenth century books are within reach of every one, and they become the apple of his eye, the sole mistress of his heart."²⁰

¹⁸ J.P., "Novels and Novel Readers," *LG* 8.5 (May 1850): 207.

¹⁹ Susanna Moodie, *Life in the Clearings versus Life in the Bush* (London: Bentley, 1853), 285.

²⁰ Anon., "Round the Table," *CMNR* 13.1 (January 1878): 89. For a home book trade that had long been dependent on an uneven supply of reading materials, the second half of the nineteenth century must have appeared to be a flourishing market. More organized than at any point in its short history, and benefitting from the steadying hand of the Booksellers' Association of Canada, which had been established in November 1857 under the guidance of Henry Rowsell, A.H. Armour, and Reverend John Cunningham Geikie, the Canadian book trade entered at mid-century a period of steady growth. The *Census of the Canadas* for the decade 1851 to 1861, for instance, shows the number of booksellers officially listed as more than doubling, increasing from 45 to 116; by 1880-1881 the number almost doubled again to 221. As James Douglas noted in his reflections on "The Intellectual Progress of Canada" (1875), this growth of a native book trade, albeit sporadic at times, was built largely on a foundation of imported materials flowing into Canada from publishing houses in the United Kingdom and the United States; as importation numbers grew, so grew the bookselling trade. Between 1868 and 1874, for instance, the annual importation of books into Canada more than doubled, rising from a reported gross value of \$479,000 to \$959,000 (*CMNR* 7.6 [June 1875]: 471). In 1875, a year in which the Canadian government restructured and significantly *tightened* the long-standing 1868 Act governing the local importation of reprints under British copyrights this total increased again, surpassing the \$1 million threshold for the first time. (As George Parker explains in *The Beginning of the Book Trade in Canada* (1985), the Literary Copyright Act of 1842, usually called the Imperial Copyright Act, continued to hold sway in Canada until its repeal in 1924. Under the 1842 Act, protection was extended through the Empire to those works first published in the two major UK centres -- London and Edinburgh -- as well as making provision for prohibiting unauthorized reprints from being produced in or imported into British territory. All of this confusion was compounded when in 1885 Canada, as part of

Various public and private initiatives contributed significantly to ensuring that this new wealth of materials was accessible to all Canadians. An expanding trade in books published by subscription (particularly popular in the seventies and eighties) and such successful Canadian-based series as Rose-Belford's Library, the Rose Library (from the Hunter, Rose Company), and various configurations of Canadian Copyright Series, succeeded in bringing well-made "cheap libraries" to the Canadian reader at competitive prices. Later in the century, the success of the Rose Publishing Company's Premier Library Series of fifty-cent titles guaranteed that the profitable Canadian publishing tradition of inexpensive reprint series continued well into this century.²¹ More controversial than these entrepreneurial enterprises was

the Empire, was brought in under the regulative umbrella of the Berne Convention.)

²¹ A ubiquitous presence on the Canadian cultural scene from his arrival in Canada in 1858 to his departure to upstate New York in 1892, Graeme Mercer Adam is illustrative of the non-elected though nonetheless tireless and powerful supporters of Canadian culture who held true to their conviction that a well-developed culture of reading provided the foundation necessary for Canada's national character. Married to the daughter of John Lovell, longtime editor of *The Literary Garland*, Adam had upon emigrating established himself as a clerk in the Toronto establishment of the influential bookman Reverend John Cunningham Geikie. With a career path that is representative of those followed by many of the new style of bookmen who emerged in Canada during this period, Adam entered the bookselling trade in 1860, when he purchased the local and extensive agency business of his retiring employer; soon thereafter he formed a partnership with another young though inexperienced bookman, James Rollo. Keen to free themselves from the capital costs traditionally associated with the indigenous book trade, the partners wisely established a policy of contracting out all of their printing, a move which allowed Rollo & Adam Publishers to attend full-time to extending their already prosperous agency lines, to issue local editions of British and American authors, and to publish and promote a number of important magazines, including the short-lived *The British-American Magazine*, a journal "devoted to Literature, Science and Art" (1863-64), and *The Canadian Bookseller* (1865-67), an expanded version of Geikie's groundbreaking *Literary News Letter*. Always keen to promote the works of native writers, the company's publications in these early years included Alexander McLachlan's *The Emigrant and Other Poems* (1861) and Thomas D'Arcy McGee's *Popular History of Ireland* (1863).

When Rollo retired from the book trade in 1866, Adam continued, forming various other partnerships, including one with John Horace Stevenson, with whom he formed the well-respected Adam, Stevenson, and Company, and a two-year stint in the 1870s during which he was part of an upstate New York publishing consortium with John Wurtele Lovell, the eldest son of John Lovell, and Frank L. Wesson of the Massachusetts family of gun manufacturers (Parker, 175). At all

the systematic expansion of a network of libraries, mechanics' institutes, and other forms of book-lending institutions within Victorian Canada. Promoted and controlled from about mid-century onward by the Reverend Egerton Ryerson, the powerful Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada who had established himself in Canadian culture as the former editor of the *Christian Guardian* and manager of the successful Methodist Book Room, this system was shaped in the early years according to Ryerson's personal campaign to systematically reorganize and regulate the uses of literacy in Canadian culture.²² Supported by the passage of the School Acts of 1846 and 1850, and reinforced in the marketplace by the near monopoly enjoyed by his Educational Depository, the sole supplier to all public schools and lending institutions, Ryerson was guided in his policies by a deeply held belief in the benefits of cultivating the reading habit among the general populace of the country: achieving a high level of functional literacy, he believed, would secure "a society based on Christian virtues, self-discipline, and allegiance to duly constituted authority."²³ As he underscored in a letter to Governor General James Bruce, Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, in the spring of 1849:

times attentive to developments north of the border, Adam began *The Canada Bookseller & Miscellany* in 1871, "the first real book trade periodical" (Parker, 177) in English Canada; this project merged after two years with Goldwin Smith's *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* (1872-1878), which Adam edited for seven years before moving on to a similar position with the *Canada Educational Monthly and School Chronicle* (1879-84). Although he would undergo a dramatic political conversion in the late 1870s from ardent cultural nationalist to vocal free trader, a shift facilitated in no small way by his growing loyalty to Smith and to his work on the controversial newsletter *The Bystander* (1880-81; 1883), Adam retained an interest in the practices and growing prosperities of the Canadian book trade and of the habits of Canadian readers. As he could calculate with a note of some self-satisfaction in 1886, "[g]ood books were never more cheap or abundant, a modest sum nowadays would buy almost the whole realm of English literature" ("On 'The Choice of Books'," 782).

²² Bruce Curtis, 'Littery Merrit,' 'Useful Knowledge,' and the Organization of Township Libraries in Canada West, 1840-1860," *Ontario History* 78.4 (1986): 285.

²³ Lorne Bruce, *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1994), 3.

There can be but one opinion as to the great importance of introducing into each township of Upper Canada, as soon as possible, a Township Library ... consisting of a suitable selection of entertaining and instructive books, in the various departments of biography, travels, history (ancient and modern), natural philosophy and history, practical arts, agriculture, literature, political economy It is not easy to conceive the vast and salutary influence that would be exerted upon the entire population ... in furnishing useful occupation for leisure hours, in improving the tastes and feelings, in elevating and enlarging the views, in prompting to varied and useful enterprize [sic], that would flow from the introduction of such a fountain of knowledge and enjoyment in each township in Upper Canada.²⁴

Given that the majority of financial and political endorsement of Ryerson's plan for tax-supported libraries was concentrated among those middle- and upper-class voters who felt that reading ought to contribute to the creation of a prosperous and harmonious society, it is not surprising that popular and legislative support for his scheme was soon forthcoming. Seen as a "highly advantageous means" by which to place within reach of all readers "well written, rational and instructive Books,"²⁵ Ryerson's restrictive vision held sway for almost two decades. Indeed, it was not until the late 1860s that Ryerson's longtime deputy and advisor, John George Hodgins, a man more attuned to public taste than was his superior, convinced Ryerson to allow the monopolistic Educational Depository to add what would eventually be classed as "approved and standard" works of fiction to the general library catalogue. Only after this time could the works of such native authors as Haliburton, De Mille, and Fleming find their way onto the shelves of public lending

²⁴ Cited in Bruce, 6.

²⁵ Dexter D'Everardo, "Superintendent's Report to the Niagara District Council," 1849; rpt. in Hodgins, *Documentary History* VII: 292.

institutions alongside the works of such other "authorized" novelists as Trollope, Scott, Dickens, and Eliot.²⁶

As Ryerson's central presence in the cultural geography of Victorian Canada suggests, this evolving system of libraries played a significant role in shaping the reading culture of the new land. It was a point not lost on Robert Barr, who incorporated into his *In the Midst of Alarms* a number of key episodes set in and against the truly Canadian setting of a small, country library. Unfolding against the backdrop of the 1866 Fenian raids into English Canada, with which Barr had direct experience as a member of the St. Thomas Volunteers, the novel deals with a period that saw the Ryerson movement at the peak of its influence. Part comic adventure tale and part sentimental romance, the novel traces its paired protagonists -- American Richard Yates and Canadian Stillson Renmark -- during a camping holiday that collapses into series of romantic entanglements and misadventures during the bumbling (and inevitably thwarted) invasion of southern Ontario. Having established their camp on the edge of a local farm, the partners settle in for an afternoon of relaxation during which the book-loving Renmark comes to realize "how far apart" these school friends "had managed to get by following paths that

²⁶ There were at mid-century 147 public libraries with holdings in excess of 22,000 volumes scattered across 31 counties of Upper Canada, making it possible for the substantial number of Canadian readers unwilling or unable to add to their home libraries through capital outlay to "withdraw from the hurry and the bustle of everyday life, and hold sweet communion with ... the grandest and noblest of the high priests of literature" (Hallam, *Notes* 6-7). As S.P. May noted in his "Report on Mechanic's Institutes, Free Libraries, Art Schools and Scientific Institutions" (1889), by 1883, these numbers, adjusted to represent the amalgamation of various smaller libraries and Sunday School libraries under the auspices of the Mechanic's Institutes and Free Libraries, saw a slight net decrease in the number of physical points of access (93) and a dramatic increase in the number of volumes held (154,093) and issued (251,920). Growth continued in the 1880s, when the number of institutions and volumes held more than doubled (187 holding 339,225 volumes) and the reported issuance more than tripled the 1883 figure (820,701). Arranging these book-lending institutions in terms of number of volumes held, two institutions in particular stand out: the Brantford Free Library, with a registered holdings of between 7,000 and 7,500 volumes, and the Toronto Free Library, with a holding listed as over 50,000 volumes.

diverged more and more widely the farther they were trodden" on opposite sides of the border (*Alarms* 102). The one incident early in the trip that underscores this perceived cultural and intellectual gulf to Renmark more than any other is one during which Yates's open and obvious lack of an appropriately cultivated and appreciative taste for reading is rendered visible. Having forgotten his own supply of reading material, the professorial Canadian enquires about Yates's supply, hoping to borrow one or two volumes of "general reading" with which to pass the afternoon. Feigning surprise at being asked such a question given that he considers himself "something of a reader," Yates disappears into his tent to produce textual evidence that he is confident will prove him to be a man of landed tastes. His reappearance does little to assuage the Canadian's fears: "The young man went into the tent, and shortly returned with an armful of yellow-covered, paper-bound small volumes, which he flung in profusion at the feet of the man from Toronto. They were mostly Beadle's Dime novels, which had a great sale at the time. 'There,' he said, 'you have quantity, quality and variety'" (*Alarms* 99). With such titles as "The Murderous Sioux of Kalamazoo," which Yates points out is a "hair-raising Indian story in every sense of the word," and with covers adorned by brightly coloured pictures of burning pirate ships and bloody-thirsty highwaymen, the offered books are dismissed by the Canadian (and the Canadian library system of the day) as trash that "will do excellently for lighting [the] morning campfire" (*Alarms* 100).

Deciding soon after this exchange to spend their afternoon in pursuit of more individual and solitary hobbies, the two men go their separate ways. As the American heads off into the woods in search of physical activity and adventure, the Canadian wanders down a rural road where he meets, to his amazement, a light wagon quite unlike any other he had seen during the journey: a democrat "heaped with books ... as if they were so many bushels of potatoes," the wagon serves as a kind of mobile extension of the local township library which is housed,

coincidentally, in a nearby farmhouse. Spending his afternoon perusing the contents of both the moveable and permanent depositories, Renmark is particularly pleased to discover numerous volumes by his favourite authors, including popular editions of classic translations, works of history and philosophy, and such approved novels as *Adam Bede* (1859).

If Barr's comic duo are, like Quixote and Sancho Panza, notable for their distinct tastes in reading materials, they are also united, and their friendship reconciled, through the romances that reshape their lives during their stay in the Canadian countryside: the American with a woman who works on an adjacent farm, the Canadian with the township librarian named Margaret Howard with whom he is smitten when he hears her allude in casual conversation to two books that he claims have shaped his view of the Victorian New World: John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1843-60) and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849). The romance between the Canadian and the librarian is sealed when Renmark discovers that Margaret has recently been given the task of upgrading the library's cataloguing and circulation records. Including as background details to this romance a brief narrative history of Ryerson's policies pertaining to the distribution of books to public libraries in Canada (*Alarms* 103-108), Barr has these two book-lovers finally realize their mutual affections during an afternoon spent moving and cataloguing portions of the small library's holdings. Their offbeat and somewhat hesitant courtship is a comic fusion of innocent sexual tensions and discussions of the responsibilities associated with librarianship:

'The librarian,' [said] Margaret, with a smile, 'seems to be at liberty to use her own discretion in the matter of lending. No one has authority to look over her accounts, or to censure her if she lends recklessly. So, if you wish to borrow books, all you have to do is to ask for them.'

'You may be sure I shall avail myself of the permission. But my

conscience will be easier if I am allowed to carry them in.'

'You will be permitted to help. I like carrying them. There is no more delicious armful than books.'

As [Renmark] looked at the lovely girl, her face radiant with enthusiasm, the disconcerting thought came suddenly that perhaps her statement might not be accurate. No such thought had ever suggested itself to him before, and it now filled him with guilty confusion. He met the clear, honest gaze of her eyes for a moment, then he stammered lamely:

'I - I too am very fond of books.' (*Alarms* 136)

Barr's emphasis within his comic parody on the benefits -- romantic and intellectual -- to be found in spending time with "good" books considered "conducive to the elevation of literary taste"²⁷ is important, for as utilitarian concerns over levels of functional literacy in English Canada diminished, and as questions of access increasingly came to be seen as remnants of those hazy days of Canada's "pioneer" past when "almost the whole community [was] engaged in the pursuit of the necessaries and comforts of life,"²⁸ the question of what and how Canadians should read remained a real concern. As Mrs. Francis Rye noted in a paper read before the Toronto Women's Literary Club in 1880: "In a time like the present when verily and indeed there seems to be no end to the making of books ... so that 'literature' becomes more a source of torment than of pleasure, it is a serious and almost awful question, *what* and *how* shall we read."²⁹

One of the most persistent anxieties surfacing in Victorian Canada concerned the question of how to inculcate in an increasingly literate populace a corresponding degree of literary competence, specifically those critical abilities that

²⁷ *General Catalogue of Books in Every Department of Literature, for Public School Libraries in Upper Canada* (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, 1857), 63.

²⁸ Dewart, x.

²⁹ Mrs. Francis Rye, "Method in Reading," *CMNR* (August 1880): 135.

would enable the average reader to distinguish the permanent and valuable in literature from the merely ephemeral. Put another way, the vision of Canada promoted by the majority of contemporary critics was one of a home not only to a reading people but to a literate population collectively and innately hostile to any literature not seriously -- even solemnly -- concerned with what were vaguely described as the fundamental questions of human nature. With "refinement in public reading taste ... seen as the desirable stage in the development of a national literary consciousness,"³⁰ there was a growing consensus among critics of the day that "[v]ery little of the literature ... choking the shelves of [Canadian] book stalls will have any permanency"³¹ or provide anything that might function as a guide for a culture moving toward the maturity promised with the passing of generations. Unlike those works with a provenance extending back into the great Old World treasury of literature "that brings before us with truth and power men in those aspects of greatness which raise them above the crowd, and show us the height to which human nature may attain,"³² the literature of the day was seen as "ephemeral"³³ and "without any manifestation of the true art spirit" that marks a work of lasting influence. So much of what was being consumed by Canadian readers was, as one such critic put it,

either sombre and neutral-tinted, a barren, prosaic, twilight waste of narration, with never a gleam of poetic light to illumine its monotonous weariness; or, on the other hand, [as] a very Sahara of pedantry or frippery, lacking an oasis of common sense, or a nook of

³⁰ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 5.

³¹ Thomas O'Hagan, "Canadian Literature," *The Week* 13.52 (20 November 1896): 1287.

³² Louisa Murray, "Democracy in Literature," *The Week* 6.35 (2 August 1889): 550.

³³ Wetherald, "Unliterary People" 250.

philosophic shade. The brooding atrabiliousness of distempered dogma and dreary platitude distinguishes the one, the garish highlights of unabashed lewdness and shameless effrontery signalize the other.³⁴

Accordingly there was consistent support for those books which would "enlarge" Canadian

sympathies, and ... not pervert them; which excite ... curiosity, and satisfy it, but not at the expense of morals; which give certainty and population to the geographical and historical dreams of ... youthful days; which build up the gaps and spaces in ... knowledge with new truths, certain to harmonize speedily with all old truth, -- instead of filling ... memories with vain, or perplexing, or atrocious images, as the common run of novelists are every day doing.³⁵

Not surprisingly, Victorian Canadians were inundated with articles and books undertaken with the tripartite goal of guiding them towards a "careful and discriminating ... selection of *model* authors,"³⁶ of teaching them "the proper spirit in which to approach the masterpieces of literature," and of ensuring that they maintain a lifelong "contact with ... what is noblest and best in books."³⁷ Standard fare in all but the most remote bookstore or lending institution in English Canada, and sporting such titles as *The Beauties and Utilities of a Library* (1857), *The Choice of Books* (1866), *The Best Reading: Hints on the Selection of Books* (1872), *Evenings in the Library* (1878), *The Book-Lover's Enchiridion* (1884), and *The Book-Lover: A*

³⁴ A.H. Morrison, "Art in Literature," *CEMSC* 12 (1890): 328. Although often positioning himself as part of this community, Adam once complained that Victorian Canada had become "not so much an era of books as an era about books; it is an expository and finger-pointing age rather than an original and creative one" ("About Books" 7).

³⁵ McGee, "The Mental Outfit" 4.

³⁶ W.P.C., "Our Literature, Present and Prospective," *LG* 6.5 (May 1848): 245.

³⁷ Alexander, "The Study of Literature" 824.

Guide to the Best Reading (1894),³⁸ these guides and "reading aids" are remarkable only for their similarities of tone and the homogeneity of their recommendations for useful reading in the service of character formation and moral regulation. Sharing a platform that is solidly Arnoldian, Canadian supporters of these writers and their ideals set out to establish themselves as true advocates of the designations of landedness by proving themselves to be readers distinct from both the literate masses who "pursue [only the] common-place"³⁹ in their literature and that "esoteric cult ... of people who hold themselves apart from common experiences and fellowships."⁴⁰

Setting themselves apart from the general population of literate though "unliterary"⁴¹ Canadians on the basis of a self-professed refined and practiced "doctrine of the relativity of things"⁴² and a "taste for reading" that has been passed on in all but the rarest instance through "generations of highly-educated well-bred ancestors,"⁴³ these native readers set out to promote in their writings the social and cultural benefits of "a reasoned respect" and admiration for landed readers like

³⁸ Georg Vasey, *The Beauties and Utilities of a Library: Forming the Student's Guide to Literature, Science, and Philosophy, and Containing an Analysis of the Canadian Parliamentary Library* (Toronto: Thompson & Co, 1857); Frederic Harrison, *The Choice of Books and Other Literary Pieces* (London: MacMillan, 1866) and *The Best Reading: Hints on the Selection of Books; On the Formation of Libraries, Public and Private; On Courses of Reading, etc.* (New York: Putnam, 1872); George Stewart, *Evenings in the Library: Bits of Gossip about Books and Those Who Write Them* (St. John: R.A.H. Morrow, 1878); Alexander Ireland, *The Book-Lover's Enchiridion: Thoughts on the Solace and Companionship of Books* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1884).

³⁹ LeSueur, "The Intellectual Life" 328.

⁴⁰ Harrison, *The Choice of Books* 15.

⁴¹ A. Ethelwyn Wetherald, "Unliterary People," *The Week* 4.16 (17 March 1887): 250.

⁴² Rye, 135.

⁴³ Douglas, "The Intellectual Progress" 466.

themselves to whom "the world of books will appear like a more or less well-ordered commonwealth." In contrast to the general population of Canadian readers to whom "all writers, past and present, will make up a mere mob of individualities," this well-defined cadre of critics represented themselves as purveyors of well-defined "canons of judgment"⁴⁴ that would, if approached with a respectful and diligent mind, serve to guide the general reader towards an acceptance of "nothing ... but a desire to know the best that has been written." That is, they would ensure that Canadian readers would acquire a taste for those books which "characterise the man of culture."⁴⁵

Secure in their belief that the landed class alone could lead Canadians toward a right and proper taste for reading through their single-minded dedication to acquiring and cultivating "a thorough knowledge of the best works of the greatest

⁴⁴ LeSueur, "Reading and Intelligence" 381. See also his "The Intellectual Life" 326-28.

⁴⁵ Harrison, *The Choice of Books* 12, 17. Available in Canada as part of Macmillan's Colonial Library series, Harrison's guide was popular among Canadian critics. See, for instance, Reverend William Clark's promotion in his series on "Books and Reading" published in *The Week* (February-May 1889).

Although individual inclination did have its advocates in this debate, to turn away from such well-meaning and, more importantly, well-informed advice was generally considered to have deleterious effects. Overwhelmed by the proliferation of reading material appearing daily and labouring under a limited or even non-existent sense of proportion that allows one to distinguish "between the ephemeral and the permanent of literature, between the best thoughts of the best minds and the idle imaginings of those that are feeble or impure" (Wetherald, "Unliterary People" 250), the "unliterary" Canadian reader would "be at the mercy of every chance impression and [would] unfaillingly fall into many grotesque, and even hurtful, errors" of judgment (LeSueur, "Reading and Intelligence" 381). It is, as George Iles concludes in his important essay on "The Appraisal of Literature" (1896), a matter of "economy of time and attention" that demands we spend our valuable hours "reading and studying only the best books" ("The Appraisal of Literature," *The Week* 13 [18 September 1896]: 1025-26). Only after such vast experience has been gained can the individual "follow [his] inclinations unfettered, because only then can he rely upon the purity of [his] taste in literature" (Arnold Theodore Haultain, "How to Read," *DR* 1.3 [May 1896]: 86).

writers,⁴⁶ the critics who adopted for themselves "the role of technician[s] of taste"⁴⁷ were similarly united in their view of where these "grotesque, and even hurtful, errors" of reading judgment inevitably leads: to "that insinuating and enervating habit of wholly desultory reading" of fiction, and, worse still, to the reading of popular as opposed to "approved" novels.⁴⁸ As Alexander Monro argued in 1855:

One thing, however, should be guarded against, both in this and the adjacent Colonies, as injurious, more especially to the rising generation: we allude to the circulation of novels and other light trash of literature, which is now becoming so common. The principal part of these works impart no useful knowledge, but on the contrary, do much to corrupt the morals and retard the intellectual advancement of the people.⁴⁹

In retrospect, many of these Canadian attacks against novels and novel reading were utterly predictable polemics that took their cues and rhetorical flourishes from arguments that were being advanced in England and the United States. A deep-rooted evangelical distrust of fiction, reinforced in Victorian Canada by a utilitarian revulsion at the thought of wasting either time or money in "unproductive" reading, lent many of these arguments a tone that ranged from

⁴⁶ Alexander, "The Study of Literature" 10. See also Chaleur, "The Study of English Literature" 169.

⁴⁷ Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 13.

⁴⁸ Haultain, "How to Read" 86. As Gerson notes, the "ease with which [critics of the day] interchanged the terms 'romance' and 'novel'" (*A Purer Taste* 57) poses an interesting challenge to the modern reader.

⁴⁹ Alexander Monro, *New Brunswick With a Brief Outline of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Their History, Civil Divisions, Geography, and Productions; with statistics of the several counties; affording views of the resources and capabilities of the provinces, and intended to convey useful information, as well to their inhabitants, as to emigrants, strangers, and travellers, and for the use of the schools* (Halifax: Richard Nugent, 1855), 319.

admonitory to outright apocalyptic. Represented variously as a sign of Philistine indolence and lack of industry,⁵⁰ as a drug akin to those "employed by the mediaeval poisoners,"⁵¹ and as a severe "literary dyspepsia" that "dulls the appetite" and vitiates the taste for a higher quality reading diet,⁵² novels and novel reading were seen in many quarters as sure indications of "an age of literary madness."⁵³ Threatening "to enfeeble the mind, and vitiate the taste, and corrupt the morals,"⁵⁴ "this rabies" of a literary habit had "so universally [entered] the blood of the people" that even among those readers who proclaimed their landedness "it is much more pardonable to be without a coat or shoes than to be without the latest ephemeral novel."⁵⁵ The messages were familiar and clear: that reading of even the best fiction was an activity that was to be indulged only in moderation; that consumption of popular novels in particular leads to a narrow and self-delusory approach to life;

⁵⁰ Books, like the vast stores of minerals and lumber upon which Canada's economic future depended, were another form of natural resource waiting to be mined in the most efficacious way possible. The decision to read guided only by one's personal preferences was seen, in other words, as a waste of time. As one unidentified author argued in an aptly titled mid-century essay "On the Employment of Leisure in Reading" (1856), Canadian readers were obligated "to the utmost of [their] power," to make the best use of their limited leisure time. "Time is a talent, for the proper employment of which we are accountable," the argument continues, and therefore a reader must always be aware that it "is wasted by an infinite variety of ways by different classes of people, as fashion or inclination suggests" (*MLM* 1.1 [September 1856]: 28-29).

⁵¹ W.H. Davenport Adams, *Woman's Work and Worth in Girlhood, Maidenhood, and Wifehood* (London: John Hogg, 1880), 140.

⁵² See, for instance, Anon., "True Value of Reading," *CIN* 2.14 (17 October 1863): 275; Clark, "Books and Reading" 163; C. Davis English, "The Immoral in Fiction," *The Week* 2.45 (8 October 1885): 710; Haultain, "How to Read" 86; L.M., "Novelists and Their Readers," *The Week* 6.44 (4 October 1889): 693-94; and Roy, "The Friendship of Books" 25.

⁵³ O'Hagan, 1287.

⁵⁴ *General Catalogue of Books*, 243.

⁵⁵ O'Hagan, 1892.

and that romance and sensational novels are the most dangerous of all, carrying within their lurid stories the power to corrupt the cultural standards of a new land.

For critics who saw the geocultural terrain of Canada as one far too distanced from the standards established in the Old World centres of cultural authority, novel reading was seen as a wholly inappropriate habit in a young dominion struggling to establish its cultural pedigree. As W.A. Douglas noted in "The Education of the Citizen" (1880), any "system" of cultural development that allows one of its citizens "to find more pleasure in a dirty 'cutty' pipe, an equally dirty pack of cards, the latest sensational novel, or the billiard table, than in the grand truths to be found in our rich stores of historical, scientific and poetic literature"⁵⁶ must be deemed a failure. As another, like-minded critic put it: "I would have more hope of the future of a young man who smoked tobacco, chewed the weed, and got inebriated every New Year's and Dominion day, than I would of one who, guiltless of these habits was an inveterate novel reader."⁵⁷ Even Ryerson's successor at the Department of Education, Dr. S.P. May, believed it necessary to add his official voice to this itemization of the sociocultural woes doomed to befall a society of novel readers. Noting that a dutifully nurtured reading habit had the power "to entice young people from the streets, the saloon, and low amusements injurious to their moral values," he warned that the reading of fiction, and especially "the reading of the ephemeral trash which is poured with such an unremitting stream into this country, in the shape of dime novels," is akin to an "intellectual

⁵⁶ W.A. Douglas, "The Education of the Citizen," *CEMSC* 2 (1880): 191-195.

⁵⁷ C.J. Atkinson, "The Teacher Out of the School-Room," *CEMSC* 3 (1881): 207.

dram-drinking which ultimately emasculates both mind and character, and unfits man for the duties of active life."⁵⁸

If the long-term benefits of right and proper reading were the points most often touched upon by cultural critics of the period, the familiar cluster of anxieties stemming from the common Victorian fixation with "the receptivity of the mind"⁵⁹ was not far behind. Inheriting the romantic belief in the power of the sympathetic imagination and the concomitant faith that literature can and does affect an audience through the innate capacity of readers to feel intensely with and for fictional characters, Canadian critics were fearful of the lessons learned from such uncontrolled and uncontrollable experiences. In a culture increasingly fixated on the potential for novels to "convey [to readers] false and exaggerated pictures of life" that would over time have injurious effects on social harmonies and tend to weaken rather than strengthen individual judgment, such powerful sympathy posed obvious problems. Foremost among these concerns was the fear that the style or content of such materials "could arouse sentiments and ideas which would incapacitate the reader to function usefully in the real world,"⁶⁰ that novel reading "excited the lower, emotional nature and created an artificial emotional susceptibility which mitigated against the performance of social duties."⁶¹

Offered such an accessible and readily available release from the perplexities taxing everyday life with its challenges and painful disappointments, many readers, it was feared, would choose to remove themselves altogether to the world of fiction rather than face what Moodie described as the work-a-day realities

⁵⁸ May, 219.

⁵⁹ Rye, 135.

⁶⁰ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 24.

⁶¹ Bruce Curtis, "The Speller Expelled: Disciplining the Common Reader in Canada West," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 22.3 (1985): 358.

of building a new and vibrant country. As one of Moodie's contemporaries and a fellow contributor to the *Literary Garland* noted, the fear was that readers would "get so habituated to the landscapes" of the imagined and often romantic fictions in which they "luxuriated" that they would "turn from the actual to rejoice in a fanciful creation."⁶²

It was such monologic and tendentious attacks on "novels and other light trash" that the Reverend Robert Jackson MacGeorge parodies in his stylized serial "The Purser's Cabin," which appeared from July through December 1854 in the short-lived *The Anglo-American Magazine* (1852-1855), a journal founded in large part to counterbalance the flood of American publications entering Canada and considered by at least one critic to be "the only rival in literary range and substance" to the seminal *Literary Garland*.⁶³ Set in 1844, MacGeorge's serial is narrated by a recent emigrant, who, having arrived in Canada with "no knowledge of trade, and being unfitted for the practice of any profession" had lost his a small fortune in a misguided attempt at becoming a land-owner, to achieve the status of what he called

⁶² Henry Giles, "Fiction," *LG* 8.6 (June 1850): 264.

⁶³ Fraser Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines 1789-1989* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989), 21. The *Anglo-American (Aa)*, on which MacGeorge functioned in an editorial capacity, was founded by Thomas Maclear, an Irishman who was sent to Toronto in 1842 by the Glaswegian publishing firm Blackie & Son. Like Graeme Mercer Adam, Maclear prospered as a reprint agent and bookseller before moving on to publishing, where his early successes included Catharine Parr Traill's *The Female Emigrant's Guide* (1852) and the first Canadian edition of Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1871).

The son of a respected Glaswegian solicitor, MacGeorge was well-known during his years as a student at universities in Glasgow and Edinburgh for his skill in farce and burlesque. Immigrating to Canada West in the fall of 1841, he settled in Streetsville, where he was a priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church, he soon took over the editorship of that city's *Weekly Review*. Under his direction the paper became one of the most widely read and oft-quoted journals in the province, due in large part to his regular columns of social satire, "The Chronicles of Dreepdaily" and "The Editor's Shanty," which he published under the pseudonym "Solomon of Streetsville." Popular, too, were his frequent contributions to such notable publications as the *Globe* and *Leader* (Toronto), and the Anglican journal *Church*.

"a lord of the soil."⁶⁴ Penniless and disillusioned, he takes on the job of purser aboard a Canadian Great Lakes steamship, where during one of his journeys he meets Miss Laura Matilda Applegate, "a devoted member of the sisterhood of novel readers" whose imagination and understanding of real life has been "profoundly tintured with the essential oil of romance." Like the famous novel readers of Cervantes and Austen, Miss Applegate "entertain[s] a generous contempt" for "every thing in the shape of the common place or prosaic"; more specifically, the purser explains, she "would rather have tramped bare-footed through the world, with a knight errant of the orthodox olden school, than have submitted to the degradation of wedding an unpoetical agriculturalist, whose only crusades" in the work-a-day world of a colony "had been against the weeds which invaded his acres, or the foxes which depopulated his hen roosts." Due partly to the fact "that Canada is somewhat lacking in the article of *Chivalry*," and partly to the harsh truth "that Minerva had been more bountiful than Venus, in her benefactions to the high-souled Applegate," this narrativized novel reader, like Cervantes's knight errant, remains unable to find love in the world beyond the texts she reads. "[T]here will be small difficulty in solving the problem," as the purser observes callously, "how it eventuated that at the mature age of forty, the lady was still possessed of the leading characteristics of maidenhood!" (5.4 334).

Unlike Quixote, whose attempts to "school" Sancho Panza in living in the real world according to the codes and patterns of a fictional one prove futile, Miss Applegate does succeed in transmitting her propensity for reading the real world in terms of novelistic standards to her niece, the naive Fanny Newlove. Young, impressionable, and a little simple-minded, she is the conventional representation of an inveterate novel reader whose unchecked consumption of gothic and sentimental

⁶⁴ *Aa* 5.1 (July 1854): 31. Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

novels has aroused false ideals and expectations about life and love. Imagining herself a romantic heroine in a world rife with gothic possibilities, she soon discovers that none of her seemingly endless supply of would-be real-world suitors can live up to the standards she has set for herself:

The most 'likely' among them were, by a million degrees, too everydayish for her highly spiced fancy. Not one in the whole squad would have been deemed worthy to flourish in a novel or drama -- at least in the novels or dramas which she thought deserving of patronage. One of her clerical adorers, it is true, might have passed in a crowd for Dr. Primrose of Wakefield, or Parson Adams, but what heroine, who *was* a heroine, would link her destiny with a foggy of that class? (5.4 334-5)

Suitor after suitor is rejected, including the elegant Cornelius Crooks, a landed young man handpicked by her father to be her husband. Fanny is eventually swept off her feet, though, by "a porter to a wholesale dry-goods establishment in Hamilton," who, as a member of the local "Histrionic Society," is able to pass himself off as a noble Scot Highlander. Supported in her affair by her Aunt Applegate, who continuously reimagines the events of her niece's mundane romance in appropriately exaggerated terms, this young novel reader pursues her affair with vigour.

Like Austen, MacGeorge does not allow his heroine's delusions to stand unchallenged or to dominate the view of the events presented to the reader. On the contrary, the reader is constantly being shown, along with Fanny, the various New World realities which correspond in no way to the views of the world promoted by the novel-reading aunt. In an attempt to short-circuit what Umberto Eco would call Fanny's "referential fallacy,"⁶⁵ Mr. Newlove takes his daughter to the dry-goods

58. ⁶⁵ Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1976),

warehouse where she sees her beau in less than chivalric surroundings and "attired, instead of the Stuart tartan, in a raincoat engendered of homely Canadian gray cloth" (5.4 337). With Fanny exposed to the reality of her situation, the romance and the stories that have supported it collapse and the affair ends. Having saved her at least temporarily from making an "unworthy" connection, Fanny's father suggests to the narrating purser the source of all his daughter's troubles: "[Y]ou must bear in mind the unfortunate manner in which she had been brought up," he explains. "Her idiotical aunt had encouraged her to read nothing more solid or substantial than novels and romances, and consequently at this moment the hapless thing knows nearly as little of the world and its history as she does of the form of government which prevails in the moon!" Having articulated one of the most persistent cultural fears of Victorian Canada, Mr. Newlove voices his support for what was forwarded by some of the most polemical writers as a potential solution to the persistently troublesome fiction problem:

It would be a blessed and a gracious dispensation for poor humanity if the whole of these pestiferous productions could be gathered together in one heap by the congregated hangmen of creation, and the authors, printers, and publishers thereof burned to ashes with their felon pages! Willingly would I walk fifty miles barefooted, in order to assist at such a righteous *auto da fe!* (5.4 337)

Enactment of such a reactionary and prescriptive strategy is averted, however, when Fanny meets Count Blitzen Von Hoaxenstein, a dramatic Hungarian stranger who regales her with fantastic stories of romance that cast him in the role of a gothic hero. She is immediately smitten, seeing in his dark good looks and hyperbolic stories unquestionable evidence of a novelistic life lived large. It is, she explains to all who will listen, a life full of novelistic "sufferings, equal, if not greater, to what were endured by good Earl Lackaday," the protagonist of her favourite gothic romance, "that deliciously pathetic novel, *The Castle of De Greetandgirn*" (5.5

435). In fact, Von Hoaxenstein's tale of his past life is itself a parody within the frame of MacGeorge's own parodic tale, complete with all the elements familiar to readers of the popular gothic romances: the requisite confinement in a "dark and pestilential" dungeon (where the Count is exceptionally well fed and quite comfortable), a series of hideous tortures (in this case, "gustatorial torture" involving copious amounts of the prisoner's favourite food), and an inevitable escape with the aid of a mysterious and beautiful maiden. Overcome at various points in the story "by a sudden attack of all-overishness" that "require[s] the administration of a modicum of sherry and water, to enable her to regain her equanimity" (5.5 437), Fanny is swept away to the generically appropriate, though culturally discouraged, secret marriage when Von Hoaxenstein, in his narrative *coup de grace*, "writes" her into the role of the mysterious maiden who appears at the end of his "story" and with whom he has been providentially reunited in the "real" world stratum of MacGeorge's narrative.

Tracked down by her father and the purser following a journey that takes them through Kingston, Toronto, and Cobourg, the new Countess Von Hoaxenstein swears her love for her husband, only to discover that the "Count" of the gothic tale and of "real" life has, in fact, incorporated into his own stylized tale yet another algebrized device: the mistaken identity. As his name suggests, Count Von Hoaxenstein is not who he appears to be, but is Cornelius Crooks in disguise. Having discerned Fanny's penchant for romances, Crooks, himself an ardent novel-reader, has brought another stylizing touch to MacGeorge's text, imagining himself as a character written in the type of romance that Fanny would fully appreciate. The only malcontent at novel's end is Aunt Applegate, who cannot bear the thought that despite her dedication to her young charge's "education" such "a commoner's lot has fallen to [her] chance." All is returned to harmony, though, when Crooks relates how during a trip to Germany earlier that same summer he had become landed in

the most superficial Old World sense of the word, having "purchased a patent of nobility, for a mere song from a Grand Duke who chanced to be a trifle out at the elbows" (5.6 546).

Significantly, a number of prominent contemporaries agreed with the broader cultural implication of MacGeorge's parodic stylizations of the issue of novel reading in Victorian Canada; indeed, from Ryerson's rise to prominence onward there was an ongoing effort by a number of notable writers to play down the seemingly endless litany of ruinous effects of novel reading. Pointing to the moral intentions of such esteemed novelists as Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, such writer-critics as Henry Giles ("Fiction," 1850), Susanna Moodie ("A Word for the Novel Writers," 1851), and Mary Jane Katzmann (editor of *The Provincial; or Halifax Monthly Magazine* [1851-53]) offered spirited and foresightful defences of the potential for popular novels and novel reading to contribute to the improvement of a literate society. Ironically, many of their arguments drew, too, on the powers of the sympathetic imagination to influence both the attitudes and behaviours of readers. When novel reading was confined to "stories using local characters in local settings [that could] teach Canadians not to gamble, flirt, or try to rise above their proper station in life,"⁶⁶ the sympathetic imagination was seen as a possible source of reassurance, imbuing imaginative literature with the great potential to cultivate an understanding of the contrasts between the world that is and the world that could be. As Westfall explains:

If the real world was materialistic, the imaginative world was spiritual; if the real world was regular and predictable, the other world was spontaneous and magical; if the real world required the individual to conform to the new routines of life and work, the other world glorified

⁶⁶ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 137.

the individual and invested in each person the possibility of a heroic life.⁶⁷

Although "[t]here are many good and conscientious persons, who regard novels ... with devout horror," Moodie notes, "we think, it should be satisfactorily proved, in spite of the stern crusade perpetually waged against works of fiction ... that much good has been done in the world through their instrumentality." If every moment spent with a book in hand is to be seen as a step towards the mental, spiritual, and cultural improvement of mankind, then there should be little cause for concern. Indeed, novel reading may be "the means of effecting much good in a gross and licentious age":

Where high moral excellence is represented as struggling with the faults and follies common to humanity; sometimes yielding to temptation, and reaping the bitter fruits; and at other times, successfully resisting the allurements of vice; all our sympathies are engaged in the contest, it becomes our own, and we follow the hero through all his trials, weep at his fall, or triumph at his success.⁶⁸

With the potential to transport readers "away from this little petty peddling, bargain-making time ... into the dawn of a glorious day" or into the lived worlds of such exemplars of virtue as the Arthurian knights, the powers of fiction could well prove a means to a positive social end. Through the pages of such fiction readers would begin to "wonder at the degeneracy of mankind"⁶⁹ and be moved to support programmes of social and self-improvement. Such "[l]iterature," J.A. McLellan reiterated in 1894, "not only forms a sympathetic imagination for the world of

⁶⁷ Westfall, 139.

⁶⁸ Susanna Moodie, "A Word for the Novel Writers," *LG* (August 1851): 348-349.

⁶⁹ McLachlan, "Books" 422.

human relations and interactions in general, it helps to widen, strengthen and purify desire through the presentation of nobler self-ideals."⁷⁰

Moreover, these writers would continue to reiterate through to the end of the century, those critics who continued to advocate what were characteristically described as Mrs. Partington-like measures of repression against Canadian readers were from mid-century onward seen to be "wasting their energies in a hopeless attempt to banish"⁷¹ novels and novel reading from Canadian culture. "It may be all very well for those who are shut up in the cloister, or who are living by rule under some definite authority, to renounce anything which is forbidden to them," William Clark argued in 1889, "[b]ut the man who tells ordinary people, 'living in the world,' that they shall not read fiction, may as well tell the wind not to blow."⁷² Even such a usually resilient Arnoldian critic as LeSueur was forced to concede that novels and novel reading were not without some value. "Fiction may serve a useful purpose," he admitted grudgingly, "by cultivating the social side of our nature," though he was also quick to qualify even such a reluctant admission with the limiting observation that this cultivation:

is its main office; and, if it does not fulfil that, it is not only valueless, but in all probability hurtful. If one reads a novel in the same spirit of idle curiosity in which one would listen to any social tittle-tattle, one might certainly be better employed. But a novel written in a genial spirit by one who knows what is best in men and women, may be a real source of edification. Next to living intercourse with our fellow-beings under circumstances favourable to the development of geniality, there is nothing so well adapted to the mitigation of

⁷⁰ J.A. McLellan, "The Ethical Elements in Literature: I," *The Week* 11.42 (14 September 1894): 997.

⁷¹ Anon., "Topics," *The Week* 5.40 (30 August 1888): 633.

⁷² Clark, "Books and Reading" 165.

asperities and crudities of individual character as the reading of a good novel.⁷³

As an anonymous editorialist concluded in *The Week*: "The moral of it all seems to be that the place of the novel in modern literature is impregnable, and that it is the part of wisdom for reformers of all classes to aim at improving and elevating the taste for it, and so its character."⁷⁴

Writing novels that they hoped would capture the attention of an audience within this Victorian milieu, other popular Canadian novelists were moved, too, to engage the double-structuredness of parodic stylizations in order to narrativize novel readers as both the light and the mirror of contemporary monologic renderings. Having previously emphasized the insightful beneficence of an inveterate reader of sentimental romances in her gothic romance *The Twin Sisters*,⁷⁵

⁷³ LeSueur, "Reading and Intelligence" 381.

⁷⁴ Anon., "Topics," *The Week* 5.40 (30 August 1888): 633. By the end of the 1880s even the tax-supported lending institutions under the charge of the Department of Education was forced to acknowledge the futility of such restrictions. Having faced vehement attacks from editorialists and columnists of such publications as *The Week* and *The Globe* (Toronto) for what was perceived to be his procrastination in controlling the flow of fiction from public lending institutions, S.P. May admitted that circulation figures for works of fiction had been hovering for the better part a decade between 47 and 61 percent of total lending circulation. In fact, in 1879-1880, publically funded lending institutions in Ontario held 135,711 volumes, of which 30,027 (22%) were classified as fiction; in that year, 244,465 volumes were circulated, of which 114,365 (47%) were fiction. This trend continued throughout the decade: 1885-1886 saw 264,794 volumes held with 69,796 (26%) in fiction, and 679,096 volumes circulated with fiction accounting for 414,035 (61%); 1888-1889 saw 252,032 volumes held with 70,142 (27%) in fiction, and 376,194 volumes circulated, with fiction accounting for 203,400 (54%).

⁷⁵ Discussed in the previous chapter in terms of its refunctioning of the north-south geocultural axis, this earlier novel includes, too, a wealthy New York patriarch, Hugh Hazelwood, who dedicates all of his free time to reading sentimental romances and who upon his passing distributes legacies according to what are repeatedly described as the odd and romantic notions he got from such texts. When his trusting sister offers by way of explanation the possibility that her brother's posthumous narrativizing of apparently erroneous family connections may be a presaging of hitherto undiscovered family ties, her step-niece responds, contemptuous of her aunt's apparent naivety, that "such things only happen in novels, auntie" (88). In the end, though, the novel reader's vision *does* prove insightful: secret links *are* uncovered and family harmony *is* restored, ending a

May Agnes Fleming turns to a more subtle stylization of cultural attitudes towards the novel reading habit in what is arguably her best novel, the sentimental *Lost For a Woman* (1879).⁷⁶ More "socially inclusive" than the conventional sentimental romance's "preoccupation with the wealthy and aristocratic,"⁷⁷ Fleming's novel opens with a series of framing chapters in which Jemima Ann, a twenty-four-year-old maid, is shown toiling in the basement kitchen of a working-man's boardinghouse owned by her aunt. Having spent the last seven years of her life in this dungeon-like room located well below street level, her sense of the real world of the novel is limited and oppressive:

It is a rainy evening in early October, the dismal twilight of a wet and dismal day. [The] basement kitchen is lit by four greenish panes of mud-bespattered glass, six inches higher than the pavement. Through these six inches of green crystal Jemima Ann sees all she ever sees of the outdoor world on its winding way. Hundreds of ankles, male and female, thick and thin, clean and dirty, according to the state of the atmosphere, pass those four squares of dull light every day, and all day long, far into the night, too. (*Lost* 3)

Trapped in a "social situation [that] provided little relief from [her] dreary round of duties and no possibility of permanent escape,"⁷⁸ Jemima Ann finds brief moments of solace in the novels she consumes. Facing only the immediate "dreary prospect" of "one long 'demnition grind,' from week's end to week's end" and doomed to a

bloody feud that has, within the opening chapters of the novel, led to a murder by poison, two kidnappings, and two suicides.

⁷⁶ May Agnes Fleming, *Lost for a Woman* (New York: G.W. Carleton, 1880). Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study.

⁷⁷ Lorraine McMullen, "May Agnes Fleming: 'I did nothing but write,'" *Silenced Sextet: Six Nineteenth-Century Canadian Women Novelists*, ed. Carrie MacMillan, Lorraine McMullen, and Elizabeth Waterston (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1992), 74.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

future in a foundry town full of "noise and grime, and clanking of great hammers, and clouds of blackest smoke" (*Lost* 3), she reads for escape, just as so many contemporary landed critics feared readers of her class would.

Contrary to the prescriptive cultural pressures aimed at limiting or eliminating novels from the lives of readers like Jemima Ann by representing such reading practices as a sure route to dissipation and corruption, Fleming's narrator explains that it is exactly the potential of such imaginative fiction to transport readers into a world far removed from the one in which they live their daily lives that may actually serve to sustain the spirits and imaginations of such readers as Jemima Ann:

The favourite 'gulf' of her novel lies between her and such airy, fairy beings as the Duchess Isoline. And yet Jemima Ann fairly revels in the British aristocracy. Nothing less than a baronet can content her. No heroine under the rank of 'my lady' can greatly interest her. Pictures of ordinary every-day life, of ordinary every-day people, pall upon the highly seasoned palate of Jemima Ann. Her own life is so utterly unlovely, so grinding in its sordid ugliness, that she will have no reflection of it in her favourite literature.

Whatever pleasure can be found in the works of such a culturally approved writer as Dickens, she muses, is diminished by the fact that the men and women who populate such novels "talk and act, and are but as shadowy reflections of those she meets every day" (*Lost* 4).

Fleming takes her dialogic refunctioning of contemporary anxieties over the dangers of losing oneself in the worlds of popular novels even farther when, with the arrival of a glamorous circus star, Mimi Trillon, and her precocious young daughter Snowball, Jemima Ann is swept away into a life that is, literally, the plot of a sentimental novel neatly framed within this sentimental novel. Through a series of remarkable circumstances that ends with her serving as the personal maid and

supportive friend of the orphaned Snowball (rechristened Dolores during her schooling by nuns in a small Quebec village), Jemima Ann goes on to live a life that is plotted as a series of conventional albeit fantastic events skilfully manipulated by Fleming. Having entered into the world of the romances she so eagerly consumes, Jemima Ann does, in the end, find through her novels an escape from the everyday tedium of her "real" life and an opportunity to live in the excitement of a world conjured by avid readers like herself.

These overt and self-conscious parodies of cultural attitudes towards novel reading and habitual novel readers dialogize the persistently monologic assumptions that consumers of such "light" literature could not, or would not, act in ways beneficial to themselves or to others. Representing in their narratives the lives of such quixotic readers as Fanny Newlove and Aunt Applegate, whose actions in many ways reinforce the arguments put forward by Canadian critics concerned with the social and cultural dangers of habitual novel reading, these writers at the same time reflect these representations in the mirror of their parodies. Although novel reading can and does lead to troublesome and disruptive actions in the novelistic worlds in which these readers function, it can and does lead, too, to the reestablishment of social order (Cornelius Crooks), to the resolution of long-standing antagonisms (Hugh Hazelwood), and even to an optimistic (perhaps overly so) reconceptualization of the socioeconomic fissures becoming evermore apparent within a Victorian society dedicated to industrialization and economic expansion.

Not all Canadian parodists chose, though, to narrativize readers so as to foreground their reception of popular novel forms. Emphasizing the reflexivity of parody's double-structure, a writer like De Mille chose instead to explore contemporary attitudes toward the reading of novels through his fictional readers's quasi-critical relationships to the textual worlds in which they find themselves. With a father whose local reputation as an unbending Puritan was built in large part on

an unsubstantiated report that he had burned a package of novels that had found their way into the cargo of one of his ships,⁷⁹ De Mille wrote potboilers in which worlds are overflowing with manuscripts and printed matter, with readers, and with interpolated, double-voiced commentaries that call attention to the presence of what Hutcheon calls "the tyranny of both reader expectation and reader control"⁸⁰ within both this text and the reading culture of Victorian Canada.

In De Mille's *The American Baron*, for instance, readers encounter Lord Harry Hawbury, who, besides being one of the many principals in this adventure story, functions reflexively as an often astute "reader" of the text in which he finds himself. Occasionally resembling Fanny Newlove in his imagining of fantastic motivations and causes behind events which can be easily explained by more prosaic and viable evidence around him, Hawbury often probes with critical acuity the surface of the story of which he is a part. Asking questions the reader wants to know, inquiring after narrative connections the reader may be searching for, and looking to fill in lacunae in the stories told and retold by other characters, he functions as a critical reader's analogue. Faced with a sudden and unbelievable series of coincidental meetings and mistaken identities in his "real" life, he reacts as a reader outside the text might in approaching the same events as algebrized conventions in a plot, declaring with increasing skepticism and some impatience that so many of the events unfolding around him "seem con-foundedly odd ... Preposterous!" (*Baron* 37). Similarly, when frustrated with his friend Stone Dacre's habit of recounting his life's adventures and misadventures in stories that are at once convention-laden and blatantly fictionalized, he promptly punctures his friend's misassumptions about his listener's/reader's willingness to suspend disbelief to such

⁷⁹ Archibald MacMechan, "De Mille, the Man and the Writer," *The Canadian Magazine* 27.5 (1906): 405.

⁸⁰ Hutcheon, *Theory* 89.

a degree: "See here, by Jove!' ... 'Really. You're going too far, my dear boy, you know. You are, really. Come now. This is just like a Surrey theatre, you know'" (*Baron* 54). But where Hawbury is quick to react in frustration to the conditions of his narrativized world, it is Courtenay Despard, a stylized reader in De Mille's *Cord and Creese*, who points a reflexive finger at the most obvious causes of such frustration.

Opening as an adventure novel set in New South Wales, the plot of *Cord and Creese* is set in motion by the unexpected appearance of two texts: a letter detailing a stock fraud that has left the hero's father destitute and the family's country estate in the hands of a villain, and a large piece of parchment on which can be deciphered a fantastic tale of lost Spanish treasure. From these conventionally text-laden opening chapters, De Mille interweaves copious tales of hidden identities, murderous plots, pirate attacks, shipwrecks, and narrow escapes as the hero attempts to reunite with his dying father before setting out to discover the lost treasure and to right all the wrongs that have been weighed upon his family.

At the height of the adventure, though, De Mille suddenly ruptures the continuity of his adventure plot, shifting with only the warning of a chapter break from a dramatic shipwreck in the South Seas to an extended domestic digression that recounts the return of a previously tertiary character, the Reverend Courtenay Despard, to his English home of Holby, Pembroke. Not unfamiliar to Victorian Canadian readers, such metanarrative ruptures are "appropriately treated as signals to pay attention," either to take notice for the introduction of information that may appear at first to be irrelevant to the main narrative but may prove extremely valuable later or to attend to sudden shifts in plot direction which may signal changes in perspective, narrative distance, or style.⁸¹

⁸¹ Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987), 65-8.

More important to this study, though, is the Formalist's reminder that metanarrative ruptures are often, too, pointed structural signals of the presence of parody. As Shklovsky points out, such breaks in narrative continuity effectively impede the anticipated flow of the main story, creating contrasts between the structures that readers have come to expect and the parodist's stylization of these expected patterns.⁸² Coming suddenly upon Quixote's whimsical interpolations on the promised (though never delivered) governorship of Sancho Panza or, more radically, upon Tristram Shandy's marbled pages and transpositioned chapters, readers are forced to pause in their consideration of the text in hand to extrapolate some adjusted orientation towards the continuing event of reading. Bakhtin adds to this formalist theorizing, suggesting that such digressive disturbances, often lengthy and abstract, "serve a retarding function and interrupt the story at its most intense and tension-filled moment, the very inappropriateness of such an interruption (especially where pedantically proliferating discussions are hooked up with pretexts that are obviously arbitrary) throws a mantle of materiality over everything, forcing us to suspect the presence of parodic stylization" (*Imagination* 374).

De Mille's rupturing of *Cord and Creese* signals such a parodic moment. Unlike such other prominent De Mille characters as O'Halloran (*Lady of the Ice*), who is dedicated to reading the classics, or Zillah, the heroine of his "straight" potboiler *The Cryptogram* (1871), who sits for hours curled up on a window-sill of the family library reading tales of Arthur or of Charlemagne and his Paladins, the Reverend Despard is, as he admits openly, a habitual novel reader. Upon resettling in Holby, he seeks out some domestic and reflexively double-structured "badinage" with his old friend and fellow novel devotee, Theresa Thornton. During this initial

⁸² Shklovsky, *Theory* 192-93.

conversation he outlines an "admirable plan" he has devised for keeping up with their pastime of choice:

‘You see,’ said Despard, ‘one must keep up with the literature of the day. I used to read each book as it came out, but at last found satiety. The lone novel palls. For my own comfort I had to invent a new plan to stimulate my interest. I will tell you about it. I take ten at a time, spread them out on the table in front of me, and read each chapter in succession.’

‘Isn’t that a little confusing?’

‘Not at all,’ said Despard *grinning*. ‘Practice enables one to keep all distinct.’ (*Cord* 82, emphasis mine)

De Mille’s manipulation of Despard’s double-structured "grin" situates the mirror of parody at the heart of this exchange. Turning inward to the narrativized novel-reading world of the text, Despard’s grin reveals not only his self-conscious ironizing of his "admirable plan" but also his willingness and desire to elicit the participation of another reader, his narrativized confidante Theresa Thornton, in this subversive stylization. Indeed, it is her mock-naïve query "Isn’t that a little confusing?" that prompts Despard to continue elucidating his grand scheme, overtly signalling that she both understands and is willing to play along with the game. But Despard’s grin also turns outward from the narrativized world of the text in order to set up a "dialectical relationship between identification and distance which enlists the audience"⁸³ in the reflexivity of the narrativized reading. At once signalling to the reader outside of the text to maintain a distance from his interpolated description of a self-described "admirable plan," (to read it, in other words, as ironic), Despard’s grin at the same time works to draw the reading audience into the text, to involve them in the participatory activity of irony-making and text-building.

⁸³ Catharine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980), 97.

As the double-structuredness of Despard's grin underscores, readers are never without complicity in the making of either a specific text or the particularities of the reading culture within which that text functions. Necessarily evoking in the shaping of their parodic stylizations a complex set of protocols and generic assumptions learned through previous reading, Canadian parodists anticipate a local audience well-armed with what the Polish literary theorist Roman Ingarden calls "active memory." As Ingarden explains, an individual approaches each new reading experience from within a cognitive "phase" in which the work in hand is known "only in a vague way, if at all." That is, the work is known only as the potential associated with the not yet read. As the reading progresses this cognitive phase slides toward an awareness of immediacy through to one in which the completed book is retained in the memory as having been read but no longer vividly present in the reader's life. Completion of a reading experience, though, does not necessarily signal the passing of the read work from the reader's memory; on the contrary, though each completed work does distance itself from "the always new present moment of the reader and sinks slowly into the horizon of the past," it is "never completely obliterated, nor does it pass in a genuine sense. One could say," Ingarden concludes, that though "the reader distances himself from" all of the texts he or she has ever read, each of these texts also continues to exist as cognitive traces which necessarily accrete over time to shape in varying degrees reading that takes place in the present moment, even if readers do not or cannot always take such influences into account.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Roman Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973), 101. Taking his cues, in part, from Ingarden, Nash suggests that this cognitive patterning is especially important in establishing what he calls the "framework of expectancy" that allows verbal and visual humour to achieve much of its effect (88). Hans Robert Jauss would later build on Ingarden's theories in his discussions of what he describes as the "*Erwartungshorizon*," or horizon of expectations that readers bring to a text.

It is this sense of active memory that Despard implies when asked by Theresa Thornton to detail the fundamentals of his "admirable plan." He suggests that such traces of previous reading allows a novel reader to approach a text with the confidence that prior experiences will help him or her locate it well within "the limits of the familiar."⁸⁵ "You see," he continues:

in each novel there are certain situations. Perhaps on an average there may be forty each. Interesting characters also may average ten each. Thrilling scenes twenty each. Overwhelming catastrophes fifteen each. Now by reading novels singly the effect of all this is weakened, for you only have the work of each in its divided, isolated state, but where you read according to my plan you have the aggregate of all these effects in one combined -- that is to say, in ten books which I read at once I have two hundred thrilling scenes, one hundred and fifty catastrophes, one hundred interesting characters, and four hundred situations of absorbing fascination. Do you see what an advantage there is in my plan? By following this rule I have been able to stimulate a somewhat jaded appetite, and to keep abreast of the literature of the day.

(*Cord* 82-3)⁸⁶

As Despard's grin implies and as parodists from Cervantes onward have understood, the feared corruption of a reading culture occurs not from excessive novel consumption but from a reading culture's algebrized acceptance of the limits of the

⁸⁵ Rose, *Parody//Metafiction* 115.

⁸⁶ Despard's observation was not far removed from contemporary critical discussions of what one representative reviewer called "Cheap, Sensation." Indeed, in an article from *Once a Week* that was reprinted in the *Maritime Monthly* in October 1873, this unsigned review provides an almost Despardian summary of what such a label might designate: "it would be hard to exaggerate the tremendous character of the incidents employed. Battle, murder, and sudden death are treated as ordinary occurrences. The plot usually turns upon the conflicting attractions of rival beauties, resulting in the suicide of the rejected one; or upon the administration of poison in mistake for medicine; or upon a countess having committed bigamy, and the consequent complications respecting the succession to the earldom and estates; or something equally original and startling. Wholesale catastrophes are very much in vogue, such as the explosion of a powder mill, or the drowning of a party of skaters by the breaking up of the ice" (418).

familiar, an acceptance that over time becomes an inhibitive influence on literary or cultural evolution. Such stagnation occurs, as Shklovsky reminds us, when the habit of reading within a given culture permits "the greatest economy of perceptual effort."⁸⁷ In a reading culture that has come to be defined by what Despard calls "jaded appetites," then, parody serves a distinctly metafictional function, "foregrounding the role played by the audience in the reception of texts"⁸⁸ as well as in the perpetual renovation, or alternatively the continued stultification of a reading culture.

It is this persistent acceptance of, and seeking after the familiar that De Mille and other Canadian parodists set out to challenge through their radical stylizations of familiar narrative structures. Opening with the appropriately titled "Introduction," in which the pseudonymous "Haggard Writer" describes a distinctly Canadian setting, the parodic novelette "Claude Coursol" includes a series of descriptive chapter titles which announce to the reader a narrative organized according to the classic and familiar notions of Aristotelian continuity. From his introduction of the setting, "Writer" moves to a description of the equally local "Hero and Heroine" (the title of chapter II) through various stages of main narrative action in "Development" (III), during which "The Plot Thickens" (IV) in preparation for the final motion toward closure in "The Denouement" (XI). In the penultimate chapter with its reflexive title "Escaped," "Writer" suddenly ruptures the announced logic of the narrative structure expected by readers who have remained attentive to his own patterning of previous chapter titles. Having closed the preceding chapter with a conventional scene in which the hero and heroine walk hand-in-hand into the moonlit night, "Writer" begins "Escaped" with a sudden and heavily punctuated

⁸⁷ Shklovsky, *Theory* 5.

⁸⁸ Rose, *Parody//Metafiction* 114.

declarative: "How they got there is a mystery!!!" Syntactically and contextually opaque, without structural, grammatical, or contextual markers providing any stable indication of where "there" is, or who "they" are, or why "getting to" this place would be deemed "mysterious," this abrupt leap forces a reader to hesitate, to ponder "Writer's" sudden defamiliarizing dislocation and to consider how the plot seems to have escaped its own syllogistic structure. Anticipating this momentary hesitation, this pondering of where a reader suddenly finds himself and how he might have ended up wherever here is, the narrator immediately sets out to settle the reader's disquieted imagination by providing the information necessary to bridge this rupture and continue along the familiar route promised by the descriptive chapter headings: "'Where?' do you ask, gentle reader?" the narrator queries before providing the answer "To Fort Niagara,"⁸⁹ the geographic wonder at which this parodic novelette finally closes. Resettled, the narrative (and the reader) can progress to the duly announced "Denouement."

Whereas Despard and "Haggard Writer" grin knowingly at their readers by way of invitation into a new and dialectical relationship with their narrativized worlds, Alexander Macrorie, the narrator of *Lady of the Ice*, suggests that the reader's role in the construction, and therefore renovation, of the fictional text is more actively participatory than even Despard suggests. When his best friend, the confirmed bachelor Jack Randolph, announces that he has proposed marriage to not one but three women (all of whom have accepted), De Mille's overwhelmed narrator tries as the writer of the story to convey to his audience the shock that he

⁸⁹ *Grip* 29.20 (12 November 1887): 5. See also the section of this novlette when, after a daring rescue at Niagara Falls, Claude "bade good bye to Maud, and started one May morning, when the sky was flooded with an amber wealth of circumambient sunshine, for Lake Simcoe. 'Why did he go' do you ask, gentle reader. He did not know why. Heroes never know. They walk a-tip-toe on the silver lining of thunder clouds, and cannot give a reason for anything. Why should they? What use otherwise of being a hero?" The next paragraph offers a distinctly prosaic, and distinctly unlikely possibility: "Perhaps he went to fish" (7).

experiences, only to run headlong into the algebrized descriptions that readers had come to expect on such narrative occasions: "Had a bombshell burst --" he begins, only to break off. Confronted by the limited evocativeness of what he criticizes as a "somewhat hackneyed" phrase, and unwilling to have his own self-expression constricted by such algebrization, Macrorie cuts short his response. Like the "writer" of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, who turns regularly to his audience to complain of the difficulties of narrating the story of his own life, Macrorie turns outward from the world that he himself is narrativizing to elicit the reader's support in moving the exposition beyond the cliché of such mechanical description. The reader, whose tacit agreement with this evaluation of the conventional bombshell as "hackneyed" is implied and accepted, is asked to rewrite Macrorie's response in language more appropriate for the circumstances detailed in the narrative: "The reader will therefore be good enough to appropriate the point" of the "bombshell," he suggests, "and understand that the shock of this intelligence was so overpowering, that I was again rendered speechless" (*Lady* 10). With the narrator/writer of the text sliding gradually towards silence, unable to grasp the words he needs to move his narration forward, the text becomes, momentarily at least, an invitation to breach the familiar distances separating author, text, and audience, to "appropriate the point" of the algebrized response and to write over it with fresher, more vital language. Like Sterne's marbled page, Macrorie's appeal assumes both a competence and a willingness on the part of the reader to become an active participant in the reading, and renovating, of the text in hand.

De Mille revisits his narrativized writer's struggles with algebrized language and convention throughout the novel. Like Harry Hawbury, whose "By Jove!" regularly serves as an automatic and increasingly vacuous response to the various misadventures described in *The American Baron*, Macrorie returns to a slightly modified though nonetheless algebrized variation of his original bombshell

whenever he finds himself "overpowered" by the events of his own story; specifically, he turns to a literary convention that he comes to call his friend "the thunder-bolt." The friend of a convention appears in the novel for the first time when O'Halloran makes the "astounding announcement" that it was Nora whom Macrorie saved from the crushing ice of the St. Lawrence. Informed of this information, De Mille's hero once again finds himself incapable of finding the language to give adequate expression to his feelings. Standing amidst the words that define O'Halloran's book-lined library, his inarticulateness is palpable: "I stood simply paralyzed. I stared at each in succession. To give an idea of my feelings is simply impossible." Even the familiar word "Dumbfounded," he explains, "does not begin to express the idea" of his troublesome silence. His reaction to this sudden suppression of his voice is to turn outward from the text in the hope of garnering some assistance in moving beyond the algebrization that has condemned him to a state of wordlessness. "I must refer every thing to the imagination of the reader" at this particular moment in the story, Macrorie admits, though not without some authorial recommendations. To "assist [the reader's] imagination," he offers some advice, which arrives, ironically, in the form of the thunderbolt, another familiar and equally algebrized literary device traditionally used to signal surprise: "I beg leave to call his attention to our old friend, the thunder-bolt. 'Had a thunder-bolt burst,' and all that sort of thing" (*Lady* 65). Still later, when Macrorie discovers that Nora is O'Halloran's wife and not his eldest daughter as he has led himself (and readers) to believe, his reaction reflects again what is quickly becoming an internally algebrized response: "There, reader, you have it. We won't attempt to enlarge -- will we? We'll omit the exploding thunder-bolt -- won't we? I will quietly put an end to this chapter, so as to give you leisure to meditate over the woes of Macrorie" (*Lady* 85). By the midpoint of the novel, the reflexive writer has reached a point in the parody at which he can effectively invoke the convention of the thunderbolt only to mark its omission or

erasure from the main body of the narrative. No longer effective as a strategy of evocation (surprise) or amplification (enlargement), the exploding thunderbolt is left out of the text.

But as Holmes points out, not all instances of readerly engagement with the written text are as knowingly conspiratorial as Despard's grin implies nor as openly invitatory as Macrorie's pleasant asides suggest. When Belinda's Jewish suitor Barnabas, for instance, receives a "cold, calculating, business-style kind of a letter" from the Canadian coquette instead of the passionate declaration of love he expects, he approaches the text as both a reader and a participatory rewriter who tests the denotative limits of Belinda's "original" composition with a view to reshaping its contents to his own romantic ends. Reflected in what appears on the page as a kind of typographic confrontation between Belinda's words (represented in italics) and Barnabas's wordy infiltration (in regular typeface), this "readerly" interaction with the text proves more contestation than collaboration:

"*Dear Sir.*' I had rather, much rather, see my name in the place of *sir*. That is a very common way of commencing a note upon business, or to one about whose love or hatred we feel quite indifferent. She has no *particular* objections to me -- this sounds as if there were some thing, how small soever, in the way. If the dear creature loved me as I do her, she'd have no objections at all. *Attachment* -- the overflowing of love is but coldly expressed by this word. Why, I have an *attachment* for my brothers, for my species, for my home, for my country, but I love them not as I do thee, thou ever fleeting object of desire. *She knows nothing of man by experience!* I hope not, and yet if I were sane -- I'm not beside myself! no, I hope she does not.... She does not deign so much as to style herself *my lover* at the close!"

(*Belinda* 11)

Aggressively participatory in his uninvited and ungrinning interaction with Belinda's epistle, Barnabas as a narrativized reader within Holmes's parody invites readers

outside of the text not only to reconsider their own unquestioning acceptance of Belinda's language but to interrogate, too, the relationship between her writing and Barnabas's own rewriting, to engage the typographic seams laid before them on the page as both a challenge and an opportunity. How, ultimately, one approaches this exchange -- as passive recipient or as active and even aggressive participant -- depends upon a reading culture's willingness to test the limits and the implications of its own familiar interaction with texts being consumed.

How one approaches this early exchange in Holmes's novel ultimately influences, too, how one might approach a later and much more radically stylized love epistle written by one of Belinda's rival suitors, J.B. Swift. Discovered accidentally by another suitor, Rowland, who is himself a writer of love epistles, the letter is half-consumed by accidental contact with an open candle flame, leaving it in a condition that is reproduced within Holmes's novel as a fragment, as a once authentic and completed text that has been rendered incomplete and radically open to revision:

yourself,
to expedite the
as ever, nor shall I
can have no cause to repent,
and is unchanged; then shall we
infinitely more than any other person
because you, no doubt, have frequently,
; and are present in possession of at least one.
Though, I must confess, I was partly influenced in

Struggling "to supply what [is] wanting" (*Belinda* 50) in this letter, Rowland, like Barnabas, is positioned as both reader and rewriter of the text before him, prompted to take the remaining fragments of this story (of unrequited love? of passion rebuked?) and reconstruct them. Unlike his counterparts, though, Rowland is not forced in the process of his rewriting to reconfigure a once authentic trace and, by extension, authenticating discourse; on the contrary, it is the indeterminacy of the found letter that prompts his dialogic encounter with the text. But whereas

Barnabas actively engages his epistle from Belinda with a critical and renovative mind, Rowland blindly accepts Belinda's less than truthful interpretation of the gaps in the charred communication. Believing her love for him to be true, he never regards her conduct toward him as anything less than honourable and even goes so far as to assist her in duping others, thinking that in doing so he will solidify his hold on her affections. A naive reader who abdicates his opportunity to assess critically an incriminating document that might reveal to him another, less appealing truth about the woman he believes loves him, Rowland is openly complicit in the jilting that leads him to a stylized suicide attempt.

Put another way, Holmes creates through his self-conscious stylization of the familiar convention of the found letter the opportunity to locate within his own parody the opportunity for an open exploration of the ways of literature's making that refuses and even resists New World culture's algebrized impulse to strive toward the familiar and comforting, to settle on a ready-made narrative code that may or may not be an authentic representation of the realities experienced. Dialogizing the relationship between a text and a multivalent context that includes aggressively jealous writers, co-writers, and rewriters (not to mention destructive candle flames), Holmes's parody contains as part of its own stylizing gesture a piece of written material that openly tests and teases the mutability of the limits of language and of literature's many different rates of exchange. Like Despard's grin, Holmes's letter and similar stylizations are double-structured gestures that reflect on the challenges confronting the various readers narrativized within these stylized fictions. Inevitably, it is an invitation to the Canadian reader to confront his or her own preconceptions about reading and their reading culture's tendencies toward passive acceptance of a familiar or even formulaic applications of language and convention.

Although such parodic challenges to the limits of algebrized language and the habit of Canadian readers' passive and uncritical interaction with the text could and did appear at almost any point in these stylizing narratives, the "making strange" of endings acquired a special meaning to Canadian parodists, as it had for such important antecedents as Sterne and Fielding. Whether understood in terms that privilege a sense of Aristotelian integrity or completeness,⁹⁰ the notion of circularity,⁹¹ or the concordance-seeking tendencies of the human imagination,⁹² the ending of a nineteenth-century fiction has commonly been understood as a point of synthesis, a point at which contemporary readers could not only plan to discover but had actually come to expect that all the conflicts of the story could (and would) be reconciled and all disparate interests more or less harmonized.⁹³ It was seen as a point, in other words, that would bring to the reading experience a sense of "duration and meaning,"⁹⁴ a sense of closure which in turn will "decisively shape [the] sense of a novel as a whole"⁹⁵ and reinforce what Henry James described as the "geometry" of a narrative. That is, endings come to be understood as

⁹⁰ See, for instance, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968) and David Richter's *Fable's End* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978).

⁹¹ Marianna Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981), 13.

⁹² Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford UP, 1967).

⁹³ As Tomashevsky notes in his essay "Thematics," it is "usually at the end of the story all the conflicts are reconciled and the interests harmonized. If a situation containing the conflict furthers the progress of the story, then, since the coexistence of two conflicting forces is impossible, one must inevitably prevail. The later harmonious situation, which does not require further development, will neither evoke nor arouse the reader's anticipation. That is why the condition at the end of a work is so static. This static condition is called the ending" (Lemon and Reis 71).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁵ Torgovnick, 3-4.

reinscribing within a reading culture the certainty that a story "will lead on and on ... in the presumability *somewhere* of a convenient, of a visibly-appointed stopping-place."⁹⁶ As Anthony Trollope suggested in the final chapter of *The Warden* (1855), such formally schematized, and by this time familiar, endings brought with them the tacit guarantee that "the scattered threads" of familiar narratives would be collected and tied "into a seemly knot"⁹⁷ for the enjoyment of a reading culture and cultural imagination anticipating a sense of completion.

But as parodists from Cervantes onward have understood, when narrative techniques of closure collapse into inhibitive *expectations* of such "seemly knots" a reading culture may begin to stagnate. As Tomashevsky puts it, when the horizon of a fictional world becomes synonymous with an anticipated delivery of such seemly endings, fiction as a realm of imaginative potentialities is itself reduced over time to the perpetuation of a comforting but simplistic moral and ethical code that guarantees that "virtue is rewarded and vice punished."⁹⁸ Moreover, such narrative endings with their implicit guarantee of a knotting together of often divergent narrative threads are inherently fraught with contradictions, a fact that such a familiar knotting together attempt to erase. As parodists point out, "seemly knots" can always be untied by a narrator, by the reader's sudden remembering or questioning of unresolved events or "uncollected" characters, or by endings like that of Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* which terminates the quixotic wanderings of Mr.

⁹⁶ Henry James, "Preface to *Roderick Hudson*," *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James*, ed. Richard P. Blackmur (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 6.

⁹⁷ Anthony Trollope, *The Warden* (London: Oxford UP, 1963), 259.

⁹⁸ Lemon and Reis, 72.

Yorick with a sudden and disruptive severing off of the narrative thread.⁹⁹ Conventional points of resolution can always be stylized, parodists suggest, as defamiliar points that actively resist resolution, as a neat and seemly "knotting up" that is at the same time a defamiliarizing unknotting that invites a reader to consider again their own expectations of the reading experience. As Shklovsky eloquently describes that moment when readers come across such stylized "resolutions," it is "as if we found a trap door on a staircase where we had expected a landing."¹⁰⁰

Such stylized trap doors were not uncommon in Victorian Canadian parody. When De Mille moves his romantic adventure novel *The American Baron* toward closure, for instance, he does so through an appropriately contrived ending that brings all of the novel's romantic entanglements together through what J. Hillis Miller calls a "combing out of the tangled narrative threads so that they may be clearly seen, shining side by side, all mystery or complexity revealed."¹⁰¹ Appropriately, De Mille's parodic novel closes on a point of knotting harmony as the story's four couples are finally and remarkably reunited, a point at which true love is shown to overcome all obstacles *and* even familiar and long-standing Old World denominational rivalries are put aside: "There they stood -- there, on the spot where they had found the crisis of their fortunes; and as they stood there the two clergymen, Catholic and Protestant, slowly came out of the house" (*Baron* 132).

⁹⁹ The journey ends with this sentence: "So that when I stretch'd out my hand, I caught hold of the Fille de Chambre's--" With neither consummation nor punctuation, it is in many ways the prototypic parodic ending.

¹⁰⁰ "Sternes's Tristram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary" in Lemon and Reis, 39. In less eloquent prose, Bakhtin suggests that endings are the points in narratives at which the hetero-voicedness of parody collides with the implied limits of the "conventionally literary, conventionally monologic ending" (*Problems* 39).

¹⁰¹ J. Hillis Miller, "The Problematic of Ending in Narrative," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 33.1 (1978): 5.

With a knowing grin to the audience, though, De Mille effectively stylizes the apparent harmonizing conventionality of this marriage tableau with a playfully reflexive chapter title that acknowledges that this is, indeed, an "Astonishing Way of Concluding an Adventure" (*Baron* 130).¹⁰²

Other Canadian parodists turned to less subtle, though nonetheless stylizing strategies for "making strange" a novel reader's expectations of the familiar and "seemly knot" of narrative closure. As the *Junior Pickwickians's* trip to North America draws to a close, for instance, the narrator preempts the anticipatory moments of his final scene with a brief reflection. With one Pickwickian already the victim of a boating accident and the three remaining members approaching the roller-coaster at Hanlan's Point, the reader is asked to reconsider for a moment the algebrized language that too often accompanies and limits the imaginative range of such endings:

As we draw nearer the frequent repetition of 'accident,' 'terrible disaster,' and similar phrases strike our ears. Let us not lengthen out the agony. The car upon which the three Pickwickians had taken their places had jumped the track, and Messrs. Coddleby, Crinkle, and Yubbits were instantly killed. Mr. Bramley's body was in due time recovered from its watery grave, and the remains of the four heroes,

¹⁰² See also De Mille's playful, congratulatory ending to *The Lady of the Ice*. Following a lengthy and detailed chapter title that begins, appropriately, "Grand Conclusion," Macrorie makes the following observation:

On reading over the above heading, I find it so very comprehensive that it leaves nothing more for me to say. I will therefore make my bow, and retire from the scene, with my warmest congratulations to the reader at reaching

The End

When Edward Hunt moves to close his "A Tale of Ter-rew Love Triumphant" he does so through a similarly self-conscious incorporation of the obligatory wedding scene: "we proceed by a graceful and easy transition to our wedding, which took place in a venerable and sacred edifice filled with aisles and other architectural luxuries. Some writers would have given you a mere marriage in a church, but we like to bring on something *recherche* and [flip]-glassy while we are about it. It costs no more, and it looks better" (5.6 527)

who have so long (and we fear so wearisomely) occupied the attention of our readers, were reverently returned to their sorrowing friends in England. Thus ended their memorable trip to America.

Having undercut the climax of his own narrative with the misplacement of key words and phrases ("accident," "terrible disaster"), the narrator hints, too, that having his heroes expire at this exact point in the narrative was less a matter of plot continuity or even narrative convenience than it was a response to waning reader interest. The *Pickwickians* have grown wearisome to the audience; therefore, their stories must end.

Despite this unseemly knot of closure, the narrative journey of the reader is, in fact, not yet complete. The literal ending of this serialized adventure (and of the *Pickwickians's* lives) is glossed by an authoritative "Note by the Editor" that not only chastizes the anonymous author for the heavy-handedness of his narrative touch but reiterates that the standard by which such tales will be judged is that standard being set by an increasingly sophisticated and demanding Canadian readership whose expectations have come to contribute significantly to shaping both the text in hand and the reading culture within which such a tale is consumed:

[Note by the Editor. -- While we are willing that this serial should end sometime, we cannot congratulate the author upon the "literary finish" of his work. There is too much of sudden death to meet the requirement of true art, and yet it cannot be denied that this is the most effectual way in which the four nuisances could be abated. It has come to our knowledge that the author of the "*Pickwickians*" was threatened with some horrible fate at the hands of a determined set of our subscribers, unless he at once let up on this story. Perhaps this accounts for the abruptness of its conclusion.]¹⁰³

¹⁰³ *Grip* 28.19 (7 May 1887): 4-5. A similarly reflexive gloss is appended, too, to Hunt's "Tale." Having reiterated the fact that his narrative meets the criteria set by readers of the day, and in some cases exceeds them, the narrator makes a perfunctory (and parodic) gesture toward a more conventional point of departure, what Eichenbaum calls a sense of *Nachgeschichte* or "after-history" of the principals

Similarly, when readers of "Claude Coursol" come across a familiar scene during which two characters fall in love, they are forced to confront their own role as consumers in the perpetuation of such convention-laden interactions when they are presented with both a catalogue of adjectives ("madly, desperately, deliriously, hyperbolically, metaphysically, superfluously in love") and an equally impressive list of metaphors describing the moment: the couples find themselves "seated in the swift flying locomotive of an all absorbing passion, or a high pressure steamboat of consuming love, or a self binding reaping machine of ecstatic joy, or an electric motor of the tramway of bliss." Having "laid bare" such algebrized descriptions by stylizing them as an exaggerated catalogue, the writer-narrator turns away from his text with a proposal that at once points to the cultural and market forces that connect the reader to the construction of a narrative burdened by such cliché-ridden constructions: "Dear reader, as you have paid your money, you may take your choice of all these beautiful and timely similes."¹⁰⁴

Considered cumulatively, then, these parodists engage stylized readers, double-structured endings, and metanarrative ruptures in the seemingly contradictory ways that parody understood as dialectic implies they would. On the one hand, these familiar narrative strategies serve the parodist well in securing an audience defined by the expectations he expects them to bring to his text. Replete with the requisite number of thrilling scenes and troubled love affairs, stereotyped characters, and appropriately knotted endings, these are texts that allow those New World readers wishing to remain well within the limits of the familiar to do so. Indeed, contemporary reviews of a number of the texts studied here suggest exactly how successful these parodists were in manipulating the double-structuredness of

of the story: "And so our hero and heroine lived happily ever after, and on several occasions (when it was absolutely necessary,) -- even longer" (5.6 527).

¹⁰⁴ *Grip* 29.20 (12 November 1887): 7.

their stylized fictions so as to function well within the limit of Victorian readers' expectations. As "one of North America's most popular and financially successful fiction writers of the 1860s and 1870s,"¹⁰⁵ and with a keen sense of what captures the attention of a readership flooded by story papers and cheap reprints, May Agnes Fleming, for instance, often saw her novels compared to the immensely popular works of Mrs. Southworth and Miss Braddon, with at least one paper, the *New York Telegram*, going so far as to claim that she "occupied on this side of the Atlantic a position akin to that won by Miss Braddon in England."¹⁰⁶ De Mille's novels were similarly praised,¹⁰⁷ though most reviewers were inclined to draw connections on points of "interest in plot, variety of adventure, and graphic delineation of character" with the equally popular novels of Wilkie Collins and Eugene Sue.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, though, these parodists understood that the same algebrized conventions and cultural or critical presumptions and expectations that might be attached to their fictions must also "be treated as a stumbling block" to opening up the horizons of a Canadian reading culture, as "prejudices which must be shaken"¹⁰⁹ by the parodist through double-structured appeals and unseemly unknottings. As more than one astute critic suggested of De Mille's novels, and what can be said of all of the parodies explored here, these fictions must be seen as both successful and popular works *and* "as a series of jokes on [and for] the

¹⁰⁵ McMullen, *Silenced Sextet* 52

¹⁰⁶ Cited in McMullen, 80.

¹⁰⁷ Anon., "Recent Literature [Rev. of *The Living Link*]" 118.

¹⁰⁸ Anon., "A Nova-Scotian Author," *AR* (25 October 1867): [1]. See also MacMechan, 414; and Pierce, *An Outline of Canadian Literature* 166.

¹⁰⁹ Rose, *Parody//Metafiction* 115.

public,"¹¹⁰ novels that "give [readers] a double laugh -- one at the folly of the book, and another at [their] own folly in being interested in it."¹¹¹ Rather than resolve their arguments toward the usually monologic and increasingly institutionalized denunciation of those uncultivated readers who were seen to be degrading themselves and the common culture through a "mere voracious consumption of books, which will no more nourish the mind or heart than quantities of undigested food will nourish the body,"¹¹² these parodists invite the now answerable New World reader into a new relationship with the books they chose to read and with the whole of the reading culture in which they function. In contrast to those Canadian critics who saw in their often self-proclaimed status of landedness the obligation to protect what they considered to be a naive or incompetent New World readership from the corrupting influences of popular novels, parodists, working in these still popular genres, insist that local readers possess far more than a functional literacy.

As theorists and critics interested in parody tend to agree, parodists assume in their readers an important and complex set of competencies,¹¹³ including what has been called "generic or rhetorical competence" which assumes in readers a degree of awareness of the ways by which preexisting narrative structures, recurrent stock characters, and what Despard calls "certain situations" come to shape their

¹¹⁰ Archibald MacMechan, "Letter to the Editor," *The Week* 10.2 (9 December 1892): 36-37.

¹¹¹ Cited in Crockett, 138.

¹¹² Clark, "Books and Reading" 163.

¹¹³ The most basic need, as critics like Hutcheon and Rose agree, is linguistic competence, the implicit knowledge of the grammar of literature by which a reader is able "to comprehend what is *implied*, as well as what is actually stated" within the hetero-voiced discourse of parody. Given that the specific techniques employed by a parodist in a given text can extend to include everything from irony and exaggeration to more subtle strategies like substitution and condensation, such a competence is clearly essential" (Hutcheon, *Theory* 94; Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Postmodern* 79).

expectations and ideals within a reading culture. In defamiliarizing the literary conventions and cultural presumptions that have traditionally hindered the evolutions of a reading culture, the parodist exposes not only the conventions themselves to the pressures of defamiliarization but also the reading assumptions and habits that have in no small way perpetuated their algebrization. In approaching these stylized reflections of the limits of their own cultural assumptions the readers are invited into a relationship with the text in which they might think critically about their own practices and expectations when consuming novels. They are offered a chance, in other words, to become more discriminating consumers of all texts.

Herein lies the dialectical structure of parody, for it is through this double-structured gesture that readers come to experience in new ways the limits of the familiar and the renovative terrain of the defamiliar; as Eichenbaum notes, "[p]arody is a road that leads to something else."¹¹⁴ If parodic stylization does, indeed, lead one to and beyond the horizons of familiar literary convention and readerly assumptions, it is a journey that "often begins," as Walter Nash asserts, from "the allusive point," the multivalent textual marker that becomes "one of the keys or signposts to interpretation" of the parodic refunctioning.¹¹⁵ Even the most concise parody explored in this study is never constructed in such a way as to allow the prospect of recognition to depend solely on the quantity or quality of the features retained from a single model. Like the works of Cervantes, Sterne, and Fielding, the fiction of Canadian parodists rarely if ever points its readers towards a single text; rather, the intertextual frames of reference engaged are complex and often labyrinthine, extending to include glances not only to other texts but to the

¹¹⁴ Eichenbaum, *O. Henry* 27.

¹¹⁵ Walter Nash, *The Language of Humour: Style and Technique in Comic Discourse* (London: Longman, 1985), 80, 79.

heteroglot discourses of a given culture which can be appropriated, combined, condensed, or rewritten.

By definition potentially both light and mirror of all textual models and cultural discourses familiar within a given culture at a given moment, parody provides, and indeed invites, readers "to make associations between texts not normally placed together"¹¹⁶ and to explore the intellectual, imaginative, and literary possibilities in doing so. Recognizing the familiar as it is set against a defamiliarizing background, the reader is faced with what Eco suggests is a loss of "the security of the familiar without knowing for sure the precise nature of the innovation" that has made such parodic stylizations possible. Promoting "the casting aside of old assumptions and preconceptions," parody directs the reader "toward an attempt to comprehend the new situation with which he is confronted." The need to decipher that which confronts a reader of parody gives the individual a chance to formulate and test a new, and often hitherto unexplored "deciphering capacity," to "formulate the unformulated." As he concludes: "it is only when we have outstripped our preconceptions and left the shelter of the familiar that we are in position to gather new experiences"¹¹⁷ and to move toward what Ingarden (borrowing Husserl's phrase) calls a new "double horizon" that invites a reader to recognize both those works already read and those that have not yet been read.¹¹⁸

Complicating the doubleness of this horizon even farther are the degrees to which each text announces its affiliations: some texts retain a large number of obvious features that are clearly marked or named (suggesting specific narrative

¹¹⁶ Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Postmodern* 77.

¹¹⁷ Umberto Eco, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1974), 29, 58-9, 294, 290.

¹¹⁸ Ingarden, 103-4.

models to be adopted or used as a point of comparison), others incorporate fewer or more subtle features less clearly marked. For instance, when De Mille dedicates a number of chapters in *The American Baron* to Scone Dacres's recounting of the story of his marriage to Arethusa Wiggins, a "conceited, tetchy, suspicious, imperious, domineering, selfish, cruel, hard-hearted and malignant young vixen" (*Baron* 34) who attacks her husband with a penknife, beats him with a riding-whip, and then torches the family estate, he is assuming that readers will recognize the similarity to the relationship between Mr. Rochester and Grace Poole in *Jane Eyre* (1847). But when Dacres and Wiggins are reunited as part of the marriage tableau on which the multi-plotted adventure tale closes, the reader is also asked to recognize the complexity of De Mille's stylizing of his Brontean model. This dialogized subplot has collapsed along with the elegantly contrived adventure story within which it is framed into a harmonious world that breaks significantly with the active traces of expectation imported from the model text.

Similar assumptions of a relatively sophisticated Canadian audience shapes Holmes's *Belinda*. Assuming that most readers will be familiar with the two most obvious models upon which his parody is modelled -- Richardson's *Clarissa* and Pope's "Rape of the Lock" -- Holmes begins even from his title to orientate readers toward a variety of other texts from other reading cultures which readers might engage as points of comparison with his own. Giving his novel the full title *Belinda; or The Rivals*, Holmes points readers, for instance, towards Sheridan's play *The Rivals* (1775), a comedy of manners that turns, appropriately, on the courtship misadventures of Lydia Languish, a young and beautiful heiress who has been raised amidst a culture of romantic novels. Another naive reader who, like MacGeorge's Fanny Newlove, models her real-life courtships after those in the sentimental novels she reads, Lydia is, like Belinda, burdened by an abundance of suitors, a plethora of love epistles, and a culturally inappropriate sense of courtship in "real" life. But just

as Belinda's sexual exploits and callous treatment of those around her are an obvious parody of Clarissa's virtuous purity, so, too, is it a refunctioning of Lydia's less virtuous naivete; as the reader soon comes to realize, Belinda Howard is neither innocent nor naive, though the story of her life is marked by distant affiliations with heroines who are. Having invoked three intertextual frames, Holmes continues to punctuate his story with marked and unmarked references to texts and authors far removed from the cultural milieu of his Canadian coquette. Linking his tale with such diverse archival models as Byron ("Maid of Athens"), Shakespeare (*Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*), and Milton (*Paradise Lost*), he not only invites his readers to consider the traces of these texts that may either complement, parry, or contradict his own story but assumes that they have the competencies, the sophistication, and the willingness to do so.¹¹⁹

Dialogizing the distances between a model text, its reception within Victorian Canadian culture, and the stylizations of their own parodies, these parodists test not only the limits of the familiar but the horizons of the reading culture within which such texts ultimately functioned and were so securely hierarchized. Their parodies invite readers to broaden and shift their expectations to take into account the new experiences of reading brought to the fore through the interaction with the parodic stylization; never exclusive or admonitory, parody encourages readers to believe that what they are reading is already part of a reading culture that can be readily expanded to include those reading experiences and texts

¹¹⁹ Similarly, when Fanny Newlove takes flight on the arm of Count Von Hoaxenstein/Cornelius Crooks, MacGeorge suggests not another popular gothic as the model for her father's outpouring of paternal grief, but infers other intertextual frames that the immediate properties of "The Purser's Cabin" does not directly elucidate, comparing his outpouring to that of Macduff "when informed that all his fair chickens had been torn from him at one fell swoop by the 'hell-kite' Macbeth?" (5.6 541). Having taken as its most obvious models such texts as *Don Quixote* and *Northanger Abbey*, this parody refracts every character and every situation once again, this time through yet another intertextual frame (Shakespearean) with which the point of comparison is less clear.

with which they are familiar as well as those with which they could become familiar. In opening these paths to the unfamiliar, parodists also reflect some of the contemporary distinctions between the popular and the archival and invite their readers to take into account the social, collective, and individual diversities of the Canadian reading audience.

At the same time, what we find in these parodies is an illumination of the sometimes obsessive search for an exclusive and landed centre around which many critics hoped and believed that a Canadian culture would shape itself. Recognized as popular and entertaining works of fiction by readers of the day, these parodies render visible to a broad audience the limitations of a culture in which reading no longer leads to an ongoing dialectical reconsideration of its own relationship to a world in which edification and entertainment, tradition and innovation, and established and emerging cultural identities and value-systems must find a way to coexist. Rather than cultivating a monologic belief in an elitist New World culture of reading entrenched firmly in the Arnoldian confidence that comforted many of their contemporaries, Canadian writers who engaged the stylizing grins and glances of parody's double-structuredness did so with a willingness to reconsider rather than consolidate the sense of a New World reading culture. With an awareness of what was being read in Canada, they also reveal a faith and confidence in what could and would be read within a Canadian milieu. Consistent with the sense of parody as a dialogue, these stylizations open rather than close inferential and intertextual paths to the reader, paths that invite and even promote other competences and other ways of reading.

But as the image of the authorial figure of Cervantes reminds us as he sits struggling to write a preface that will appeal to contemporary readers raised on expectations of wonderful invention, elegant style, and substantial evidence of learning and erudition, the anxieties associated with the cultural activity of reading

are never far distanced from those associated with the cultural activity of writing. For "an emerging nation struggling toward self-definition and both seeking and creating its identity through its literature,"¹²⁰ writing was, indeed, an activity charged with the potential to function as both the product *and* the creator of a collective sense of national identity. An integral component in the process of national development, writing was seen in Victorian Canada to illuminate the aspirations and ideals of a nascent national imagination. It was also burdened with preconceptions and limitations of a culture fixated with consciously constructing pieces of a national culture, and creating a sense of history in which to live.

¹²⁰ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* xiii.

CHAPTER THREE

**"PAPER, PENS, AND INK":
PARODY AND THE BURDEN OF A NATIONAL CULTURE**

Chapter Three

"Paper, Pens, and Ink": Parody and the Burden of a National Culture

As James Douglas observed in 1875, the questions and anxieties surrounding the reading habit in Victorian Canada were clearly understood by critics and thinkers of the day as intimately connected to those anxieties which arose when considering the writing habits of the young country. "Now, if we are not a reading people," Douglas observed, "we are sure not to be a literature-producing people. For writing is an art only to be acquired by long and painstaking apprenticeship, and an art practised therefore only where there are readers to appreciate and reward it."¹ Douglas was an astute observer, for if Victorian critics were anxious about what and how Canadians should consume as readers in order to guarantee social harmony and prosperity in the new Dominion, they were equally concerned with questions about who would produce the stories that would satiate what Frye suggests has long been

¹ Douglas, "The Intellectual Progress of Canada" 467-68. See also W.A. Foster, *Canada First; or Our New Nationality* (Toronto: Adam, Stevenson, 1871) and "Sarepta" [Edward Burrough Brownlow], "Correspondence: More Prose Wanted," *The Week* 6.31 (12 July 1889): 507. As Foster confirms, there was a solid belief amongst Victorian Canadians in the inevitability of "an intellectual vivification" of the country, particularly given the "indications that the native mind is at present awakening from the lethargy which has hitherto shrouded and dwarfed it. This is expressed in many ways, and is most observable in the large reading constituency that exists in the country, in the influence which has given impulse to the publishing and importing of the Book Trade, and in the recognized necessity for a Canadian magazine -- a vehicle of native thought and culture" [publisher's note].

the "unquenchable desire of the Canadian cultural public to identify" and to celebrate its distinctiveness "through its literature."² Like Theodore Unwin's hopeful revisioning of the paternity of Belinda's child, Victorian Canadians had a deep desire, in other words, to establish a kind of narrative genealogy that would serve a "synthesizing consciousness" in the present and as "a maker of concords between past, present, and future."³

As a vital participant in the full range of discursive exchange that takes meaning and shape within the stories of a particular historical moment, parody is unambiguously in and of the anxious world to which Douglas alludes. Like *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*, many of the Canadian parodies discussed here were intensely self-conscious narratives that irradiate the concealed fissures underlying the activity of narrating the Dominion into cultural consciousness. Shining a comic torch on the activities and decisions, presumptions and preconceptions that shape, and are shaped by, Victorian Canada's determined construction of a national literary spirit, Canadian parodists set out, as the narrator of the parodic novelette "Eva Head, A Naughtical Romance: Of Beauty, Blood, and Booty" (1869) tells readers, to show "[t]he ordinary reading public the disadvantages and difficulties under which an author labours" in the New Dominion. These are narratives, that is, that reveal the struggles and decisions of writers forced "to give heed to all the barks from 'asses' souls in lions' skin,' which assail [them] at every point"⁴ from within a culture in transition, pointing out, to rephrase Fielding's observation in the epilogue

² Frye, "Conclusion" 823, 840. See also Kroetsch's often cited observation that Canadians have long struggled with the feeling that "we haven't got an identity until somebody tells our story. The fiction makes us real" (*creation: Robert Kroetsch, James Bacque, Pierre Gravel* [Toronto: new press, 1970], 63).

³ Kermode, 56.

⁴ Anon., "'Eva Head, A Naughtical Romance: Of Beauty, Blood, and Booty," *Diogenes* (10 September 1869): 146.

to chapter four of *Tom Jones* (1749), that there is much more involved in the composition of discursive prose that will tell a nation's story than "paper, pens, and ink, together with the manual capacity of using them."

Published in the popular *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, Douglas's reflections were particularly well timed. With the federal government in the process of replacing the 1868 Act Respecting Copyrights with a new and in retrospect progressive Act (38 Vict., cap 88), and with the International Copyright Act (1886) on the horizon, Canadian "literature-producing" was entering a new phase in its cyclical and somewhat hesitant history. With great strides being made in securing a literate home audience, and with a gradually stabilizing technical and capital infrastructure providing a base upon which an indigenous publishing industry might begin to grow,⁵ the most pressing concern that continued to trouble critics was that Canadian writers, and Canadian fiction writers in particular, had still done little to establish themselves as the voice of the young nation. "[T]here is very little to say" about Canadian literary novels or romances laments Bourinot in *The Intellectual Development*, "for though there have been many attempts at [a native] fiction, the performance has, on the whole, been weak in the extreme." Citing only three examples of what he considered to be "works of merit" produced by "native" fiction-

⁵ Until the economic depression of the late 1870s, which triggered among other things a resurgence of protectionist tariff policies in the United States, there were quantifiable indications that the business side of Canadian publishing was poised for a period of significant growth. From 1851 to 1861, for instance, census records show nearly a quintupling of English Canadians who registered their primary trade as publisher (from 9 to 43), with those registered in the allied trades growing significantly as well: the number of printers more than doubled during the same period (436 to 895) and the number of bookbinders increased by more than half (51 to 86). By 1880-81 these numbers had increased again, with the occupation census for Ontario alone listing over three thousand publishers and printers (the numbers had been officially combined by this time) and more than five hundred bookbinders. From the optimistically high levels of this period, though, the numbers declined dramatically throughout the depression until the mid-1890s when economic renewal and some stability in the copyright and tariff policies allowed for a sustained and more controlled growth to begin again.

makers -- John Richardson's *Wacousta* (1832), Jean-Talon L'Esperance's *Le Bastonnais* (1877), and William Kirby's *Le Chien d'Or* (1877) -- Bourinot observes that "during the long interval of nearly forty years between these works, not a single romance worth reading was published in Canada. These three books, however, are written with spirit, and recall the masterpieces of fiction." Turning his attention to what he considered more popular (as distinct from literary) forms of fiction, he appears even less enthusiastic, pointing to the works of the now-forgotten Louisa Murray and the early novels of De Mille as Canada's lone successes, though even the latter's novels tended to "decline" in Bourinot's opinion into somewhat "slavish imitations of the ingenious plots of Wilkie Collins and his school."⁶

In significant ways, the arguments forwarded by Bourinot and his contemporaries throughout the late 1880s and early 1890s proved in significant ways to be only minor variations of those forwarded by a number of prominent and foresightful predecessors. The material spirit continued to be cited as a major impediment to the production of a native literature. Concerned with the devaluation of writing within a culture that had long felt more confident in assessing and promoting material goals and gains, late Victorian critics reiterated longstanding arguments that declared Canada's land-based economy "highly unfavourably to literary progression" given that "[a]ll the strength of mental invention and assiduity is devoted to the advancement of pecuniary interests"⁷ and resource management. That "notable historians, poets and [novelists] have not largely appeared" should come as little surprise, such arguments advanced, given

⁶ Bourinot, *The Intellectual Development* 107-108. Curiously, Bourinot's opinion of *Wacousta* would change dramatically by the time *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness* was published in 1893. In the later book, *Wacousta* is "at best a spirited imitation of Cooper, and has not retained the interest it attracted at a time when the American novelist had created a taste for exaggerated pictures of Indian life and forest scenery" (27).

⁷ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country" 56.

that few men had either "the time or the opportunity" to become "patrons of literature"⁸ in a country where "the plough proved a mightier engine than the pen."⁹

Acknowledging that Canada's "history for the past half century has been the record of material progress" and that "[f]orests must be cut down, cities must be built, the land and sea must pay their tribute to industry, before men have the leisure or ability to give attention to [the art of] letters," these critics continued to press the argument that Canadian culture must move beyond what they saw as a pioneer fixation with material progress. Celebrating the fact that the average Canadian settler had even by mid-century "surmounted [their] early difficulties, and built up for [themselves] a country whose wealth and vitality [they] have every reason to be proud,"¹⁰ the critics suggested that the time had come to attend with equal vigour to establishing the nation as a land of writing people. The time had clearly come for Canadians to consider the question of how to "improve [their] surroundings and cultivate the arts that refine and adorn"¹¹ a truly independent culture, to look toward a future in which native "writers with *noble ideals*" would skirt "the undermining influence of a debasing materialism"¹² in order to add significantly to the strength and future prosperity of a young country.

Considered at once "the watchword of national union" and an eloquent "counterpoise" to "the tendency to sectionalism and disintegration" long perceived to

⁸ I. Allen Jack, "Acadiensis," *The Week* 8.28 (12 June 1891): 443.

⁹ George Stewart, "Literature in Canada," *Canadian Leaves: History, Art, Science, Literature, Commerce. A Series of New Papers Read Before the Canadian Club of New York* (New York: Napoleon Thompson, 1887), 131.

¹⁰ Bourinot, "Canadian Materials" 200.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Agnes M. Machar [Fidelis], "Views of Canadian Literature," *The Week* 11.17 (23 March 1874): 391.

be a "political weakness of Canada,"¹³ the landed activity of writing a national literature was seen as an essential and vital component in negotiating what was seen to be a period of transition, or "plastic stage"¹⁴ of cultural development. It was a volatile period, critics remained convinced, during which the "[c]ustoms and institutions and modes of thought and feeling which will have much to do in shaping [the nation's] destiny for all future time"¹⁵ would be established. Providing the country with an inherently centrifugal and intrinsically moral authority that could be persuasive and pervasive rather than strident and localized, this idealized sense of a national literature was seen as a harmonizing influence in a time of potential sociocultural strife, a means by which "not to irritate, but to calm the public mind -- allay existing dissensions -- reconcile and unite differing parties -- and prepare the way for the important business of ... public improvement, worthy of our race and our country."¹⁶

Searching for eloquent and literary expressions of the essence of Canada's intellectual life that might provide the bonds of national unity and serve as guides for a national energy,¹⁷ critics looked for stories that Holmes had earlier described as being of this place, stories that would become the manifestation of a certain

¹³ Dewart, *ix-x*.

¹⁴ J.E. Wells, "Canadian Culture," *CMNR* 8.6 (December 1875): 460. Wells suggests that it is during such a stage that "every new contact and association without, and every new thought and volition and impulse within ... is little by little gravitating and remodelling those changing features" of the nation.

¹⁵ Dewart, *x*.

¹⁶ Anon., "Notice to the Public," *MR* 1.1 (January 1841): [80].

¹⁷ Dewart, *x*. As such critics as Fee (1981) and Corse (1997) suggest, the connection between nation and literature in Canada originated primarily with early nineteenth-century theories of nationalism, particularly those of "the German Romantic nationalists who promulgated the now accepted idea that literature is defined by its national affiliation and should embody the unique characteristics of a nation" (Corse, 7).

readily identifiable national character. As McGee had emphasized as early as 1858, "[e]very 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." Moreover, he warned, "[i]f precautions are not taken to secure this end, the distinctive character and features of a people must disappear."¹⁸ So essential was the idea of a national literature to the formation of a national character that the thought "of a country possessing important political institutions and a political status that is constantly becoming higher, and commanding the attention and respect of other nations, and yet, destitute of a literature or literary men of note" was to many observers indicative of "a decided lack"¹⁹ or absence tainting the cultural geography of Canada.

To some commentators, this perceived dearth of a native literary culture was a symptom of a deeper want of "that warmth of national sentiment without which, no matter how favourable other conditions may be, a great imaginative literature does not spring up."²⁰ W.D. Lighthall was among those critics who remained adamant in his calls for a revitalizing level of patriotism that would spark a vital corpus of national writing. "Shall we recognize that we have a *people to make?*" he challenged native writers in his contribution to *The Week's* 1894 series of "Views of Canadian Literature." "Shall our young men each make this his personal matter and ask himself what his people need in order to be more united, purer, higher in national solidity and progress, clearer in national ideal?"²¹ The fact that

¹⁸ McGee, "Protection for Canadian Literature," *NE* 1.144 (24 April 1858): [2]. See also Dewart, *ix*.

¹⁹ Longley, "Canadian Literature" 257.

²⁰ Roberts, *History* 422-23.

²¹ Lighthall, "Views of Canadian Literature," *The Week* 11.18 (30 March 1894): 416.

some people were seen to be "perpetually deluding themselves with the idea that there is something magic about the literature of a country; that it is a mysterious thing and dependent upon some wonderful agencies and impulses which cannot be seen or defined" was understood as a key impediment to the development of a distinctly Canadian writing culture. "The literature of the country is the thought and essential outgrowth of the national life," Longley concurred, and it "becomes great and heroic when the people of the country become great and heroic."²² As Lighthall concludes, once Canada develops "real patriots, then a literature will follow," since history has proven that "the burning word will accompany the burning deed."²³

To other critics, though, this relationship between burning words and burning deeds was understood differently. There can be "no influence more potent than literature and the literary" in "nationalizing of the Dominion," Adam noted in 1887, and

[n]othing will better contribute to the welding process, or be more efficient in bringing about homogeneity, and the consolidating influences the country so urgently needs, than a healthy native literature and an ardent national sentiment. With these, and due encouragement to their exercise, we may see the various Provinces of the Dominion knit more closely together in the bonds of a common nationality, and sectionalism and disruptive influences dispelled as things of alien growth.²⁴

There was "little doubt that patriotism and national sentiment might be largely fostered by the literary spirit," like thinking critics affirmed, "particularly were it

²² Longley, "Views of Canadian Literature," *The Week* 11.17 (23 March 1894): 392.

²³ Lighthall, "Views of Canadian Literature" 416.

²⁴ Adam, "Outline History of Canadian Literature," *An Abridged History of Canada*, William H. Withrow (Toronto: William Briggs, 1887), 184.

given that encouragement which the Canadian intellect should now extend to it."²⁵ As an anonymous reviewer succinctly summarized near century's end: "The novels that inspire Canadians with a love for Canadian nature, Canadian life, Canadian people, or Canadian civilization, are just as important as the patriotic hymn, or the soul-stirring address or sermon."²⁶

Regardless of the stance taken toward the relationship between burning deeds and burning words, the majority of Victorian Canadian critics agreed that one had only to glance across the Atlantic to understand "the propriety and importance of making efforts in this country to build up a distinctive National Literature, and of fostering a spirit of literary zeal among [the] people" of a nation. "Indeed," as Longley suggests, "a study and contemplation of what has been achieved in other and older countries ought to stimulate us to seek, by vigorous efforts, to invest our literature with a brilliance and a glory which shall make our new nation famous and respected throughout the world."²⁷ Seeing in the Old World considerable evidence of the connection between a national writing and a distinctive national character, Canadian critics promoted the benefits of a similar attentiveness at home. Popular models abounded for native writers to consider, most notably the works of such historical novelists as Maria Edgeworth²⁸ and Walter Besant,²⁹ writers whose

²⁵ Adam, "Nationalism" 119.

²⁶ Anon., "Novels in General and New," *CM* 11.2 (June 1898): 176.

²⁷ Longley, "Canadian Literature" 258-9.

²⁸ See, for instance, William Howitt, "Eminent Literary Ladies," *Calliopean* 1.21 (1848): 165-66 and M. Algon Kirby, "Maria Edgeworth," *The Week* 15.30 (5 June 1896): 710-11.

²⁹ Besant's *Such a Good Man* (January-April 1878) and *The Monks of Thelema* (April 1878-April 1879) were serialized in *CMNR*; see also Anon., "Rev. of *The Monks of Thelema*," *CMNR* 2 (May 1879): 628-29; Anon., "Fifty Years Ago," *The Week* 5.52 (7 November 1888): 832; Anon., "Rev. of *The New Martyr of the Desert*," *CMM* 32.04 (October 1890): 334-38.

books brought to Canadian readers stories of the Old World "ideals of romantic chivalry ... and patriotism royal and noble" that might be replicated in the new land.³⁰ As numerous critics have documented, though, it was the influence of Walter Scott that was felt most deeply in Victorian Canada.³¹ Seen as an exemplar of what Goldwin Smith would call "The Seven Lamps of Fiction," Scott and his novels were especially revered by the landed critics of Canada as models of what they promoted as the "impartiality" demanded of the truly national literary figure. Seen to be free from prejudice, political partisanship, and the "personal vanities, favouritisms, fanaticisms and antipathies" that might otherwise taint the chronicle of a nation's literary character, Scott, along with such "kings of pure and healthy fiction" as Shakespeare and Cervantes, was seen as the most viable and impartial model to "guide the steps of the writer of fiction" in Canada toward a standard of authorial disinterestedness which alone could produce authentic representations of the Canadian spirit "brave, pure and true."³² Important, too, was the fact that Scott's fictions were granted a cultural authority in Canada that hinged on a

³⁰ Elihu Burritt, "The Reality and Mission of Ideal Characters," *CMNR* (February 1879): 152.

³¹ See, for instance, Gerson, "The Long Shadow of Sir Walter Scott" (*A Purer Taste*, 67-79); Kuester, "Parodies of History" (*Framing Truths*, 24-43); Winnifred M. Bogaard's "Sir Walter Scott's Influence on Nineteenth Century Canadian Historians and Historical Novelists," *Scott and His Influence: The Papers of the Aberdeen Scott Conference, 1982*, ed. J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Assoc. for Scottish Literary Studies, 1983), 443-54; and Robert L. McDougall, "The Literary Influence of Sir Walter Scott in Canada," *Totems: Essays on the Cultural History of Canada* (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1990), 9-22. More general discussions of the traditions of the historical novel in Canada, notably Dennis Duffy's *Sounding the Iceberg: An Essay on Canadian Historical Novels* (1986), explore the significance of various Scott models in relation to the writing of such later novelists as Timothy Findley and Rudy Wiebe.

³² Goldwin Smith, "The Seven Lamps of Fiction," *CJS* 76 (July 1872): 347-51. Originally delivered as an address at Toronto's Mechanic's Institute as part of a national celebration of the centenary of Scott's birth, Smith, adapting his title from Ruskin's *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), lays out in his paper a septet of principles that are to be used as a guide for fiction writing in Canada. In each case, Smith turns to Scott as an exemplar of the literary virtue presented.

tripartite identification: they were at once models of authoritative impartiality, popular examples of the benefits to be derived from the prominence within a culture of an authorizing historical-mindedness (that is, the power of an imagination connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher), and these were textual models that were undeniably literary.

This latter point warranted particular attention from many writers. As LeSueur cautioned young native *litterateurs*, maintaining the highest standards of literariness was especially important in a New World culture in which the lure of what he called "the opiate of popularity" was omnipresent:

The world is ever at the elbow of the man of talent, urging, tempting him to devote to its service -- but not in the highest sense -- the gifts at his command. A thousand voices cry: "Amuse us, enliven us, startle us, flatter us, or, if you like, satirize us; but in some way or other excite and please us, and you shall not have to wait for your recompense. We will pay you cash down, and leave no debt for posterity to settle. Your name and fame shall be in all the newspapers, and if criticism ventures to attack you we will laugh it out of countenance; for are we not the great public, and can we not protect our favourites?"

Warnings of the implications of dealing with "the world" resonated in the culture of Victorian Canada. Having yielded "to such solicitations," LeSueur explained, "many a man has abandoned art and truth, and devoted himself to the ignoble task of gratifying tastes which he recognized as frivolous or vicious. He has given the world what it ordered, allowed it to dictate what he should write or speak or create, and he has had his reward in popularity and pay."³³ Openly accused "of pandering to [a] popular taste" rather than setting a distinctive set of values and communal myths

³³ LeSueur, "The Intellectual Life" 325-26.

"upon a height up to which the people may be invited to climb,"³⁴ these less-than-literary writers were tainted by an "undisturbed satisfaction"³⁵ in garnering support from a readership that must "have neither taste in regard to appearance of a book, nor judgment as to literary value"³⁶ and which looks to "have its new novel as regularly as the Scotchman must have his porridge, the Englishman his egg and toast, and the American his ice-water."³⁷ The genres which appealed to the dissipated tastes of the world -- notably sensational novels of adventure, romance, or intrigue -- were -- as I have shown in the preceding chapter -- seen by these critics as having little connection with literature in general or, more importantly, with the stories that might reflect the geocultural realities of "the matter of fact, sober, plodding routine" of Canadian life. To "write Stories of Canadian life, and fill the scenes with brutal murders, ruthless assassinations and bloody riots" was seen as "simply ridiculous," given that Canada had been for the most part a place thankfully "devoid of the 'blood and thunder' element." In order to render faithfully the national character of the Dominion in the pages of fiction, the "delineator of Canadian life must picture the quiet scenes of industry, the simple incidents of ordinary life, the joys, sorrows, hopes, disappointments, successes and failures which are incident to men in the common routine of life."³⁸ Those who choose instead to dedicate themselves to the making of "[t]rue classics" of literature, these critics

³⁴ J. Gordon Mowat, "Conan Doyle's New Book," *CM* 5.6 (October 1895): 574.

³⁵ Dewart, *x*.

³⁶ Mowat, "Current Thought," *CM* 9.5 (September 1897): 437.

³⁷ Bourinot, *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness* 30.

³⁸ Longley, "Canadian Literature" 260.

countered, "are not often those who take their own generation by storm, and are never those who write simply with a view to immediate popularity."³⁹

Not surprisingly given these concerns, critics from mid-century onward openly promoted in Canadian culture a strong desire to produce a New World equivalent to what were seen as such landed and culturally legitimizing models of Scott and Edgeworth,⁴⁰ those writers who continued through to century's end to hold what many critics believed to be an "undivided sovereignty over the thoughts, hearts, and learning of every intellect in [the] wide dominion."⁴¹ Buoyed by the often repeated reassurance "that Scotland waited long for her 'wizard of the north'" to appear, Canadian critics remained patiently optimistic that "the coming of [a Canadian] wizard" was imminent, that a writer who "will supplement with the 'light that never was on sea or land' the warm shimmer of our summer noons and the frosty brilliance of our winter nights"⁴² would soon appear despite the fact that Canada is a "land whose history dawned but yesterday, and where the soil is almost

³⁹ LeSueur, "The Intellectual Life" 325-26. Whatever the motivation, Louisa Murray elucidated, "an author, like every other workman, must live, and to live must supply his patrons with the kind of article they like most." This does not mean, though, that one must pander to the least refined of popular tastes. The writer, she suggests,

has the best of the contract in many ways. What the public demand the public must have; but in supplying this demand the author enjoys a large measure of independence which cannot be invaded or curtailed. He gives his patrons what they want, but he gives it in the form and manner which please himself. The work which he does is not theirs, it is his own. And be the public ever so exigent their favourite rules them than they are aware, and come in what guise he will, he is sure of a warm welcome ("Novelists and Their Readers" 694).

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Smith's arguments in "Current Events and Opinions," *The Week* (26 June 1884): 466.

⁴¹ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country" 36. See also J.E. Collins, "International Copyright," *The Week* 1.1 (6 December 1883): 5.

⁴² Dawson, "Rev. of John George Bourinot's *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness*" 424.

virgin."⁴³ As Robert Barr would declare in the first instalment of his controversial two-part essay on "Literature in Canada" (1899), "Canada, from its position on the map, its hardy climate, its grand natural scenery, its dramatic and stirring historical associations should be the Scotland of America... It should produce the great historical novelist; the Sir Walter Scott of the New World."⁴⁴

This emphasis on a sense of a "history dawned but yesterday" and "stirring historical associations" was crucial, for to many Victorian critics and thinkers the most effective route to establishing a distinct Canadian literature and literary culture was the same path that Scott had marked out for Scotland and Edgeworth for Ireland: through the "sparkling fragments" of those "rich and exhaustless stories"⁴⁵ of "the energies, the heroism, and the national pride of the people"⁴⁶ who had settled the New World decades earlier, stories that could be "magnified through the mists and vapours" of history.⁴⁷ The appeal of such fictions, Dewart clarified, was obvious: as was the case with Holmes's stylized Castle marking the geocultural terrain of the New World in *Belinda*, stories "that are hoary with age, and dim in their distance from us, are more likely to win veneration and approval, while whatever is near and familiar loses in interest and attraction."⁴⁸ Victorian Canadians generally saw the narrativization of their country's past as both "an especially instructive branch of literature" that could instill in Canadians a deep respect for "the distinctive experiences" and realities of the New World and "an

⁴³ Bourinot, *The Intellectual Development* 127.

⁴⁴ *CM* 14.1 (November 1899): 3.

⁴⁵ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country" 59.

⁴⁶ Adam, "Outline" 179.

⁴⁷ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country" 59.

⁴⁸ Dewart, *xv*.

indispensable index of a maturing nationality." Indeed, when the Royal Society of Canada was founded in 1881, history (both formal and popular) was categorized in the same class of endeavour as literature, both of which were considered discourses "to commemorate and memorialize the eminent, to strengthen patriotism, or to draw morals from the past."⁴⁹ Predictably, Canadian critics celebrated signs that such narrativizations of the country's past had begun to appear. Such historical romances as Kirby's *The Chien D'Or* (1877), Parker's *Pierre and His People* (1882) and *The Seats of the Mighty* (1896), and, to a lesser extent Roberts's *The Forge in the Forest* (1896) and *A Sister to Evangeline* (1898), were acclaimed as sure "signs of an awakening" and "unmistakable tokens of promise"⁵⁰ that, once "devoured," would promote "a wider and fuller knowledge of life, and a deep admiration for the historic land in which [Canadians] should all take pride."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History. Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing: 1900-1970* (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1976), 1-2.

⁵⁰ Anon., "Rev. of William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*," *CMNR* 11.5 (May 1877): 564.

⁵¹ Thomas Guthrie Marquis, "Rev. of Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty*," *The Week* 13.27 (29 May 1896): 644. Parker's *Seats of the Mighty* was often cited as "a book which every Canadian should read. Apart from its worth as an absorbing tale, the historical value of the work is considerable" (*Mm* 2.1 [July 1896]: 72-3).

Such optimism was not universal, though. For many Canadian writers there remained the troublesome perception that unlike the Old World "Canada has no historical past" from which great literature could be made, "no worshipped heroes whose memory may bind the hearts of the people together ... no sacred fables, myths or traditions like those which, in the morning of the world, steeped some favoured spots of earth in an atmosphere of romance and poetry that will cling to them forever" (Anon., "Canadian Poetry and Poets," *BA* 1 [August 1863]: 416-17). To suggest that Canadian writers could produce stories from Canada's past equal in quality to those produced by Scott or Edgeworth was ridiculous, such a prominent poet as Archibald Lampman concluded. "Born and bred in an old and famous land covered with the monuments and remnants of a romantic history, a land still ringing with the names that were illustrious centuries ago," Old World writers were at a definite and unsurmountable advantage. "We have no magnificent race history behind us," Lampman explained, "nor visible memorials of its beauty and splendour; we have not even a homogeneous people; we are, indeed, only the scattered and intractable materials of which a nation may be made" (Lampman, "At the Mermaid Inn" [22 October 1892] 178). Even Parker, the Canadian novelist whose success

Reassuring native writers that "[i]t is not necessary to go beyond [their] own country to find dramatic incidents which may give light and brilliancy to the pages of history ... and romance,"⁵² and confident that "the Canadian Scott, or Hawthorne, or 'George Eliot,' or Dickens"⁵³ would soon appear, Victorian critics hinted at the same time that the current absence of burning stories of Canada's past might be the result of the limitations of Canadian writers who "have not done all they might have done, considering the rich materials at hand." One only had to look at the new land through the glow of Scott's lamp of impartiality to find in "the political, religious, industrial, and social life of Canada, in the history and legends of the past, in the varied national life of the people,"⁵⁴ and in "the individuality which is the natural result of the circumstances and surroundings"⁵⁵ a hoary past "replete ... with all the materials of romance." Granted, these critics admitted, such materials may not be "on any great scale, with 'blare of trumpet and beat of drum'" that was seen to distinguish the stories of England or Scotland, "but in that grander movement of the country's industrial and social life, which has made of the wilderness a cultivated garden, and brought peace and plenty to a thriving and enlightened people,"⁵⁶ there

came largely from his ability to draw on this past, affirmed this sense of a heritage lacking the burning deeds necessary for great historical romances. Responding to an interviewer's questions about "what sort of a field Canada is to work in -- to find material in -- whether it is quartz country or wheat land; rich grass or only good for the oats and Indian corn of literature," he suggested that he himself had "often had to make bricks out of very scattered and sometimes very scanty straw." The key problem, he explains, is the country's relative newness and youth, the fact that the "aspect" of the country is "unsoftened by the finger of Time" and that "the life of the people, being largely agricultural, has no glamor upon it" (W.J. Thorold, "Gilbert Parker: An Interview," *Mm* 3.2 [February 1897]: 118-19).

⁵² Bourinot, "Canadian Materials" 193-95.

⁵³ Bourinot, *Intellectual Strength and Weakness* 30.

⁵⁴ Adam, "Outline" 228, 182.

⁵⁵ Machar, "Views of Canadian Literature" 391.

⁵⁶ Adam, "Outline" 186, 183.

is a nonetheless vital "record of heroic endeavor and suffering, of the struggle between antagonistic principles and systems, of human passion, frailty, and virtue." There was seen to exist, in other words, adequate though underdeveloped "Canadian materials"⁵⁷ necessary "to stir the pulse" and to "fire the brain" into "the impassioned recital of the stirring deeds of an earlier time."⁵⁸

The need for impartial native writers to react quickly in telling the stories that might stir the pulse of Canadian readers was even more critical given the perception that American writers were appropriating the very stories that would form the cornerstone of a truly Canadian culture. "In our indifference" to the stories of our own heroic past, Adam warned,

American writers are entering upon the field; and already many of the localities in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, with their rich histories and fascinating legends, are fast passing into literature through the medium of a foreign pen. It is perhaps not too much to say that it is from the pages of Howells' 'Wedding Journey' and 'A Chance Acquaintance' that our people are first apprised of the beauties of Quebec and the St. Lawrence; while of the local writers, Hawkins and Le Moine, they probably never have heard.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Bourinot, "Canadian Materials" 193.

⁵⁸ Adam, "Nationalism" 119. See also Foster's celebration in *Canada First*: what a land of adventure and romance this has been! We may have no ballad for the nursery, or home-born epic for the study; no tourney feats to rhapsodise over, or mock heroics to emblazon on our escutcheon; we have no prismatic fables to illumine and adorn the preface of our existence, or curious myths to obscure and soften the sharp outline of our early history; yet woven into the tapestry of our path, are whole volumes of touching poetry and great tomes of glowing prose that rival fiction in eagerness of incident, and in marvellous climax put fable to the blush. We need not ransack foreign romance for valorous deeds, nor are we compelled to go abroad for sad tales of privation and suffering. The most chivalrous we can match; the most tried we can parallel. [5]

⁵⁹ Adam, "Outline" 182.

Even the pseudonymous parodist "Haggard Writer" agreed that this was a problem to be taken seriously. Opening what he called his "Great Canadian Novel" with an "introduction" in which he explains the motivation for its writing, "Writer" points to this concern with cultural appropriation: "An American magazine having called the attention of authors to the wide field of undeveloped romance in Canada, and having invited them to try their skill in cultivating it," has promoted the "conviction" south of the border "that the great American novel may come from the North. I have forestalled the robbery," he boasts, "and secured the prize for my own land." He reiterates this sentiment at the end of his parody, celebrating the fact that "this classic tale, which for grace, pathos, dramatic incident, and local coloring has never been equalled and never can be equalled in this or any other country. Thus is fulfilled the prediction that the great American novel would come from the north."⁶⁰

But what both this "Haggard Writer" and other Canadian parodists also agree upon is that there was reason to be wary of such simple equations linking stories of burning deeds with a national literary character; indeed, the making of a national literature and literary culture is, they posit, a much more complicated proposition than such narrow assumptions suggest. Opening his story, like "Haggard Writer," with an authorial commitment "to produce a first-class Canadian story," the anonymous author of the parodic novelette "Beneath the Maple Tree" (1888) immediately reflects in the mirror of parody his own promise to produce "A Genuine Canadian Story," warning in the process that such guarantees may in themselves be little more than marketing ploys aimed at a contemporary culture fixated with questions of how to represent its own distinctiveness. "The title alone

⁶⁰ *Grip* 29.18 (29 October 1887): 7; 29.21 (19 November 1887): 5.

ought to sell it, being of this soil and appealing to national sentiment,"⁶¹ the writer-narrator notes in a stylized aside to the reader.

Uncertain now whether the story being read is, in fact, an "authentic" Canadian story or a story meant to *appear* authentically Canadian, readers are introduced to the hero of "Beneath the Maple Tree," a man whose intensely coded name at once reinforces and stylizes the promise of a heroic Canadianness: Macdonald Brown Cartier Watson is, the narrator assures, "a Canadian of Canadian extraction," a man whose genealogy underscores the genuine Canadian origins of this story. "His ancestors had fought in 1776, 1812 and 1837" and "[o]ne of his second cousins was out in the Fenian raid, and his uncle by marriage was in the Red River Expedition. It may be as well to inform the reader that in 1776," the narrator begins, only to hesitate in mid-sentence. Implying that his fictional hero's Canadianness is much longer than his present narrative can accommodate, the narrativized writer steps forward in his text to direct the reader to "consult an encyclopedia" if he or she desires additional details of the lineage of this prototypical native son.

The main body of the text continues this stylization as it becomes a catalogue of literary conventions which have been engaged, the writer explains, solely as a means of marking the Canadian pedigree of the hero and, by extension, of the story in hand. Returning momentarily to biographical details of Macdonald's life, the writer-narrator points out that his hero was born and raised in a log house,

⁶¹ *Grip* 31.761 (15 September 1888): 3-4. The dangers of myopic boosterism are made clear in other Canadian parodies as well. Appearing the same year as Jarvis's deliberately sensational *Geoffrey Hampstead* (1890), the parodic "Guffery Bumpstead" opens with a similar stylized admission that the Canadian setting of both the parody and the original may be little more than a strategy aimed at garnering market attention: "The scene of my story is laid in Toronto, as being the best way of securing a sale for the work. The only way to make Canadian literature go is to give it a local and personal interest. Everybody in 'society' will want to buy Guffery Bumstead to see if they can recognize any of the characters. Great scheme!" (*Grip* 35.13 [27 September 1890]: 198).

an important detail he pauses to accentuate in the first of what becomes a series of bracketed and intensely reflexive ruptures punctuating the novelette: "[*But it must be a log-house I tell you.*]" The reason, he explains, is simple: "[*It's ever so much more Canadian than brick.*]" Later, when a beaver makes a sudden and apparently irrelevant appearance in the tale, a similarly stylizing aside explains the presence as less a function of imagination than of algebrization: "[*This may seem irrelevant, but I've got to work in the beaver somewhere, and he may as well come in here as anywhere else.*]" The writer closes his "Genuine Canadian Story" with an equally stylized and patently self-congratulatory gloss that reflects a stultifying cultural boosterism writ large: "[*I flatter myself there is considerable originality in that [story]. Who says there's no material for first-class native fiction?*]"⁶²

Perhaps the most vocal critic of what was seen in some critical quarters as a reactionary and imitative cultural fixation with Scott-based historical romances was Sara Jeannette Duncan, whose spirited dismissal of *An Algonquin Maiden* (1887), a historical romance produced through the collaborative effort of Adam and Ethelwyn Wetherald, opens with a complaint this book is not merely "a romance, [but] a romance of the most uncompromising description." Duncan's reaction against such late century reverence for the general Scott formula of fictive story played out against a historical backdrop was grounded in two not unrelated frustrations. Most obviously, she suggested, was the fact that the form as it had been adopted by Adam and Wetherald (and others) had by the 1880s become stale, driven more by an algebrized antiquarianism than the imaginative vitality and attention to current social problems that had been introduced into the original Scott formula by such writers as Dickens and Charles Kingsley. "One need go no further than the title to

⁶² *Grip* 31.761 (15 September 1888): 3-4; 31.762 (22 September 1888): 6-7. See also the more satiric "Asphodel Canata. The Tragic History of the First, Last and Only Canadian Poet," which appeared in *Grip* in February and May 1888.

discover it a romance" she argues, given that "'maidens' are unknown to the literary methods of a later date. They have become extinct and are less euphonically replaced" in more contemporary works by less algebrized representations of women living in this place and in this time, and in works, Duncan implied, that gravitated toward the social, political, and religious issues that were increasingly being seen to set the temper of the times. Without dismissing the Scott formula outright, Duncan did criticize the new generation of Canadian writers who refused to refine upon Scott's techniques and to adapt the historical romance to meet the demands of a young country and an increasingly sophisticated reading public.

More troubling to Duncan, though, was the fact that beyond writing a "romance," Adam and Wetherald "have had the temerity to sub-title it, 'of the Early Days of Upper Canada'," implying, she argues, that their propensity for "word-painting in the matter of Canadian scenery" and for representing the "sympathetic grace" of a pioneer past was still seen by many writers and readers as an authentic representation of what was to Duncan the distinctly more prosaic origins of Canadian culture.⁶³ Canadian writers were caught, her argument suggests between what one writer called "the Scylla and Charybdis of literary navigation"⁶⁴ of a colonial imagination: the intense desire to find the Canadian Walter Scott and the necessity of writing stories that represent accurately the individualities of the stories of Canada's past. As an early advocate and explorer of Canadian literary culture, McGee had forewarned native writers of their dilemma, pointing out that stories that relied too heavily on imported models or patternings "are not always the best fitted for us; they do not always run on the same mental guage [sic], nor connect with our trains of thought," coming as they do from "another state of society, bearing

⁶³ Duncan, "Saunterings," *The Week* 4 (13 January 1887): 111-12.

⁶⁴ Anon., "The Literature of a New Country" 56.

traces of controversies, or directed against errors or evils, which for us hardly exist."⁶⁵

Working from the critical assumption that "[s]triking originality can hardly be developed to any great extent in a dependency which naturally, and perhaps wisely in some cases, looks for all its traditions and habits of thought to a parent state," such critics as McGee and Duncan came to the conclusion that to remain forever "[i]ndisposed or unable to compose sustained and original works" would merely condemn Canadian writing to the status of the "merely imitative" and to producing a body of work lacking the "creative and original"⁶⁶ spirit necessary in "a literature that shall be in any distinctive sense national."⁶⁷ Canadian writers could not "keep turning out faint copies of European models,"⁶⁸ they were told, if they had any hope of attaining that cultural "condition ... when men have learned at last to think as well as act for themselves, to originate rather than to reproduce."⁶⁹ Only when this movement occurs will Canadians be able to judge their national literature, and by extension the distinctness of their national character, by international standards. "Canadians who think in the past and feel that their ideas must conform to those of another age cannot be independent in their thought, nor can they fully appreciate the literature of the present," reiterated Walter James Brown in 1900: "It is high time that we as individuals and as a nation should break from our feet the fetters of the past. We should cease to bind our minds with the casings of antiquity, we should cut loose from the prejudice, narrowness and provincialism, and become

⁶⁵ McGee, "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion" 6.

⁶⁶ Bourinot, *The Intellectual Development* 117, 126.

⁶⁷ Adam, "Retarding Influence" 120.

⁶⁸ Marshall, 65-66.

⁶⁹ Bourinot, *The Intellectual Development* 117, 126.

alive to the demands and opportunities of our country and our time." What Canada needs, Brown concludes, is what critics had been reiterating for decades: "less conservatism and more originality."⁷⁰

Canadian parodists, too, tended to agree with those critics calling for a reconsideration of the cultural attitudes toward a national literary character that could lead to such clearly imitative endeavours as *An Algonquin Maiden*. "Claude Coursol," for instance, includes a chapter in which the hero meets and falls in love with "Tonawanda, a lineal descendant of the Algonquin Maiden" who is "fifty times more beautiful than her great grandmother and not half so savage." Although the two characters set out to find happiness in a world "flooded with an amber wealth of circumambient sunshine," the backward glance of the original text has been reflected in this parodic novelette. Whereas the model text ends with the Algonquin maiden being drowned, a convenient (and algebrized) passing that allows Adam and Wetherald to move their narrative toward a point of closure that combines a marriage between the descendants of the settling Europeans and an extended assurance to "the modern reader of this old-time story that everything happily came about as foreshadowed,"⁷¹ the parody ends more abruptly and with less of what Duncan labelled "the unalloyed bliss" of the Old World historical romance.⁷² When

⁷⁰ Brown, 173, 176. In order to circumvent the threat of this self-perpetuating cultural provincialism, Canadian writers were urged to strive for a level of originality and creative "self-assertion" (Bourinot, "Views" 368) that were seen as "the prime factors" for the "vigorous growth and development" of a national literary spirit (Adam, "Retarding Influence" 120) There would be a day in the not too distant future, these critics remained certain, when "that narrowness of mental vision on the part of our literary aspirants" would fall away and "give larger scope to what original and imaginative genius may exist among [the Canadian] people" (Bourinot, "Views" 368).

⁷¹ Graeme Mercer Adam and A. Ethelwyn Wetherald, *An Algonquin Maiden: A Romance of the Early Days of Upper Canada* (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1887), 240.

⁷² Duncan, "Saunterings" 112.

Maud, Claude's jilted lover, recognizes the Algonquin maiden as a threat to their foreshadowed (and generically appropriate) reconciliation, she slips a lethal dose of arsenic into an ice cream cone and erases the maiden from the story.

Similarly, when the editors of *Grip* set out to promote the parodic novelette "Mabel, The Dog-Catcher's Daughter" (1890), it is Wetherald and Adams's Algonquin Maiden who reappears at various points during this stylized narrative as a kind of ghostly and algebrized reminder of Canada's pioneer and imaginative past. Set in the historical present of 1889, "Mabel" is a "composite novel" in which "the different chapters" have been written by "several of [the] best known Canadian *litterateurs*," namely G. Mercer Adam (*sans* Wetherald), Robert Tyson, R.W. Phipps, Sam Jones, and May Agnes Fleming.⁷³ The main goal of such a radical composition is, as the editors explain, to counter popular claims that "we have no material for a Canadian literature." Accordingly, the novelette opens with the introduction of Mabel Pickering, the story's heroine, at the moment when she has decided to quit "her paternal cot in the quiet hamlet" of Beachville, "a venerable hearthstone" around which "stirring memories" of the war of 1812, the Rebellion of 1837, and the Confederation year 1867 are "clustered." As her journey away from this historic spot begins, Mabel is startled when "a light step rustle[s] the underbrush" near her and suddenly "the Algonquin maiden [stands] before her" as "lithe as a panther" and with "the wild, untutored grace of the children of nature." Coming face to face with a character whom Adam and Wetherald had only two years earlier narrativized as a central character in a story of Canada's "romantic" past, Mabel is unimpressed. Imitating the forced solemnity that burdened the

⁷³ Anon., "Mabel, The Dog-Catcher's Daughter," *Grip* 38.25 (18 June 1890): 400-401. In a satiric jab at the practice of both Canadian and American publishers to release "new" novels by Fleming well after her death in 1880, the editors added the following editorial note: ["The fact that this talented Canadian authoress has been dead for some years does not prevent her writing for other publications, then why should it for *Grip*?"]

model text, the reaction of the Algonquin Maiden is a terse "'White squaw has come'." The reaction of the contemporary Canadian heroine reflects this unflinching austerity with her own unchecked amusement: "Yes," she laughingly replies, "otherwise I should not be here." Following this stylized exchange, Adam and Wetherald's heroine disappears by climbing (appropriately) into "an adjacent maple tree" ("Mabel" 400) only to reappear in the final chapter of the novelette when a more recent and more famous Canadian "maiden," Pauline Johnson, enters the narrative to expose her Algonquin predecessor as a fraud, not only out-dated but irrelevant in the world of 1889 ("Mabel" 401).

As such critics as Dewart and McGee had warned as early as the 1860s, one of the more serious implications of this limiting fixation with celebrating the stories of Canada's past was the perpetuation of a myopic promotion of the second-rate solely on the basis of a perceived Canadianness. To praise native "writers, in which, whatever their merit, the dross was largely mixed with the pure ore" has only "tended to mislead the public," Dewart suggests, "and to give the authors false notions of their talents and achievements."⁷⁴ Such shortsightedness would in the long term serve only to "stunt," not nurture, "the growth [of] the generous spirit which alone can produce generous and enduring fruits of literature."⁷⁵ What a

⁷⁴ Dewart, xv. Not all Canadian writers agreed. John Richardson was a particularly vocal advocate of literary boosterism, noting in 1847 that such a practice "has been the custom of all ages, and in all countries, for men of education and acquirement to join in testifying regard for their authors, however mediocre their talent; and even in the United States -- the last country which has given birth to men of genius and literary accomplishments -- we find the caterers to the republic of letters treated with that consideration which the civilized world has agreed in according to them. In Canada, they have this yet to learn and practice" (*Eight Years in Canada*). Later in the century an anonymous reviewer of Christopher Oakes's novel *The Canadian Senator; or, A Romance of Love and Politics* noted that "Every Canadian author, who endeavours by means of his brains and pen to introduce the world to the social and political life of the Dominion, as well as to advertise its natural resources, should," regardless of the success in produce a literary work of art, should "receive all due encouragement" (*The Week* 8.9 [30 January 1891] 144).

⁷⁵ McGee, "The Mental Outfit" 6.

national literary culture needed, these early men of letters countered, was a frankness of opinion and unbiased judgment, not "a bundle of [critical] cliques" comprised primarily of book reviewers and pseudo-critics predisposed to the "spasmodic and senseless eulogy"⁷⁶ of their friends and "the indiscriminate depreciation"⁷⁷ of all others. Within such a system of cultural patronage "the standing of a literary man or woman may depend largely on the booming qualities of his or her personal friends"⁷⁸ who "greet every new production of whatever merit or demerit with the same ridiculous praise decked out in the same fulsome and meaningless phraseology."⁷⁹

It was this ridiculous praise and meaningless phraseology that provided ready discursive models for parodists in Victorian Canada as well. Featured irregularly in the pages of *Grip*, for instance, was a series of parodic "Book Reviews (with parenthetical remarks by the reviewer)." Structured and with a tone and style that imitates closely the reviews in such prominent papers as the *Globe* and *The Week*, these stylized commentaries illuminate the duplicities and self-motivations that often underlie the ebullient praise of those looking to "boost" or "boom" Canadian literature. A representative review of the fictional novel "The Peanut Vendor of Mimico. A Canadian Novel. By Ingledew Duxter, LL.B. Fakerson Bros, Toronto"⁸⁰ begins, for instance, with the parenthetical reflections of the reviewer as he or she sits, Cervantes-like, contemplating the sensitive writing task at hand:

⁷⁶ Lampman, "At the Mermaid Inn" (19 March 1892) 38.

⁷⁷ Dawson, "Rev. of *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness*" 422.

⁷⁸ Campbell, "At the Mermaid Inn" (10 December 1892) 207-08.

⁷⁹ Lampman, "At the Mermaid Inn" (19 March 1892) 38.

⁸⁰ *Grip* 35.17 (25 October 1890): 267.

[Duxter is a good fellow and all that, but why will he persist in thinking he can write? Really, of all the utter twaddle I ever saw -- why, it hasn't a redeeming feature. The plot is a tissue of absurdities, the characters unnatural or commonplace, and the style is execrable. But I suppose I must say a good word for it -- I believe I promised to, and if I slate it people will say I'm jealous and spiteful.]

In contrast to the unnamed Old World reviewer in Robert Barr's "The Great Pegram Mystery" (1894) who actually publishes "an [anonymous] article slating the book of a friend" and then proceeds to console him secure in the knowledge the author "will never know who stabbed him,"⁸¹ this Canadian reviewer is unwilling to attach his name to what might well be an accurate assessment of the book in hand. What he or she does foist upon his unsuspecting Canadian audience is an example of the "spasmodic" and ultimately misleading eulogy that critics feared would lead to a misshaped sense of Canada's literary culture:

Canadian literature has no more promising votary than Mr. Duxter, the talented author of the delightful work before us. It is a book to be read and re-read. The grace and simplicity of the writer's style are a relief after the turgid and sensational bombast of so many of the popular fictionalists. The characters are well drawn, and stand out from the page with life-like individuality. The incidents, though striking, are all within the range of probability, and the working of the plot displays a knowledge of human nature and vividness of local coloring which place the author in the highest rank of Canadian novelists.

Anticipating Stephen Leacock's "booming" editor in the story "Making a Magazine," who spends a small fortune promoting a manuscript on the advice of his office

⁸¹ *Selected Stories of Robert Barr*, ed. John Parr (Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1977), 47-8. The earliest Canadian parody of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, Barr's super-detective Sherlaw Kombs observes that the reviewer can take some consolation from the recognized fact that the paper for which he writes, like most of the day, "makes a speciality of abusing all books not written by some member of its own staff" (48).

janitor,⁸² the editors of *Grip* extend this comic stylization when they publish as part of their next issue an excerpt from the fictional novel under review.⁸³

As Edward Hunt suggests in his "A Tale of Ter-rew Love Triumphant," such blatant self-promotion was a familiar route across the literary terrain of Victorian

⁸² "Making a Magazine" (*Behind the Beyond*, 1913). Leacock would return to a more satiric look at such novel booming in his "The Reading Public: A Book Store Study" (*Moonbeams*, 1915) in which a bookstore manager sells all his male customers one book (*Monkeys of New Guinea*) and all his female customers another (*Golden Dreams*), the latter being "boomed" variously as "the most powerful book of the season" (44), "a love story -- very simple and sweet, yet wonderfully charming" written in "the old style, like the dear old books of the past -- quite like ... Dickens and Fielding and Sterne" (46), and "the most humorous books of the season" (47).

⁸³ *Grip* 35.18 (1 November 1890): 278-79. Boosterism was refunctioned with a sharper edge in "How to Become a Native Canadian Litterateur" (1889), a parodic-satiric essay that stylizes contemporary concerns with the incestuousness of the Canadian literary establishment and the misplaced patriotism that were seen by the final decade of the century as retarding the Canadian literary spirit. "As most editors must have noticed," the essay begins:

there is considerable latent literary ambition lying around loose in this country. Many of our young men and women, ignoring the remunerative careers which lie always open to talent, as bartenders, canvassers for tea and sewing-machines, base-ball champions, speculators in real estate or dime museum freaks, persist in essaying to tread the thorny slopes of Parnassus and the rickety staircase leading to the editorial den. Spite of exhortation and warning they will do it.

By way of assistance to such tenacious creative spirits, the anonymous essayist provides a series of five "rules" aimed at helping them realize their ambitions. Of this quintet, three are of particular relevance here.

The first rule outlines the benefits to be derived from "being intensely, excruciatingly 'loyal,' and very patriotic," in one's writing, which means exhibiting in equal part a sufficient enthusiasm for "the sentiments" of nationalism and a harsh denunciation of "Yankees and all their institutions on every possible opportunity." The second rule explains the "principal theme" for a young writer should be Canadian literature: "You will write articles entitled, 'Have We a Canadian Literature?' 'Need of a Canadian Literature,' 'Progress of Canadian Literature,' etc.," the essayist notes ironically, since "[a]s everybody knows it was by writing *about* English literature, the necessity of having it, and the means of encouraging it, that it got a start." The third relevant rule, and one tinged more than any other by satire, suggests the benefits to be realized from "work[ing] the mutual admiration racket, by mentioning favorably all the other native Canadian writers" who will respond in kind. The essayist closes this stylized guide to writing in Canada with a pair of observations: "It is by no means necessary to have read the writings you praise" and that by following these directions a young Canadian writer "will very shortly be acknowledged by the fraternity as a native Canadian *litterateur*" (*Grip* 32.14 [6 April 1889]: 213). See also *Grip*'s "How to Boom a Novel" (35.7 [16 August 1890] 16).

Canada. Punctuating his fiction with copious parenthetical self-congratulations,⁸⁴ Hunt's narrator lifts boosterism to the pinnacle of cultural vacuity. Having produced a text that is to large extent an accumulation of self-praise and self-promotion, Hunt's narrator closes his tale with a chapter in which he goes so far as to claim that he has, in fact, set a new standard by which Canadian and even literary imagination should be judged:

Being entirely without friends, and more or less an orphan, we feel it our duty to call the gentle reader's attention to the surprising number of thrilling and original situations that we have managed to cram into seven short chapters. In other words (we do not deny it), we are a genius. Several papers (at our request) have said so.

Fully satisfied, he claim success "in thus modestly hinting at our worth" (5.6 527) with the Canadian literary milieu.

For the writer-narrators of Holmes's *Belinda* and De Mille's *The Lady of the Ice*, the fissures and difficulties underlying the narration of the stories that might stir the pulse to a Canadian nationalism are shown to be significantly more complex than simply skirting the dangers of imitation and myopic boosterism. The concern first and foremost in their mind is the cultural value placed on Smith's lamp of impartiality, the emphasis, that is, on history as a conceptualizing model that is to be established over fiction, and especially the novel, as the means of understanding the actual events as opposed to the possible or imaginable events that would give rise to a great nation. Showing themselves to be cognizant of contemporary concerns with impartiality and the related devaluations of novel writing (and reading) in Victorian Canada, both of these narrativized writers move in their writing to assure readers

⁸⁴ Describing a character as responding with "a roar of baffled rage," for instance, he immediately points to the originality of his configuration ("baffled' rage observe)," or later when describing a character's faces as "passion-distorted" he steps from behind the increasingly illuminated shadows of authorial propriety to solicit praise: "(fairly expressive that, I flatter myself, for a beginner)" (526).

that what they are writing is more than "a mere novel" that might be picked up "to pass time away, or for the pleasure of the moment" (*Belinda* 82). Conscious, too, that their tales may, at times, "savor very much of a romance or novel," each of these writers features as part of his respective narrative a series of reflexive amplifications that point to his credibility and reliability as author of the book in hand. Through these interpolations, each asserts his own authenticating impartiality, his own conventional willingness to identify truth with fact and dedication to expunging from his narrative every hint of the fictive or subjective that might mark his text as something less than a disinterested chronicle of events as they really occurred.

Promising to fulfill his role as a chronicler who goes "full and against the practice of the novelist" (*Lady* 144), each of these narrativized writers explains that he has "undertaken to set down a few of the most important and interesting events" in the lives of his characters (*Belinda* 82) and that he is forced due to lack of imagination to "rely on facts" (*Lady* 144). Each reassures readers, too, that his sole goal is "to paint the picture true to the original, without vainly endeavoring to improve upon nature" through the workings of a "prolific imagination" or to "impose" in any way upon the reader's "credulity" (*Belinda* 107) with his own impressions or prejudices. As Macrorie reiterates, almost proudly, throughout his tale of adventure and romance, he "has no imagination whatsoever" (*Lady* 144). It is an admission that he believes should establish his authority in the New World, serving as proof to readers that he is "not a novelist. [He is] a historian, an autobiographer, or any thing else you choose," but under no circumstances can he or will he shape the events of his tale "no matter what the taste or fashion of the day might be" (*Lady* 144).⁸⁵

⁸⁵ See also this notable denial of novelistic tendencies: "The night passed, and the morning came, and the impression of these recent events grew more and more vivid. The very circumstances under which I found my *Lady of the Ice* were not such as are generally chosen by the novelist for an encounter between the hero

The narrator of *Belinda* also returns to such claims throughout his story, building on the assumption that the history of the Canadian coquette is to take on the characteristics of a full and authentic report of human experience, complete with accurate renderings of details of time and place, and with individual characteristics presented through an impartial and detached language. Pausing at one point to "vouch for the authenticity" of his text, he hesitates at another to claim that what is being recounted is "a plain statement of facts" (*Belinda* 3), and, later still, to stress to readers that they can be confident in his "authority for saying that the actual circumstances" (*Belinda* 113) of the events narrated have been neither "contradicted [nor] falsified" in any way (*Belinda* 76). Through an emphatic repetition of such words as "authenticity," "authority," and "truth," Holmes's narrativized writer succeeds, or so he believes, in positioning himself as the impartial narrator of events, as a New World *auctor* who remains at all times a detached recorder of the facts guided solely by a "strict regard for truth" (*Belinda* 83). He positions himself, in other words, as the kind of legitimizing and impartial social historian demanded by a Canadian culture fixated with Smith's Scott-based lamp of impartiality. He positions himself as a writer whose disinterestedness and unquestionable moral certitude will guarantee an impartial representation of the social and cultural realities of the New World.

Such claims of authorial fiat are quickly reflected in the mirror of parody, though, when both of these writer-narrators are revealed as being unable or unwilling to fulfill their declared mandates. Instead of discovering authentic and impartial texts in which the readers are left "to exercise their own judgments, and draw their own inferences" (*Belinda* 55) about the characters and the events recorded by a disinterested author, readers find in these parodies, despite explicit

and heroine of his novel. Of that I am well aware; but then I'm not a novelist, and I'm not a hero, and the Lady of the Ice isn't a heroine -- so what have you got to say to that?" (*Lady* 98).

declarations to the contrary, narratives in which the personality of the author determines the form and content of the story told. Readers confront writers as intimately engaged in the struggles of writing as the figure of Cervantes toiling over his prefatory remarks or as Tristram struggling to catch up with the story of his own life. Like these figures, too, these New World "writers" invite their readers to reconsider the firmly held cultural myth of an impartial narrative of national origins liberated from the shaping forces of personality, politics, and even algebrized convention.

Intrusive and tendentious in the same way that the various writer-narrators of *Don Quixote* are, the narrativized writer of *Belinda*, for instance, is as much in and of the world he sets out to chronicle as are Belinda and her many suitors. Indeed, there is very little that occurs within his story that he does not comment on, either through his propensity for colourful and intensely subjective descriptions (Belinda's aunt, for instance, is described as a "shrew" and "busy body," and as "clamorous" and "capricious" [17]) or through more fully developed adjudications. The most obvious of his intrusions into the narrative occurs when he turns to describe Bickerstaff, a "sheepish and uncurbable" married man whose visits to Belinda under the pretence of religious discussion are merely a facade for his attempts to seduce her; when rebuffed, his thoughts turn from enticement to slander. On these occasions, the cloak of authorial impartiality falls away completely: "Who would not wish to share in the meritorious act of purchasing a rope to suspend the rascal high in the air?" the writer-narrator demands of the reader. "If there is any thing that would excite my mirth and jollity, 'twould be to see a wretch like this dangling at a gallows -- a lofty gallows, and substantial, like that on which the wicked Hamon hanged, and which, like him, he had so well deserved" (*Belinda* 87-88). Still later, he states without hesitation that he "had rather have a baboon for my brother, than to confess myself akin to such a reprobate" (*Belinda* 109). By breaking his self-declared code of

impartiality and narrative propriety, the narrator of *Belinda* moves toward what Bakhtin calls a "border violation" (*Imagination* 33) that threatens to erase the conventional certainties that kept historical discourse distinct from the fictional. As the narrator moves further and further from the glow of Smith's "lamp of impartiality," the perceived irrationalities and subjectivities of fiction gradually displace the more rational, more detached certainties of history. Fiction, in short, emerges as a more powerful force in the world of the *Belinda* than the conventions of history.

More telling still is the same writer-narrator's open willingness to excise events from his narrative, to exclude elements of his ostensibly authentic record for reasons that are either unarticulated or, more often, explained as the product of his justifiable habit of discretionary editing. At times, as when he sets out to record a conversation between Belinda and her father, such elisions are the result of his admitted technical inadequacies as recorder:

I shall not pretend to give even the purport of what passed between them upon that occasion. For, although I have practised stenography a little, yet where two meet for the express purpose of recriminating each other; where both talk at the same time with all their might; and, above all, where one of them is a woman, skilled in the profession, I find it quite impracticable to report with any approach to precision. Suffice it to say, that one talked the louder, the other the faster. (*Belinda* 74-5)

More often, though, the reasons for such ellipses are intensely subjective. When the Scotchman Mack dictates to Belinda a letter designed to end his rival Barnabas's pursuit, for instance, the writer-narrator refuses to "transcribe [it] on account of the extreme rudeness and indecency of the language used" (*Belinda* 10). And when a conversation between Belinda and Bickerstaff transgresses what he defines as the "principle[s] of honor [and] of virtue ... to say nothing of the spirit of that religion

which they professed," he feels "obliged to break off the dialogue between the goddess and him who worshipped at her shrine" for fear of insulting the reader. "I dare not follow them another step," he explains, "through the fear of spoiling my book" (*Belinda* 87).⁸⁶ Readers are faced with the ineluctable fact that even in the most chaste discursive prose, those texts intended to represent "things as they are" without the adornments of the imagined or the fictive, there is always, at some level, a failure of impartiality. Every text can be shown to have something left out or to having had something put into it that is not necessary to what some reader will regard as an authentic description of events or characters.

Nowhere is this cultural fixation on the perceived Old World ideals of narrative impartiality and authenticating antiquarianism stylized more radically and with more "sparkling *verve* and crispness"⁸⁷ than in De Mille's *The Dodge Club; or, Italy in MDCCCLIX* (1869).⁸⁸ First serialized in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* from March to October 1867, *The Dodge Club* was published by Harper's in book form two years later; as Monk notes, "the reading public seemed to have appreciated" both the original serial and the book very much, for it "had at least 12

⁸⁶ See also when the writer-narrator, anticipating a challenge from the reader about his description of Belinda's wedded bliss, pauses for a moment of justification: "It will be said, perhaps, that I, who have never passed the ordeal of matrimony myself, have no claim to notice when I speak of its attendant happiness, or misery. I am not particular about attentions, nor writing for the purpose of making court to sex or sectary; and shall, therefore, act with perfect liberty of conduct and of conscience. I love as well as hate" (*Belinda* 11).

⁸⁷ Anon., "Recent Literature" [Rev. of De Mille's *The Living Link*], *CIN* 10.8 (22 August 1874): 118.

⁸⁸ De Mille, *The Dodge Club; or, Italy in MDCCCLIX* (New York: Harper, 1869). Subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically within the body of this study. Although the serial appeared for the first time in 1867, the story had its genesis in a trip to France and Italy which De Mille and his brother Eliza made in 1850-51 (Monk 43-54).

editions between 1868 and 1897.⁸⁹ Published the same year as Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad or the New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869)⁹⁰ and exhibiting a Pickwickian energy that suggests De Mille's self-acknowledged affection for Dickens,⁹¹ *The Dodge Club* is a spirited parodic stylization of such popular travelogues as George Hillard's mid-century *Six Month's in Italy* (1853) and of those cultural certitudes which promoted Old World touring as a means of recovering and absorbing whatever meaning the past has to offer to the historical present of the New World. As Eva-Marie Kröller points out in her *Canadian Travellers in Europe 1851-1900* (1989), this was a period in which the landed desire to enquire directly into the perceived Old World sophistications in the traditions of the Grand Tour was complemented by the comforts of the grand hotel and the technological advances that shortened the average trans-Atlantic passage from about nine weeks to six days.⁹²

An energetic parody of the literary conventions and cultural presumptions and attitudes on which the travelogue format had been established, *The Dodge Club* takes its name from five representative American male travellers thrown together during a European tour and whose prime goal becomes "to dodge all humbugs and

⁸⁹ Monk, 206. So popular was this adult novel that De Mille launched a series of frequently reprinted sequels aimed at the juvenile fiction market in which he explores the more innocent misadventures of a group of "touring" boys: *Among the Brigands* (1871), *The Seven Hills* (1873), and *The Winged Lion; or, The Stories of Venice* (1876).

⁹⁰ Gwendolyn Davies, "James De Mille's *The Dodge Club* and the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Travel Literature," *Studies in Maritime Literary History, 1760-1930* (Fredericton: Acadiensis, 1991), 142.

⁹¹ Gerson, "Three Writers of Victorian Canada" 202.

⁹² Eva-Marie Kröller, *Canadian Travellers in Europe 1851-1900* (Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 1989), 27. Kröller points out, too, that De Mille used the observations gathered on his own tour in many of his novels, including two "straight" historical romances: *The Martyr of the Catacombs: A Tale of Ancient Rome* (1865) and *Helena's Household: A Tale of Rome in the First Century* (1867).

swindles, which make travelling so expensive" in the Old World (*Dodge* 6).

Rambling through France and Italy guided by individual and collective attitudes that range from cultural naivete to nationalistic brashness, the Dodge Clubbers have their story told by an omniscient narrator who is notable for his willingness to step outside his self-proclaimed duty as the objective chronicler of events to discuss the style and organization of his narrative-in-progress with the audience. When he attempts to describe a gathering of street people, for instance, this usually restrained shaper of the travelogue reveals himself as a kind of composite of the self-promoting and aggressively intrusive writer Canadian audiences had been warned about.

Suddenly overwhelmed by the sights unfolding in front of him, this self-proclaimed "Historian" (*Dodge* 132) gives way to an uncharacteristically unrestrained impulse to conjoin (and often create) superlatives that prove anything but impartial descriptors of the people he observes: "taken as a whole, they form the raggedest, oiliest, fattest, drollest, noisiest, sleekest, dirtiest, ignorantest, prejudicest, narrow-mindedest, shirtlessest, clotheslessest, idlest, carelessest, jolliest, absurdest, rascaliest -- but still, for all that, perhaps -- taken all in all -- the happiest community on the face of the earth" (*Dodge* 18). When the impulse reappears some pages later, De Mille's narrator halts the process abruptly, directing those readers who may feel cheated to "see preceding pages" for "further epithets" (*Dodge* 29). Still later, following a description of Vesuvius, the narrator steps out of his narrative for a moment of self-congratulatory explication that we might expect from a writer committed to boosting the general cultural tone of writing in Victorian Canada:

--- There - I flatter myself that in the way of description it would not be easy to beat the above. I just throw it off as my friend Titmarsh, poor fellow, once said, to show what I could do if I tried. I have

decided not to put punctuation marks there, but rather to let each reader supply them for himself. They are often in the way, particularly to the writer, when he has to stop in the full flow of a description and insert them - (*Dodge* 42-3)

Using such interpolations to reflect both the anticipated journey structure familiar from the travelogue as an established genre as well as the expected impartiality of the shaper of this tour record, De Mille gradually moves toward a particularly reflexive exchange with his audience during which his narrator abandons all pretence of providing a conventional travelogue description of Rome and its environs. Following an extended heading in which he promises a "thoroughly exhaustive" detailing of the Eternal City's ancient history, topography, and art, the narrativized writer provides as the text of his chapter an equally wordy parenthetical explanation as to why the promised chapter will *not* appear and why he will *not* allow his antiquarian interests to override his good sense as a chronicler of the adventures of the Dodge Club:

[There! as a bill of fare I flatter myself that the above ought to take the eye. It was my intention, on the departure of the Club from Rome, to write a chapter of a thoroughly exhaustive character, as will be seen by the table of contents above: but afterward, finding the chapter had already reached the dimensions of a good-sized book before a quarter of it was written, I thought that if it were inserted in this work it would be considered by some as too long; in fact, if it were admitted nothing more would ever be heard of the Dodge Club; which would be a great pity, as the best of their adventures did not take place until after this period.]

Erasing a chapter that was to include typical and expected travelogue material on the grounds that such information has no logical relationship to "the real character of the present work," the narrator suggests that "any of [his] readers [who] prefer[s] to wait till they read that chapter before reading any further, all I can say is, perhaps they'd better not, as after all it has no necessary connection with the fortunes of the

Dodge Club" (*Dodge* 88).⁹³ He does promise, though, that this "definitive" history of Rome will appear as a separate book after he has "given to the world" a full catalogue of other scholarly endeavours which includes such telling titles as "The Toads of Maine," a detailed "Report of the Kennebunkport, Maine, United Congregational Ladies' Benevolent City Missionary and Mariners' Friend Society," and in a De Millean inside joke, "The Odyssey of Homer translated into the Dublin Irish dialect"; that final title is the same book that O'Halloran would dedicate his scholarly attention to in *Lady of the Ice*.⁹⁴

The main story to which De Mille's narrator remains so rigidly dedicated is itself a narrative populated with a number of inveterate writers and rewriters each of whom brings his own attitudes and partisan motivations to the stories of the journey being recounted by this self-congratulatory narrator. The tone and standard of the Club's authorial participation is set by the group's *de facto* leader, a resourceful traveller named Buttons to whom the privilege of authorship is understood in terms radically different than those expressed in Smith's discussion of the lamp of impartiality. Writing eloquent and lengthy letters home to personal friends, for instance, he describes "some of the fairest scenes on earth" and "the successive charms of the region" through which the Clubbers pass despite the fact

⁹³ As Kröller notes, many mid-century travelogues of the type to which De Mille looks as models for this chapter could be read as the antecedents to the popular *Baedeker's* and *Murray's* guidebooks that proved very popular with Canadian readers later in the century. Including detailed lists of useful books for travellers to read before and during their journey, these guides significantly shaped and popularized the appreciation of art, architecture, literature, and history in the age of mass travel.

⁹⁴ De Mille modifies this comic stylization slightly for Chapter XVII, which promises readers "Night on the Road. -- The Club Asleep.-- They Enter Rome. -- Thoughts on Approaching and Entering "The Eternal City." Given that it is night and that those characters whose thoughts are to provide the contents of the chapter are resting soundly, the narrator is left with little choice but to fill the body of his chapter with an illustrated nightscape. Prominent in the centre of the frame, though, is the conventional finger-shaped sign marking the way for travellers and readers in search of the next city/chapter.

that such scenes "made but little impression at the time, and indeed were scarcely seen at all through the vapor-covered cabin windows" (*Dodge* 13). With his memorandum-book always at hand, he provides readers at home (and of the novel) with descriptions and stories that have, as matter of habit, been "retouched" or "embellish[ed] with a few new features of an original character" (*Dodge* 31, 38).

The custom of Buttons's good friend Dick Whiffletree is more intriguing still. On the strength of an extended retrospection during which he recounts a fantastic narrative detailing his genealogy that ends with a declaration that "on the whole ... fiction should be preferred to dull facts like these," Dick is nominated as the Club's "Recording Secretary": he is, as De Mille emphasizes, cast into a position of the Club's authorized (and authorizing) "Historian" (*Dodge* 55). The irony of such an appointment is underscored when the newly appointed historian takes up his pen to fulfill the promise he had made to write an occasional travel piece for a "village paper" at home. Interrupted regularly during his composition with advice ("be original or be nothing") and admonishments from his fellow Clubbers ("it's not fair to work off an old college essay as European correspondence"), the Club Historian eventually succeeds in submitting a detailed and colourful travelogue for the enjoyment of his readers. What tips the reader of De Mille's travelogue to the presence of parodic stylization in this recounted achievement is the revelation that this "authentic" history is, in fact, pure fiction. It has been submitted to the unsuspected readers at home as authentic despite the fact that the Club has yet to visit any of the cities about which he writes; the "real live facts" that constitute his descriptions have been drawn from what he has "read in books of travels" (*Dodge* 57), which, like Buttons's travel journals, may have themselves been pure fabrications. Moreover, it cannot escape the reader of De Mille's stylized travelogue (itself based partially on a real journey) that the shaper of the book that he or she is reading might well behave with the same scant regard for impartiality,

and even honesty. As the equally intrusive narrator of the travelogue explains by way of justifying his decision to reproduce as part of his own text a number of passages "described in Dick's own words, as he pencilled them in his memorandum book," one must remain aware at all times of the Clubber's revisionist impulse. The reproduction from Dick's rough notes is as close as one can get to authenticity, the narrator explains, given that soon after the events "the description was retouched" (*Dodge* 31).

For such a habitual revisionist as Buttons, Dick's less-than-detached narration is well within the parameters of acceptable authorial practice. Secure in his conviction that "information is dull by itself," the Club leader goes so far as to suggest supplementing the "solid information" of the official Club history "with the lighter graces of amusement, fun, and fancy" (*Dodge* 57). Better still, he suggests, the goal should be to produce "the best kind" of narrative, to counteract, that is, the kind of narrative "which deals altogether in adventures," with "[i]ncidents of travel, fights with ruffians, quarrels with landlords, shipwrecks, robbery, odd scrapes, laughable scenes." When Dick balks at including a tale of ruffians in his authentic history due to the minor inconvenience that the Club had met to date "with no ruffians," or recounting adventures when "there are no adventures to relate," Buttons responds with a piece of reflexive advice that stylizes once and for all any New World cultural deference to pronouncements and promises of an authenticating impartial discourse: "use a [writer's] privilege and invent them," he states to the Club's official historian. "What was the imagination given for if not to use?" (*Dodge* 56-57).⁹⁵

⁹⁵ See also the American Senator's equally futile attempts at providing "a true, liberal, unbiased, plain, unvarnished view of Rome" to readers of his local paper, *The New England Patriot* (73-5).

Such stylized interactions between the written and the rewritten, or alternatively between the written and the revised, punctuate De Mille's text. When the Dodge Clubbers, for instance, find themselves surrounded during one of their ventures by armed bandits, one of their members, an ever-plotting American Senator, comes up with a scheme whereby he divulges his plan for escape to his fellows while having the multilingual Buttons deflect attention through a simultaneous re- or mistranslation of their conversations in English to their Italian-speaking captors. De Mille represents this complex and vitally dialogized exchange through a series of parallel notations and interpolated reactions (physical and verbal) from both the English-speaking Clubbers and the Italian-speaking bandits. A brief excerpt of this lengthy exchange is reproduced here, complete with De Mille's own "explanatory" headings:

[What the Senator said.]

"Boys, look at these devils, one on each side of us. They have arranged some signal, and when it is given they will spring at us. Look sharp for your lives, and be ready to do what I say. Buttons, listen, and when you don't hear look at me, and I'll repeat it."

[Club -- "Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"He says, most noble Captain, and gentlemen, that he is desperately hungry; that he can't get what he wants to eat. He generally eats dried snakes, and the supply he brought from the Great American desert is exhausted; he wants more, and will have it."

[Sensation among bandits.]

(Dodge 47-48)⁹⁶

At such a moments readers can hardly forget that the text in hand is no more than the product of the processes of "real" world text-building, of the words manipulated into type, corrected by other readers, and bound in pages. Adding to this parodic stylization is the reader's recognition that Buttons's (mis)translation of the Senator's plot is, in fact, an accurate recapitulation of the Senator's role in the story of *The*

⁹⁶ De Mille returns to this form of parallel notation to depict typographically what his narrator describes as the "give and take" of the Old World barter system (53-54).

Dodge Club to that point: he is a man whose trip through France and Italy has been dedicated to searching for food and promoting the greatness of all things American.

With its multiplicity of "authentic" national languages circulating throughout its complex narrative structure, *The Dodge Club* underscores the essential hetero-voicedness of its own constructions and points toward the hetero-voicedness of the communities (local and national) forming both within and beyond the text, communities in which a sense of single-voiced national character was increasingly coming to be seen as a kind of organizing centre around which a nation and harmonizing common character could coalesce. Led by the multilingual Buttons, a man with "a chivalrous soul" (*Dodge* 19) and an "extraordinary volubility" (*Dodge* 11), the Dodge Clubbers find themselves free, in fact, to move relatively unscathed through a Bakhintian heteroglossia of "Continental" languages, including French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Tellingly, their only serious and most comic misadventures occur when the unilingual and aggressively monologic American nationalist, Senator Jones from Massachusetts, sets out in his fervour to explore and to promote the American way of nation-building and cultural boosterism. With an absolute faith in the universality and transcultural authenticity of his national language, the Senator pushes forward with a bombast that threatens, on occasion, to decline into caricature. Characterized by the "little peculiarity" of "bawl[ing] broken English at the top of his voice when he wants to communicate with foreigners" (*Dodge* 7), the Senator's engagements with other languages and other cultures inevitably end in frustration that reinforces, in the Senator's mind at least, the impossibility of any kind of meaningful exchange; to the reader, the exchanges reinforce the limitations of the kind of monologic nationalism that Canadians would be well advised to avoid.

The most dramatic of these exchanges occurs during the Clubbers' visit to Rome, when the Senator goes out alone in "his explorations of the nooks and

corners" of the city with little thought that he is without the accompaniment of his much-needed interpreter. Overcome suddenly with a desire for frogs' legs, he enters a cafe determined to secure for himself a plate of this "local" delicacy. With a "thundering rap to summon the waiter," the Senator, confident that his American ingenuity will allow him to skirt the language barrier, orders with a series of guttural sounds and "long shrill gurgle[s] such as he thought the frogs might give" (*Dodge* 79). Following repeated attempts to communicate in this fashion, and with a parenthetical aside by the writer-narrator noting with some irony the Aristophanic tradition in which the American seemed to be working, the Senator storms from the cafe "in majestic wrath" (*Dodge* 80), unfaltering in his belief that it was the Romans and not himself who failed in the communicative act.

Having self-consciously forced the reader to hesitate over the Senator's exaggerated and defamiliar use of language, De Mille draws attention, too, to the fact that the notion of a single legitimizing national discourse is, in the end, untenable, centred not in the homogeneity of a harmonizing and impartial national voice (literary or otherwise) but in the discursive heterogeneity that Canadian writers and readers participated in daily, in the multiplicity of sometimes dissenting voices that circulated within the culture of the New World. As Zarifopol-Johnston notes, it is this openness of parody to "various speech stylizations" that "pierce the texture of the narrative discourse, sometimes pushing the authorial voice itself to the periphery of the discourse," that allows the parodist to weave "an entirely new narrative texture in which the authorial voice no longer carries the weight of authority but is relegated to a place among a chorus of competing voices."⁹⁷

Resisting a kind of Senatorial regression into cultural monologism as well as the more common articulation of a cultural elitism that implies that only a "true" literary

⁹⁷ Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston, *To Kill a Text: The Dialogic Fiction of Hugo, Dickens, and Zola* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1995), 106.

discourse (as opposed to popular or extra-literary) can and should provide the centre of a national character, Canadian parodies spoke of and to a culture that was, to borrow Bakhtin's image, "washed by heteroglot waves from all sides" (*Imagination* 307).

De Mille establishes this point most clearly in a chapter that promises to be a delightful diversion in which "The Glory, Grandeur, Beauty, and Infinite Variety of the Pincian Hill" will be "Narrated and detailed not columnarily but exhaustively, and after the manner of Rabelais." In a stylized discovery that serves as a kind of celebration of multiplicity and diversity, De Mille fulfills the promise of the stylized encounter announced by his marked allusion to one of Bakhtin's most cherished touchstones in his theorizing of parody. After a futile attempt to narrate the cultural archive recalled in a visit to a "[p]lace on earth to which no place else can hold a candle," the unnamed narrator slides away from traditional description to a robust catalogue of the sights and sounds of this archival place:

Pooh -- what's the use of talking? Contemplate, O Reader, from the Pincian Hill the following:

The Tiber, The Campagna, The Aqueducts, Trajan's column, Antonine's Pillar, The Piazza del Popolo, The Torre del Capitoglio, The Hoar Capitoline, The Palatine, The Quirinal, The Viminal, The Esquiline, The Caelian, The Aventine, The Vatican, The Janiculum, St. Peter's, The Lateran, The Stands for Roast Chestnuts, The New York *Times*, the Hurdy-gurdys, The London *Times*, The Raree-Shows, The Obelisk of Mosaic Pharoah, The Wine-carts, *Harper's Weekly*, Roman Beggars, Cardinals, Monks, Artists, Nuns, The New York *Tribune*, French soldiers, Swiss Guards, Dutchmen, Mosaic-workes, Plane-trees, Cypress-trees, Irishmen, Propaganda Students, Goats, Fleas, Men from Bosting, Patent Medicines, Swells, Lager, Meershaum-pipes, The New York *Herald*, Crosses, Rustic Seats, Dark-eyed Maids, Babel, Terrapins, Marble Pavements, Spiders, Dreamy Hazem Jews, Cossacks, Hens, All the Past, Rags, The original

Barrel-organ, The original Organ-grinder, Bourbon Whiskey, Civita Vecchia Olives, Hadrian's Mausoleum, *Harper's Magazine*, The Laurel Shade, Murray's Hand-book, Cicerones, Englishmen, Dog-carts, Youth, Hope, Beauty, Conversation Kenge, Bluebottle Flies, Gnats, *Galignani*, States, Peasants, Cockneys, Gas-lamps, Dundreary, Michiganders, Paper-collars, Pavilions, Mosaic Brooches, Little Dogs, Little Boys, Lizards, Snakes, Golden Sunsets, Turks, Purple Hills, Placards, Shin-plasters, Monkeys, Old Boots, Coffee-roasters, Pale Ale, The Dust of Ages, The Ghost of Rome, Ice Cream, Memories, Soda-Water, Harper's Guide-Book (*Dodge* 60).⁹⁸

Emphasizing the presence of Old World cultural traces that had acquired archival status within Victorian Canada, this catalogue at the same time interpolates traces (some animate) from the cultural present. The interpolated entries, from the New York *Herald* to the coffee-roaster, represent the evidence on which such a remarkable monument to various national pasts are founded, but suggest, too, that this evidence itself needs reevaluation, thus leaving the sense of culture "as a collection of ruins contained in one vast museum"⁹⁹ in question.

Exemplifying Bakhtin's definition of parody as an internally and intentionally dialogized narrative hybrid, De Mille's museum clearly has "as its goal the illumination of one [cultural discourse] by means of another" (*Imagination* 361). Like Dickens's emphasis on the architectural metaphor of the bleak house or chancery, De Mille's Pincian Hills are "like a fun-house at a fair, part 'old curiosity shop,' part puzzle, part labyrinth, part hall of mirrors. The main features ... are [their] irregularity and eclecticism."¹⁰⁰ It is a richly dialogized space in which

⁹⁸ See also the Dodge Clubbers visit to "the Tombs leading to the Herculancum Gate" at Pompeii (37).

⁹⁹ Richard Cavell, "Bakhtin Reads De Mille: Canadian Literature, Post-modernism, and the Theory of Dialogism," *Future Indicative: Literary Theory and Canadian Literature*, ed. John Moss (Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1987), 208.

¹⁰⁰ Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston, *To Kill a Text: The Dialogic Fiction of Hugo, Dickens, and Zola* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1995), 96.

individual cultural artifacts from "All the Past" and from the archives of classic and Old World landed traditions, no longer form separate hierarchized categories but openly intermingle and partake of one another's nature. As Bradbury emphasizes in "An Age of Parody," within the Old World concepts of culture and history "the name for a monument that is both solid and evanescent." Parody, he continues, "accepts the truth of the monument but also questions and tests the artifice used in its construction. It perpetuates and destroys, becomes a form of mysterious translation, exploring the mystery of institutionalisation and the paradox of the existence of any art-object."¹⁰¹ In this sense, De Mille's parodic stylization of this historical and cultural archive opens the door to the museum, extending the scope of the landed collection in order to bring the past and the esteemed, the present and the everyday, and even the animate into dialogized contact with that which has been thought and said (and held and broken) in other times and other places. Moreover, closing as it does with a reference to one of Harper's popular series of guide books, De Mille's Rabelaisian list has a peculiar air of incompleteness and openness that refract, too, the exclusive authority of the ideal of landedness itself; there is, De Mille suggests, always room to add more to the story of the landed past "culture" once the seams of the archives have burst.

As De Mille also implies, the Victorian Canadian fixation with the exigency of establishing and safeguarding a heritage involves more than simply an importation of a Scott-based narrative model or unquestioning dedication to Smith's lamp of impartiality. If Scott's *Waverley* novels gave Canadian writers a model of "a new capacity for fine discrimination between what was authentic and what was false

¹⁰¹ Bradbury, 55.

in a historically concrete milieu,"¹⁰² parody pointed toward what Bakhtin would call the "gay relativity" (*Rabelais* 462) of Canada's literature and national literary character. As in the case of Frye's question "Where is here?," the questions of narrating Canada as a new and distinct place must be extended to include a questioning as to whether it is necessary to renovate the old and possibly outdated notions of why and how a culture is to root itself in the historical-minded soils and narrative patternings of a colonial past. In inviting a reconsideration of the key concepts of impartiality and authenticity, as well as of the cultural preoccupations that perpetuate their continuing value within the cultural economies of the New World, these parodies invite, too, the reconsideration of any writing that is celebrated as evidence of the spirit of the national character. Since every discourse is seen to be at once potentially representative and potentially interpretive of its specific milieu, the very notion of a discursive model that might serve as an especially privileged and homogenizing centre around which national character can coalesce is laid bare; the distance between reliably transparent texts or documents and subjectively distorted, unreliable, or opaque texts disappears when reflected in the mirror of these parodies.

Working within a culture that celebrated the potential of a native literary tradition to articulate to a people their common ideals and aspirations, Canadian parodists saw at the same time the preconceptions and limitations burdening such a celebration. Faced with a culture that increasingly privileged certain discourses and certain literary practices over others, most notably those aimed at "booming" a potentially monologic sense of national character, they engage the hetero-voicedness of parody to construct narratives that both illuminate and refract these

¹⁰² Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), 3.

sociocultural pressures, that openly and self-consciously introduce into their fictions discourses that are in and of the culture of the time but have been singled out conspicuously as extra- or even non-literary, as *not* the stuff that stories of national character are to be made of. They look to the double-structuredness of parody by way of positing a somewhat oblique answer to Frye's question. They look, too, to invite Canadian readers to consider again the multivalent discursive relations that have given rise to the Canada of the present. Appropriately, it is this same double-structuredness that Stephen Leacock, the writer most often considered the father of Canadian parody and humour, would look to again as Canada moved into the twentieth century.

CHAPTER FOUR

1894:

LEACOCK AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN CANADIAN PARODY

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1894 might seem an odd date to suggest as marking the birth of modern parody in Canada. The end of Macdonald conservatism was still two years away, a passing that also marked the rise of the country's first Liberal government and the return of the Manitoba School Question to the forefront of Canadian political culture. The flattering attentions paid to Canada at the first Colonial Conference (1887), and the not-so-flattering outburst of regional dissonance from the Interprovincial Conference of the same year, were gradually settling into the back rooms of the collective consciousness. But 1894 did mark in many significant ways the shift toward a new episteme in Canada.

A number of the popular writers, publishers, and cultural critics who have figured prominently in this study were by 1894 removed from Canada's cultural scene. Some, like Fleming and De Mille, had died (both in 1880), though their books were still available in libraries throughout English Canada and reprint editions continued to attract readers well into the 1890s. Others had left Canada: Robert Barr for England in 1881 (though he would look to this country for

inspiration for his first novel, *In the Midst of Alarms*, which was published in 1894¹), and Graeme Mercer Adam for upstate New York in 1892.

For many of those who chose to remain, 1894 was a watershed year. John George Bourinot, having published *Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness* in 1893 and contributed to *The Week's* 1894 series of "Views on Canadian Literature," would turn away from questions of native literature and culture to spend the later years of his career writing the books on parliamentary procedure and constitutional law for which he is best remembered. The Ottawa triumvirate of Lampman, Campbell, and Scott would move off in various directions, having closed the door on their "Mermaid Inn" in 1893; Lampman, arguably the most forward-looking of the three, would not live to see century's end. And 1894 marked the end of an important and durable Canadian literary institution when the seemingly indefatigable J.W. Bengough, having braved (and contributed to) the publishing and political storms of more than two decades, added his trademark raven emblem to the final issue of the always provocative *Grip*.

Change was in the air, with new social relations and attitudes taking centre stage. The economic depression that had burdened the 1880s was lifting and a renewal gaining strength, bringing with it a new wave of policies aimed at securing the benefits of western expansion. As Laurier articulated in his now-famous observation that "the twentieth century will be the century of Canada," it was a time of transition and spirited optimism in what Charles G.D. Roberts called the "[b]oundless ... possibilities of that future upon which the eyes of Canada are now fixed with confident but questioning hope."² The country's intellectual and literary

¹ Barr would set two of his later novels in Canada: the sentimental romance *One Day's Courtship* (1896) and *The Measure of the Rule* (1907), his partially autobiographical portrait of the Toronto Normal School.

² Roberts, *History* 437.

spirit was also moving into a period of change as a new generation of writers began to capture the attention of Canadian readers with their sometimes controversial ideas and narrative strategies: such popular novelists as Sara Jeannette Duncan (*A Daughter of Today*, 1894) and Joanna Ellen Wood (*The Untempered Wind*, 1894), for instance, brought the stories of what were then considered "untraditional" women to a home audience. Many established writers, too, looked toward new imaginative horizons around this time, introducing heretofore unexplored forms or themes into Canada's national literature: Scott's *In the Village of Viger* (1896), for instance, explored the complexities of the story cycle (a form that has since "become something of a sub-genre within the Canadian short story"³) while Roberts's *Earth's Enigmas* (1896) established the popular animal story as Canada's own.

And in 1894, too, a twenty-five-year-old Stephen Leacock succeeded for the first time in placing some of his writing beyond the relatively cloistered pages of *The Varsity*, the University of Toronto's student newspaper. In a sadly ironic convergence of events, Leacock's only article published that year, "That Ridiculous War in the East," appeared in the 6 October issue of *Grip*. The man generally considered to be the father of Canadian humour and parody was introduced to what was then his widest native audience in one of the last issues of a magazine that had since 1873 brought such inspired parodies as "Claude Coursol," "Beneath the Maple Tree," and "Guffery Bumstead" into Canadian homes. By the next year, *Grip* would be gone and Leacock would be entertaining readers through the pages of such American publications as *Life*, *Truth*, and *Our Monthly*.

This moment of brief contact between *Grip* and the creator of such Canadian classics as *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) and *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (1914) has warranted no discussion in critical or

³ Gerald Lynch, "The One and the Many: English-Canadian Short Story Cycles," *Canadian Literature* 130 (1991): 91.

historical appraisals or reappraisals of Leacock or of Canadian literature. However brief this contact may have been, it signals both a turning point in the history of parodic writing in Canada and a move toward a new set of epistemic uncertainties that can be seen as related to but distanced from those that had shaped Victorian Canada.

At the most obvious level, Leacock's contact with a such a Victorian-Canadian standard as *Grip* can be read as symbolic of his well-defined attachment to the ideals and cultural tenor of another time; like *Grip*'s founders, contributors, and readers, Leacock, a Victorian by birth, remained throughout his life a Victorian by inclination, a man who "saw himself as a cultured gentleman of late Victorian times"⁴ and whose "thought in social-political and social-religious issues is suffused with echoes of the nineteenth century."⁵ Declaring this affiliation openly and often throughout his writings, he can be seen, on the one hand, as the modern manifestation of many of the anxieties and ambiguities that had defined Victorian Canada. At once comfortable with theories of market-driven economies, he was at the same time intensely wary of technology, institutionalized bureaucratization, and the insidious decline into mechanistic materialism to which unchecked "progress" might lead. A staunch defender of his own rights and ideas, particularly in his dealings with publishers and later with the administration of McGill University, he was at the same time fearful that individualism, like business, could be subject to the temptations of reductionism and egocentricity. An ardent and conservative advocate of respect for traditional institutions and for what he saw as the well-being of the status quo, he remained a man to whom liberation movements, particularly those of a socialist nature or aimed at securing more rights for women, were

⁴ Berger, *The Sense of Power* 44.

⁵ Gerald Lynch, *Stephen Leacock: Humour and Humanity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1988), 15.

anathema.⁶ And like another late Victorian, Sara Jeannette Duncan, he was a cultural and economic nationalist who dismissed protectionist policies as the spectre of a narrow provincialism and who astutely recognized (and exploited) the market for his own work in England and the United States. Explained by modern critics as the sometimes paradoxical expressions of a world view unified by what has been described variously as Leacock's humanism,⁷ his red-toryism,⁸ and most recently by Lynch (via Desmond Pacey and Charles Taylor) as his tory-humanism,⁹ the tensions

⁶ See "The Devil and the Deep Sea: A Discussion of Modern Morality" (*University Magazine*, 1910) and "The Political Rights of Women -- The Case Against the Suffrage," (*Toronto Star Weekly*, 1911). Indeed, Leacock's discussion of Dickens's attitude toward women might be considered a concise statement of his own position:

Indeed, in regard to women [he] from first to last took what one might call an entirely Victorian point of view. He lived well before the days of women's rights, women's votes, women in college, and women in the business world. Like all his generation, he rated women, intellectually, away down. While nominally placed upon a pedestal as angels, fairies, and ministering spirits, in reality they were the inferior sex. Their function was to adorn life, to soften it, to beauty it, and so on; under these flattering terms was concealed the fact that it was men who ruled and thought and acted and created. (*Dickens* 219)

General discussions of this aspect of Leacock's world view are forwarded by F.W. Watt in "Critic or Entertainer? Stephen Leacock and the Growth of Materialism," *Canadian Literature* 5 (1960): 33-42, and Alan Bowker in his introduction to *The Social Criticism of Stephen Leacock: The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice and Other Essays* (1973), which includes six essays published between 1907 and 1919 in which Leacock articulates his views on "imperialism, education and culture, religion and morality, feminism, prohibition, and social justice" (ix), that is, on what he called that "dense flock of clergymen, temperance workers, women-rights-women, municipal-purity people and all the whole batallion" (Letter to E.V. Lucas, 9 February 1915).

⁷ Ralph Curry, *Stephen Leacock: Humorist and Humanist* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).

⁸ Alan Bowker, "Introduction," *The Social Criticism of Stephen Leacock: The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice and Other Essays* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973), xxxvii.

⁹ Lynch resolves this apparent oxymoron in his chapter on "The Middle Way: An Introduction to Leacock's Tory-Humanist Norm" (*Humour and Humanity* 3-23); see also Desmond Pacey, "Leacock as Satirist," *Queen's Quarterly* 58 (1951): 208-219.

fissuring Leacock's life and writing are important and complex. As the appreciative Donald Cameron suggests, Leacock might be best seen as a "late and troubled Victorian."¹⁰

Following his 1894 article in *Grip*, Leacock would explore his ideas along two distinct tracks. The academic Leacock worked slowly and methodically toward the 1906 publication of *Elements of Political Science*, the book that was to be his best-selling title. Leacock the humorist worked toward establishing for himself a regular pattern of periodical publication that would continue until his death in 1944. It was not until 1910, though, that his wife Beatrix would gather a number of these earlier pieces into the book that launched Leacock on the career for which he is best known. Completed early in the year, this first book of humour was offered initially to Houghton Mifflin, who had already published the immensely profitable text on political science; the Boston house turned the new book down, though, arguing that the market for humorous sketches was, at best, uncertain.¹¹ Prompted by his brother George to undertake the task of publishing the project himself, Leacock negotiated with the Montreal-based Gazette Printing Company for an edition of three thousand copies to be modestly bound in green paper-board with a spine sticker giving the title and author's name. (In negotiations that foretold the attention to proprietary details that would define his subsequent dealings with

¹⁰ Donald Cameron, *Faces of Leacock* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1967), 5. The two books seminal for understanding many of the paradoxes crucial to Leacock's world view are Curry's biographical *Stephen Leacock: Humorist and Humanist* (1959) and Lynch's critical study, *Stephen Leacock: Humour and Humanity* (1988). The influence of these two works on my discussion of Leacock's often ambiguous vision is pervasive.

¹¹ See Curry, who refers to a holograph note by Leacock dated 12 December 1934 on the fly leaf of a copy of the book (79). See also David M. Legate's *Stephen Leacock: A Biography* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1970), 51.

publishers, Leacock retained control of the promotion and, to a lesser extent, the distribution of this first book of humour.)¹²

Eclipsing any discussion of the business behind *Literary Lapses* was its remarkable success; at thirty-five cents a copy, its initial printing sold out in two months.¹³ One reader was particularly impressed: having picked up the thin volume during his annual visit to Canada and read it during his steamer journey home, the London publisher John Lane contacted Leacock in the fall of 1910 to negotiate purchase of the rights to *Literary Lapses*; a suitable arrangement was reached and a British edition was released early in 1911. The book proved as popular in England as it had in Montreal; as one reviewer noted, Leacock's stories were soon being quoted "in every journal that gives a column or two periodically of humorous excerpts."¹⁴ Indeed, the book was so successful that Lane alone would reprint it twenty-two times by 1950.¹⁵

In retrospect, this earliest book contains some of Leacock's finest and most frequently anthologized work, notably "My Financial Career" (which had originally appeared in *Life* in 1895), "Boarding-House Geometry," (from *Truth*, 1897), and the initial publication of "A, B, and C." As Curry notes, it is in this first book that critics can find "almost the whole scope of Leacock's humor of the next fifteen years."¹⁶

¹² In a letter to Mr. Tanguay of the Montreal News Company, the sole Montreal distributor of *Literary Lapses*, Leacock confirms the following arrangements: "It is understood that you are to pay me 23 cents each for the books sold, and that they are to be put on the retail market at 35 cents. I am to pay you 3 cents a pound for such books as you send out and are returned to you unsold. I will also supply you with 200 paper placards and 100 placards in cardboard to be used as advertisements in stores and book stands" (3 February 1910).

¹³ Curry, 82.

¹⁴ Anon., "Stephen Leacock, Humorist," *The Living Age* 24 (5 November 1921): 353.

¹⁵ Curry, 86

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

More importantly, it is also a book that signals Leacock's abiding attraction to the double-structuredness of parody, with such prominent inclusions as "Lord Oxhead's Secret," which refunctions the conventions of the historical romance, "The Life of John Smith" (biography), and "A Lesson in Fiction" ("the modern melodramatic novel"). Indeed, parody was soon established as a kind of touchstone to which he returned throughout his career and which locates him in a tradition of Canadian writing that extends back to Holmes's *Belinda* as early as seven decades earlier.

Leacock reaffirms this affection for parody with his second book.

Composed with the working title "Novels in Nutshells,"¹⁷ *Nonsense Novels* is a significant work in the Leacock *oeuvre*, for in these ten short fictions Leacock turns exclusively to parody. With an acknowledged affiliation with such popular antecedents as W.P. Thackeray's *Novels by Eminent Hands* (1847) and Bret Harte's popular collection of *Condensed Novels* (1867),¹⁸ *Nonsense Novels* is not a book that looks to parody any particular story or particular author. Rather, Leacock looks in

¹⁷ Legate, 54. In *Nonsense Novels*, as Curry suggests, "Leacock did something he seldom tried again in his writing career. He wrote a book; that is, the contents of the volume had never appeared elsewhere and were written expressly for book publication" (94). Like De Mille and Fleming before him, Leacock was a consummate professional when it came to managing the business of his writing, a man keenly aware of the financial gains to be realized from using and reusing a single piece in periodical and newspaper publications before releasing it in book form. As the popularity and reprintings of *Nonsense Novels* accumulated (thirty-six reprintings by 1950), he soon discovered that "writing a book" was not the most profitable of strategies.

¹⁸ In *Humanity*, Leacock notes that all of these books were "[e]qually typical and excellently well done" examples of prose parodies that take as their models the style and the "matter" of previously written stories (75). In a number of his letters to John Lane from 1915 onward, Leacock proposes a book with the working title *The American Humorists* in which he would discuss the works of favourite American humorists, including Bret Harte. He did go on to include a separate chapter in his *The Greatest Pages of American Humor: A Study of the Rise and Development of Humorous Writings in America with Selections from the most notable of the Humorists* to Harte, noting in his introductory essay that with such parodies as *Condensed Novels* and *Lothaw* (of D'Israeli's *Lothair*) the American had "achieved a conspicuous and quite unparalleled success" ([Garden City: Sun Dial Press, 1936], 107).

these ten short fictions to parody popular genres or combinations of genres. In "Maddened by Mystery: or, The Defective Detective," for instance, he refracts the detective fictions popularized by Poe and Doyle (whose Sherlock Holmes was first parodied by another Canadian, Robert Barr); in "The Man in Asbestos: An Allegory of the Future," he finds his models in both the futurist fiction of such writers as Jules Verne and H.G. Wells and the English utopian tradition of Edward Bellamy. He extends his field of vision to include parodies of the confessional novels of Marie Bashkirtseff ("Sorrows of a Super Soul: or, The Memoirs of Marie Mushenough"), the gothic novel ("Q.' A Psychic Pstory of the Psupernatural"), the society-historical novel ("Gertrude the Governess: or, Simple Seventeen"), and two inclusions which refract genres that had already attracted the attention of many earlier Canadian parodists: "Guido the Gimlet of Ghent: A Romance of Chivalry" and "Hannah of the Highlands: or, The Laird of Loch Locherty," a story in which he turns again to the genre of the historical romance that had served him well in "Lord Oxhead" and which at least one reviewer celebrated as the best in the book.¹⁹

Public reaction to these parodies was, again, resoundingly positive. The New York *Evening Sun* praised *Nonsense Novels* as a book that allowed the contemporary reader "to become familiar with the work of our most popular novelists in one sitting. What is more, and what differentiates the volume before us from the volumes it mirrors," the reviewer continues, is the fact that the reader "will have some fun" while doing it. The London *Star* suggested that *Nonsense Novels* was even more humorous than Leacock's first book, and that it would firmly secure its creator a place alongside Samuel Clemens as the most prominent and popular

¹⁹ Anon., "Rev. of Stephen Leacock's *Nonsense Novels*," *The Montreal Weekly Witness* (11 July 1911): 14. As this reviewer also notes, "Hannah" is "written in a style which sufficiently reminds one of the *Waverley Novels*" with its stylized renderings of "the Scotch weather and feuds."

humorist of the time.²⁰ Indeed, *Nonsense Novels* entered a much wider cultural consciousness when American President Theodore Roosevelt borrowed a line from "Gertrude" for one of his political speeches.²¹ Writing in *Punch* five years later, J.P. Collins would reflect upon the tradition in which Leacock wrote and the reasons for the lavish praise his parodies received:

It seems only the other day that "Nonsense Novels" arrived to prove that a vogue in which Thackeray and Bret Harte excelled is still a living force in criticism, and that a Canadian professor is equal to either of those [masters] in the power of turning the eccentricities of modern fiction against itself. If he turns on its practitioners as well, he is not content with mimicry of their accent and locutions, but tries to reconstitute their viewpoint, and always with an imperturbable good humour. You perceive very soon that with him the mimetic stage has never been more than a kind of reserve trench in the 'big push' against humbug and literary pretension, and that the parodist in this case is also a creative humorist of the first water.²²

As Leacock's fellow humorist and first biographer Peter McArthur noted in 1923, in producing parodies of best-sellers Leacock himself "produced a best seller," a book that is "sheer fun from start to finish." "If Hazlitt could have seen this book," McArthur celebrated, "he would have devoted a special essay to it."²³

²⁰ Cited in Legate, 55. The aforementioned reviewer for *The Montreal Weekly Witness* agrees with this assessment, suggesting that *Nonsense Novels* will "undoubtedly mark Dr. Leacock as the foremost Canadian humorist of the time" (14).

²¹ Less well known is the fact that "Hannah of the Highlands" inspired a young F. Scott Fitzgerald to pen his "Jemina, a story of the Blue Ridge Mountains, by John Phlox Jr."

²² J.P. Collins, "Stephen Leacock, Ph.D.: Savant and Humorist," *The Living Age* (December 1916): 802.

²³ Peter McArthur, *Stephen Leacock* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1923), 139.

But as Collins and McArthur were also quick to caution, such acclaim did not come without cost. Ironically, both suggest that *Literary Lapses* and *Nonsense Novels* might have been *too* successful, and might in the longer term limit the ways in which the book-buying public viewed Leacock. "Too much emphasis has been laid on [Leacock's] faculty for parody," Collins explains to his readers, reminding them in the process that though parody might well be Leacock's most obvious comic strength, it "is only one weapon after all in his well-stocked armory." Still, Collins's praise is lavish. Suggesting that Leacock proves to audiences throughout Europe that the Old World "enjoys no monopoly of wit," he goes on to prescribe "the circulation of an unlimited edition" of Leacock's books "in all languages" as the cure to a host of social ills.²⁴ McArthur, too, balances accolades with counsel, suggesting that despite the fact that "[a]s a single book 'Nonsense Novels' does not deserve a word of censure," its success might be the cause of some apprehension on the part of its creator:

Since its appearance the public has demanded more nonsense novels, and the publishers have tried to make it appear that all his later work has been of the same class. This is not true. He has allowed himself a wide range, which embraces pathos as well as nonsense, but publishers, critics and readers have seemingly conspired to make believe that all his productions are nonsense sketches.²⁵

If Leacock had such concerns, he never expressed them openly. On the contrary, both *Literary Lapses* and *Nonsense Novels* remained personal favourites of Leacock, and as late as 1925 he remained proud of their continued and, he hoped, continuing popularity. In a letter to Frank Dodd, whose company eventually secured the North American reprint rights to many of his books, Leacock boasted that these two early

²⁴ Collins, 801-02, 804.

²⁵ McArthur, 141.

books, even "after ten years of publication has [sic] such a continuous and steady sale in England and America that it looked as if they would become permanent properties of value."²⁶

Leacock would return to parody throughout his career, giving it a prominent place in almost all of his subsequent collections as well as on his various speaking tours. Indeed, a selected readings of his parodies became the highlight of his 1917 lecture tour for the benefit of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.²⁷ A brief survey of the decade following the publication of *Nonsense Novels* gives a solid representation of the centrality of parodic discourse in his writing. *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy* (1915) includes "Spoof: A Thousand-Guinea Novel," which takes as its models the modern psychological novel and the contemporary craze for novel-writing competitions. The same volume includes "Who Is Also Who: A New Pocket Dictionary," which refracts the famous *Who's Who* style and format with a refunctioned emphasis on the less-than-rich or famous. *Further Foolishness* (1916) includes among its various parodies a section of "Stories Shorter Still," which refunctions contemporary tastes for *Reader's Digest*-style fictions with "An Irreducible Detective Story," "A Compressed Old English Novel," and "A Condensed Interminable Novel." Leacock closed out this profitable and prolific decade with *Winsome Winnie and Other New Nonsense Novels* (1920), his most consistently parodic collection since the original *Nonsense Novels*. These new sketches reveal, again, the diversity of Leacock's parody with "Winsome Winnie: or, Trial and Temptation" ("narrated after the best models of 1875"), "John and I" ("Narrated after the approved fashion of the best Heart and Home Magazines"), "The Split in the Cabinet" (political novel), "Who Do You Think Did It?, or The Mixed-Up

²⁶ Letter to Frank Dodd [Dodd, Mead & Company], 12 February 1925.

²⁷ Curry, 126-27.

Murder Mystery" (detective story), "Broken Barriers, or Red Love on a Blue Island" (sea tale), "The Blue and the Grey: A Pre-War War Story," and "Buggam Grange: A Good Old Ghost Story," one of Leacock's most skilful parodies. As Leacock's career progressed, this list would expand to include parodic refunctionings of "almost every [popular] form of writing possible, [including] obituaries, drama, novels, slick magazine fiction, do-it-yourself articles, scholarly articles, memoirs, verse, guide-books, outlines, oratory, and journalism."²⁸

Despite both the international success of these early parodies and their role in establishing Leacock in the opinion of many readers as a parodist as opposed to a more general humorist, modern critics approaching Leacock's humorous writing have tended either to ignore them (Bowker and Lynch) or to be critically dismissive.²⁹ Both Douglas Bush and Robertson Davies, for instance, argue that *Nonsense Novels* lacks "the finer grain" of Leacock's earlier effort or (more seriously) of a contemporaneous publication like Max Beerbohm's *A Christmas Garland* (1912).³⁰ To be clear, the purpose of this chapter is not to recover Leacock's parodic writing by rushing madly off in all directions in order to establish the success of each of his constituent parts; indeed, such an endeavour would add little to the ongoing exploration of this intensely complex writer.

Leacock as parodist broke no new technical or stylistic ground; on the contrary, and significantly, like so many of the writers discussed throughout this

²⁸ Curry, 94.

²⁹ Francis Zichy concurs with this argument, noting in 1990 that it "is hard to see how [any] *book-length* study of Leacock in which *Literary Lapses* and *Nonsense Novels* do not even appear ... can advance our knowledge of his comic art" ("Problem Tory," *Canadian Literature* 127 [1990]: 170).

³⁰ Robertson Davies, "Introduction," *Feast of Stephen* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 13-14; Douglas Bush, "Stephen Leacock," *The Canadian Imagination: Dimensions of a Literary Culture*, ed. David Staines (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1977), 133-34.

study, Leacock's greatest strength came from being an astute judge of popular taste who understood the nuances and comic potential of generic structures and conventions that had become overly familiar or overused.³¹ As a number of his contemporaries noted, Leacock's parodic spirit was not even particularly new on the Canadian literary scene by the early twentieth century. Both Logan and French in *Highways of Canadian Literature* (1924) and Pierce in *An Outline of Canadian Literature* (1927), for instance, suggest that Leacock's parodic stylizations were largely anticipated by De Mille, whom they suggest might be considered "the first of the Leacockians in Canada" and perhaps even "the father' of the later or 20th century Canadian humorists beginning with Leacock."³² Although these two early literary histories can be justly accused of an anti-Leacock bias in their surveys, their general sense of the relationship between Leacock as parodist and those who came before, whether De Mille or MacGeorge or the various contributors to *Grip*, remains valid. What is of interest here is not that Leacock wrote parody (he did) or whether he was a technical innovator in the history of Canadian parody (he was not). What is of interest is the complex question of what in this hetero-voiced, double-structured discourse appealed to Leacock and how his understanding of its function within a culture differed from those who came before.

As the first English Canadian to consider parody from both the critical and practical perspectives,³³ Leacock left ample though not necessarily consistent

³¹ "With a practiced eye," as Curry suggests, Leacock "picked the weaknesses in a style or genre, and these weak points became the strong points of his humor" (91-92).

³² *Highways* 323; *Outline* 164.

³³ Although De Mille does mention parody in his *Elements in Rhetoric* (1878), he does so only in passing and without any particular analysis of specific parodies or of the parodic tradition. Designing his book for the college trade, De Mille, in fact, continues the longstanding critical practice of defining parody as a kind of subset of satire, though he is quick to point to such examples as Cervantes's *Quixote*, the Smith brother's *Rejected Addresses*, and *Punch*'s "Prize Novelists" as

evidence of his theory of parody. Like earlier critics, he sees parody at its most basic level as a type of humour dedicated to the exploration of difference at the heart of similarity; it is, he explains, a range of "humorous writing -- achieved or attempted -- which consists in getting fun out of something already written."³⁴ Developing an informal typology of the parodic that ranges from "plain verbal parodies" based on a single work or author to more sophisticated parodies that take as their model a whole school of writing or genre (*Humanity* 75), Leacock suggests that the highest range of parody is that which extends beyond the margins of the page to refract "not merely the written books of a period but the life and manners of a period itself" (*Theory* 68). It is at this level that he placed his own work. In explaining that parody can be "extended from the treatment of a single author or book, to the treatment of whole *genre* or class of stories," he would suggest with due modesty that "[s]uch is, or is meant to be, the plan of the book called *Nonsense Novels* written by the present writer twenty-five years ago, and still not dead, or not quite" (*Humanity* 75).³⁵ Parody of this stature is transformed from a fundamentally intertextual event into "a brilliant form" of social discourse that can draw attention to "literary defects or philosophical fallacies in a way as legitimate or as exalted as a critical essay by a Sainte-Beuve or a Hippolyte Taine" (*Humanity* 64-5). Taking as its models not only specific texts or authorial styles, parody, when put to this "true use," functions as a means of rendering both literary and cultural "defects visible by heightening the colours to the point of visibility," to a level whereby the incongruity functions as a critical discourse "often more rapid and effective than criticism itself" (*Humanity* 74-6).

examples of prose parodies defined more by humour and curiosity than by satiric certainty (*Elements* 417).

³⁴ *Humour: Its Theory and Technique, With Examples and Samples; A Book of Discovery* (Toronto: Dodd, Mead, 1935), 42-3.

³⁵ See also *Theory* 52-3.

Forwarding the term "humour analogy" (*Humanity* 66) as an alternative to the imprecise language that he saw as traditionally hampering discussions of the parodic,³⁶ Leacock promotes an understanding of parody as what he calls, in an admittedly unfortunate word choice of his own, kindly parasitism. To him, the connotations of this troublesome term are wholly positive, with a tradition rooted solidly in the annals of biological science. "Biology has nothing against a parasite," he states:

He is as good as anybody else. Indeed the biologist calls the animal on which a parasite feeds, its 'host.' This seems a genial and kind relationship. In the plant world the connection appears even better. When the mistletoe vine throws its waving tendrils about the cedar and buries it under its foliage, the suggestion is of an embrace, of love and mutual dependence.

So it comes that a whole class of humorous literature may be called 'parasitic' without involving offense. No one should mind being compared to a Virginia creeper, though he might object to comparison with other kinds. (*Theory* 42)

³⁶ Terminological imprecision was, ironically, an ongoing concern of Leacock, whose own critical vocabulary is marked by troublesome connotations and indeterminations (see especially *Theory* 51-3). Still, he suggests accurately that one of the largest obstacles facing critics setting out to write about parody is a critical past hampered by a vocabulary that does not allow for precise differentiation between parody and such related but not synonymous terms as imitation and burlesque. Lacking the "adequate terms" to write about or explain such a complicated discourse, he explains, leads critics to "obscure rather than elucidate the subject" (*Humanity* 63) or worse still, to use "cheap words" which conceal the worth of what he considers to be a serious practice:

'parody,' once a noble Greek word that meant 'a song on the side' ... is degraded by the fact that the term is applied to school-boy adaptations of new words to old texts, often of a very pointless kind. Hence the word 'parody' has lost caste. We talk of a thing as being a 'mere parody' of this or that, to mean that it utterly fails to be what it tries to be. (*Humanity* 64)

"This lack of proper terms to designate" the techniques and effects of parody and other forms of humorous writing, he concludes, "cheapens [the] whole art" (*Humanity* 65).

Never degenerating to "a mere wanton destruction of the original, like the malicious smearing of paint over a beautiful painting" (*Humanity* 69), parody as a parasitic-critical discourse actually promotes a dialectical reconsideration of the habits of reading and writing literature. "[J]ust as the parasite may bring to the parent plant elements of life and sustenance and purify it from disease," he argues, so parody "may serve to invigorate and purify the whole body of letters." Looking to a familiar Old World model as an example, he suggests that "[a] large proportion of the pages of *Punch* are parasitic, and *Punch* is the most wholesome thing in England" (*Theory* 42-3).

As his allusion to *Punch* denotes, Victorian literature played a key role in Leacock's theory of parody as promoting a cultural dialectic. "The Victorians need[ed] parody," he suggests, because a "lot of their writing simply called aloud" for it, particularly given the increasingly automatized reliance on sentimentality, what he called the "sob-stuff." Drawing on the conventionality of this "sob-stuff" within their own fiction, a Victorian novelist like Thackeray could use the double-structuredness of his work to raise "a protest against the over-sentimentality, or the over-reputation of the original," an always kindly corrective to "a note too often struck" (*Humanity* 70). Even Dickens, Leacock's favourite Victorian writer, was susceptible to the "trap" of "substitute[ing] mechanism for inspiration," though only "in later years," Leacock is quick to qualify, "when he still drove his pen ahead with a tired brain and an exhausted imagination."³⁷ When Dickens chose inspiration over "mechanism," there was little doubt in Leacock's mind of the social function his writing could serve: "He did as much as, or more than, all the Benthams and the Romillys and the Shaftesburys to sweep away the removable hardships, the cruelties and injustices of the England of his day. He led where legislation followed. The pen

³⁷ *Charles Dickens: His Life and Work* (New York: Doubleday Doran, 1933), 49.

was mightier than the parliament" (*Theory* 111-12). Without the prodding of parody, though, Victorian literature could never have achieved such heights. Rather, it would have been "over-watered with tears" and choked by the "rank and weedy growth" of "its feebler aspects, its maudlin exaggeration, its joy in tears, its lack of restraint and reserve" (*Humanity* 70-1, *Dickens* 47).

Despite his admiration for Dickens, Leacock saw the most powerful example of the broader social function of parody in the fictional hero he considered "[a]mong the first of the great characters of modern humour" (*Humanity* 128) and to whose spirit he looked in his own early parody "Guido the Gimlet of Ghent": Cervantes's famous tilting knight Don Quixote. Although he borrows much of the structure and tone for his study from Hazlitt's lecture "On the English Novelists," in which he firmly situates the creator of the *Quixote* as "among the greatest ornaments and best benefactors of our kind,"³⁸ Leacock moves beyond Hazlitt's argument in setting Cervantes at the highest level of parodic art for his ability to engage parody as a discourse that refunctions and prompts reconsideration of a full range of sociocultural attitudes and structures. Writing at a point in Spain's history when chivalry had "filled its purpose" as a vital and "animating spirit" within a feudal system that had earlier embraced its sense of honour and codification of military engagement, Cervantes saw a cultural discourse that had by his time degenerated into a set of constrictive cultural schema. Chivalry had, in Leacockian terms, "gone utterly to seed," being reduced "to so many formulas as to who could fight whom, and how, that [it] was as bad as algebra." It is only through understanding the full context in which Cervantes wrote, what Bakhtin might call the social heteroglossia, that one "can realize what it was that Cervantes did with Don Quixote and appreciate the glorious humour that lies at the base of it" (*Humanity* 132). As

³⁸ Cf. "On the English Novelists" 211-18.

engaged by Cervantes, parody became "a social force" (*Humanity* 132) that allowed its shaper to "smil[e] sadly at the passing of the older chivalry"³⁹ while guiding toward "sanity the mind of a [culture] still a little delirious" with outmoded ideas and stale customs. It was Cervantes, he concludes, who "helped to laugh out of existence what remained of mediaeval chivalry" (*Humanity* 132, 129).⁴⁰

It was this Cervantine ideal for which Leacock himself aimed in his parody. Troubled by much of what he saw in the social character of the continent on which he lived, Leacock was somewhat burdened by the late Victorian instinct to turn to the past as a means of making sense of the present and of gauging the route that might best serve the future. Indeed, from the early years of his career Leacock had been intrigued both privately and professionally by the stories and culture of Canada's past.⁴¹ By 1907 he had researched and written a volume on *Baldwin, LaFontaine, Hincks: Responsible Government* for the pioneering "Makers of Canada" series, which included contributions from such familiar Victorian generalists as Bourinot (on *Lord Elgin*), LeSueur (*Count Frontenac*), and Longley (*Joseph Howe*).⁴² As Leacock had noted in a letter to Professor Paul S. Reinsch from June

³⁹ *Essays and Literary Studies* (Toronto: S.B. Gundy, 1916), 114.

⁴⁰ Leacock also suggests that "Mark Twain was like Don Quixote tilting against windmills" in his much-publicized attitudes toward religious orthodoxies (*Mark Twain* 150).

⁴¹ The most useful discussion of this ignored aspect of Leacock's writing is Ian Ross Robertson's "The Historical Leacock" (*Leacock: A Reappraisal*, 33-49). Although my discussion here approaches Leacock's early forays into popular historiography from a significantly different angle than Robertson's, I concur with his conclusion that there is much in this writing to warrant and to support further exploration. Writing in 1986, Robertson noted that "[o]ver the past twelve years no one has published an historical work focusing on Leacock, and over the past fifteen years at least two graduate students in history have abandoned proposed theses on him" (48).

⁴² McKillop suggests in *A Critical Spirit* (1977) that there was significant conflict between Leacock and LeSueur, the advising editor to the "Maker" series assigned the responsibility of overseeing the *Baldwin, LaFontaine, Hincks* volume. The two could not agree on an interpretation of *Responsible Government*, a

1906, the research for his "Makers" volume had "occasioned [his] getting access to a lot of stuff in the Canadian Archives Department," a cumbersome process that served only to fuel his enthusiasm for stories from Canada's past. "I've been making some speeches on [colonial history] in Canada," he writes, "and am vastly interested in it all," adding by way of closing that he is "delighted to hear that [this new] association, of which [he] shall be happy to become a member, intends to do something in this direction."⁴³ It was in the same year that his "Makers" volume appeared that Leacock also published his most important early statement on Canadian nationalism, *Greater Canada, An Appeal: Let Us No Longer Be a Colony*.⁴⁴ He would go on to write three more volumes on Canadian history, all of which appeared in 1914 as part of the popular and highly readable "Chronicles of Canada" series.⁴⁵

stalemate LeSueur attributed to Leacock's partisanship and what he called the "influences" of William Lyon Mackenzie on Leacock's historical interpretation. Never one to take kindly to what he dismissed as editorial interference, Leacock held fast to what he saw as "the beaten track" of Canadian history. One man's persistence is another's resistance, though, and in his last letter to the series's publisher, LeSueur makes his understanding of this relationship very clear, concluding with the statement: "Don't send any more Leacocks my way" (McKillop 250-51, 272; Letter to LeSueur, 11 October 1906).

⁴³ Letter to Professor Paul S. Reinsch, PanAmerican Delegation, State Department, Washington D.C., 29 June 1906. Accepting an invitation to present a paper at the formative sessions of the Political Science Association's colonial institute, Leacock reiterates his interest in his closing: "There is a fine field in the realm of Colonial History & Politics still only partly explored." In a letter to his mother from 30 December 1906, Leacock reflects on the success of this presentation, underscoring his pleasure with an allusion to his favourite author: My trip was a great success and the paper I read on Canadian government was apparently very good. I met all the leading American authorities on Political Science and on the strength of my book was received with open arms and elected to a seat on the Executive Council of Political Science Association of America -- a title which sounds as grandeloquent as the official positions of the Pickwick Club.

⁴⁴ *University Magazine* 6 (April 1907): 132-41, and later the same year in a monograph published by The Montreal News Company.

⁴⁵ Leacock's contributions, as ordered in the original series, were *Adventures of the Far North: A Chronicle of the Arctic Seas*, *The Dawn of Canadian History: A Chronicle of Aboriginal Canada*, and *The Mariner of St. Malo: A Chronicle*

Given the dramatic highlights of these early studies, Leacock agreed, not surprisingly, with his Victorian forebears that Canadian history refracted through a "prism of past distance" and "blurred and softened" by the "mellow haze of retrospect" did appear to be a kind of "enchanted" counterpoint to the crude and harsh realities of the moment. "Each of us in life is a prisoner," he notes, and the "past offers us, as it were a door of escape" from a world in which "[w]e are set and bound in our confined lot.... We seek to reach into it and the pictured past seems to afford us an outlet of escape" (*Humanity* 262). And like Canadian parodists before him, he even suggests that the best approach to the past is not through romanticized revisionings but through a more dialogized and more humorous study that would have the additional benefit of marking those elements that might or should be set aside: "As a nation we [must] perpetually 'laugh off our history,'" he states, "finding amusement in each phase that passes, oddity in every retreating custom and silliness in each forgotten craze." Such an "attitude to the past is one of mingled reverence and amusement" (*Uncle* 111).

It is the mingling of reverence (a deep cultural regard for similarity) and amusement (a cognizance of incongruity or distance) that Leacock explores in "Lord Oxhead's Secret," a parodic refunctioning of the popular historical romance that first appeared in *Literary Lapses*. Set in the palatial Oxhead Towers, the story opens in the family library, where the current Earl Oxhead is in sorrowful examination of a bundle of papers that will reveal to the world a ruinous secret from his past. As in De Mille's *Lady of the Ice* and Barr's *In the Midst of Alarms*, the architectural space of the library is defined by auspicious markers of a distinctly Old World lineage. It is, to borrow a Leacockian word, a "mausoleum" in which the symbols of past glories are mounted for celebration within a family that harbours a decided "passion for

of the Voyages of Jacques Cartier. As Curry notes: "In spite of his interest in political science, [Leacock] preferred the history of adventure to the history of politics" (107).

heraldry, genealogy, [and] chronology."⁴⁶ Consistent, too, with the tradition of De Mille and Barr, Leacock saw in such display a myopic antiquarianism ripe for parodic refunctioning. The refracted stories behind the family treasures tell of a history less august and less glorious than what might appear at first glance:

... [Earl Oxhead] came of a proud stock. About him hung the portraits of his ancestors. Here on the right an Oxhead who had broken his lance at Crecy, or immediately before it. There McWhinnie Oxhead who had ridden madly from the stricken field of Flodden to bring to the affrighted burghers of Edinburgh all the tidings that he had been able to gather in passing the battlefield. Next him hung the dark half Spanish face of Sir Amyas Oxhead of Elizabethan days whose pinnacle was the first to dash to Plymouth with the news that the English fleet, as nearly as could be judged from a reasonable distance, seemed about to grapple with the Spanish Armada. Below this, the two Cavalier brothers, Giles and Everard Oxhead, who had sat in the oak with Charles II. Then to the right again the portrait of Sir Ponsonby Oxhead who had fought with Wellington in Spain, and been dismissed for it. (*Lapses* 10-11)⁴⁷

It is this lineage of misfits and ne'er-do-wells that the Earl wields like a shield when his daughter, the radiant Gwendoline, requests permission to marry Edwin Einstein, an American whose New World "seat" is located at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. At first

⁴⁶ *Literary Lapses: A Book of Sketches* (Montreal: Gazette Printing Company, 1910), 14.

⁴⁷ As Bakhtin explains in a relevant discussion in "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," such architectural metaphors as the towers of the Oxhead family home have long provided authors with a densely coded "territory" within and against which "novelistic events" can unfold. Such buildings are, he explains, "saturated through and through with a time that is historical in the narrow sense of the word, that is, the time of the historical past." These are the places "where the lords of the feudal era lived (and consequently also the place of historical figures of the past), the traces of centuries and generations are arranged in it in visible form as various parts of its architecture, in furnishings, weapons, the ancestral portrait gallery, the family archives and in the particular human relationships involving dynastic primacy and the transfer of hereditary rights. And finally legends and traditions animate every corner" of such structures (245-46).

favourably disposed to the match, he demands his daughter break off the engagement when he discovers that the Einstein history is not one of battlefield glory but of what Holmes's Belinda might dismiss as "the hold door trade": "The earl started from his seat in blank amazement. 'In business!... The father of the suitor of the daughter of an Oxhead in business! My daughter the step daughter of the grandfather of my grandson! Are you mad, girl?'" (*Lapses* 16-17).

As a celebrated standard by which to judge and shape the present and future, the Oxhead legacy proves as stilted as the code of chivalry in Cervantes's Spain. The current Oxhead generation is one defined by fiscal mismanagement, "long years of high living," and a general lassitude of spirit and intellect. Accordingly, the Earl's resolve crumbles when he learns that the battles of the New World markets, which he had dismissed moments earlier with an abruptness due his station, have, in fact, secured glory in the form of an estate worth fifteen million dollars. For all past Oxhead brilliance, it is this triumph alone that will save the family legacy from financial ruin and protect the "stately home that had been the pride of the Oxheads for generations" (*Lapses* 10). The story moves toward an apparently harmonizing (and generically appropriate) closure when the Earl grants his blessing for the imminent nuptials, his mind lost "in a whirl" of interest calculations. Leacock refracts this tale of multiple histories, though, when upon meeting Edwin for the first time, Earl Oxhead, apparently recognizing his daughter's betrothed, gasps in terror and dies. Although Leacock's narrator hints of a past and possible blood connection between the Earl and Edwin, all of which may -- or may not -- hinge upon a mysterious diamond tie pin which Edwin plucks from the dying Earl's neck, this tale of histories personal and familial is left forever unresolved, closing on the final and subverting observation that though "Lord Oxhead's secret died with him" it was "probably too complicated to be interesting anyway" (*Lapses* 18).

Leacock's own sense of the past, like the story of the Earl's secret, was indeed much more complicated than his Victorian predecessors. Whereas earlier parodists were likely to tilt the lens of their parody so as to refract the notion of the authenticity of such a storied lineage or to question the relevance of such traditional ideals in Canada, Leacock suggests that even the Old World past was characterized not by acts of heroism or duty but by cowardice and self-interest. What this troubled Victorian saw in looking to Canada of the near or even distant past, in other words, was not the invigoratingly heroic discourse of nation and nationality that Kirby, Adam, and Parker had discovered, nor even the dialogic potentialities that had intrigued such parodists as De Mille and Barr. What Leacock saw in Canada of the past was Canada of the present. He saw social structures in tremendous upheaval and strained to breaking by the shifting of economic orders (fur-trading to agriculture, agriculture to industrial) and new waves of population settlement (Old to New World, country to city). He saw a national culture persistently defined by materialism, parochialism, short-sighted political partisanship, and increasing secularization.

Viewed by Victorian Canadians as a harbinger of prosperity and the seat of an authentic discourse of nation and nationality, the past becomes for Leacock a place of crumbling foundations, of faltering beacons, of shadows. "Only a false mediaevalism can paint the past in colors superior to the present," he wrote. "The haze of distance that dims mountains with purple, shifts also the crude colors of the past into the soft glory of retrospect. Misled by these, the sentimentalist may often sigh for an age that in nearer view would be seen filled with cruelty and suffering."⁴⁸ Confronted with a present defined by "the bigotry of a by-gone day" and still

⁴⁸ *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice* (New York: John Lane, 1920), 24.

haunted by the various "demon[s]"⁴⁹ that Canada as a nation has yet to exorcise, Leacock slouched toward pessimism: "Escape is barred. And yet we look around forward and backward to find it; nor anywhere more eagerly than backward, to those wistful and haunting recollections of our childhood, that search for a vanishing identity connecting us with eternity but lost in the mist of the infinite" (*Humanity* 264). Tellingly, he turned away from writing history after 1914; aside from making the requisite revisions to his "Makers" volume, he did not return to write specifically about Canada's past until well after his forced retirement in 1936 from McGill, when he produced two books, both of which were sponsored by industry or government and neither of which was as important or as well-written as his earlier contributions.⁵⁰

Where antecedent parodists saw in Canada's past the narrative raw materials for both a national literature and culture that needed only to be pulled free from the mechanized conventions and expectations of Old World narrative models, Leacock saw nothing in the gloomy mists and vapours of the stories of Cartier or the struggle for Responsible Government to suggest that the emergence of a national culture was imminent. His reaction to such an absence is paradigmatically Leacockian. On the one hand, he again proves himself a man of Victorian sensibilities, rekindling the attacks of Bourinot and LeSueur, and chastizing Canadian writers and artists for missed opportunities. Surely there is the inspiration for literature in "the silent untravelled forests and the broad rivers

⁴⁹ *Greater Canada An Appeal: Let Us No Longer Be A Colony* (Montreal: The Montreal News Company, 1907), 5-6.

⁵⁰ As Robertson summarizes: "In 1941 he published *Canada: The Foundations of Its Future*, a book perhaps most notable for its illustrations, under the sponsorship of the House of Seagram.... A year later, on the 300th anniversary of the founding of Ville-Marie by Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, there appeared *Montreal: Seaport and City*. Both volumes were discursive, opinionated, and lacking in new information; not surprisingly, they received damning reviews from professional historians" (34).

moving to unknown seas" or "in the lofty stimulus that comes from the unbroken silence of the primeval forest," he questions. Despite the vast uniqueness of the Canadian landscape, the "fact of the matter is that despite our appalling, numerical growth and mechanical progress, despite the admirable physical appliances offered by our fountain pens, our pulp-wood paper, and our linotype press, the progress of literature and the general diffusion of literary appreciation on this continent is not commensurate with the other aspects of our social growth." Of course, blame does not rest entirely on native artists; native audiences must bear their share of the burden. The ordinary citizen of Canada, he noted, is "not a literary person" and does not carry the imaginative spirit that "in some indefinable way, fosters, promotes, and develops the true instinct of literature." Accordingly, Canadian writing is degraded, pushed "downward,' so as to catch the ear and capture the money of the crowd" (*Essays* 70-6, 88). Leacock was very much the late Victorian critic.

On the other and more frequently shown hand, though, Leacock anticipates such modernists as A.J.M. Smith and F.R. Scott in setting the whole "national literature problem" aside as little more than a troublesome preoccupation that "gives us a flattering sense of fighting stoutly against odds in a perplexed world." As he noted with some irony, "Stated very simply the problem before [Canadians] is, -- whether we have a national literature, and if not, why not? Did we ever have one, or did someone take it away? Is the problem merely another instance of the rapacity of the United States or does it show something to be lacking in ourselves?" Turning in 1928 to the same questions that so many Victorian critics had debated, Leacock argues that any gains in this area that might have been celebrated are merely illusions: "we keep on asking ourselves, Is there such a thing as Canadian literature? My own opinion is that there is not, or not as yet: that there may be a

Canadian literature someday or perhaps there never will be."⁵¹ He reiterated this position throughout his life, going so far as to state that even in the writing of humour "as in all branches of literature, it would seem to me that we have little or nothing to call our own. There is no distinctly Canadian way of telling a story or writing a song. It is possible to write humorous things *about* Canada, and it is possible to write humorous things *in* Canada (I try to do it myself), but there is, in my humble opinion (reached after forty-six years of effort), no Canadian humor" (Humor 112).⁵²

In contrast to his Victorian predecessors whose enthusiasm for an authentic Canadian literature was almost palpable, Leacock preached patience and a return to the stabilizing practice of imitation:

We ought not to repine ... at the larger fact that there is no Canadian literature. We cannot have everything at once. We are a new people, made of a variety of elements, strung out in a thin line as if from London to Siberia, not yet amalgamated into a national type. We have all the advantages of boundless future, on the material side, and in art and letters all that comes from an ability to draw upon both British and American sources. The price that we have to pay is that we must of necessity remain long in an imitative stage, consciously or unconsciously adopting the models set by others. The attempt to force, an original note ... is tiresome beyond words. (Humor 112)

"It seems to me, in short," he would reiterate, "that the attempt to mark off Canada as a little area all its own, listening to no one but itself, is as silly as it is ineffective. If a Canadian author writes a good book, I'll read it, if not I'll read one written in

⁵¹ "The National Literature Problem in Canada," *The Canadian Mercury* 1.1 (December 1928): 8.

⁵² See also *Mark Twain*, in which Leacock argues that while the United States had Twain who shared in the people's common "heritage, and added to the common stock," Canada had no such writer. "[I]n order to make the point clear and rob it of all venom -- there is as yet no Canadian literature, though many books have been written in Canada, including some very bad ones" (91).

Kansas or Copenhagen. The conception of the republic of letters is a nobler idea than the wilful attempt at national exclusiveness."⁵³

To suggest, as most critics do, that Leacock's attitude toward a Canadian national literature and culture was consistent in its ambivalence⁵⁴ cannot be dismissed. Parody, though, offered another solution to this apparent paradox, allowing Leacock the opportunity to step back Cervantes-like "from the traditions, good and bad, of European life" in order to gain a "a highly objective view ... and to discover many contrasts and incongruities hidden from the European eye" (*Essays* 115-16). Ensuring, on the one hand, the possibility of retaining some connection with these traditions, parody allows him, on the other, to select the strengths on which to build while discarding those elements of Old World culture that had become mechanized and burdensome. Retaining some ties was crucial, Leacock would stress. For to break away totally "from traditional ideas and conventional views" of literature and culture, as a new country might be inclined to do, may actually retard its growth in the new soil. Appropriately, humour again warrants particular attention: "It will readily be perceived that, unless sustained and held in check by the presence at its side of an elevated national literature, this form of writing easily degenerates. Freedom from convention runs into crudity and coarseness; and a tone of cheap vulgarity is introduced calculated to discredit grievously the literature to which it belongs" (*Essays* 123-24).

At least one contemporary pointed to Leacock's ability to maintain this kind of discursive middle ground between an oppressive reverence for tradition (Old World antiquarianism) and a radical rejection of those traditions (American republicanism) as the mark of his Canadianness. Working from the assumption that

⁵³ "The National Literature Problem" 9.

⁵⁴ James Steele, "Imperial Cosmopolitanism, or the Partly Solved Riddle of Leacock's Multi-National Persona," *Leacock: A Reappraisal* 66.

"[e]very country has the humor it deserves; and the people of one nation can only apprehend, never comprehend, that of another nation," a reviewer in *The Living Age* suggested that the styles of British and American humour are reconciled in Leacock's Canadian sensibility: "Canada is a sort of half-way house in letters between U.K. and U.S.A., and it was to be expected that a Canadian humorist would arise who should discover the hilarious mean between American and English humor and so contrive to be all things to all festive folk (all save highbrows) on both sides of the Atlantic. Canada, though its literature has been impaired by literary criticism and rye whiskey, has raised a sound good-humorist from time to time."⁵⁵ It is this kind of comic middle ground that J.B. Priestley also suggests distinguishes not only Leacock's "outlook, manner, and style" of humour but also that of "the nation." "Very adroitly [Leacock] aimed at both British and American audiences," Priestley explains, "but he never identified himself with either; always, at least when he is at his best, he remains a Canadian."⁵⁶

The question remains, though, as to what Leacock found in the past if not a consistent (and consistently Victorian) vision that might move Canadian literature and culture toward what Holmes had described decades earlier as an expression of our own country under our own observation. What he found was the nobler idea which he believed sat firmly at the centre of the republic of letters, the one aspect of past culture that could reinforce his sometimes wavering belief in a modern Canada strengthened not encumbered by sensibilities rooted deeply in the soil of the

⁵⁵ *The Living Age* 352. Admitting that Leacock "seldom talked directly about the characteristics of his own humour" and when he did readily acknowledged "that humour everywhere has a common basis and warned that national distinctions could be overdrawn," such modern critics as R.E. Watters continue to promote in Leacock's writing a distinctly "Canadian humour" that is at once shaped by and revealing "our national characteristics" ("A Special Tang: Stephen Leacock's Canadian Humour," *Canadian Literature* 5 [1960]: 22, 23).

⁵⁶ J.B. Priestley, "Introduction," *The Bodley Head Leacock* (London: The Bodley Head, 1957), 10.

nineteenth-century; he found what he called "kindliness." The greatest achievement of the nineteenth century was that age's

advance in human kindness, in human sympathy with the poor, the lowly, the outcast. Its righteous anger and its copious tears helped to smite to pieces and to wash away the older cruelty of the law, the inhumanity of the prison, the bitter isolation of the workhouse. It heard the cry of the children and took them to its heart. The moral advance of the Victorian age has helped to open a new social world. (*Theory* 68-9)⁵⁷

And if the Victorian age was the epoch of a kindly new social world, it was also the epoch of humour, for it was in humour that Leacock saw the most vital literary manifestation of kindness.⁵⁸ Building, as Lynch suggests, on his own reading of Hazlitt's *Lectures on English Comic Writers* and Thackeray's "Charity and Humour,"⁵⁹ Leacock articulates this defining conjunction most clearly in his brief preface to *Humour and Humanity*:

⁵⁷ That there would be potentially stultifying defects accompanying such preeminently noble qualities was a given in Leacock's world view. Prudery, self-righteous moralizing, hypocrisy, and sentimentalism were all attitudes that Leacock would rail against throughout his life. Whether looking back at the nineteenth century or at his own time, the tory Leacock was never hesitant to vent his frustrations at a morality that ran too easily to the "namby-pamby and self-righteous" that sought to hide its (usually socialistic) defects "under a make-believe of noble-mindedness and false equality" (*Theory* 69; *Humanity* 70-1).

⁵⁸ A persistent concern of Leacock's was how the "inconceivable rapidity" of the technological advances that defined the twentieth century was going to change this ideal of Victorian kindly humour. And although he courted adaptations into both mediums in his personal business dealings, film and radio were seen as potentially troubling developments: "The nineteenth century took its humor [sic] through books. The printed page stimulated the mind to create a picture. The twentieth century will take its humor direct, with words and pictures all supplied, nothing to invent. The effect may be to dull, in the spectator, the warm power of creation; or it may not" (*Greatest Pages* 232).

⁵⁹ cf. Thackeray's observation "that the best humour is that which contains most humanity, that which is flavoured throughout with tenderness and kindness" ("Charity and Humour," 270). Lynch provides what is to date the most detailed discussion of Leacock's notion of kindness in terms of these earlier theories in his chapter "Between Satire and Sentimentality: Leacock's Theory of Humour" (24-56).

The author has given to this book the title of *Humour and Humanity*, rather than the obvious and simple title *Humour*, in order to emphasize his opinion that the essence of humour is human kindness. It is this element in humour which has grown from primitive beginnings to higher forms: which lends to humour the character of a leading factor in human progress, and which is destined still further to enhance its utility to mankind. (*Humanity* 9)

Rising to "its highest development" (*Theory* 13) in the Victorian era, an age in which humour confirmed its position "near the summits" of literature's "highest range" (*Humanity* 247), it also confirmed itself in Leacock's mind as "the highest product of our civilization" (*Humour* 113).⁶⁰ In 1916 Leacock summarized what he saw as the contributions made to the modern world of his two favourite humorists, Mark Twain and Charles Dickens. It remains perhaps his most succinct statement of the potential for humour to diffuse kindness throughout a cultural fabric:

Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is a greater work than Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and Charles Dickens' creation of Mr. Pickwick did more for the elevation of the human race -- I say it in all seriousness -- than Cardinal Newman's *Lead Kindly Amid the Encircling Gloom*. Newman only cried out for light in the gloom of a sad world. Dickens gave it. (*Humour* 112-13)⁶¹

⁶⁰ See also *Uncle* 109.

⁶¹ cf. Thackeray on Dickensian kindness: "As for the charities of Mr. Dickens, multiplied kindnesses which he has conferred upon us all... have not you, have not I, all of us reason to be thankful to this kind friend, who soothed and charmed so many hours, brought pleasure and sweet laughter to so many homes; made such multitudes of children happy; endowed us with such a sweet store of gracious thoughts, fair fancies, soft sympathies, hearty enjoyments? There are creations of Mr. Dicken's which seem to me to rank as personal benefits; figures so delightful that one feels happier and better for knowing them, as one does for having been brought into society of very good men and women. The atmosphere in which these people live is wholesome to breathe in; you feel that to be allowed to speak to them is a personal kindness; you come away better for your contact with them; your hands seem cleaner for having the privilege of shaking theirs." ("Charity and Humour" 283-4)

Here is hearty praise indeed from a man who noted as early in his career as 1912 that he personally "would sooner have written 'Alice in Wonderland' than the whole Encyclopedia Britannica" (SS).⁶²

This is not to suggest that Leacock did not recognize that there existed a darker, harsher side to humour and by extension to humanity. Familiar as he was with the theories of Hobbes and Bergson, he understood full well that the "original devil of malice ... still survives" in the philosophy and practice of humour as a "malicious counterpart" to what he saw as its essential kindness. "One is tempted to think," he suggests by way of explanation

that perhaps the original source parted into two streams. In one direction flowed, clear and undefiled, the humour of human kindness. In the other, the polluted waters of mockery and sarcasm, the 'humour' that turned to cruel sports of rough ages, the infliction of pain as a perverted source of pleasure.... Here belongs 'sarcasm' -- that scrapes the flesh of human feeling with a hoe -- the sardonic laugh (by derivation a sort of rictus of the mouth from a poison weed), the sneer of the scoffer, and the snarl of the literary critic. (*Humanity* 30)

It is at this point well in the past "that mere vindictiveness parted company with humor, and became its hideous counterpart, mockery" (*Theory* 11). Even the masterful Dickens was open to criticism when he veered in his later "social" novels away from what Leacock perceived to be the genius of his writing, namely his true kindness. One novel in particular raised Leacock's critical hackles. "The story *Hard Times* has no other interest in the history of letters than that of its failure," he wrote. "At the time, even enthusiastic lovers of Dickens found it hard to read. At

⁶² Cf. Hazlitt: "The invention of a fable is to me the most enviable exertion of human genius: it is the discovering a truth to which there is no clue, and which, when once found out, can never be forgotten. I would rather have been the author of Aesop's Fables, than of Euclid's Elements!" ("On Wit and Humour" 43).

present they do not even try to read it. A large part of the book is mere trash; hardly a chapter of it is worth reading today: not an incident or a character belonging to it survives or deserves to.... Not a chapter or a passage in the book is part of Dickens's legacy to the world" (*Dickens* 169-70).

It is this shift from questions of nationalism and national culture to vaster and more glorious dreams of transnational legacies that signals Leacock's most radical break with his Victorian heritage and marks, too, the birth of a modern parodic discourse in Canada. For if humour was Leacock's sanctuary in an increasingly uncertain and troubling world, parody was that unmovable point at which he felt most secure and to which he returned most frequently. In looking to the true humour of such a parodist as Cervantes, Leacock assured himself and his readers of a critical discourse that could never mock, malign, or attack. Parodists have "no intention of satirizing or criticizing the parent," he suggests. They "merely take it as the pattern or model on which they frame their theme." The humour of parody comes not from an impulse to degrade but from a recognition of the incongruity, from a sense of difference at the heart of similarity that in no way causes harm but still serves to prompt rethinking and reevaluation. Indeed, it becomes a condition of Leacock's parodic spirit "that no serious harm or injury shall be inflicted" (*Essays* 110). To become "over-rapid, snarling, and ill-tempered" and to exploit such incongruities in order "to 'show things up,' [as] a vehicle of denunciation, not of pleasure" is to regress toward satire, or what he more generally calls "the 'grouch' writing" (*Theory* 241, 238).⁶³

⁶³ That Leacock was unable or unwilling to stay true to his own doctrine of "kindliness" will continue to be the subject of much critical debate. Such books as *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (1914) and the intensely mocking *The Hohenzollerns in America* (1919) suggest he was not, though neither of these is a parody. As the earliest Leacock apologist, McArthur set the tone for subsequent explanations of his unkindliness: "It is true that his ridicule can provoke laughter at many things that deserve the lash of satire, but it is not the laughter that one associates with the great masters of the lash. The subtle malignity of Swift, the

As a specific and vital type of the more general corpus of kindly humour writing, parody as the generous juxtaposition of the familiar and the defamiliarized has the potential to revivify a modern culture cut off from the luxury of a "false mediaevalism," to bring to its crumbling discursive and intellectual structures "a new significance" (*Humanity* 63-4), a new sense that extended beyond the increasingly monologic discourses of progress and Oxheadean antiquarianism. Having discovered in his country's past the shortcomings of "eager ambition, brisk success, and absorption in the game of life," Leacock found in the humour of the parodic a kindness that might serve as "a comforter" in a world struggling to reconcile itself "to things as they are in contrast to things as they might be."⁶⁴ It was humour in general, and parody most eloquently, in which Leacock saw the means to a "prolonged and sustained conception of the incongruities of human life itself," a rethinking that would reveal to a society the "shortcomings of [its] existence" and "the sad contrast of [its] aims and [its] achievements" (*Essays* 113-114). For this late and deeply troubled Victorian, humour, and especially the smile of the parodist, was "like Hope still left at the bottom of Pandora's box when all of the evils of the gods flew out from it upon the world" (*Theory* 115).

Important to Leacock, too, is that fact that parodic laughter reinforces the need for a creative engagement with the world as it is. Echoing Meredith's argument that the reflexivity of parodic laughter "enfolds" those who laugh "with the wretched host of the world, huddles them with us all in an ignoble assimilation, and

delicate, brilliant savagery of Pope, and the indignant scorn of Dryden, are nowhere in evidence.... Mr. Leacock lacks the cold ferocity of the master satirist. And it is a good thing that he does.... [It] is doubtful if the satirist ever accomplished much for the good of mankind" (144-145).

⁶⁴ *The Garden of Folly* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1924), ix. For variations on this sentiment, see also *Mark Twain* 142, *Humanity* 239, and *Theory* 12. Cf. Hazlitt's opening line from his introductory lecture "On Wit and Humour": "Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they ought to be" (1).

cannot be used by any exalted variety as a scourge and a broom,"⁶⁵ Leacock sees parodic laughter as very much a collective laughter. "Let me hear the comedian's own laughter come first," he writes, "and mine shall follow readily enough, laughing not at him, but with him" (*Garden viii*). As Magee notes, Leacock as parodist is a man in and of the world on which he gazes, albeit one who "may not feel so much that life is naturally funny as that laughter can make its shortcomings endurable, and may suggest some insights into its meaning."⁶⁶ Acknowledging openly that the satirist is free (though not necessarily required) to engage humour as "the very life" of his discursive attack, Leacock argues that its laughter is not the laughter of Cervantes and cultural renewal but the Hobbesian laughter of superiority and conflict, a snigger "of discomfiture, of destructiveness and savage triumph" (*Humanity* 188, *Essays* 108). The laughter of satire is, he argues, a laughter "of a decidedly anti-social character" (*Essays* 110). It is, as Bakhtin reminds us, "a laughter that does not laugh" (*Rabelais* 45).

For a man who saw himself as a cultured Victorian gentleman, a man who enjoyed an easy rapport with society, Canada in the first decades of the twentieth century would have been a place open to charges of being anti-social. Men of learning and of culture were pushed aside in the quest for profit and gain. Business, not kindness, set the tone of the entire community, and as the decades progressed such anxiety-provoking words as depression and annexation were joined in the vocabulary by world war and modernity. Trapped in what McArthur has described eloquently as "the bewildered sanity of [a] trying period,"⁶⁷ Leacock came to see in the kindly laughter of parody the mark of a discourse at once more intensely

⁶⁵ Meredith, 64, 19; see also Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 12.

⁶⁶ William H. Magee, "Genial Humour in Stephen Leacock," *Dalhousie Review* 56.2 (1976): 270.

⁶⁷ McArthur, 146.

personal and transnational than his Victorian Canadian predecessors. Less of an intertextual or even cultural discursive event, parody became to Leacock a kind of "spiritual crusade" akin to that which Alan Bowker suggests came to define his equally complex imperialism.⁶⁸

"We live in a harassed world," Leacock noted in "L'Envoi: Our Present Need of Humor," an essay included in *The Greatest Pages of American Humour* (1936):

Some of the most solid foundations of our civilization seem crumbling under our feet. Our older forms of belief no longer seem to fit the mind and circumstance of our time.... It seems as if the old landmarks were disappearing, the old lights growing dim: in place of them is a wall of black shadows broken here and there with a dancing will o' the wisp of false doctrine and vain hope.

Such a distress spreads over all mankind a dead weight of apprehension, a sort of mass feeling of impending fate. We feel ourselves no longer masters of our own fate, but drawn in a vortex towards the unknown. Very great is our need of relaxation, of forgetfulness if only in the pauses of our distress. Nor can we find it anywhere better than in the magic pages of the bygone humorists. Here the vital issues that called forth the passing jest have faded so far into the past that all the pain and fret is out of them, and nothing left except a smile. (*Greatest Pages* 270-71)

This intense commentary on both Leacock and the times is preceded by a simple, telling sentence: "There never was a time when one might turn back with more profit than at the present moment to the golden treasury of the world's humor" (*Greatest Pages* 270).

More telling still are Leacock's words from his earliest public meditation on the question of a *Greater Canada*, words on the Empire that apply with equal

⁶⁸ Bowker, *xxiii*

relevance to his sense of what parody could offer to Canadians. "We cannot continue as we are," he warned, for in the "history of every nation, as of every man, there is no such thing as standing still. There is no pause upon the path of progress. There is no stagnation but the hush of death.... Thus stands the case. Thus stands the question of the future of Canada" (*Greater* 3, 10). Parody provided an answer, a kind of beneficent position upon which one could perch Janus-like, looking back to the kindness of Victorian humour and forward to an unknowable and uncertain future. "But," as Leacock would remind his readers, "there is and must be for the true future of our country, a higher and more real imperialism than this" that is "the recognition of a wider citizenship" (*Greater* 1-2), one through which an individual may learn to sympathize more fully with the joys and sufferings of mankind in general. Parody opened the door to that wider world of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

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"And, for a final conclusion, I imagine that all that which I say is really so, without adding or taking aught away."

(Cervantes, *Don Quixote*)

To suggest that one can ever conclude a discussion of parody as it was practiced in Victorian Canada is itself a parodic gesture. Parody is by definition an ultimately inconclusive dialectic, an "essentially unfinalizable dialogue"¹ between a double-structured comic refunctioning and its various textual and discursive models. Promoting through its vital comic spirit a renovating laughter that "prevents it from proposing itself as definitive," parody flaunts rather than disguises "the fact that it is as vulnerable and tenuous" as that which it refunctions.² Unwavering in their engagement of a comic discourse that lets "nothing rest secure, including what it seems to endorse,"³ the Canadian parodists whose works have been explored in this study are equally persistent in their use of the parodic as an open encouragement toward a dialectical reconsideration of those accepted notions of art, literature, and language that had crystallized within Canada prior to the midpoint of the nineteenth

¹ Gary Saul Morson, *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's Diary of a Writer and the Traditions of Literary Utopia* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981), 144.

² Hannoosh, *Parody and Decadence* 18.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

century, notions that reinforced a comforting constellation of imaginative and epistemological certainties.

Foremost among these cultural certitudes was a broadly based confidence in the colonial conviction "that in cultural affairs, nationhood would be achieved only by transplanting the most admirable traditions of the Old World to the New,"⁴ in a belief, that is, that the future of a New World culture was totally "dependent on the provenance of Old World systems of perception, conceptualization, and representation."⁵ As I have shown, such convictions were almost continually reaffirmed throughout the nineteenth century by Canadian critics and thinkers dedicated to the promotion of a set of narrowly determined touchstones: a faith in the portability of Old World literary models and conventions, an unwavering dedication to the cultivation of a complex system of values or evaluations that would guide the Canadian public toward right and proper tastes in reading and writing, and a confidence in the progressive interrelationship between the stories of Canada's past and the prosperity of its future.

An ancient and complex form of comic discourse, parody was engaged by writers in Victorian Canada as both light and mirror of the various models, traditions, and monologic declarations that came to be arranged within this constellation. At once acknowledging the dominance of such ideals within the nascent culture of the new Dominion, these writers at the same time raised questions about the appropriateness of such imported standards within a New World environment and the willingness or desire of the majority of writers and thinkers to invest such ideals with a potentially inhibitive authority. To import the discursive models and cultural presumptions of other places and other times without

⁴ Gerson, *A Purer Taste* 154.

⁵ Turner, 10.

question is, Canadian parodists suggest, to prompt a slide toward an algebrized and static view of Canadian culture, to define it in terms of a normative acceptance of the appropriateness of preformed models rather than to test continually the boundaries of these models in search of new forms that might represent more accurately to Canadians the distinctiveness of their geocultural terrain.

Incorporating as part of their own structure a diversity of intertextual and metafictional markers, and punctuated with reflexive ruptures, glances, and grins, the popular parodies explored in this study introduced into Canadian writing a renovating spirit that invited readers and writers to participate actively in breaking the hold of preestablished definitions and expectations of Canadian culture and of the Canadian imagination. Revealing in this body of parodic writing a sophisticated awareness and understanding of the temper of the times, each of these parodists raises entertaining and provocative challenges to a society that tended to celebrate shared and stable values, challenges that illuminate the "double horizon" facing Victorian Canada. This was a culture drawn, on the one hand, toward the ideal of reinscribing a sense of Old World tradition and driven, on the other hand, by an impulse to create within Canada a culture that would help create and nurture a sense of an independent and distinctly local identity.

A discussion of stable values and independent identity was also at the heart of the writing of Stephen Leacock, a writer to whom parody was seen, ironically, as the source of stability in a modern world that he perceived to be floundering under the weight of ideological and spiritual incertitude. A Victorian by birth and by inclination, Leacock saw in the comic spirit of parody the comfort of a laughter that enfolded that world rather than chastized, and that reaffirmed the positive attributes of kindness and humanity that he believed might serve to illuminate the path toward an unknowable and uncertain future. Working within what can now rightfully be described as an established tradition of parodic writing in Canada,

Leacock signals, too, the end of the tradition of parody to which he glances with fading hope. Like Quixote's fearsome windmills, the realities facing Leacock and Canadian culture as each sat poised, somewhat hesitatingly, on the edge of the twentieth century were the giant that even this widely nourished and elegant parodic spirit could not overcome.

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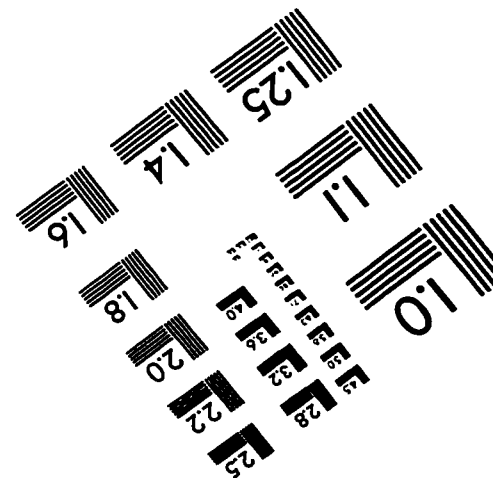
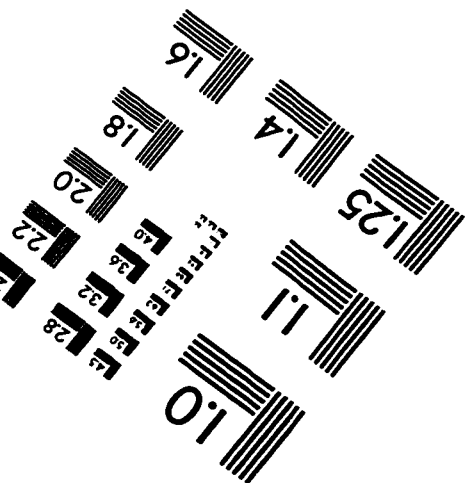
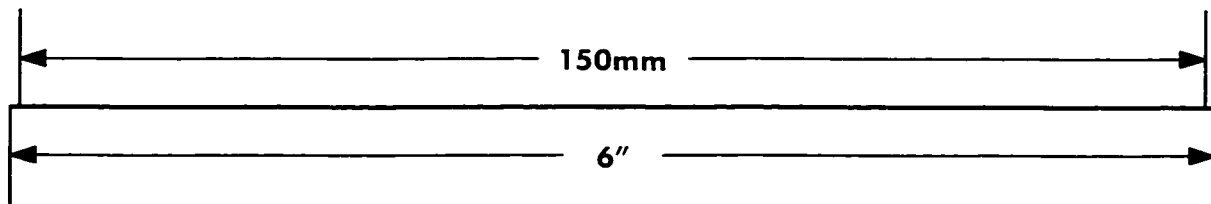
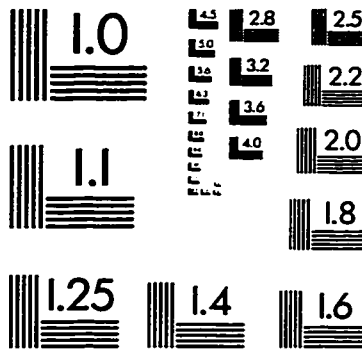
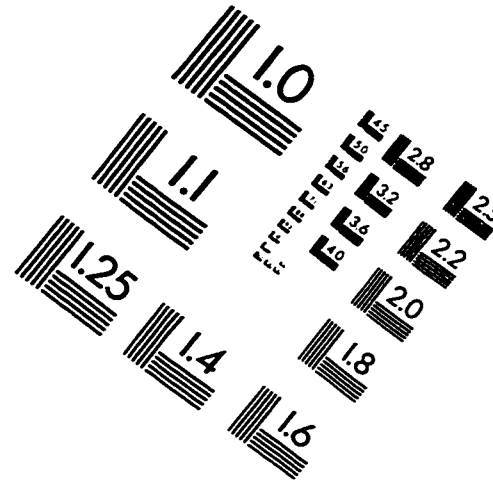
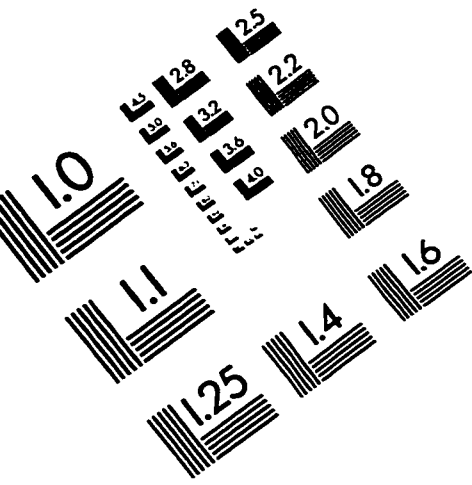
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"As [the scholar] continues on his upward way, the air about him gets rarer and rarer, his path becomes more and more solitary until he reaches, and encamps upon, his own little pinnacle of refined knowledge staring at his feet and ignorant of the world before him, and the future before him. At the end of his labours he publishes a useless little pamphlet called his thesis which is new in the sense that nobody ever wrote it before, and erudite in the sense that nobody will ever read it."

Stephen Leacock, "Literature and Education in America"

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