The Marriage Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century English Canadian Fiction

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In 1864 John Lovell printed Rosanna Leprohon's *Antoinette de Mirecourt, or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing: A Canadian Tale.* That same year, G. & G.E. Desbarats released *The Canadians of Old*, Georgianna M. Penée's translation of *Les anciens canadiens* (1863) by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé.[1] To discuss the central image of marriage between French and English in these two texts is to begin deliberately *in medias res*, for this image of union anticipates the political confederation of 1867. Moreover, the rapid translation of these novels into the two languages—*Antoinette de Mirecourt* appeared in a French edition in 1865—indicates a widespread readership in both linguistic communities. Indeed, the demand for *Les anciens canadiens* in English was still strong enough as late as 1890 for Charles G.D. Roberts to make yet another translation of this popular book. Therefore, because of the significant date of their original publication vis à vis the emergence of Canada as an independent political and cultural entity, and also because they are a shared literary property for anglophone and francophone, these novels present themselves as an ideal starting point for my discussion. As the study proceeds, however, it will become apparent that the marriage metaphor is not merely a pre-confederation phenomenon but dates from the very beginnings of English Canadian fiction.

On a literal level *Antoinette de Mirecourt* is the story of how an attractive, energetic, but naive young French Canadian girl secretly marries a young, handsome, but morally bankrupt British officer. On a symbolic level, however, we may view this entire story as an extended metaphor, as a political allegory which offers a fictional rendition of early Canadian history—hence the *Canadian Tale* of its title.

[1] Rosanna Leprohon, *Antoinette de Mirecourt, or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing: A Canadian Tale* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864); Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, *The Canadians of Old*, trans. Georgianna M. Pennée (Quebec: G. & G.E. Desbarats, 1864).

The worst has happened—the Conquest. The social fabric is in tatters ("the year 176-": the interlude between 1760 and the Quebec Act of 1774). The leadership of the old society is either in exile overseas or rendered powerless by defeat (M. D'Aulnay, M. de Mirecourt, the French Canadian men). Initiative passes to those elements in society which realize that life must go on and so seek a new *modus vivendi* (Lucille D'Aulnay). Indeed the transfer of power from male to female signifies the shift from the physical plane of warfare where New France has been defeated to the spiritual plane of the heart and mind where there is a chance for a different kind of victory. The enemy are prepared to put the past behind them. They seek a peaceful accommodation in the present and "an entrance into our Canadian *salons*" (16). Mrs. D'Aulnay has the energy to set in motion a *rapprochement*, but not the powers of judgement to direct it. Because of her limited moral vision she panders to that which is most venal in the victors (Major Audley Sternfield). Through her agency, the most vital element of New France (the young and beautiful Antoinette) is wedded to the most predatory element of the victorious party. The secret marriage symbolizes how socially unacceptable this union is. It cannot be publicly acknowledged because it represents a bad choice.

When Antoinette leaves her father's seigniory to come to Montreal, we have an image of New France detaching herself from traditional values. While this detachment explains the moral destabilization which subsequently occurs, it does not excuse the wrong choices Antoinette makes when she fails to seek her father's blessing for her marriage, does not publish the wedding banns, and, finally, takes part in what she calls the "ceremony" but not the "sacrament" of marriage (112). For not following the traditional guidelines of her heritage, she is condemned to suffer the appropriate penalty (life with Sternfield). Only by admitting her errors and accepting her suffering as just can she regain her moral integrity. In so doing she exchanges her role as victim for the triumphant role of one morally superior to her tormentor. This does not eliminate her pain, but it strengthens her to endure it.

Fortunately, the leadership of the old society, while it cannot provide direction, has a negative capacity to alter circumstances. The young French Canadian, Antoinette's ideal suitor in the opinion of her father, represents this negative power of action. Thus, Louis Beauchesne (the best of the old French régime) eliminates Audley Sternfield (the worst of the new English) and the vitality of the unhappily married Antoinette (a morally chastened New France) is saved from suffocation.

The marriage of Antoinette to Colonel Evelyn symbolizes the coming together of the very best of New France with the very best of the victorious English. As a man of character Evelyn is worthy of the beautiful and now morally developed Antoinette. His superior military rank—Audley is a major—signifies that, inwardly, he is the better man. Moreover, though he is a lapsed Catholic, he is a co-religionist and, as such, has her father's blessing. The attempted colonization of her by Audley in the first marriage is replaced by the mutual support of the partners in the second. The contest that was acted out on the Plains of Abraham and later in the secret unhappy marriage is replaced by a marriage wherein both partners triumph in their love for each other. The happy marriage ending as the personal solution for Antoinette de Mirecourt and Colonel Evelyn prefigures a larger political solution in Canada: the confederation of French and English into one nation.

Antoinette and Lucille, her cousin, represent New France just as Sternfield and Evelyn represent the victorious English. Antoinette and Evelyn are metaphors of moral development and represent the best of each group. Their moral maturity contrasts greatly with that of Mrs. D'Aulnay and Sternfield. An examination of these characters reveals the complexity of metaphorical significance Leprohon seeks to present to the reader.

What is so attractive about Lucille D'Aulnay, for example, is her energetic pragmatism. The men, former leaders of society, are responding in completely ineffectual ways to the Conquest; her husband immerses himself in his library, Sieur de Mirecourt endures a self-imposed exile on his country estate, and many of the Canadian nobility flee to France. For Lucille life must go on, and as a lady with social pretensions, it must go on with a certain amount of style. So while her husband is appalled by her proposal to socialize with the English, her response is typical:

> Those English officers may be tyrants, ruthless oppressors, what you will; but they are men of education and refinement; and—conclusive argument—they are my only resource. (14)

A realist, she is completely committed to coming to grips with life as it is. In this respect, she is a powerful person who drags her decent but somewhat defeatist husband out of the wreckage of the past, into a viable present, and possibly even into a hopeful future. While the men seek the safety of their books or their country homes, she is determined to make things happen. She may be censured for her superficiality and for what principally arises out of it, namely, the silly, bad advice she gives Antoin-

ette, but her spirited drive and energy reflect an admirable strength and vitality. She has the audacity to engage in a battle of the sexes as a revenge against the English, and, moreover, she has the self-confidence to see herself the winner:

> Myself and country-women will take good care that in all cases they shall be the sufferers, not ourselves. Antoinette and I shall break dozens of their callous hearts, and thus avenge our country's wrongs. (16)

But her limitations are also clear, and are principally to be understood by examining the metaphorical implications of her marriage to D'Aulnay. Her attachment to him signifies a commitment to the old order which inevitably must pass away. This is reinforced by the reference to her age which we are coyly told is on "the shady side . . . of thirty" (12). What will be needed is someone free from attachments, flexible and young enough to engage in the new order. Unlike the arranged marriage which Lucille has entered into with D'Aulnay (23), the successful new order which is a metaphor for the emerging nation demands a relationship characterized by the free choice of the two partners.

The "bright-eyed, graceful Antoinette de Mirecourt" (40), cousin to Lucille, and half her age, has the personal qualities for such a relationship. She has all of the energy, vivacity and charm of the older woman but none of her faults. Most importantly she is unattached. By the end of the novel she evolves into a considerably more profound version of Lucille D'Aulnay. She achieves this by suffering the consequences of decisions her cousin never has had to make. As strong and energetic as Lucille is, she has been uninvolved in that most critical of life's choices—her own marriage. In this area of choice, it is Antoinette who is to exercise leadership by taking action. It is her agony and ultimately her joy to choose her own partner.

Similarly, regenerated New France must choose freely her present and her future. Virtue adheres to choice; any decision that is predetermined or forced lacks credibility. In the person of the young girl Antoinette, all of the complexities involved in free choice are instantly before us—including, of course, the possibility of making a mistake. Young, energetic, full of life, and away from home for the first time, Antoinette enters society in Lucille's salon. Alone and inexperienced, she is also ill-advised by a person who, intially, is more impressed by Sternfield's social credentials than by Evelyn's less obvious—and less glamorous—strength of character. The poor counsel she receives from the older woman is understandable. It may be that

Lucille D'Aulnay is jealous of Evelyn, the older man who has the possibility of a romantic liaison with the younger Antoinette, a possibility denied her, the older married woman, in relation to young Sternfield. I believe this underlies the initial preference she shows for Audley and explains her vicarious pleasure at bringing him and Antoinette together. Through Antoinette, this lady "on the shady side of thirty" is living out a forbidden sexual fantasy involving herself and the young English officer. Led astray by her cousin whom she trusts, Antoinette is also depersonalized by Audley who involves her in yet another hidden agenda.

Audley Sternfield is totally absorbed in self-love. For him people exist either to reflect his beauty or to be used. Thus, all too late, Antoinette understands that he has married her "not from any romantic feeling of attachment, but from cold calculation, from motives of interest" (235). When she confronts him with this accusation, he sarcastically replies that his wife must possess "some golden charms as well as more irresistable ones" (236). All along, then, he has been after her money. Painfully she realizes that she has blinded herself to his faults and has abdicated her moral obligation to follow the dictates of her own conscience. This recognition of her mistake and the acceptance of its consequences transform her into the most heroic person in the story. She rises above Sternfield and Mrs. D'Aulnay and refuses to be manipulated by either of them. When Audley is mortally wounded, it is fitting that she should turn to Colonel Evelyn, his better English counterpart. Evelyn is worthy of her precisely because he always has recognized her inner spiritual mettle as well as her exterior physical beauty.

The two partners freely accept each other and mutually assume each other's happiness (368). They are open to each other through the transforming powers of love. There is a struggle before they come together, but their final reward, richly deserved, is to have each other in a socially sanctioned way. In its broadest outlines, this story can be understood by anybody at anytime. But in the specific context of Canada, I believe Mrs. Leprohon meant us to understand it as her vision of Canadian confederation. From the culture as she found it, she shaped a particular rendition of the emerging national myth. In this way, as she tells us in her Preface, she presents us with the "essentially Canadian" (vi).

Mary Jane Edwards[2] is right to insist that the marriage of Evelyn and Antoinette "is clearly meant to symbolize the union of the old and new orders in Canada and the emergence of a new society" (20). The point also has to be made that the marriage metaphor as the archetypal resolution of English-French relations is a feature of Canadian fiction from the beginning. One need only turn to *The Canadians of Old* to encounter this metaphor again. Like Leprohon, Aubert de Gaspé, in the very first pages of his book, promises that what we are about to read there will be "perfectly Canadian" both in the style of telling and in the story told (5). Continuing his opening remarks, he guarantees the accuracy of his view of the past and says that its credibility derives from an author who is a "septuagenarian, born only eight and twenty years after the conquest of *La Nouvelle France*" (5). While it might be possible to dismiss Leprohon's work as a product of youthful poetic fancy, the vision of the old francophone is more difficult to discount.

The Canadians of Old is an exotic hybrid best described as a fictionalized memoir. It contains thirty-six pages of endnotes and sometimes two and three footnotes per page. Memoir and fiction are interdependent and their juxtaposition constitutes the basic structure of this work. Thus, the fictional Jules and Archy's experiences in school recall real-life events which happened to the author's grandfather and father, and to himself. The stories of the *habitants* and boatmen are stories which he heard when he was young from his family's *censitaires.* Chapters such as "A Supper at a Canadian Seignior's" and "The D'Haberville Manor" are part of the fictional setting but also capture the old man's past experiences. The fiction then becomes a device by means of which the past may live again. Fictionalizing the past leads him into long digressions and these take the form of footnotes and, especially, endnotes. At this point the work becomes pure memoir wherein we find the early history of Canada presented as family gossip. As Archibald Lochiel is taken into the fictional D'Haberville family so Aubert de Gaspé takes the reader into his real family. Through the use of memoirs, *The Canadians of Old* looks at a past full of glory and, through fiction, suggests a present which is tied to an inherited past but which also imaginatively looks to the future.

Marriage as the core image signifying the Canadian reality is exactly as in *Antoinette de Mirecourt* but with the sexual roles reversed. New France is here seen as male and the warrior virtues of the fighting man now turned family man are ap-

[2] Mary Jane Edwards, "Essentially Canadian," *Canadian Literature* 52 (1972): 8-23.

plauded. The English wife, "the fair daughter of Albion" (286), is not fully described, but we are assured that, as Mme. Jules D'Haberville, not only is she a person of "great beauty" but also she possesses "all those qualities which inspire an ardent and sincere love" (286). What is exactly the same in both novels is the intimation that each partner draws out the best in the other: the perfect complementary match. *The Canadians of Old* presents us with a symbolic image of the new Canadian society centering on Jules D'Haberville and his English wife and, more importantly, on the new generation in the person of their son, Archy D'Haberville. This is an icon of Canada, a child of the noblest English and French parentage, and watched over by Blanche and Lochiel as guardian angels who represent the best of Celtic warrior virtue and the highest level of Gallic idealism. Jules D'Haberville and Archy Lochiel, bonds of affection deepened, join the fraternity of the vanquished—Lochiel's Highland Scots at Culloden and Jules's New France at Quebec. Both are subjects of the English King now. The old order passes away and the new takes its place. The dying words of the old seignior to his son Jules are: "Serve your new sovereign with as much fidelity as I have served the King of France" (287-88).

As the novel ends Jules's own son, Archy, named after his Scots godfather, lies gazing at the fantastic figures created by the fire's dying embers on the hearth. Warmed by the glories of his ancestors, the boy, promise of the new generation, lies in front of the fireplace a cynosure of the world to come: a vision of the Young Canada. As heat radiates from the hearth so too do comfort, ease, joy, loving support, social harmony, and tranquil well-being radiate from the fictive world of this book. After many turmoils, it is the world of the happy home.

From this contented vision of life, however, the author finally turns to the somber realization of his own mortality:

> Farewell then also, dear reader, ere my hand shall be colder than our Canadian winters, and refuse to trace my thoughts. (293)

The glories of the past, like the story, live on even as the storyteller prepares to die. Just as our old author bids farewell to us at the end of his work so too the people of New France bid farewell to the old way of life defeated on the Plains of Abraham. The memoirs look back with nostalgia to what was, but the fiction looks forward wholeheartedly to what will be. Events on the Plains of Abraham precipitate the birth of Canada even as they signal the death of New France. Past and present are held together in the person of the writer himself—author, authority, and

descendant of the old Canadian nobility. But the future is in the story he tells—the union of French and English in marriage. This is the "perfectly Canadian" story.

Whether New France is a beautiful, virtuous young woman as in *Antoinette de Mirecourt* or a noble, high-minded, active young man as in *The Canadians of Old*, it is clear that Canada has received a rich dowry from the francophone partner. This is the theme that Julia Beckwith Hart elaborates upon in *St. Ursula's Convent, or the Nun of Canada.*[3] Canada's first novel has been misread from the beginning. Those who expect to find lurid details about convent life will be disappointed; the revelations here are symbolic not sensational. They exist at the level of metaphor, for this novel, too, treats the emerging Canadian cultural identity. Our first novel, it is also first to refer to the francophone contribution to the national culture as "arcadian."

The nun of the title is Mother St. Catherine. She is the spiritual guide and confidante of Charlotte Turner and Adelaide de St. Louis. The Conquest has cost her everything: her husband, her children, and all that is dear to her have been destroyed by the English invasion. Married to a member of the French nobility before the Conquest, she later takes the veil and becomes the bride of Christ. In so doing she transcends the destruction of her secular reality and engages the world at the level of the sacred. She seeks refuge in the spirituality of the convent where she is a symbol of New France in defeat. She is noble, engaged, energetic, and spiritually developed, but she has lost or given away all worldly things. She eventually leaves the convent and rejoins her husband and children who are, in fact, still alive and well. What is presumed lost has been found, and surely this rediscovery signifies the return of the French Canadian people to full participation in the world of the profane, the ordinary realm of human activity in the workings of a new nation.

Charlotte and Adelaide, her two young students, are members of the new generation who are poised to live out the values which Mother St. Catherine has taught them. They thus represent the best hope for ongoing life after the Conquest. Anglophone and francophone, both are nourished by a woman who, as nun and noblewoman, embodies the French aristocratic ideal. Moreover, this ideal flowers fully in the Canadian nobility. When Adelaide de St. Louis learns that she is actually Lady Louisa Dudley, the central conceit of the work becomes clear. The Canadian nobility and the English aristocracy are com-

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[3] Julia C. Beckwith Hart, *St. Ursula's Convent, or the Nun of Canada*, 2 vols.(Kingston: Hugh C. Thomson, 1824).

pletely identical. At their root, at the beginning, in infancy, as it were, the two cultures are interchangeable. Indeed, the nursing of Lady Louisa back to health at the breast of Josette, her wet nurse, signifies the reinvigorating possibilities for the British of contact with French Canada.

In this connection, references to the golden age begin to assume their full significance. From the beginning, the French Canadian St. Louises who are surrogate parents for Lady Louisa are viewed as ideal in their happiness:

> The parents, seated in the midst of their blooming offspring, envied not the world its grandeur. Their happiness was unalloyed. It resembled that of the golden age . . . . (I.4)

Both in reference to Mother St. Catherine and to the St. Louises, it is the married life of the Canadian nobility—the Canadians of old—that is being praised. The central image of marriage as the *summum bonum* is concisely stated in the epigraph to chapter one.

> "Though fools spurn Hymen's gentle powers,
> We, who improve his golden hours,
> By sweet experience know,
> That marriage, rightly understood,
> Gives to the tender and the good
> A paradise below."

Thus the model that best represents this "paradise below" is the married life of the seigniorial class in New France. Around the couple gather their children, who also include their tenants as members of an extended family. Government becomes a family affair and the world of the St. Lawrence is an idyllic land where "pride and ambition" have forsaken the homes of the peasantry (I.63). The seignior responds to his tenants as a loving father to his children. Colonel Turner makes the objective judgement of the English outsider when he declares that life in Quebec "does indeed bear a greater resemblance to it [the golden age]" than life in England (I.63). Not in Albion, where Blake's "dark satanic mills" are looming on the horizon, but in Canada is found the prelapsarian, bucolic countryside.

French Canada is explicitly identified with Arcadia when Adelaide, now revealed as Lady Louisa, returns, in the company of Lord Grenville, her fiancé, to the house of her supposed father, M. de St. Louis. Moved by his love for her as she appears in the transfigured landscape of her homeland, Grenville proposes an immediate solemnization of their marriage vows: "On

this enchanting spot," he says, "I will build an Arcadian cottage" (II.97). Later, reality, in the form of the need to manage European affairs, forces them to abandon this plan. Before returning overseas, however, they stop in the delightful grove of trees where "they had formed their arcadian scheme of happiness" (II.101). The "arcadian scheme of happiness" which they have formed in Canada they will carry back across the ocean with them. The process of colonization is reversed when the New World attempts to transplant the Canadian flower of the French aristocratic ideal as found in Quebec in the Old World. In the final tableau the French Canadian convent girl who is really a British lady marries her Lord Grenville, and the occasion is celebrated in the Canadian fashion with country dances.

A plethora of marriages between French and English is part of the resolution of the action in *St. Ursula's Convent* (Mother St. Catherine's son marries Charlotte Turner, and Julia, her daughter, marries Edward, Charlotte's brother); and this pattern of multiple marriages presents us with a metaphor of union which will become an image of Canadian political unity. Marriage, the metaphor for good government as expressed in the old seigniorial system of New France, is also the arcadian legacy bequeathed to Canada by the francophone partner. Thus, in the world of this novel, the anglophone gets not only a worthy person as partner but a noble ideal as well.

Questions of identity make up an important part of *Wacousta or the Prophecy: A Tale of the Canadas.*[4] The equivalence of identities in *St. Ursula's Convent* becomes in *Wacousta* a fusion of identities. Englishmen with French names symbolizing the two identities fused into one person now replace babies switched at birth symbolizing congruent identities. This fusion of national identities also occurs on the personal level in the relationship between Frederick and Madeline De Haldimar. Because they are cousins, these two characters are already related when they marry. Similarly, the marriage of French and English is the union of persons who already share many points of relationship that are here symbolized as family ties. Most importantly, this marriage is sanctified by the presence of the native people who are prepared to teach the young couple how to live peacefully in the new world.

In contrast, the struggle between Wacousta and Colonel De Haldimar ends in mutual destruction. The fight between the Englishman with the French name and the Englishman "gone

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[4] John Richardson, *Wacousta or the Prophecy: A Tale of the Canadas* , 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1832).

native" signifies a basic conflict like that between "fire and ice" (III.194), heart and head. Wacousta/Sir Reginald is all enthusiasm, carelessness, impetuosity, and independence. De Haldimar is "all coldness, prudence, obsequiousness, and forethought" (III.194). Wacousta represents instinctual life gone wild whereas De Haldimar represents the rational life mechanized into "martinetism" (III.142). If the "orthodox despotism" (III.140) of De Haldimar carried to an extreme is the English vice, then the unbridled "impetuosity of character" (III.222) seen *in extremis* in Wacousta is the French. In fact, the mutual self-destruction of Wacousta and De Haldimar is a symbolic re-enactment of the deaths of Wolfe and Montcalm who die fighting over New France. Thus, the three references during the course of the story to Wacousta's participation in the battle on the Plains of Abraham are a clear attempt to link his behaviour on the Michigan frontier with the dream of a French resurgence in North America. The Jacobite Scots at Culloden, the *ancien régime* at Quebec, and the Indians at Detroit—all three groups symbolized by Wacousta are alike doomed. But so is the inflexible British imperialism that De Haldimar represents. In the end, both extremes are eliminated in favour of the young couple who owe their lives and hopes for happiness to the kindness of the aboriginal people.

There are strong similarities between Leprohon's *A Canadian Tale* and Major John Richardson's *Tale of the Canadas.* Both stories take place after the Conquest, a time characterized by extreme social disorder and confusion. And both use marriage as the symbol of a redemptive social re-ordering in the aftermath of a great calamity. "On the morning of the third day" (III.369) the Indians propose peace and Frederick and Madeline De Haldimar emerge Christlike out of the tomb of the beseiged garrison eventually to become man and wife. This is the redemptive possibility—the Canadian solution witnessed by the Indian princess Oucanasta and her brother.

John Moss in his *Patterns of Isolation* uses *Wacousta* as an example of the "isolation" imagery which he believes is a defining characteristic of Canadian literature.[5] Margaret Atwood argues a similar point in *Survival.*[6] Recently, Gaile McGregor's *The Wacousta Syndrome* appeared advocating the same view.[7]

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[5] John Moss, *Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: McClelland, 1974) 50.

[6] Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972) 94.

[7] Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985).

In my opinion they all suffer a common weakness: lack of attention to the structure of the novel as a whole. They unduly emphasize the novel's setting, seeing an antagonistic dichotomy between garrison and forest, but they ignore completely the implications of the story's final denouement. Their interpretation overlooks the fact that Richardson has taken us through the chaos to a final moment of harmony. Art anticipates life as the fictitious actions of these English people with French names who are cousins prefigure political events which will occur later in the Dominion of Canada.

Catharine Parr Traill's *The Canadian Crusoes: A Tale of the Rice Lake Plains*[8] presents the reader with a final scene in which the two founding groups are joined by the native people in the person of Indiana and, united together in matrimony, they establish a new community in the virgin wilderness of Canada. Liberated from the restraint of writing for adults, Traill gives free rein to this unalloyed fantasy. Red and white, English, French, and Mohawk united in one bond of nationhood—this is the radical image subsuming her story for children.

Duncan Maxwell and Catharine represent the anglophone group and Pierre, the brother-in-law, and his wife, the francophone. Hector and Catharine Maxwell are the Canadian offspring of the two linguistic communities symbolized by Duncan and Catharine, their parents. Louis Perron is their francophone cousin. The French and English interaction is, as in *Wacousta*, definitely a family affair. Consanguinity may be an impediment to marriage in real life as Traill notes (350); nevertheless, it is a boon in a metaphorical sense. Louis's marriage to his cousin Catharine symbolizes the coming together in a socially sanctioned way of English and French who already have a pre-existing family connection. It is important to note, however, that marriage is a choice while family connection is a given. Similarly, French and English must freely choose each other in the partnership called Canada.

French and English form an integrated whole wherein individual strengths are complemented and weaknesses compensated for. Representing the anglophones, Hector the Scots soldier is stern and steady, while the francophone Pierre, the lumberjack, is hopeful, lively, and creative (8). Their sons Duncan and Louis reflect these same qualities in the next generation:

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[8] Catharine Parr Traill, *The Canadian Crusoes: A Tale of the Rice Lake Plains*, ed. Agnes Strickland (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue & Co., 1852).

> Louis never saw difficulties; he was always hopeful, and had a very good opinion of his own cleverness; he was quicker in most things; his ideas flowed faster than Hector's, but Hector was more prudent, and possessed one valuable quality—steady perseverance . . . (110)

and:

> Hector's habitual gravity and caution were tempered by Louis's lively vivacity and ardour of temper and they both love Catharine . . . . (143)

Fortunately for the gene pools of their descendants, as well as for the requirements of the fiction, the young Indian maiden soon enters their lives. Much as Frederick De Haldimar had saved Oucanasta from drowning in the St. Claire River so Hector saves Indiana—their name for her—from a hostile band of fellow Indians. Her gratitude turns into love for him which leads to marriage by the story's end. Although the white children have "the love of life" and are capable of "the exertions necessary for self-preservation" (129), she knows "more of the management of a canoe, and the use of bows and arrows and fishing line, than either himself [Louis] or his cousin" (192-93).

The Canadian Crusoes expands the metaphor of French and English intermarriage to include the native people as an active partner in the new society, rather than as a mere witness, as in *Wacousta.* Traill's story is one in which not only is the innocence of children a prerequisite for interracial harmony, but without it successful settlement becomes difficult, if not impossible. Indeed, the innocence of children becomes the main criterion for the colonial enterprise. The remarkable story of these four children's life together becomes a powerful metaphor for building a nation. Their venture on the Rice Lake Plain is a diminutive reflection of their parents' departure from Lower Canada to colonize Upper Canada, just as their parents' activity reflects, in miniature, the European colonization of the New World. When the children become integrated both with their physical environment and the people native to that environment, they are pointing the way to a transformed future. *The Canadian Crusoes* gives a special Canadian interpretation to the biblical injunction that "unless we are as little children," we can enter neither the heavenly kingdom above nor the Canadian "paradise below."

Moral turpitude and not innocence is the subject of William Kirby's *The Golden Dog [Le chien d'or]: A Romance of Old*

Quebec.[9] At the opposite ethical extreme from *The Canadian Crusoes*, it tells the story of New France's demise, not as a result of superior British military strength, but as a consequence of the degeneracy of the ruling clique at Quebec. The Intendant Bigot and his retinue reflect the corruption of Louis XV and the French court at Versailles. The cancer at the heart of the empire is the unrestrained abuse of people for personal gain.

Marriage, or rather its absence, is a key metaphor in Kirby's novel. It is the inability of characters to marry and the subsequent collapse of their personal relationships which become the metaphors for the collapse of New France. In Bigot's world self-love is the only love. The desire for wealth and power removes any opportunity for people to be open to each other. Characters treat each other not as persons but as objects to be used in schemes of self-aggrandizement. The Intendant is a successful Audley Sternfield who has reached an all-powerful position in society. His paramour, Angelique des Meloises, is a fallen angel—a corrupt Lucille D'Aulnay. In every Arcadia there is a disrupter who brings the golden age to an end. In the *ancien régime* of New France, the Arcadia of the Canadian imagination, the role of serpent in paradise is played by Bigot and Angelique, his female counterpart.

Nevertheless, the ethical chaos of *The Golden Dog* is left behind just as destruction is surmounted in *Wacousta.* Moral order is restored at the end of Kirby's novel when the Conquest becomes the chastening instrument of reform. The British entry into Canadian history is like a surgical intervention which cuts out the tumor. Events on the Plains of Abraham sweep away the corrupt French administration and bring about "a wonderful change of circumstances" (619). The "red uniform" (619) of England is now worn by the French Canadians: the "De Gaspés, and others of noblest name and lineage in New France" become "loyal subjects of England's Crown" (620). This alliance recalls the dying words of the old seignior in *The Canadians of Old*, "Serve your new sovereign with as much fidelity as I have served the King of France." It also suggests that Kirby is contrasting the fall of New France with the birth of Canada. Just as the absence of wholesome marriage prefigures the disintegration of New France, so a union characterized by mutual love and respect must define the "marriage" of French and English in Canada. J.R. Sorfleet makes a similar point[10] when he says

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[9] William Kirby, *The Golden Dog [Le chien d'or]: A Romance of Old Quebec*, authorized edn. (Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1897).

[10] J.R. Sorfleet, "Fiction and the Fall of New France: William Kirby vs Gilbert Parker," *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, 2.3 (1973): 132-46.

that, in *The Golden Dog*, Kirby inveighs "against the greed and self interest he saw operating in his own times by showing where these values had led in the world of 1748" (145). Sorfleet too sees the thrust of *The Golden Dog* to be toward a "Pan-Canadian unity" (145).

Towards the end of *The Golden Dog*, the best of the French Canadian people have put on the British redcoat, and are fighting against the American revolutionaries who have invaded Quebec. John Talon Lesperance's *The Bastonnais* is the story of this invasion.[11] Published the same year as the pirated edition of *The Golden Dog*, it dramatizes how this attack on their homeland created a dilemma for many French Canadians. This novel suggests that some francophones believed that if the Continental Army was successful before Quebec, the Americans, who then were receiving massive military aid from France, would show their gratitude by reinstating the French in Canada. Consequently, the decision to unite with the anglophone in the common defence of Canada was a difficult one to make. In a dramatic scene between Bishop Briand, who is convinced that support for the English is essential, and M. Belmont, the richest man in Quebec, who is undecided, Lesperance demonstrates how the choice made was based ultimately upon a mixture of political opportunism and conscientious loyalty.

Parallel and in contrast to these geopolitical complexities there is the simple love of an anglophone boy for a francophone girl. The anglophone is Roddy Hardinge, whose Scots father had been a soldier in Wolfe's army like Archy Lochiel and Duncan Maxwell; his beloved is Pauline Belmont. Before too long their uncomplicated love for each other becomes as confused as the political realities around them. Pauline falls in love with Carey Singleton, a Virginian prisoner-of-war. As the ultimate sign of selfless love, Roddy releases her from any obligations to him. In so doing, he opens himself to the love of the much more interesting Zelma Sarpy, a French Canadian lady of beauty and intelligence. Three generations later, the author as a *persona* in his own fiction meets a young lady on board a Saguenay cruise-ship. She is the daughter of a Hardinge boy and a Singleton girl. Thus, the blood of the two couples mingles together at last in a common offspring. Whereas the blood of Americans and Canadians had mingled together in death on the battlefield because of political conflict, now, at the personal level, it mingles together in love, and symbolizes what is desirable. Love conquers all; out of the wreckage of war emerge two couples: an anglophone and

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[11] John Lesperance, *The Bastonnais* (Toronto: Belford Brothers, 1877).

francophone Canadian and an American and a French Canadian. These four become the grandparents of the same child—an image of continental unity that puts one in mind of the racial unity imagery in *The Canadian Crusoes.*

The French Canadian is made to serve two symbolic functions in this novel. In terms of national sovereignty, French Canada is the symbolic front line against American expansionism, but in terms of the heart there is a symbolic conjunction of American and English Canadian affection in the love of French Canada. The first leads to bloodshed while the second produces a shared love-child. The final vision of *The Bastonnais* concludes with the child born of the archetypal marriage which leads to peace and harmony.

Language as the instrument of cultural and spiritual self-preservation is the tale told in Marshall Saunders' *Rose à Charlitte: An Acadian Romance.*[12] This is the story of a rich young man from Boston who goes to the Bay of Fundy in order to atone for an ancestral crime—in other words, it is the story of the "Bastonnais" not as invader but as suppliant. He frees himself and his family from an ancient curse and also finds personal happiness in the love of Rose, a beautiful Acadienne.

As an extended metaphor, *Rose à Charlitte* may be read in the following way. An enlightened bilingual anglophone sets out to atone for the persecution of francophones by his ancestors. He meets and falls in love with a francophone woman. They are prevented from marrying by reason of her marriage to old Charlitte—a symbol of the sad old Acadian past intruding upon the potentially happy, albeit transformed, Acadian present. Charlitte's death signifies the removal of obstacles which historically separate them. Meanwhile, the anglophone man saves a francophone child from the linguistic death of assimilation. He becomes the agent through whom she rediscovers the richness of her French heritage. This granting of cultural life in the present atones for the destruction of physical life in the past. He is materially rewarded for his generosity to the francophone, but more important is his spiritual reward, which is to be set free from ancestral guilt. In Rose's boy he finds a surrogate son. There is a bond between them which goes beyond their similarity in physical appearance and taste. The boy Narcisse is a true reflection of the man Vesper Nimmo (a permissable narcissism?). Likewise, francophone and anglophone are mirror images of each other—self and other locked in a relationship,

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[12] Margaret Marshall Saunders, *Rose à Charlitte: An Acadian Romance* (Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1898).

formerly of hate, but now of love. When the boy runs away from home to be with Vesper in Boston, he parodies in a benign way the sorrowful transportation of his Acadian ancestors to New England. This reversal symbolizes the righting of an ancient wrong.

The Protestant anglophone weds the Catholic francophone; the urban, technologically advanced is joined to the rural, organically whole, and the present is linked to the past as a foundation for the future. The Acadian wife, the Acadian foster son, and the new baby daughter are the green shoots grafted onto the formerly doomed anglophone root. Future growth is assured through this new lifeline. Thus, access to French Canada is through language: the French language. From *St. Ursula's Convent* through *Antoinette de Mirecourt* to *The Bastonnais* this has been a recurring motif. In *Rose à Charlitte*, the first Canadian author to sell a million books (*Beautiful Joe*[13]) makes it the focus of her fiction. Furthermore, if we read it metaphorically, her story suggests that the health of anglophones depends upon the nurturing of francophones.

In Francis Grey's *The Curé of St. Philippe: A Story of French Canadian Politics*,[14] we move from the ideal world of *St. Ursula's Convent* into a world "not worse than Tammany but certainly not Arcadian" (87). It is a world in which sex, politics, and religion become areas of self-assertion in the struggle for personal power. Whether the struggle be physical, political, or spiritual, the drive is always the same: to have one's own way. Actions are set in motion by an appeal to the highest principles which yet conceal the most self-serving ends. Still, Grey treats this human propensity with compassion rather than cynicism. Nothing escapes his wry humour, neither the one-upmanship of the one party, nor the face-saving tactics of the other; he sympathizes with all participants in the game. His is a world that is caught between the most lofty and the most banal—between the "Arcadian" and "Tammany."

This is a novel of difficult choices: the bishop caught between the clergy and laity; the curé between factions in his parish; the young man caught between two women; the young woman between two men; the politician between two parties; the father between his pride and his son; Canada between two lan-

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[13] This story of an abused dog was written in 1894 for an American Humane Society competition. An international best-seller, it was translated into more than 14 languages. See Lorraine McMullen, "Saunders, Margaret Marshall," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985).

[14] Francis W. Grey, *The Curé of St. Philippe: A Story of French Canadian Politics*, introd. Rupert Schieder, New Canadian Library 72 (Toronto: McClelland, 1970).

guage groups. Dilemmas are everywhere. Moreover, the wicked do prosper; deceit and corruption do go unpunished in the land. And yet at the very center of the fiction, there is the fortuitous reunion of Tom Fitzgerald and Alice Charette: the anglophone and the francophone in Canada. The reader never learns the details; perhaps there are no words for it:

> The narrator of this chronicle not having been present cannot undertake to report their conversation, and declines to invent one, from personal experience or otherwise . . . . Those who cannot fill it in for themselves will lose nothing by such reticence on the historian's part; those who can will be satisfied, surely, with the image evoked by memory or by imagination. (280)

What cannot be described has been a gratuitous intrusion that, unsought for and unexplained, has redeemed a disintegrating situation. Their love becomes a metaphor for grace abounding, providence, good luck, whatever term may be used to name this mystery which cannot be explained and which the world of this fiction cannot do without. No matter what games people play, what hidden agendas they may have, what self-serving ideals may be used to rationalize their actions, all falls into shadow before the central illumination of the love of this young couple.

With *The History of Emily Montague*, we leave the nineteenth century and conclude where we might have begun.[15] It is uncanny how Frances Brooke anticipates so much anglophone fiction of the next century. Colonel Ed Rivers comes to Canada because the women here are "handsomer" than in New York (I.2). He hopes for a "new golden age" here (I.10). He sees country girls dressed like "shepherdesses of romance" (I.35). "This colony is a rich mine yet unopened," he observes (I.50). The sleigh rides in the country, the balls and social events, all point ahead to familiar motifs in nineteenth-century Canadian fiction. More than anything else, however, Frances Brooke's preoccupation with marriage anticipates a central metaphor of English Canadian writers in the nineteenth century. She is true to her motherland the way Ed Rivers is true to his mother. Just as he returns home to marry an English wife rather than the formidable Mme. Des Roches, she, too, turns back to England.

In the next century anglophone authors always will choose Mme. Des Roches or her male counterpart. In this they will be

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[15] Francis Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague*, 4 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1769).

both creating and embodying in their art a vision of Canada as a happy marriage of French and English who have freely chosen each other. In their fiction it is a union achieved after great struggle, but one that emerges stronger because of the struggle.

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