

# BETWEEN EMPIRE AND REPUBLIC



America in the Colonial  
Canadian Imagination

OANA GODEANU-KENWORTHY

# Between Empire and Republic

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## America in the Colonial Canadian Imagination

Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy

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*To my parents*



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# Introduction

On a cold December day in 1837, on Navy Island in the Niagara River, which separates the United States from Upper Canada, a group of revolutionaries proclaimed the Republic of Canada. In a symbolic gesture, their leader, William Lyon Mackenzie, raised the flag of a new republic; it was a blue flag with two stars, one for Lower Canada, the other for Upper Canada.<sup>1</sup> During the following months the two Canadas were shaken by guerilla attacks, particularly in the south. These strikes were organized on the Canadian side with the support of many American enthusiasts. But the expected masses of colonists and immigrants never materialized to clamor for annexation to the United States. Instead, colonial volunteers rallied from all over the provinces, from the small settlements on the shores of the St. Lawrence, to the pioneers and farmers of the backwoods, joining the British troops in their efforts to crush the two uprisings in Montreal and York (present-day Toronto). In the end, without the expected popular support, Mackenzie's revolutionary movement was defeated. Even though political conversations about annexation to the United States were to surface on and off for another hundred years, monarchy was never to be seriously challenged again. The inconsequentiality of Mackenzie's symbolic gesture of proclaiming a republic in Canada merely announced the extent to which republican enthusiasm was to be marginalized in this North American outpost of the British Empire.

In the coming decades, the colonies fiercely debated their political and institutional futures, their places in the larger imperial family, and the future of their relationships with Britain and with the United States. The debates moved the colonies toward greater representative government, but stopped short of radically challenging their British institutional and cultural foundations. Ironically, the reform movement consolidated the British North American colonies as a central part of the imagined community of the empire, and confirmed the United States as an unquestionable ideological Other to the British space.<sup>2</sup>

In a poem written in the backwoods of Upper Canada, mere days after news of the Rebellions had reached her remote settlement, colonial writer Susanna Moodie voiced the patriotic feeling animating the volunteers that quelled the Rebellions:

Huzza for England! May she claim  
 Our fond devotion ever . . . ;  
 We swear—no foe shall sever  
 Her children from their parent's side;  
 Though parted by the wave . . .  
 We swear to die or save  
 Her honour from the rebel band  
 Whose crimes pollute our injured land.<sup>3</sup>

This poem is part of a larger, if ephemeral, body of literature produced in Upper Canada in the first half of the nineteenth century by colonists who in the same breath voiced their attachment to Britain and to their adoptive new home. Many were one-hit-wonders on the colonial literary scene, soon to be forgotten; a few found fame beyond the borders of British North America, where they were taken to illustrate the complexities of imperial loyalties in the nineteenth century. Moodie herself was to achieve recognition in the English-speaking literary world in the decades to come, but at the time she wrote this poem, she was but one of the many English immigrant women to North America whose husbands and sons left their fledgling settlements in order to join the rows of His Majesty's soldiers in defense of empire. Her poems echoed the feelings of an entire generation of settlers who had chosen Canada over the United States as their place of emigration, and who placed the British Empire at the center of their affective geography. These colonists saw themselves as part of a larger transoceanic enterprise, were attuned to the ideological transformations reshaping the world, and were willing to take up arms to defend the British constitution in North America.<sup>4</sup>

Assertions of commitment to empire and monarchy and of belief in a (primarily) Anglophone North American community distinct from the United States were not limited to the flurry of patriotic literature produced immediately after the Rebellions; rather, they represent a permanent trend in Canadian colonial culture. Building on Linda Colley's terminology, I call this trend "trans-colonial metropolitanism," an imperial manifestation of the idea of Great Britain as "an invented nation superimposed . . . onto much older alignments and loyalties" and applied onto a global scale.<sup>5</sup> This interpretation of the term acknowledges the fractured and constructed nature of "Britishness" as a conceptual category, but assumes it as a valid signifier of belonging in British North America.<sup>6</sup> Canadian historian Philip

Buckner demonstrates that imperialism and nationalism are not antithetical and incompatible concepts because “during the nineteenth century the majority of English-speaking Canadians defined themselves as British and shared many of the same myths, prejudices, and enthusiasms as the British did in the mother country.”<sup>7</sup> Yet, Britishness was never a homogeneous term, even though the American Revolutionary War did not end what Eliga Gould terms “the persistence of empire” in the rest of the British provinces in North America.<sup>8</sup> Its diversity of interpretations engendered a mosaic of sociopolitical identities ranging from an imperial cosmopolitanism based on the colonists’ awareness of operating on a global system, to a colonial patriotism stemming from a sense of a North American identity that was differentiated and distanced from the British Empire, and that included notions of autonomy or even independence.

The transatlantic literary market in English was fractured by political ideologies and emergent national categories, but united by language and trade. Books travelled across the Atlantic, from Britain, to the United States, to the Canadian colonies; they were eagerly awaited in North America, were pirated and bowdlerized by editors, and often changed by authors themselves in their desire to adapt to new markets. British and American writers were popular in the colonies, both in book form and in serialized form in the many (and often short-lived) periodicals that constituted the bulk of colonial publishing before 1840. The literary cultures of early Canada were regional, slow to emerge, and reflected local trends and preferences. They shared nevertheless a set of literary and cultural referents (primarily English), and the connection to the transatlantic networks of production and distribution on which cultural life in the colonies depended. The rise of mass readership led to a shift in the audience sought by colonial writers, as did the growing appetite for popular fiction; both marked the start of professional authorship in the colonies in the 1830s. A new group of writers understood the potential of this larger pool of readers and systematically tried to court foreign publishers and foreign audiences for their books.<sup>9</sup> While the metropolitan market was certainly important, the American one was closer and quite lucrative; colonial Canadian writers often wrote for both and adapted their texts to suit the different political climates of each literary market.

This study investigates the literary representations of American culture and American political institutions in the writings of the three Anglophone colonial authors who secured fame and success beyond the borders of British North America. Upper-Canadian Imperial officer John Richardson (1796–1852), English émigré to Upper Canada Susanna Moodie (1803–1885), and Nova Scotian political satirist and historian Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796–1865) were contemporaries to one another, but they experienced North America and the imperial connection differently. Across a variety of

genres, from historical fiction, to memoirs, to satirical sketches, to poetry, their writings comment upon the larger conceptual and ideological shifts in ideas about empire, popular governance, and political affiliation transforming the Anglo-Atlantic world. They reveal the complexity of the reasons behind the counterrevolutionary position of the Loyalists, and the evolution of that original ideological choice into a full spectrum of nineteenth-century North American liberalisms.

Even though they were studied retrospectively as ‘Canadian,’ and hailed as founders of Canadian national literature, Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton were, during their lifetime, marketed by publishers—and marketed themselves—as alternatively British or American. Collectively, their literary output hints at the tensions between the new political categories imposed on individuals by external events, wars, or treaties, and the fluctuating compound of competing identities that most colonists had to negotiate every day. As the site where the three authors imagined themselves as Britons or Americans, Protestants or Catholics, middle class or working class, white or half-Indian, men or women, the Pre-Confederation Canadian literary output speaks to the extent to which these categories clashed and overlapped, and reveals the role of political ideologies in articulating the resulting collective identities.

## A DIVIDED ATLANTIC

Using Mary Louise Pratt’s terminology, nineteenth-century British North America can be described as a contact zone, a social space where cultures intermingled and competed with one another, albeit “often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power.”<sup>10</sup> Politics mattered, then, as it does now. In the early decades of the century, the region was at the interface of two imagined communities united by the memory of the same past, yet which defined themselves in increasingly ideological terms. Early Canada shared with the United States a settler-colonial experience whose cultural inconsistencies surfaced in similar ambiguities vis-à-vis Britain, the British Empire, and the Native populations. With Britain, it shared the legacy of shared institutions and cultural practices, a rootedness in the larger transoceanic imperial community, and a fluid, yet compelling sense of Britishness.<sup>11</sup> Early America itself was caught in an uneasy relationship with its former mother country from which it had established its political, but not yet cultural independence. The War of 1812 cemented American self-definitions and the country’s sense of a national destiny.<sup>12</sup> The instability of nineteenth-century political boundaries mirrored the fractured nature of continental self-definitions. Despite Thomas Jefferson’s conviction that acquiring Canada was going to be “merely a matter of marching,” the end of the War of 1812 demonstrated

that Great Britain was not ready to concede the New World to the American republic just yet.<sup>13</sup> While colonial loyalty to the Crown allowed Britain to cling to the New World, the rise of the United States as a second continental center of power—economic, military, and cultural—complicated the dynamics of early Canadian settler colonialism, creating an uneasy triangulation across national and imperial borders, whose cultural echoes reverberate well into the twenty-first century.

The nineteenth-century Anglo-Atlantic world was bifurcated after 1776 between the American republic and those societies which remained loyal to Britain; so far, literary research has been dominated by comparative studies focused on the United States and Britain. As historians Linda Colley, C. A. Bayly, Eliga Gould, Joslyn Almeida, and Dror Wahrman showed, the American Revolution triggered a transatlantic conceptual shift that introduced the language of political ideology at the very heart of national definitions, and replaced the pre-modern regime of identity with a modern one.<sup>14</sup> Race and cultural particularities became components of the new patterns of belonging: the Second British Empire rebuilt after the loss of the thirteen American colonies was more authoritarian and paternalistic than the first, but also a more multicultural venture. The American Revolution had been a formidable catalyst for the creation of new definitions of citizenship expressed in political, rather than ethnic terms; although this is often forgotten, British North America was a third political space created by it. This study sets out to investigate the role that political discourse played in shaping stories of belonging and identity in the colonies, and reclaims literature as an important lens through which to explore the continental political debates of the time.

In his seminal study of the emergence of national feeling, Benedict Anderson devotes a chapter to the case of creole nationalism in North and South America, connecting the rise of nationalism and republicanism with the gradual rise of a literate middle class. Anderson identifies a single paradigm for the new nations of North and South America, predicated on republicanism and the break with the European imperial connection. For the thirteen American colonies, in addition to this revolutionary ethos, the progress from colony to nation was facilitated by the ideological common ground ensured by print capitalism and by the strengthening of commercial ties among the colonies.<sup>15</sup> Yet Anderson's discussion does not account for Canada, whose political evolution diverges from the clear-cut pattern he tries to identify as the general model for the rest of the territory. Together with the brief independence of Texas, Canada is dismissed as a 'failure' of the American model of creole nationalism anchored in republicanism and an indigeneity rooted in anti-metropolitan resistance.<sup>16</sup>

This British North American form of exceptionalism can be better understood when investigated in a transatlantic and transnational framework.



Despite the emergence of two Anglo-Saxon political imagined communities after 1783, one republican, the other monarchical, the remaining British colonies on the continent remained entwined in ideological and institutional arrangements that linked them politically and culturally both to Britain and the United States. These arrangements both reflected, and informed longer cultural trends that outlasted the British Empire in the region. The Canadian Rebellions of 1837–1838 were final act of the larger Atlantic revolutionary movements that started in 1776, built upon the intellectual developments that preceded them, and were articulated in two competing understandings of liberty that informed subsequent colonial debates on reform in the 1830s and 1840s and beyond.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, these competing understandings of liberty are still with us well into the twenty-first century, albeit muted by the dominance of the neoliberal paradigm, and continue to shape American political debates.

## THE STRANGENESS OF POPULAR DEMOCRACY

Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton explain their conscious choice to remain part of the British world by turning to American political arrangements as their foil. One of the most pressing political issues animating the Atlantic intellectual scene was the future of monarchy in an age of democracy. Starting with 1776, and even more so after 1789, European politicians, philosophers and artists alike voiced their skepticism toward the future of republics, and expressed doubts about the possibility (or desirability) of absolute equality and of the rule of the people. For conservatives like Edmund Burke in Europe, republicanism and democracy evoked the deluge of violence and civil unrest that devastated France on the wake of the Revolution. In the United States, as Sandra Gustafson has shown, the controversy over the nature of democracy led to a gradual definition of the concept that initially relied on its incompatibility with “empire,” and by extension with Europe, only to move later on in the direction of popular rule.<sup>18</sup> In the 1830s, British North American colonial culture was located at the intersection of two competing definitions of liberty: one predicated on the will of the people as the only legitimate source of political authority, the other derived authority for the government from the constitutional (and institutional) heritage of the community.<sup>19</sup> American republicanism was the closest form of republicanism that most nineteenth-century Canadians were likely to know directly; the colonies’ geographic proximity to a strong alternative ideological model gave urgency to local debates over the long-term consequences of imperial reform for the political future of British North America. In many ways, nineteenth-century British North America developed and maintained a broader political spectrum than the United States, one that included the likes of both William Lyon Mackenzie

and Thomas Haliburton: Mackenzie was similar to the Jacksonian democrats, while Haliburton was even more conservative than most Federalists/Whigs in the northeast United States. Both represented positions that were debated, engaged with, and sometimes implemented during the long age of colonial reform that led to the 1867 British North America Act. Beyond the quasi-hegemonic position of the American revolutionary narrative, colonial political debates reveal the existence of other models of North American liberalism and paths toward participatory government.

Neither skepticism nor optimism about American democracy was new; in many ways, British North American colonial debates of the 1830s merely revisited the terms and arguments of the competing narratives of social order that Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine had put forth half a century earlier, applying them to the changing landscape of emerging capitalism, industrialization, and democratic reforms. Here, any reform seemed to contain in it the threat of American annexationism and the loss of membership in the British Empire. In other words, for the British North American colonies, changes to political institutions and arrangements involved not only a choice between two forms of government but also between two visions of community; for London, the challenge of reforming the Canadian colonies while keeping them in the imperial fold turned this remnant of the first British Empire into the ultimate test of the ability of constitutional monarchy to endure in the New World during the changing times.

Despite the radical outbursts of the 1837–1838 colonial Rebellions, British North America, which in the 1830s consisted of Upper and Lower Canada (united in 1840 as the Province of Canada), Newfoundland, and the three Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, embraced a trajectory informed by the preservation of constitutional monarchy and by a self-conscious rejection of the American republican and democratic model. Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, even after the 1867 Confederation, the members of the colonial literate middle class continued to define themselves through their imperial connection, rather than against it. These colonists believed constitutional monarchy to be the form of government most suitable for keeping in order a diverse population, and feared the tyranny of the majority epitomized by Andrew Jackson's boisterous popular democracy. Whether they addressed their political beliefs head-on or indirectly, colonial writers produced a body of literature that reasserted the Britishness of all Canadian colonies and narrativized it as an extension of a larger transoceanic home—a global empire that could spread (and maybe even improve upon) the forms and ideals of the metropolis by making the most of the advantages of the New World while preserving the best of the old.

This literary and cultural revalorization of British imperialism was one consequence of the loss of the thirteen American colonies. The age of the Atlantic

Revolutions, while creating a context for movements of cultural change and social reform, also unleashed a strong counterrevolutionary response among British political and social elites.<sup>20</sup> The imperial institutions and ideologies of the period between 1790 and 1830 were applied to the settlements of the Second Empire. The vitality of these ideas during the following decades was a direct reaction to the fast-paced social changes reshaping Britain, its institutions, class structures, and a globally more expansive Britishness.<sup>21</sup> Empire and monarchy became more important than ever in reshaping British paradigms of identity and belonging. The ideological arguments behind this counterrevolutionary impulse, as well as the subsequent changes to the British constitution, have been overshadowed by the revolutionary paradigm that, until recently, was the dominant investigative lens through which scholars approached North American cultures.<sup>22</sup> My examination of colonial Canadian literature is informed by Elizabeth Mancke's reframing of the early nineteenth century within the Atlantic 'Age of Constitutionalism,' an approach that examines change—political as well as cultural—by centering the meta-narrative upon the object of change (the constitutional reforms within the British Empire) and away from the extreme tool of constitutional change represented by the American Revolution.<sup>23</sup>

From this vantage point, the evolution of early Canadian political and literary cultures, which Benedict Anderson explains as an aberration, is revealed to be a local manifestation of parallel models of transition to modernity that were not all focused on the creation of the nation-state, and which allowed for more than one way to imagine community in North America. Empire meant many things to many Britons; metropolitan interpretations of the term, and of Britishness itself, varied from those on the periphery. The political and economic structures of the formal empire existed in parallel with an "informal empire of cultural discourse and social praxis," and were inflected quite differently from one colony to another.<sup>24</sup> Some of the resulting imperialisms were defined by class, race, ethnic, and religious subordination; others, like in British North America, were a result of the pull of an alternative political model.

Nineteenth-century British North America was the meeting ground of both post-war counterrevolutionary impulses, and of the more fluid and flexible self-definitions reinforced via U.S. culture by the legacies of the same war.<sup>25</sup> The politics of the region was a "contest between Lockean liberals and civic republicans," a back-and-forth dance between liberalism and romanticism.<sup>26</sup> In this fluid ideological environment, older ethnic or regional forms of belonging, that had disappeared in the metropolis, survived in British North America alongside both social norms grafted from metropolitan culture and new regional cultural hybrid forms of identity, still self-designated as

'British.'<sup>27</sup> All of them were expressed in the literature produced and consumed in the colonies.

## CULTURE AND LITERARY CULTURE

The Anglo-Atlantic world may have been divided ideologically; nevertheless, it shared the same literary market. Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott were popular in Britain, British North America, and the United States; James Fenimore Cooper was read and imitated on both sides of the Atlantic. British literature provided the small community of colonial writers with models to emulate and with iconic names to admire, although British North American book buyers dealt with American, as well as with British sellers thus opening the field for two literary outputs to intersect in the colonies. It was a two-way street. American publishers reprinted British and Canadian books eagerly, often without copyright, and American editions of British publications were often available in Canada at lower costs than their direct imports from Britain. Particularly after the 1840s, American books and periodicals were available in Canada at such affordable prices that they drove out of business the domestic periodicals which could not compete with them.

Furthermore, writers on both sides of the border capitalized on the popularity of newspapers and the growing public appetite for serialized fiction in the English-speaking world. Americans like Washington Irving or Edgar Allan Poe were frequently reprinted in colonial newspapers or almanacs side by side with British or local authors, colonial Canadian writers courted American publications in their search for new readerships and financial support, and everyone dreamed of being published in London.<sup>28</sup> And yet, with all these seamless exchanges, the colonial world of print stood in an uneasy relationship with political authority. Then, much like today, writing and reading were *private* as well as *public* endeavors, and they had potentially political consequences. Religious institutions as well as the imperial state viewed and used the printed word as a means of supporting their authority and were wary of the literary world's ability to give voice to opposition and dispute, to challenge authority, and to bring new ideas into the public sphere.<sup>29</sup>

Intellectual historians and political historians of the Anglo-Atlantic world have chronicled the multi-dimensional nineteenth-century debates over the best forms of government in Britain and the United States. By focusing on how idioms and constructions pertaining to the political discourse filtered down into Canadian colonial writing, I argue that literature can illuminate the ways in which these debates altered the way selves and others were imagined within the same hemispheric space, and helped to define the two future national communities along ideological, rather than ethnic or religious,

lines. In *Atlantic Republic* (2005), Paul Giles demonstrates the impact of the break between Britain and the United States on the evolution of English Romanticism, as well as on the social and political reforms of the 1820s and 1830s. He argues that “English Romantic writing was heavily implicated and involved in . . . debates about the identity of the nation-state: the question of whether it might be understood as a natural organism . . . or whether its political choices were more specifically volitional and contingent.”<sup>30</sup> The ideas that were animating William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge on the one side of the transatlantic ideological divide, or P. B. Shelley and Lord Byron on the other were also at the center of similar conversations in Britain’s North American colonies. Yet their dynamics were complicated by the ambiguity of the settler-colonial position of British North America, by the social and demographic realities of life in North America, and by the influence of American republican and democratic ideas upon colonial culture.

Haliburton, Richardson, and Moodie were active participants in a British North American literary culture that simultaneously engaged and resisted British narratives of imperialism and belonging. They were connected, either through their lives and travels or indirectly, through their extended families, to the arteries of an empire which they considered home. They read and were read in the same colonial periodicals, responded to the same events across the colonies and the empire, and remained attuned to the larger ideological debates on both sides of the Atlantic, the British colonies in the Antipodes, and South Africa. As educated gentlefolk whose involvements in the lives of their communities were local, transcolonial, and transnational, they grappled with their dual position as Britons and colonials on the periphery of the British Empire, reflected on the political contingencies of history, and struggled to reconcile local allegiances with metropolitan values.

For most post-Confederation readers and critics, Haliburton, Richardson, and Moodie constructed and mediated a ‘Canadian’ culture which they were taken to represent, albeit the assumption of ‘representation’ is misleading and does not tell the entire story.<sup>31</sup> In themselves, none of these writers can be taken to truly stand for an essentialized and monolithic ‘early Canadian’ culture, to be listed alongside its ‘early American’ counterpart, particularly since, due to its colonial context, ‘early’ does not reflect the same temporality for Canada as for the United States, nor does it signify the same kind of territorial formation. Rather, these authors’ writings illuminate the multiple positions and arguments embraced by participants in the national and imperial debates of the time and the breadth of the North American ideological spectrum.

The backgrounds of the three authors were very diverse, as were the genres in which they wrote, the ways in which they engaged their North American material, and even their international popularity. As authors, they enjoyed

different degrees of fame and success; as members of the colonial literary elites, they belonged to different social classes. Even their lives refuse easy categorization. Susanna Moodie was born in England and emigrated to Upper Canada with her family for financial reasons. Throughout her life she saw herself as an exile in the New World, never returned to England although she continued to publish there, and infamously compared her love for Canada to the feelings which “the condemned criminal entertains for his cell.”<sup>32</sup> Thomas C. Haliburton was a Nova Scotian judge, born in the colonies of New England loyalist stock. Hopelessly in love with his Britishness, he was the first Canadian author to achieve worldwide recognition and was for a while considered a serious rival to Dickens, especially in the 1830s. A committed supporter of the idea of imperial federation, he remarried in his sixties to a wealthy British woman, moved to England, and ended his life as a member of the Westminster Parliament, protesting current colonial policies. Through his mother, Major John Richardson was part-Ottawa; through his father, he was part-Scottish, and his own life experiences anchored him in the imaginary space of the British Empire. His grandfather, John Askin, had been a staunch Loyalist and an influential and wealthy merchant in Detroit, forced to relocate to Canada after the Revolutionary War. Richardson was barely a teenager when the War of 1812 started; he joined the army and fought against the American troops alongside Tecumseh and his Indian warriors, and was taken prisoner of war for a year in Kentucky. Upon his release in 1815, he took up an ensignship in the Imperial Army and spent the next twenty-three years sailing the seas of the British Empire. He was more invested in his North American roots than Haliburton, and was determined to do for Canadian literature what Fenimore Cooper had done for American literature. Yet he only returned to Upper Canada in 1838 as a journalist for the *Times*, and remained there a mere eight years before moving to the United States where, after a brief career as a hack writer, he died in abject poverty in New York City.

The Canadian colonies that Moodie, Haliburton, and Richardson inhabited were islands of Britishness in an Atlantic world in turmoil. They were also part of the many transamerican literary scenes which, as Anna Brickhouse showed, were inextricably linked to emergent nationalisms, and whose writers were “engaging in conversation and contest across national and colonial boundaries in the hemisphere.”<sup>33</sup> The Britishness of these three colonial writers was informed by the transatlantic and hemispheric currents of their age, as they struggled to conceptualize and legitimize a dual model of identity in an imperial and North American framework. Their writings illuminate the ongoing ideological triangulation between British North America, Britain, and the United States, and expose the existence of regional models of belonging shaped by the conceptual and ideological shifts in ideas about empire, popular governance, and political affiliation in the Anglo-Atlantic world after 1776.

## LITERATURE AND POLITICS

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said points out that while authors are not necessarily defined by ideology, class, or economic history, they are nevertheless “very much in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that history and their social experience in different measure.” Said concludes that “culture and the aesthetic forms it contains derive from historical experience” and cannot be separated from it.<sup>34</sup> Literary texts were a privileged part of the larger cultural discourse of nineteenth-century North America. They provided a sounding box that enhanced the social resonance of any enunciation or discursive practice. As historian Dror Wahrman put it in a different context, literature’s structures and logic were “picked up to be reproduced or mirrored or objected to or bounced around again and again and . . . thus continued to reverberate against a background buzz of similar enunciations or practices.”<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, in the words of Americanist John Carlos Rowe, the flexibility of literary discourse can directly impact culture, both in order “to achieve economic, social, and political ends,” and to challenge and subvert ideology.<sup>36</sup> History shapes literature, but literature can also impact culture; literary analysis can, and should explore this interdependence.

The premise of this book is that the writings of Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton were informed by the larger political and semiotic orders of their communities. They were submerged in the larger colonial discursive environment while projecting outwards its structures and systems of belonging and self-definition for collective consumption beyond colonial borders. State authority and political identity are always enmeshed with personal identity. The structures of language help to express existing systems of social and political order and locate the speaking subject within those systems, because of the intimate relation between personal identity and the sense of belonging to one’s polity. Identity is articulated within language, so the sociopolitical ordering embedded in language will be internal as well. The literary texts these authors produced as a product of language were part of the ongoing process of verbalizing individual and collective political identities in pre-Confederation Canada, at once a public act through its production and a private one through its consumption.

The ideological split in the Anglo-Atlantic world loomed large in nineteenth-century literature on both sides of the Atlantic. Paul Giles connects the evolution of American and English literature to the political and ideological developments of the time; American nationalism coincided with Romanticism and built on the romantic emphasis on the natural connections between land and the people that inhabited it. As Giles puts it, “It was because of this particular and fortuitous coincidence that American literature was not

involved in a sustained ideological dialogue with British imperial power.”<sup>37</sup> Early American literature was involved in a complex process of replacing colonial hierarchies with republican ones; the relevance of an American national literature was reasserted by imaginatively encouraging readers and authors to position themselves at the center of an American experience rather than on the periphery of British culture.<sup>38</sup> The Revolution had set the rhetorical parameters of the relationship between Britain and the former colonies, and the resulting narrative of national liberation served to obscure America’s imperial practices in North and South America, by couching stories of its expansionism in the language of freedom—personal or collective.<sup>39</sup>

While Giles’s argument is compellingly made for the exchanges between Britain and the United States, his focus is never on how the discourse of Anglo-American difference was inflected in Britain’s Canadian colonies. On the one hand, unlike their nineteenth-century American counterparts, writers in British North America resisted the American rhetorical monopoly of freedom, and continued to define themselves as members of the British Empire. On the other, the colonies were still heavily exposed to American culture; their societies were more genial to the egalitarian ethos of American republicanism and popular democracy, and many regions had strong Loyalist roots. Their inhabitants were connected through the ties of commerce, family, or ideology with the republic next door, and were more likely to favor self-government and more open to American social practices. What this meant for the ‘Britishness’ of the colonies was not clear, particularly during the tumultuous 1830s, when colonists disgruntled with colonial corruption started clamoring for political reform of local imperial institutions. It was also not clear later on, when the colonies had to debate their political path on the continent—*independence and possible absorption into the United States, or responsible government and continuous membership in the British Empire.*

Colonial publications pitched in the controversy, and authors and journalists pondered on the long-term consequences of embracing American institutions for the identity of the colonies. The American Revolution may have been long over, but its echoes continued to ripple across nineteenth-century North America. English-speaking writers and readers were all participants in a British ‘civil war’ of imaginative fiction with potentially political consequences. British writers like Byron or Coleridge may have idealized the American experiment from afar, without traveling there, simply by projecting upon it the utopian longings they saw thwarted by a conservative British society; for Canadian colonial writers, America and the ideological alternative it represented were a very palpable choice (or threat). Their writings reflect the immediacy of the debates and the importance of the matters at stake. Conversations around colonial reform and popular democracy were not merely about the reform of colonial institutions, but also about their



long-term consequences on colonial culture and its relationship to Britain and the United States.

## EMPIRE AND SETTLER AMBIVALENCES

My analysis builds upon Paul Giles's interest in the literary representation of political ideology in Anglo-Atlantic culture but extends its scope to include Canada in the discussion. The book's central contention is that in colonial British North America political ideologies, in addition to providing paths to good government, functioned as cultural signs and as markers of national identity. A study of the perception of American republicanism and democracy in British North America illuminates both the transnational and hemispheric limits of imperial identity, and offers a new perspective on settler colonialism in general. Haliburton, Richardson, and Moodie are the colonies' first three professional authors with a wide international readership; their writings provide a lens through which to explore the ideological continuities and discontinuities between British North America, Britain, and the United States a time when the colonies were at the forefront of speculations about the future of the monarchy in a modern world of nation-states. The tropes of belonging they used offer a glimpse into the ideological contest that was laying the foundations of a novel regime of identity in North America based on political institutions rather than on ethnic or linguistic commonalities.

These tropes often belied their authors' multiple and conflicted allegiances—British, English, Canadian, Nova Scotian, North American, white or mixed-race, Anglicans or dissenters. Dual forms of belonging were not limited to North America, and are characteristic throughout the British world, and in settler societies past or present. Linda Colley showed in *Britons* that the increased importance of empire rendered Britishness more open to its Celtic fringe, favoring the emergence of a more flexible and inclusive identity regime.<sup>40</sup> If nationalism is the modern equivalent of older sacred myths of ethnic election, then settler-colonial patriotisms can be viewed as variants of 'classic' nationalism, which provided the colonies with a myth of ethnic election in the form of belonging to the imagined space of the imperial polity.

As David Cannadine pointed out, the British Empire was not only concerned with constructing otherness (racial, cultural, or political), but also with creating sameness through homogeneity, since homogeneity was believed to guarantee the solidity of the imperial enterprise. Empire was as much about the domestication of the exotic, as it was about the reordering of the foreign in terms used by the world left behind.<sup>41</sup> The settler colonies in particular were to be created in the image of the mother country. Because the new borders of Britishness divorced cultural expression from political sovereignty, the

imperial framework was able to accommodate multiple self-definitions. In other words, Scots like Richardson, English genteel emigrants like Moodie, or Nova Scotians of New England stock like Haliburton could construe their place in the empire while living in the Canadian provinces without having to discard their regional, ethnic, religious, or class identities, as long as they saw themselves as British.

Settler societies occupied an ambiguous position *vis-à-vis* the imperial center; on the one hand, they were inhabited by colonists who shared with the mother country both race and cultural origins, and who expected to enjoy the full benefits of their Britishness. These colonists' discursive and symbolic efforts to assert their Britishness in an imperial context functioned as claims for equality to their metropolitan brethren that were not always met.<sup>42</sup> In Alan Lawson and Hellen Tiffin's terms, settler subjects emerge as "situated at the very site of the operation of colonial power . . . part of the imperial enterprise," simultaneously its instruments and its recipients, both "mediator and mediated, excluded from the unmediated authority of Empire and from the unmediated authenticity of the indigene."<sup>43</sup> Thus, the British Empire functioned simultaneously as a more inclusive site of power which expanded the boundaries of Britishness after the American Revolution, and as a site of discrimination, where new cultural hierarchies effectively separated the white settlers from their metropolitan counterparts.

In a North American context, this power dynamics was further complicated by the existence of a second center in relation to which the colonies experienced their marginality. At a very basic level, the United States represented a success story right next door. By contrast with the stagnant British colonies, whose population barely reached one million, by 1840 the American republic boasted a booming economy, an aggressive and successful westward expansion, and a population of over seventeen million.<sup>44</sup> Immigration to Canada flowed from the south as well as from Britain; many American pioneers took advantage of the unsettled nature of much of the northern and western borders and trekked north in search of cheap land. As Jane Errington demonstrates, the long border between the United States and Canada remained porous and open to ongoing exchanges of ideas as much as material objects via trade, travel, and personal relationships.<sup>45</sup> To all this we can add the vigorous book market that spilled over the long undefended border with British North America and which exposed the colonists to the rhetoric of American Exceptionalism, to American ideas and propaganda, as well as to the workings of American institutions.

These political institutions, the political ideologies behind them, and the impact they had on collective identities, shaped early Canadian views of both the United States and the British Empire. Benedict Anderson points out the crucial role that the alliance between Protestantism and print-capitalism

played in the establishment of national identity through the creation and mobilization of homogeneous reading publics. The rise of national feeling in the thirteen colonies was also explained in part by the fact that their “market centers . . . were readily accessible to one another, and their populations were relatively tightly linked by print as well as commerce,” thus facilitating the emergence of a cohesive reading public that could imagine itself as a political community.<sup>46</sup> But the Canadian colonies were uneasily situated at the intersection of two fields of power. Print-capitalism anchored them simultaneously into the British realm and in the American one, in many ways cancelling the ambivalences of the settlers’ subordinate position vis-à-vis one imperial center by the threat of absorption into the orbit of another.

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This book is not a history of the evolution of democracy in Canada and the United States; rather it examines early Canadian literary representations of American republicanism and democracy and as the foil for a more general exploration of colonial political cultures. It argues that these representations relied heavily upon transatlantic and imperial tropes of difference rooted in political ideologies, distilled in literary figures, and circulated intertextually from Britain, to North America, and back, and demonstrates the three writers’ skillful use of the national context in which their work was to be consumed. It also aims to illuminate the enduring nineteenth-century cultural patterns that continued beyond the age of empire, well into the twenty-first century. While democracy is no longer an experiment today, how the institutions of the Canadian state represent it and defend its principles remains different from the American model, reflecting some of the same ideological dilemmas of the nineteenth-century. From the elite-driven political philosophies of Edmund Burke or Samuel Taylor Coleridge in Britain to the egalitarian democratic yet imperialistic vision of Andrew Jackson, the values of those political universes and their internal contradictions filtered down to the world of popular literature. The imaginative literature of the time was not directly concerned with analyzing the philosophical subtleties of Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, or John Stuart Mill, but was nevertheless informed by an awareness of distinct political universes whose most immediate and prominent signifiers were the monarchical Britain, on the one hand, and the republican France and the United States on the other.

The book is organized around five main themes recurrent in American self-representations; it examines how these tropes of American identity were informed by the ideological context between monarchy and republicanism, and by the political debates around the idea of popular democracy. Reexamining them from a British North American perspective illuminates the ways in which the ideological distinctions between American and British societies were mirrored in colonial society and its literature: Who were the

Americans? What exactly made early Canadians British? How were the former perceived to be different from the latter? If Britishness meant the preservation of the political and institutional bonds uniting the colonies to the mother country, how did colonial writers conceptualize British North America's place in a changing empire, and how did they describe the United States, its people, its values, and its institutions in their stories and plots?

Chapter 1 focuses on the idea of freedom, and analyzes how Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton articulated in their literary output the two competing discourses about liberty in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world. Ever since the American Revolution, the United States had claimed rhetorical monopoly over the concept of 'freedom,' linking it to republicanism and democracy; conversely, the British Empire claimed to protect the freedom of its citizens through the constitutional traditions of the monarchy. Haliburton, Moodie, and Richardson all wrote stories about British North America and the United States, dramatizing the various guises under which American 'freedom' presented itself and was translated in social practices, political interactions, and economic exchanges on the ground. Chapter 2 tackles the relationship between freedom and law (or lawlessness), and identifies common themes in the authors' literary portrayal of American popular attitudes toward rules and conventions—whether military treaties, economic agreements, or social conventions—linking them to the American propensity to value individual interest over collective interest, and to the deep imprint of popular democracy on society as a whole. From their colonial perspectives, laws, rules, and conventions protected freedom rather than hindered it, and Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton all, despite their different literary approaches, all hammer this point home. Chapter 3 explores Moodie's and Haliburton's treatment of religion and religious institutions in English-speaking North America, finding parallels between the popular support for an established Church and the monarchy in British North America on the one hand, and American federalism and the horizontal, decentralized structure of religious institutions in the United States, on the other. Chapter 4 revisits the myth of political equality and upward mobility associated with immigration to the United States, and compares it to colonial understandings of 'equality.' Moodie and Haliburton wrote about the desirability or lack of desirability of hierarchical class structures in British North American society, contrasting them to the destabilizing effect of egalitarian American social mores, while Richardson portrayed moving to the United States as a defection and a betrayal of the larger imperial family. The final chapter examines the conflation of whiteness and national identity in Jacksonian America, and discusses the relationship between political ideas and the rhetorical choices made by Moodie, Haliburton, and Richardson when writing about race and Americanness, Britishness, and civility.

Benedict Anderson wrote that nations are the spontaneous distillation of distinct historical forces, which, once created, became modular, “capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations.”<sup>47</sup> Early nineteenth-century ideas of Britishness were integrated in such a modular model and exported to the settler colonies, whether these ideas focused on British conservatism, tolerance, paternalism, inclusiveness, or on support of hierarchy, class boundaries, and monarchy. In British North America, the geographic proximity of an alternative ideological center represented by the United States allowed those same ideas to be used to confirm both the political and national distinctiveness of the British and American worlds, and the incompatibility between American culture and the regional cultures of British North America.

The deeper metaconvention structuring the colonial universe is a hierarchical worldview, epitomized in the British constitutional monarchy as the political structure best equipped with protecting individual and collective freedoms against the tyranny of the majority which, colonial Canadians argued, was pushing the United States toward utter chaos. Imagining belonging and community in the British colonial worlds of the nineteenth century relied therefore heavily on ideas and concepts from the realm of politics, welded into the building blocks of new national identities. As this study argues, the political and historical contingencies of the age were indirectly reflected and narrativized in the literary works which were produced across the British North American colonies; they eventually morphed into essentialized national characteristics that shape cultural perceptions about the two national communities to this day.

## NOTES

1. William Mackenzie was the leader of the radical reform movement in Upper Canada. He was one of the leading figures of the 1837–1838 anti-colonial Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada; the leader of the French-Canadian reformers was Louis-Joseph Papineau.

2. French-Canada, although technically a British colony, had a different cultural dynamic than the rest of the British settler colonies in North America. Since the Treaty of Paris in 1763, French-Canadian culture had developed in an uneasy relationship with the British imperial authorities on the continent. The 1837–1838 Rebellions were differently inflected in Upper and Lower Canada, even though they shared in common a dissatisfaction with the dysfunctional and corrupt colonial regime. Given my interest in the tensions between political ideologies and narratives of Britishness in the settler colonies of the British Empire, this book does not include France or Quebec in its scope. It is limited to the triangulation between Britain, the United

States, and the remaining British colonies on the continent, and as such focuses on Upper Canada and the Maritimes.

3. Susanna Moodie, “The Oath of the Canadian Volunteers,” *Roughing It in the Bush* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1871), 452. All further references will be to this edition.

4. See Philip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: Calgary University Press, 2005).

5. Linda Colley, *Britons, Forging the Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1996), 5. See also S. F. Wise, *God’s Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993).

6. Although the territorial formation we understand today as ‘Canada’ did not exist as such until 1867, for the sake of convenience, I use ‘early Canada/Canadian,’ ‘colonial Canada/Canadian,’ and ‘British North America/n’ when referring *collectively* to the territories and political units that are today part of Canada. When discussing individual colonies (Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, etc.) I name them separately.

7. Philip Buckner, “The Long Goodbye: English Canadians and the British World,” in *Rediscovering*, 181–207, 181.

8. See Eliga Gould, “The American Revolution in Britain’s Imperial Identity,” in *Anglo-American Attitudes*, Fred M. Leventhal and Roland Quinault, eds. (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 23–37.

9. George Parker, “Courting Local and International Markets,” in *The History of the Book in Canada*, Patricia Lockhardt Fleming and Yvan Lamonde, eds., volume 1 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004), 348.

10. Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* (1991): 33–40, 34.

11. See Colley, *Britons*; Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

12. See Jasper M. Trautsch, *The Genesis of America: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Formation of National Identity, 1793–1815* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018).

13. Quoted in R. B. Bernstein. *Thomas Jefferson: The Revolution of Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 205.

14. Colley, *Britons*; C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780–1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1989); Eliga Gould and Peter Onuf, eds., *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Eliga Gould, “American Independence and Britain’s Counterrevolution,” *Past & Present* 154 (1997):107–41; Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Joslyn M. Almeida, *Reimagining the Transatlantic, 1780–1890* (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

15. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 64.

16. Anderson, 46.

17. Alan Greer, *The Patriots and the People* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993). Also, see Alan Greer “1837–1838: Rebellion Reconsidered,” *Canadian Historical Review* 76 (1995): 1–18; Michel Ducharme, *Le concept de liberté au Canada à l’époque des révolutions atlantiques (1776–1838)* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010).

18. Sandra Gustafson, “Histories of Democracy and Empire,” *American Quarterly* 59, 1 (March 2007): 107–33.

19. Ducharme, 37–43.

20. See Gould, *The Persistence of Empire*.

21. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 251.

22. For a historical reconceptualization of the Canadian transition to modernity, see Elizabeth Mancke, Jerry Bannister, et al., eds., *Violence, Order and Unrest: A History of British North America 1749–1876* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019).

23. Elizabeth Mancke, “The Age of Constitutionalism and the New Political History,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 100 (4) 2019: 620–39, 623.

24. Nancy Christie, “Introduction,” in *Transatlantic Subjects: Ideas, Institutions, and Social Experience in Post-revolutionary British North America*, Nancy Christie, ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 18. Also see Jeffrey McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791–1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

25. Wahrman, *Modern Self*, 251.

26. Janet Aizenstat, *The Once and Future Canadian Democracy: An Essay in Political Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2003), 9.

27. Christie, “Introduction,” 14.

28. Michael Peterman, “Literary Cultures and Popular Reading in Upper Canada,” in *The History of the Book in Canada*, volume 1, 395.

29. Patricia Lockhardt Fleming and Yvan Lamonde, “Editors’ Introduction,” in *The History of the Book in Canada*, 8.

30. Paul Giles, *Atlantic Republic: The American Tradition in English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 33.

31. See one such example in Ray Palmer Baker’s *A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation* (1920), although he used these authors to illustrate the supposedly ‘American’ character of early Canadian literature. Four years later, Archibald MacMechan dismissed Moodie in *Headwaters of Canadian Literature* (1924) as a ‘denizen’ that could not be classified as a Canadian writer, while Richardson was left out altogether. Haliburton is sometimes hailed as a father of American humor, and at other times, he is presented as a representative of early Canadian nationalism with roots in the Nova Scotian colonial experience. W. H. New’s *History of Canadian Literature* (2003), while self-consciously trying to construct a narrative predicated on change and discontinuity, nevertheless includes Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton in the category of ‘reporters’ of Canadian realities before 1867. New presents their works as illustrative of the two dominant directions in literary responses to the history of settlement in Canada: the experience of exile and a feeling of belonging. By the time literary critics started to pay attention to Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton individually, postmodern and postcolonial

literary scholarship started to dominate the investigative framework. Of the three, Moodie achieved the most iconic status in the twentieth century. Margaret Atwood enshrined her as “the spirit of the land she once hated” in the afterword to her poetry volume *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1972) and in *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972); in his influential “Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada” (1975), Northrop Frye cast Moodie as an embodiment of the “garrison mentality” that essentialized an enduring Canadianness supposedly rooted in community and in a perpetual retreat from, or fear of, the northern landscape. Richardson and Haliburton fared less well, with only passing critical interest in their works and their significance from either a national or an international perspective. Michael Hurley used psychoanalytic criticism to explore Richardson’s fiction in *Borders of Nightmare: The Fiction of John Richardson* (1992), while George Elliott Clarke’s essay “Must We Burn Haliburton?” (1997) opened the path to an exploration of the writer’s highly problematic views on race, gender, and class.

32. Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It*, 163.

33. Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 32.

34. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), xxii.

35. Wahrman, *Modern Self*, xvi.

36. John Carlos Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 14–15.

37. Giles, *Atlantic Republic*, 15.

38. Edward Watts, *Writing and Postcolonialism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 21.

39. Rowe, *Literary Culture*, 5.

40. Linda Colley, *Britons*, 382.

41. David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xix.

42. Catherine Hall, “What Did a British World Mean to the British? Reflections on the Nineteenth Century,” in *Rediscovering the British World*, Buckner and Francis, eds., 21–38.

43. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, eds., *De-Scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and Textuality* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), 231.

44. At the sixth census held in 1840 in the United States, the total population was 17,069,453. “1840 Census of Population and Housing,” U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1840/1840v3/1840c-26.pdf> (accessed January 11, 2021).

45. Jane Errington points out that Upper Canada’s most conservative, pro-British elites had close social, economic, and ideological connections to the American Federalists, sharing many of their ideas, their prejudices, and their dilemmas about governance and community. Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987).

46. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 64–65.

47. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4.





## *Chapter One*

# **Freedom**

The American Revolution abruptly introduced the language of political ideology into the heart of national definitions. It juxtaposed the fluid category of ‘Britishness’ to a new American national identity defined by republicanism and egalitarian ideals, although who exactly was “created equal” to whom was to be debated for many decades to come.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, the dissent rhetoric of reform and democracy had been monopolized by the young republic; that of conservatism and loyalism had become cemented in British self-definitions of belonging and identity. As political philosopher Janet Ajzenstat points out, Canadian history and politics have been a back-and-forth debate between two political movements. One is the Enlightenment liberalism of John Locke, present from earliest days in British North America and still shaping Canadian institutions and culture; the other is what Ajzenstat calls the counter-Enlightenment Romanticism, which favored a more direct, participatory form of democracy. Although originally stemming from the same liberal British intellectual roots, these two competing understandings of freedom informed the corresponding British and American conceptualizations of social order and political organization in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

They also shaped two competing understandings of liberty. Historian Michel Ducharme distinguishes between “republican liberty” and “constitutional liberty” as the ideological drivers of the Age of Revolutions in the Atlantic world. The first, closest to Ajzenstat’s “counter-Enlightenment Romanticism,” defined freedom as the equal right of individuals to participate in the political life of their communities. This interpretation of the term supported popular sovereignty and viewed the people as the only legitimate source of authority. To be free, individuals had to be equal but also independent from one another and from the state. The second interpretation of the term viewed freedom merely as the sum of individual rights that a state had the duty to guarantee all its citizens.<sup>3</sup> In this second case, authority was derived from the constitutional (and institutional) heritage of a community

and not from the people's direct involvement in the political arena. Since the first interpretation linked freedom to the political realm, republican liberty could and did legitimize revolution; by contrast, constitutional liberty was not predicated on political participation, and therefore its proponents distrusted social unrest and revolution. Those embracing this interpretation of liberty supported a hierarchical worldview that legitimized inequalities—economic, political, or social. As long as the basic rights of all individuals were protected by the state—safety, personal liberty, and defense of private property—there was no reason to challenge the status quo.<sup>4</sup> American republicanism and the views of the more radical reformers in Canada were shaped by the first interpretation of freedom, the Romantic one; the second informed the centralized restructuring the Second British Empire in the decades that followed the end of the American Revolutionary War. Both ideas were part of the *Zeitgeist* of Canadian colonial culture throughout the nineteenth century, and informed political debates and literary expression alike.

## PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN REPUBLICANISM IN THE BRITISH WORLD

By the 1830s and 1840s, the British world was transforming under the dual push of the move toward free trade and of migration. Lingering British enthusiasms for republicanism had been eroded by Napoleon's self-aggrandizing rise to power, while Whig beliefs that America represented the culmination of British liberal values were undermined by the excesses of Jacksonian democracy. The American republic was rapidly expanding across the continent; by the end of the War of 1812, it was clear that the former upstart colonies had become a military and economic force to be reckoned with. The British Empire had a new global rival. As Paul Giles, Richard Gravil, and others have argued, this new rival also stood for an alternative vision of how society and the government could be organized.<sup>5</sup>

During the time span that this book covers, British North America was a fractured and heterogeneous space, organized into Upper and Lower Canada—united after 1840 as Canada—and the Maritime colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island; beyond them lay the vast unincorporated swaths of Rupert's Land and the Northwestern Territory extending West, to the Pacific Ocean. In certain ways, these colonial spaces were very similar to prerevolutionary America: beyond their shared British allegiance, they had well-defined regional identities underpinned by distinct histories of settlement and involvement in empire, and a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic makeup. Lower Canada was a colony of conquest, predominantly inhabited by French Canadians; Upper Canada was a postrevolutionary

creation, a product of the institutional and cultural strengthening of imperial ties after the loss of the American colonies; the Maritimes, especially Nova Scotia, had a strong Loyalist presence and a more defined Atlantic identity, both rooted in its prerevolutionary past and geographic proximity to Britain.

American republicanism was the only form of republicanism that most nineteenth-century British North Americans were likely to know directly. Therefore, debates around the future of the colonies or around imperial reform hinged on perceptions of how well the American political system worked and whether its model could be used in British North America. Yet, despite shared liberal beliefs in individual rights, the rule of the law, or freedom of political speech, American-style democracy and republicanism appeared alien to a colonial worldview still anchored in authority, tradition, and monarchy. This trend endured; as late as 1865, when Canada was debating the form of its future Confederation, the United States was used as a cautionary tale: George-Etienne Cartier, one of the Founding Fathers of the Confederation stated:

They [the Americans] had founded a federation for the purpose of carrying out and perpetuating democracy on this continent but we, who had the benefit of being able to contemplate republicanism in action during a period of eighty years, saw its defects, and felt convinced that purely democratic institutions would not be conducive to the peace and prosperity of nations.<sup>6</sup>

Situating colonial culture at the intersection of two competing definitions of liberty has several direct implications for understanding the dominant literary tropes of British North American representations of the United States. The first is to explain the enduring appeal of monarchy in Canada, and the centrality of empire in the colonial literary imaginary. The second concerns the colonial debates over the legitimate source of power in a community. What qualifies as revolution? How does one draw the line between legitimate uprising and unlawful rebellion? Where are the true global champions of liberty to be found, in the British Empire or in the American republic? Was the future of the Canadian and Maritime colonies to join the booming American republic? Colonial writers grappled with all these questions in their literary output, directly and indirectly.

### **REPUBLICANISM AND MOBOCRACY: THOMAS C. HALIBURTON'S SATIRE**

Thomas C. Haliburton was a prominent Nova Scotian politician and historian, known for his colorful involvement in the life of the colony, as well as for his

writings. A conservative and charismatic public figure, Haliburton did not see himself as ‘Canadian,’ in the contemporary sense of the word, but as Nova Scotian, and first and foremost, as British. He believed in the monarchy, in British institutions, and was deeply suspicious of democratic reforms. The judge began his career as a reformer, fighting against the privileges of the colonial oligarchy in Nova Scotia. But, after the reforms that followed the Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada and that seemed to push the colonies in the American direction, Haliburton turned to literature in an attempt to persuade colonial audiences of the desirability of maintaining imperial institutions in British North America. While he ultimately failed to achieve this political goal, his subsequent literary career brought him a level of national and international fame unprecedented for a colonial author.

Haliburton’s literary protagonist, Sam Slick, is a charismatic and shrewd Yankee seller of clocks, whose adventures are narrated in a series of satirical sketches, initially published in serialized form in a colonial newspaper and then in book form in 1836 in Halifax. *The Clockmaker* mixes the format of the frontier tall tale with elements from political pamphlets, references to popular culture, and fictional comments about current events, educating readers about the dangers of introducing democratic, elective institutions in the colonies. The formula stuck, and the Halifax edition was soon republished in London and in New York. Due to strong demand from publishers, Haliburton produced a second and a third volume that followed Slick’s adventures across Nova Scotia and the United States, as well as a sequel, *The Attaché*, that (1843–1844) took Slick to London where he becomes an American diplomat and continued his cross-cultural musings. By the end of the 1830s, the wandering Yankee peddler was famous and quoted not only in Montreal or Halifax, but also in Boston, New York, and London, where Haliburton’s sketches were a serious rival to Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers* which had come out at about the same time.<sup>7</sup> Over a hundred editions of *The Clockmaker* were published in the nineteenth century, which was a significant accomplishment for a colonial writer.<sup>8</sup>

Despite their surface humor and undeniable satirical appeal, the sketches encouraged colonial and British readers to ask themselves some very serious questions about the future of the colonies and of the empire. To conservatives like Haliburton, the anti-colonial Rebellions of 1837 and 1838 in Upper and Lower Canada represented both real and symbolic threats to a worldview predicated on order and tradition. Reforming colonial institutions to incorporate democratic principles could open the way for republican ideas. Was it a good idea to support such reforms? Haliburton believed that the loss of the American colonies and the victory of republicanism were due to the rise of democratic ideas, as much as they were due to imperial mismanagement. If monarchy was central to Britishness, any threat to its institutions in the

colonies was also potentially a threat to colonial identity in general. Popular democracy and equality had become the hallmarks of American national self-definitions: What would then be the fate of a democratic British North America? Would it remain British? Would it join the American union? His writings strove to answer these serious questions; indeed, the reviews of his work, published in prestigious magazines in Britain, Upper Canada, and New York, acknowledged the importance of Haliburton's satirical sketches not only as literature, but also as unique contributions to the political discourse about British North America.<sup>9</sup>

Popular democracy and republicanism function as interrelated and mutually-reinforcing dimensions of the American image in his sketches. To Haliburton, democracy was an unavoidable historical tide, and American republican institutions were demonstrably ill-equipped to control it. The violence and chaos that accompanied the expansion of the American republic across North America showed that, while imperialism and popular democracy could coexist, the results were not conducive to social harmony or to freedom for everyone. To make this point, the three series of *The Clockmaker* consistently describe American society as infused with an egalitarian ethos at every level: from government, to social mores, to religious institutions, in each case with negative consequences upon the fabric of society as a whole. The characters' reflections on the philosophical differences between the two forms of government competing in North America address the potential impact of democratic institutions on monarchical loyalty in Nova Scotia and by extension in British North America. They also echoed the age's transatlantic debates over the compatibility of democracy, monarchy, and empire.

One of the recurrent protagonists of *The Clockmaker* is Reverent Hopewell, an Episcopalian minister whose flock deserted him *en masse* and joined the Unitarians after the American Revolution. Hopewell repeatedly explains the shortcomings of nineteenth-century American society as consequences of the new political system which had altered the colonies' original institutions, culture, and mores away from the British model. Hopewell is presented as a living bridge to prerevolutionary America. In series 2, in "Confessions of a Deposed Minister," Hopewell situates himself at the intersection of the past and the present of the republic and provides an insider's critique of American history. The Revolution and its aftermath brought freedom to many, but also infringed upon the freedoms of many by usurping the authority of the British state whose responsibility was to protect everyone's rights.

We boast of freedom; tell me what freedom is? Is it havin' no king and no nobles? Then we are sartainly free. But is that freedom? Is it in havin' no established religion? Then we are free enough, gracious knows. Is it in havin' no hereditary government, or vigorous executive? Then we are free, beyond all

doubt. Yes, we know what we are atalkin' about; we are wise in our generation, wiser than the children of light—we are as free as the air of heaven. What that air is, p'rhaps they know who talk of it so flippantly and so glibly; but it may not be so free to all comers as our country is.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, democracy and freedom are deemed incompatible because Haliburton feared that the individual freedom to pursue one's happiness always impinges upon someone else's liberties. The examples of recurrent mob violence that punctuated the news from the United States, made nineteenth-century British North Americans uneasy about mass democracy: the American political system is presented as merely having removed all restraints upon individuals.

'Reform' is a recurrent motif throughout his writings; Haliburton vehemently opposed all reform movements in education, politics, religion, and trade, whether in Europe or in North America. Current events in the colonies and in the United States serve as the background for his characters' musings on democracy and freedom. *The Clockmaker* presents American egalitarianism as a tendency that had always existed *in embryo* in the Revolution, only to become intensified by the rise of popular democracy in the nineteenth century. Thus, Haliburton constructs a relationship of causality between the past of the British Empire and the present of North America as a whole: if the American Revolution hadn't happened, popular democracy in the New World would have been kept in check by the British monarchical institutions. Some moderate Federalists in the United States may still exist in the 1830s and 1840s, some sensible Tories may still be in power in British North America and in London, but Haliburton feared that they were all rapidly losing ground to radicals, reformers, and democrats.

Another character who spans the temporal and ideological gap between colonial America and the American republic is the elder Slick, Sam's father. Like Hopewell, old Slick lived through the American Revolution, remembers the prerevolutionary past of North America, and is able to contrast it to its present. Throughout the three series of the book, Slick the elder reminisces at length about his experiences during the battle of Bunker Hill, expresses his disdain for the British, but also decries the trajectory of the American republic which has strayed from its ideals and abandoned its founders. In "The Dancing Master Abroad," he articulates his mistrust of the electoral system because of the fickle nature of popular support toward its republican heroes:

Says father: *there's a moral, Sam, in every thing in natur.* Never have nothin to do with elections . . . sarve the public 999 times, and the 1000th, if they don't agree with you, they desart and abuse you—see how they sarved old John Adams, see how they let Jefferson starve in his old age, see how good old Munroe like to have got right into Jail, arter his term of President was up. They may talk of independence, says father, but Sam, I'll tell you what independence

is, and he have his hands a slap agin his trowses pocket and made the gold eagles he won at the race all jingle again; *that*, says he . . . *is what I call independence*.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, at the center of Haliburton's construction of American otherness is not republicanism itself, but popular democracy. The two are distinct, though related: one could lead to the other, and both are incompatible with the constitutionalism implied by Britishness. Empire and monarchy are repeatedly described in *The Clockmaker* as buffers against both the tyranny of the majority and against the tyranny of an imperial center that did not treat colonials as full citizens, and could abuse its power over them. As Georges-Etienne Cartier was to notice in 1865, American republican institutions could not truly protect individual freedoms from the tide of populism or from the violence of mob rule. Young Sam's naïve and uncritical exceptionalism serves as the internal foil through which Hopewell and the elder Slick explore the changes American society underwent since its independence. Along similar lines, in "The Preacher Who Wandered from His Text," in the first series of *The Clockmaker*, Professor Everett, another American character conversing with Slick, laments the current state of American society in the age of Jackson by contrasting it to the ideals of the original republic: "Mr. Slick, our tree of liberty was a beautiful tree, a splendid tree. It was a sight to look at; it was well fenced and well protected, and it grew so stately and so handsome, that strangers came from all parts of the globe to see it."<sup>12</sup>

The fences, rather than obstacles to freedom, are viewed as protecting it from the masses, a view that delegitimizes all claims to an absolute authority rooted in the popular will. Echoing the same feeling, in "Confessions of a Deposed Minister," Reverend Hopewell revisits the idea in his reflections on the intrusion of the democratic element into the original design of the American republic: "Where now is our beautiful republic bequeathed to us by Washington and the sages and heroes of the revolution? Overwhelmed and destroyed by the mighty waters of democracy."<sup>13</sup> Thus, it is not republicanism itself, but unchecked popular democracy, that is to blame for the problems American society was facing, from mob rule to social unrest, street violence or economic instability.

Canadian colonial attitudes about republicanism's relationship with popular rule were also influenced by political events in France. The French experiment in self-rule was even less reassuring than the American one: the 1789 Revolution had degenerated into Napoleon's bloody empire, and cemented the British view of French republicanism as a dangerous, godless, and mobocratic form of government that could easily slip into a levelling tyranny of the majority.<sup>14</sup> The subsequent turbulence of French politics throughout the nineteenth-century with its rollercoaster of revolutions, republic, monarchy, and empire did nothing to challenge these perceptions.<sup>15</sup> And, finally, the



marked republican tone of the 1837–1838 Rebellions in Lower Canada further solidified associations between the move for popular sovereignty and social unrest. French-Canada’s example of anti-loyalism and rebellion was enough for Haliburton to oppose any concession that colonial reformers wanted to grant French Canadians.<sup>16</sup>

The sketch “English Aristocracy and Yankee Mobocracy,” in series 2, describes democracy in quasi-medical terms: it is a disease, a virus that spreads and infects. Those that are the most vulnerable to this ideological pandemic are the French Canadians, because of their continental cultural lineage. “Them chaps go to France, get inoculated there with infidelity, treason, and republicanism, and come out and spread it over the country like small-pox.” As long as they are allowed to use their own language, Sam declares, the French will be impossible to acculturate, and will continue to function as hotbeds of republicanism within the British Empire. “If the French in Canada were to rebel . . . they’ll rebel as soon as they can walk alone, for the British have made ’em a French colony instead of an English one.”<sup>17</sup> The French-Canadian adoption of the American rhetoric of popular sovereignty during the Rebellions, combined with the support that William Mackenzie sought from the United States in the 1837–1838 conflict, are used by Haliburton to demonstrate to his readers the connection between republicanism, democracy, and social instability.

Any British North American pro-reform arguments in support of republicanism revolved not around virtue and public good, but around its rejection of central authority (which it construed as invariably oppressive) and around the support for the rights of the common man. Given the French and American examples, this interpretation of republicanism alienated the majority of the British colonists and built negative connotations around republics not as instruments of liberty that limit government powers, but as harbingers of popular democracy and its excesses.<sup>18</sup> In the same sketch, Reverend Hopewell spars with the elder Slick in their assessment of the American political system. Hopewell decries the structural vulnerability of republicanism to the dark side of popular democracy. The masses can be easily manipulated by demagogues and, to Haliburton, if respect for the law is eroded, there is a slippery path down from popular rule to mob rule:

There is nothing’ to check popular commotion here, nothin’ to influence it for good, but much to influence it for evil. . . . The press can lash us up to a fury here in two twos any day, because a chord struck at Maine vibrates in Florida, and when once roused . . . where are the bodies above this commotion that can soften, moderate, control, or even influence it? The law . . . is too feeble; people disregard it; the clergy can’t, for if they dare to disagree with their flocks, their flocks drive ’em out of the pastur’; the legislators can’t, for they are parts of the

same turbid water themselves; the president can't, for he is nothin' but a heap of froth thrown up by conflictin' eddies at the central point, and floats with the stream that generated him.<sup>19</sup>

Republicanism is construed as twice problematic; first, because the American Revolution was associated with betrayal toward the mother country and second, because American republicanism had already fomented rebellion in the colonies. The sketch "Canadian Politics" dramatizes once more the appeal of American ideology for the French-Canadian radicals in Sam's account of his conversation with a group of doctors in Montreal. The rhetoric of popular sovereignty is at the center of the American image in this sketch, as the source of inspiration for French-Canadian ideas of independence:

Great man, your Washington, says the doctor. Very, says I; no greater ever lived. . . . And Papinor is a great man, too, said he. Very, said I, especially in the talking line—he'd beat Washington at that game, I guess by a long chalk. I hope, says he, some day or another, Mr. Slick, and not far off neither, we shall be a free and independent people, like you. . . . We shall be the France of America afore long—the grand nation—the great empire.<sup>20</sup>

In response to the doctor's grandiose dreams about the future of French Canada as an independent nation in North America, Slick retorts that, as soon as the British Crown stops protecting it, French Canada will be absorbed into the United States. In Slick's cynical assessment of continental geopolitics, the expansion of the American empire goes hand in hand with popular will:

Our folks would drive you off the banks, seize your fish, tear your nets, and lick you like a sack—and then go home and swear you attacked them first, and our government would seize the fisheries as an indemnification. . . . Our fur traders would attack your fur traders, and drive 'em all in. Our people would enter here and settle—then kick up a row, call for American volunteers, declare themselves independent, and ask admission into the Union; and afore you know'd where you were, you'd find yourselves one of our states. . . . Gist look at what is goin' on to Texas and what has gone on to Florida, and then see what will go on here. We shall own clean away up to the North and South Pole, afore we're done.<sup>21</sup>

To Sam, the growth of the American republic, demanded and legitimized by the will of the masses, made it highly unlikely that any other political entity could exist in North America. Thus, in Haliburton's interpretation of events, the British Empire becomes the unlikely protector of French-Canadian cultural freedom. In short, by blending references to events in France with anecdotes that dramatize the impact of American egalitarianism, expansionism, and majority rule on society, *The Clockmaker* consistently makes the point

that the British monarchy, with its stratified institutions that limited direct political involvement, was a better protector of individual and collective freedoms than the American model.

### REPUBLICANISM AS BETRAYAL: SUSANNA MOODIE'S REBELLION POEMS

The nineteenth century saw an impressive wave of migration from Britain toward its settler colonies, whose population increased twenty times over by the year of the Confederation: by 1867, two thirds of those living in Canada were of British origin.<sup>22</sup> Although she has been firmly wrought into the Canadian literary canon as the founding mother of national literature, Susana Moodie's only claim to Canada upon her arrival was derived from the imperial ideology that cast all colonies as extensions of home.<sup>23</sup> Moodie was the daughter of an impoverished English merchant ruined by the economic downturn that followed the Napoleonic Wars. In 1832, together with her husband, an officer on half-pay and no prospects in Britain, she joined the flood of newcomers seeking a better life in Canada. The Moodies belonged to the small group of middle and upper-middle-class emigrants from England whose project of personal improvement depended upon emigration; like others in this group, they chose the Canadian colonies specifically because British North America seemed a space more genial to social hierarchies and familiar cultural norms than the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Moodie's writings illuminate the deeper internal divisions within Canadian settlerhood, which often pitted Canadian-born against newcomers, and which were particularly visible in debates around colonial reform. The Moodies spent their first eight years in Canada living the harsh life of pioneers in the backwoods. Here, uncleared land could be purchased more cheaply than the land in the already settled parts of the colony but life was hard. More often than not, fortunes and lives were lost in the inhospitable wilderness, especially when the immigrants were genteel Britons, like the Moodies, with no experience of the brutal realities of Canadian pioneer life, which turned out to be quite unlike the romanticized pro-immigration propaganda that was flooding Great Britain at the time.

Moodie started to publish poems and short sketches as soon as she arrived in Canada and for a while supported her entire family with her pen. Her literary career in British North America took off due to the success of the handful of patriotic poems inspired by the 1837–1838 conflict, which struck just after the family moved to the frontier. Her pro-British poems were published in the Toronto-based *Palladium of British America, and Upper Canada Mercantile Advertiser*, but her international fame came decades later. *Roughing It in the*

*Bush* (1852) was a motley collection of poems and autobiographical sketches written in the 1830s in the backwoods, which Moodie edited and republished in book format with the help of her London editor Richard Bentley. The book was marketed as an honest account of immigration to Canada by a genteel Englishwoman, and fit, with a difference, within the flood of immigration literature of the time.<sup>25</sup> Due to its rapid success, the book was followed a year later by a sequel, *Life in the Clearing*, which explores Moodie's life in the urban parts of the colony.<sup>26</sup> Both volumes had a primarily English audience in mind; particularly, *Roughing It* was conceived as a warning to potential immigrants of genteel background who imagined they would achieve an easy fortune if they relocated to North America. It propelled Moodie to the forefront of the colonial literary scene and was quite successful with continental and with American readers, but also attracted significant criticism from Canadian readers for the negative depiction of life in the colony.

Some of Moodie's Rebellion poems were included in *Roughing It*; unlike the overall negative tone of the book, they articulated Moodie's conservative allegiance to the British cause, her rejection of the ideas of radical reform put forth by radical William Mackenzie and his republican followers, and her assertions about the enduring British heritage of Canada. The Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada were different in nature from one another, but they were part of the larger, democratic movement triggered by the sudden intrusion of the 'masses' in the political sphere and by the loss of legitimacy of the old colonial order which Haliburton described in his satirical sketches.<sup>27</sup> In Upper Canada, the challenges to the colonial order were brought about by the chronic mismanagement of the colony at the hands of the entrenched colonial oligarchy; in Lower Canada, they were also rooted in a keen sense of national and ethnic distinctiveness between the French-Canadian population and the Anglophone population. The situation was compounded by political tensions on the background of a period of acute economic distress, triggered by financial collapses and crop failures, all of which greatly accentuated class strife across the two colonies.<sup>28</sup> The uprisings in Lower Canada erupted in late November 1837, but were easily crushed by the British troops. Firebrand Scottish journalist William Mackenzie led the Rebellions in Upper Canada; the support that his movement received from American volunteers, and his proclamation of the Republic of Canada in December 1837, validated the accusations of treason on the part of the conservatives, cementing the mainstream association of radical reformers in Canada with American influence and republican ideas. The failure of Mackenzie's movement and his eventual flight to the United States marked the real and symbolic defeat of the idiom of 'republican liberty' in Canadian colonial politics, and opened the way for the moderate reform movement, which was to eventually lead to responsible government (home rule) for Canada, in 1840.

Moodie's writings reflect the transformations in the language used in the colonies when describing loyalty and the role which imperial institutions were believed to play in securing colonial allegiance after these Rebellions. In Upper Canada, Canadian-born and American-born settlers tended to endorse some degree of reform, while the British immigrants supported the colonial government.<sup>29</sup> Before 1830, the conservative (Tory) oligarchy in Upper Canada equated Loyalism with unquestioned support for imperial institutions viewed as the last buffer protecting the province from the expansionist United States. The continuous influx of Americans coming to Canada in search of cheap land made the cultural threat of American republicanism more insidious because it was both internal and external; only strong imperial institutions could protect Upper Canada from the potential radical impulses of these Trojan horses of democracy and republicanism, the Tory rhetoric went. At the same time, to many immigrants from Britain, imperial institutions were viewed as guarantors of privilege and upward mobility within the familiar class system of the British world.<sup>30</sup>

One of Susanna Moodie's poems made it to Toronto through her husband, John, who had joined the imperial forces to fight the rebels. The poem, partly included in *Roughing It in the Bush* under the title "An Address to the Freemen of Canada," was reprinted by at least eight other Canadian newspapers after its initial publication in one of the main literary magazines of the colony, the *Palladium of British America and Upper Canada Advertiser*. It was soon followed by "On Reading the Proclamation Delivered by William Lyon Mackenzie, on Navy Island" published in *The Palladium* in December 1838. This second poem offers a scathing criticism of Mackenzie and the rebel cause and, in critic Michael Peterman's words, struck "a note of rabid patriotism" without equal in Moodie's writing.<sup>31</sup> Other patriotic poems in the same vein were reprinted in newspapers across the colonies and quickly helped to establish Susanna Moodie's reputation as a Tory writer and supporter of the conservative cause in the 1830s and 1840s.

In its original form, "On Reading . . ." challenges the republican view of the people as an ultimate source of legitimacy, and of Mackenzie as representative of the Canadian people and as a potential harbinger of their liberty:

Liberty! Freedom!—soul inspiring sounds  
 'Tis a strange mockery to hear them fall  
 From felon's lips—to hear a wretch proclaim,  
 (A self-elected demagogue), that he  
 Can give to his misguided lawless band,  
 The best—the noblest—highest gift of heaven.

To Moodie, a true definition of freedom is predicated on the defense of a law that is in the collective interest. "O this is freedom!—this is to be free /

Secure in conscious worth to stand the shock.” The opponent is “a traitor to [his] native land” who sacrifices “all private happiness and public good.”<sup>32</sup> By casting the appeal of the rebel leaders as selfish and materially motivated, Moodie’s poem cancels out the republican fiction of ‘the people’ by presenting the rebels as merely manipulating the rhetoric of ‘liberty’ to further personal goals.

Ironically, the same poem includes George Washington among past defenders of freedom and legitimate challengers of authority. Moodie’s main biographer, Carl Ballstadt, notes the contradictions in her categorization. While Mackenzie is described in unflattering terms as “a wretch” and a “slave who lures / His wretched followers with the hope of gain,” Washington is a “bold, a brave independent man . . . / Strong in the majesty of simple right,” “freedom’s intrepid champion,” and a “patriot,” whose just cause grants legitimacy to his followers. Mackenzie’s supporters are dismissed as “sons of anarchy.” Ballstadt explains these inconsistencies by the psychological undercurrents of Moodie’s poetry, pointing out that “the idea of insurgency against the emblems of British authority was very traumatic for Moodie,” although this does not explain her positive treatment of Washington. Despite these contradictions, the 1837–1838 Rebellions gave the writer the possibility to state her Britishness and loyalty in print, themes which she later explored in subsequent poems such as “A National Song: The Wind That Sweeps Our Native Sea” and “There Is Not a Spot in This Wide Peopled Earth,” both of which celebrate Britain as the land of true freedom and courage.<sup>33</sup>

In another poem, written in 1846 in Belleville (“Lines: Written upon the Prospect of a War with the American States”), Moodie describes again the United States as a threat, and urges Canadians to defend their country again in the name of empire: “‘Arise! In England’s might, for England’s right’ / And drive the invader from [their] happy land.” Natives and slaves alike support the British cause, united against a common invader whose continental hubris is about to be paid:

Columbia’s hand the thunderbolt has hurl’d,  
To force an unjust war upon the brave,  
Her own rash act unchains the soil-bound slave;  
Degraded Helot of the western world—  
The native chief awaits the unholy strive,  
With eager vengeance burning in his brain . . .<sup>34</sup>

The rhetorical identification of the colony with the mother country is a recurring theme in Moodie’s patriotic poetry. “An Address to the Freeman of Canada” and the “Oath of the Canadian Volunteers” were included in *Roughing It*. In both, loyalty to the land is paralleled by loyalty to the ancestors who lived in a different land which grants the colony its very identity.

The Canadian volunteers are called to fight the foe—William Mackenzie and his supporters, as well as the United States. The political nature of “the sacred link” between colony and metropole is revealed by rejection of the model represented by the United States:

The stars for us shall never burn,  
The stripes may frighten slaves,  
The Briton’s eye will proudly turn  
Where Britain’s standard waves.  
Beneath its folds, if Heaven requires,  
We’ll die, as died of old our sires!<sup>35</sup>

Moodie conflates family and nation, on the one hand, and empire and nation, on the other, bringing together colonial loyalty and national identity to be confirmed in the support of the Crown. Britain, the British Empire, and Canada come together in an imaginary community, a rhetorical choice which blurs the borders between Britain and its colonies, and uses the imperial past to provide meaning and structure to the colonial present and future.

The Moodies’ black-and-white understanding of colonial life was not to last. After several years in the backwoods, the family moved to the settled parts of Upper Canada, in Belleville, Ontario. Here, Moodie and her husband found a world deeply divided along party lines and acquired a more intimate knowledge of the social and political realities of the colony. The family’s experience in the backwoods helped in retrospect to nuance their understanding of the colonial grievances behind the 1837–1838 Rebellions. While they never embraced republicanism, the Moodies eventually came to share the view that responsible government would be beneficial to Canada’s development, and that it was not inconsistent with either patriotic loyalty to the mother country or traditional British values. Susanna Moodie’s moderate Toryism mirrors the contested definitions of loyalty in the province in the 1840s.<sup>36</sup> In *Life in the Clearings* (1853) she reminisces about the sharply polarized town of Belleville upon their arrival. “The odious term of rebel, applied to some of the most loyal and honorable men in the province, because they could not give up their honest views on the state of the colony, gave rise to bitter and resentful feelings, which were ready, on all public occasions, to burst into a flame.” Moderate views were rare, she confesses; all supporters of reform were indiscriminately branded as “traitors and rebels,” so that “[e]very conscientious and thinking man who wished to see a change for the better in the management of public affairs, was confounded with those discontented spirits, who had raised the standard of revolt against the mother country.”<sup>37</sup>

Moodie's editorializing around the poems and sketches inspired by the rebellions, as she edited them for inclusion in *Roughing It*, illuminates the evolution of political ideas and colonial political sensibilities between the time when the texts were written and the time when the book was published. Moodie also made further editorial changes in later editions, published after the Canadian Confederation. The 1852 edition of *Roughing It*, which was published in London, opens with a patriotic poem that describes Canada not as "a child of bondage" but as a land of liberty enjoying the "freedom's crown"<sup>38</sup> represented by British colonial rule; for the 1871 Canadian edition, Moodie toned down the pro-imperial tenor of the first edition, adapting it to the mood of colonial society after Confederation. In 1852, Moodie had explained away the colonial patriotism of the pioneers and their rejection of all claims for reform as the result of ignorance: "The honest backwoodsmen, perfectly ignorant of the abuses that had led to the present position of things, regarded the rebels as a set of monsters, for whom no punishment was too severe."<sup>39</sup> In 1853, in *Life in the Clearings*, Mackenzie and his followers are described as having acted "not without severe provocation; and their disaffection was more towards the colonial government, and the abuses it fostered, than any particular dislike to British supremacy or institutions."<sup>40</sup> And, finally, in the 1871 introduction to the first Canadian edition of *Roughing It*, Moodie goes so far as to actually credit William Mackenzie for the healthier state of affairs in the colony: "the blow struck by that injured man, weak as it was, without money, arms, or the necessary munitions of war, and defeated and broken in its first effort, gave freedom to Canada, and laid the foundation of the excellent constitution, that we now enjoy."<sup>41</sup> The failed "felon leader" of her earlier writings in the 1830s is revamped into a founding father of the Canadian constitution and included in a Canadian national narrative four decades later. His radicalism no longer a threat after the creation of the Dominion, Mackenzie's literary conversion from radical and republican traitor to national hero is complete. Yet, even as debates in colonial politics shifted, loyalty and disloyalty remained connotative labels that evoked not only ideas of belonging or not to a particular community, but also the political choices that defined those forms of belonging.

### REPUBLICANISM AS SELFISHNESS: RICHARDSON AND THE FOUNDATIONAL NARRATIVE OF CANADA

John Richardson began his career in London, when the American Fenimore Cooper was already a literary star. His first novel, *Écarté; Or, the salons of Paris*, was published in London in 1829, but it was a frontier novel in the



style of Fenimore Cooper, *Wacousta* (1832), that was to win him international recognition. Richardson continued to write empire-friendly frontier fiction, as well as historical works about North America, with a declared goal of educating his audiences and bolstering their national pride. Richardson's fictionalized narratives of the Canadas are inspired on the one hand by his own experiences, which he cast as a story of both empire and nation, and on the other, by the enduring British-American tensions in the New World. Richardson returned to Canada in 1838 and stayed there only a few years, failing to create a national literary movement as he had hoped. After his move to the United States, he churned bowdlerized versions of his Canadian fiction, with all patriotic passages excised, and generic frontier pulp fiction aimed to titillate his American readers. What is mostly known of his output during this period are two short novels based on the 1812 Indian attack on Fort Dearborn (today Chicago): *Hardscrabble; Or, the Fall of Chicago: A Tale of Indian Warfare* (ca 1850) and its sequel, *Wau-nan-gee; Or, the Massacre at Chicago: A Romance of the American* (1852); and a lurid tale of rape and betrayal on the U.S.-Upper-Canadian border, *Westbrook, the Outlaw* (1851), also set during the same conflict.

The War of 1812 looms large in Richardson's writing. Barely a teenager, Richardson took part in a number of battles in 1812 and 1813, fighting alongside Tecumseh and his Indian warriors against the Americans, and spent a year as a prisoner of war in Kentucky. These personal connections to the events inform not only his fiction, but also his historical account of the conflict in the *War of 1812* (1842). *Wacousta* and *The Canadian Brothers* (1840) were written with an imperial audience in mind and consistently refer to the United States and British North America as political entities. By contrast, the plots in *Hardscrabble*, *Wau-nan-gee*, and *Westbrook* revolve around individuals and their personal choices, not around communities as political agents. Unlike his last three novels, clearly commercial enterprises written with a U.S. audience in mind, *Wacousta* and *The Canadian Brothers* were intended to provide a foundational story for the united Canadas and, as Richardson himself confessed, to lay the bases of polite literature in the colony. They draw upon Richardson's memories of the 1812 war, address an imperial readership, and approach the past from the vantage point of Richardson's colonial present.

*Wacousta's* plot unfolds against the background of Pontiac's 1763 Rebellion, when an alliance of Native leaders tried to push the British settlers and troops out of the Great Lakes region. Richardson situates the Canadian colonies within the larger British imperial narrative, so that two distinct conflicts over continental dominance (the French and Indian Wars and the War of 1812) are narrativized as two stages of the same foundational war for British North America. The convoluted story takes the reader back and forth in time

and across the Atlantic, the fate of its protagonists pre-figuring the national divisions of nineteenth-century North America. Back in England, the British colonel de Haldimar stole the bride of a fellow officer, Sir Reginald Morton, then he was dispatched to Canada. Enraged against his rival, Reginald Morton abandons the British army, and follows de Haldimar to Canada. He enters a French corps at Quebec as the the Warrior Fleur de Lis; after committing countless atrocities in the French army, he joins the Natives under the name of Wacousta, exploits the tense relations between the Indian tribes and the British, and persuades Pontiac to rebel against the king. Wacousta finds a mate and ally equally thirsty for revenge in Ellen Halloway, the wife of a British officer executed on the orders of Colonel de Haldimar for a minor breach in the military rules of the garrison. Together, they plot their vendettas in the Canadian wilderness.

The story progresses in countless accounts of murder, captivity, and escape, punctuated by gory blood baths. All of the young de Haldimars perish, with the exception of one son and his bride, Madeleine. Wacousta himself will die, and with him, the threat represented by the Indian tribes. The end of the novel offers a picture of interracial bliss, where Natives and Europeans live in peace and harmony on the edge of the forest. The cultural divisions that structure *Wacousta* will be continued by national ones in its sequel, *The Canadian Brothers* (1840), where the remaining heirs of the de Haldimar family find themselves entangled in love and conflict with Wacousta's American descendants, on the backdrop of the War of 1812. In contrapuntal fashion, the plot weaves in actual events, such as General Isaac Brock's death at Queenston Heights, the death of the Indian leader Tecumseh, and the victory of the Canadian militia in stopping the progress of the American troops. Richardson uses the cast of characters to draw distinctions between the two sides involved in the conflict, but also to hint at the unacknowledged commonalities between Americans and Canadians.

The War of 1812 is the last war Canadians and Americans fought against each other. While in the United States it is but a forgotten conflict, in Canada it is celebrated as a foundational moment in the history of the country, when an alliance of colonists—anglophones, francophones, First Nations, and British troops—defended the country against the American invasion. In reality, the War of 1812 was as much a civil war as it was part of the larger realignment of military fault lines in the Northern Atlantic. In Upper Canada, it was waged among similar ethnic groups enlisted in different ideological camps; the American-born outnumbered British-born colonists on the Canadian side; on both sides there were Irish, Scotch, and Natives who chose to defend either the republic or the Empire, based on their own interests and visions of the future.<sup>42</sup>

The plot of *The Canadian Brothers* engages with the distortions of the facts in the official memory of the war in both camps, and reveals to readers the two competing historical narratives retrospectively superimposed upon the facts. Richardson places at the heart of the story a conflict between brothers, a barely veiled metaphor for the fratricidal nature of the War of 1812. During a routine operation, the eldest descendant of de Haldimar, Gerald Grantham, captures an American ship. Here he meets the beautiful and mysterious American, Matilda Montgomerie, falls in love and is ready to sacrifice his career and duty to be close to her. His younger brother Henry anxiously watches Gerald's growing obsession paralleled by a gradual descent into depression and alcoholism. Matilda is revealed to be the daughter of the Yankee Desborough, a settler who had moved to Canada after the Revolution, but who, once the war starts, reverts to his old loyalties and works as a spy for the Americans. Desborough is Wacousta and Ellen's son, which makes Matilda a descendant of Wacousta, and an implicit heir to his savagery, individualism, and violence. Unlike Fenimore Cooper's romanticized frontiersmen, Richardson's whites gone native are negative characters. Wacousta's bloodlust is continued in Desborough who rejects civilization, lives alone in the forest and eats Indian flesh, a grotesquely distorted version of Natty Bumppo. The individual pursuit of one's goals—whether revenge or love—that characterizes Wacousta and his descendants is also associated with the American character as a whole.

The trope of the traitor that switches sides during the war and commits atrocities on behalf of the American army is reworked in Richardson's last novel, *Westbrook, the Outlaw* (1851), whose protagonist abandons the conventions of civilization the moment he turns against the British and starts working for the American army.<sup>43</sup> Like Desborough, Westbrook lives in the woods; his log cabin is the North American equivalent of the Gothic dungeon where imprisonment, torture, rape, and incest can take place, safely removed from law and civility. In fictionalizing the Loyalist Andrew Westbrook, the historical figure that inspired his protagonist, Richardson leaves out the reasons and injustices that may have pushed the real Westbrook to switch sides.<sup>44</sup> What is left is sheer evil; driven by a desire of personal revenge, like Wacousta and his offspring, Westbrook spirals out of control in a frenzy of blood and gore that ends up frightening even his American allies. Richardson stops short of labelling Westbrook as either an American or a Canadian, nor does he explicitly link the outlaw's story to any national characteristics, which is not surprising given that he was courting a U.S. audience.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, he remains the strongest friend and ally of the Americans during the war, hinting, as critic Dennis Duffy argues, at the hardships that Canadians historically "endured at the hands of rapacious men beyond the control of law."<sup>46</sup> Overall,

Richardson's fictional Westbrook remains a bogeyman, a grotesque border creature defined by personal choices and drives, whose demonic nature transcends any clear national allegiances.

While Wacousta, Desborough, and Westbrook are alien to any external sense of norms that would direct their behavior, the protagonists of *The Canadian Brothers* grapple with the limits that morality and duty put on their freedom. In pursuit of his romantic obsession with Matilda, Gerald is involved in, but just as many times, avoids the historical events of the War of 1812. Under Matilda's spell, he is torn between love and duty, and temporarily renounces his loyalties to Crown, country, and family for his own pursuit of happiness. This decision takes a corrosive toll on his sense of honor; Matilda asks him to prove his love for her by killing an officer who had insulted her reputation. In the end, despite his feelings for the beautiful American, Gerald cannot commit the crime. Not only does he learn that his intended target is an American officer he had befriended back in Detroit and whom he respects, but he also finds out of the real cause of Matilda's tarnished reputation—a mysterious incident hinting at her possible liaison with a black slave. At the cost of a superhuman effort, the Canadian brother breaks the spell the American woman has over him. He refuses Matilda's demand, warns the American officer of her plans, and helplessly watches the woman he loves commit suicide. Gerald's return to his regiment and family does not mark a happy ending. Richardson weaves historically accurate details into the fictional story of the two brothers. Consumed by guilt, the Canadian brother dies on the battlefield of Queenston Heights—the place of one of the major British victories against the Americans in the war. He is accidentally killed by his own brother who mistakes him for an enemy soldier. Henry too will die on that battlefield, at the hand of a Desborough gone wild and tormented by the need for revenge. With their deaths, Ellen Halloway's prophecy is fulfilled, as Gerald's infatuation with the beautiful American led to the demise of the entire de Haldimar line.

The irresistible attraction Matilda exerts over Gerald Grantham epitomizes what Canadian literary critic Dennis Duffy identifies as a Canadian national trait, the "humiliating, self-destructive fascination with things American."<sup>47</sup> Gerald needs to prove that he has the strength to resist Matilda's test of love, and fails. She promises him a domestic paradise of private life and its individualistic pleasures, in exchange for his forsaking of both law and his honor. Even contemplating to commit murder for his beloved meant that Gerald broke a solemn promise made to his father on his death bed, never to do anything that would bring disgrace upon their family name. Matilda's magnetism is rooted in her individualism: her intricate reasoning when trying to persuade Gerald that revenge is the same thing with killing someone during a war; her indifference to religion, confirmed by her suicide, as well as the allusions

to her possible affair with a black slave mark her as an enemy of rules and of conventions of all sort—political, religious, social. Unlike her father, Desborough, whose national allegiance is more fluid (he is an American who took an oath of loyalty to the Crown, then betrayed it), Matilda is not an ambivalent political agent. From the beginning to the end of the novel, she is clearly presented as an American and a woman that pursues her individual goals with no concern for anyone else. In her political and cultural otherness, but also in the power she has over Gerald, she embodies the lure of the United States over British North American subjects.

Richardson's fictional narrative of Canadian temptation may have been inspired by larger historical patterns. In *Eight Years in America*, his nonfictional account of colonial Canada under the administration of Lord Durham, the author addressed the massive desertions among the British soldiers, trying to find an explanation for the phenomenon. He noted that from 1815 when the war ended and until the 1837–1838 Rebellions, five thousand men deserted from the British corps in Canada, and fled to the United States.<sup>48</sup> Richardson's explanation of this trend invokes three possible reasons. The first is the “wayward love of change—that vain and unreasonable desire of bettering their condition, which the near proximity of the United States—the land of presumed liberty—seemed most calculated to gratify.” The second is the addiction to alcohol. The last is intentional; Richardson pointed out “the persevering efforts of American citizens,” whose main “pride and duty” is to “seduce as many men as they can, from their allegiance to a country they conceive to be hostile to their own.”<sup>49</sup> In short, intentionally or not, the United States exert the same addictive and dangerous lure over the British soldiers as Matilda exerts over the elder Grantham in *The Canadian Brothers*.

Thus, paradoxically, although at one level Richardson's text paints the United States in a negative, ideological key meant to strengthen the feeling of identity of the loyalist Canadians, at a second level of reading the country is simply irresistible. Pragmatic and industrious, kind and sophisticated, as well as selfish, dangerous, vulgar and boorish, the Americans step forth from Richardson's pages under the key note of fascination, projecting onto a national level the two extreme reactions epitomized in Matilda and Desborough in *The Canadian Brothers*. This vocabulary of fascination contradicts the common gendered depictions of Canada as effeminate, when compared with the more masculine, dynamic United States. To Richardson, America is an enthraller, a temptress, a feminine seducer, charming the loyal subjects of the Crown away from an honest, if modest life, luring them into the false paradise of individual liberty and wealth. The dual registers of desire and disavowal echo the similar treatment of Sam Slick in Thomas C. Haliburton's political satire, and illuminate the complex and conflicting relationship between the colonial society and the new exemplary settlerhood represented by the United States.

Torn between fascination and repulsion toward the republican alternative, Richardson's Canadian protagonists depend, in terms of identity, on the rejection of the same alternative that tempts them.

Michael Hurley suggested that, unlike Cooper's unrelenting focus on the individual, in Richardson's prose national identity is a "complex of interdependent links," because to him identity is communal, not individual.<sup>50</sup> Choosing personal freedom with no concern for others is tantamount to a political *and* moral betrayal. The choices and actions of his characters stand for larger national features. Gerald's obsession with pursuing his love interest is tantamount with giving in to selfishness by following his own desires. Matilda's arguments are explicitly labeled as American and are associated with an American ethos of selfishness which the author rejects and mistrusts. As Daniel Coleman pointed out, Richardson's text argues that this sophistry of republicanism and individualism can lead "to the breakdown of civil society to the point where private revenge sounds as readily justifiable as defense of one's nation."<sup>51</sup> Conversely, the younger brother's attempt to gain Gerald back embody the pull of the fraternal community, because they remind the latter of the selfless ideals of public and national responsibility and of the obligations toward a code of honor that binds him both as an officer and as a son.

The price for Gerald's temporary self-absorption is death. Even if he does not act upon it, Gerald came too close to abandoning loyalty, identity, and allegiance. By almost giving in to Matilda's appeal, he descends into what Daniel Coleman dubs "the ethical morass of American vigilantism," framed through the allegory of the prodigal brother who puts personal interests above family interests.<sup>52</sup> Richardson describes Gerald, when under Matilda's spell, as "too much rapt in himself to give heed to others";<sup>53</sup> he turns to alcohol to seek "oblivion" from his "wretchedness in that whirlpool, as the only means of destroying the worm that feeds incessantly upon [his] heart."<sup>54</sup> After he refuses to commit murder for the American woman, Gerald transforms again as he forsakes his individual needs and desires. He returns to his brother and to his battalion "determined to find death, fighting at the side of General Brock," thus expiating through self-sacrifice on behalf of nation and empire the sin of betrayal.<sup>55</sup> When in the last chapter of the book, Henry Grantham accidentally shoots him, Gerald welcomes death with relief, as a well-deserved liberation from guilt, "dishonour" and "weakness."<sup>56</sup> Thus, Richardson's ending seems to signal that the demands of the group come above the desires of the individual, because moving away from the community brings about disorder, chaos, and death, rather than freedom.

## CONCLUSION

Perceptions of American republican democracy filtered into the literary output of pre-Confederation Canada as crucial markers of difference that distinguished the colonies from their neighbors to the south. Colonial definitions of freedom derived authority from the constitutional (and institutional) heritage of the British North American colonial community, rather than from the people's direct involvement in the political arena. Radical reform across British North America never took hold enough to threaten popular support for the monarchy, and this political reality percolated into the literary conversations of the period. The metaphors that Haliburton, Moodie, and Richardson used in their writings to describe the United States present the American political system as driven by individual desires and pursuits, therefore unable to ensure the stability of the community as a whole. Whether the American ideological and cultural alternatives are linked to selfishness, as in Richardson's frontier novels; betrayal, as in Moodie's patriotic poems; or are simply inadequate to contain the mobocratic threat of nineteenth-century popular democracy, as in Haliburton's satire, in all three cases, British imperial and monarchical institutions are consistently believed to be the best defense of individual and collective freedoms in the colony. Freedom, for all three authors, is not the sum of individual pursuits of happiness, but rather the ability to be part of the collective endeavors that united the colonial communities to the cultural and political traditions represented by Britain, its constitutional monarchy, and the imperial structures that, literally and figuratively, protected them from the United States. As the following chapter will show, in the Canadian literary imaginary of the early nineteenth century, laws are not a hindrance to individual freedoms, but rather their protector.

## NOTES

1. Kate Flint, *The Transatlantic Indian 1776–1930* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009), 17.

2. Janet Ajzenstat, *Once and Future Canadian Democracy: An Essay in Political Thought* (McGill-Queen University Press, 2003), 8.

3. Michel Ducharme, *Le concept de liberté au Canada à l'époque des Révolutions atlantiques (1776–1838)* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 29–30.

4. Ducharme, 170.

5. Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections; British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,

2001), 120. Also, Richard Grivil, *Romantic Dialogues, Anglo-American Continuities 1776–1863* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

6. *Parliamentary Debates on the Subject of the Confederation of the British North American Provinces*, Hunter and Rose and Co., Quebec, 1865, 59, <https://archive.org/details/parliamentaryde09parlgoog/page/n73/mode/2up>, accessed July 15, 2020.

7. Richard A Davies, *Inventing Sam Slick. A Biography of Th. Ch. Haliburton* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005), 62.

8. For a complete list of all the European and North American editions of Haliburton's Slick sketches, see Victor L. O. Chittick, *Th. Ch. Haliburton: A Study in Provincial Toryism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), 653–65; and John D. Logan, *Thomas Chandler Haliburton* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1923), 153–61.

9. George L. Parker, "Editor's Introduction" to *The Clockmaker. Series One, Two, and Three* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995), xlii–xliii.

10. Thomas C. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker; Or, The Saying and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville* (London: Bentley, 1852), *First Series*, 120. All further references are to this edition.

11. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 64.

12. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 27.

13. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 123.

14. For a comparison of Haliburton and Tocqueville's views on democracy, see Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy, "The Political Other in Nineteenth Century British North America: The Satire of Thomas Chandler Haliburton," *Early American Studies Journal* 7:1 (Spring 2009): 205–34.

15. In the nineteenth century, France moved from republic and empire (Napoleon's First Empire), to absolutist monarchy (The Bourbon Restoration, 1814–1830), to revolution (the July Revolution, 1830), to constitutional monarchy (1830–1848), revolution again (1848), back to republic (Second Republic, 1848–1852), and again to empire (Second Empire, 1852–1870). For more on the complex story of republicanism in France, see Jeremy Jennings, *Revolution and the Republic: A History of Political Thought in France since the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

16. For a discussion on this topic, see Pierre Spriet, "Les deux Amériques dans l'œuvre de Th. Ch. Haliburton," *Annales du CRAA* 16 (1991): 95–11.

17. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 116.

18. David E. Smith, *The Republican Option in Canada, Past and Present* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1999), 75.

19. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 116.

20. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 131.

21. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 132.

22. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2007), 15; Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 49.

23. See James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).



24. Jackie Horne, “Settler Dreams: Re-establishing Landed-Gentry Hierarchies in Catharine Strickland’s *The Young Emigrants*,” *CCL/LCJ: Canadian Children’s Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse* 34/1 (2008): 19–42, 25.

25. For more on immigration literature and Moodie’s writings, see Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy, “‘Mind Above Matter’: Work, Gender, and Social Class in Susanna Moodie’s Immigration Memoirs” in *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 56:3 (2020): 370–83.

26. Although it does not deal directly with Canada, *Flora Lyndsay* (1854) completed Moodie’s intended Canadian trilogy by presenting in a fictionalized form her 1832 voyage to Canada. This is the last work Moodie wrote about the country.

27. The Rebellions in Lower Canada had also an ethnic and cultural character, while the ones in Upper Canada had to do more with discontent at colonial mismanagement of local affairs.

28. See Greer, *Patriots*, 21. Also see Phillip Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America 1815–1850* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985).

29. Allan Greer, “1837–1838: Rebellion Reconsidered,” *Canadian Historical Review* 76.1 (1995): 1–18, 9–10.

30. Michel Ducharme, *Le concept de liberté au Canada à l’époque des révolutions atlantiques (1776–1838)* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2009), 120. Social class nuanced the levels of commitment to the British monarchy in the colonies. For a discussion of class in Moodie’s writings, see Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy, “‘Mind Above Matter’: Work, Gender, and Social Class in Susanna Moodie’s Immigration Memoirs” in *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 56:3, 2020, 370–83.

31. See Michael Peterman, “Roughing It in Michigan and Upper Canada: Caroline Kirkland and Susanna Moodie,” in *Context North America*, edited by Camille R. La Bossiere (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 91–122.

32. Susanna Moodie, “On Reading the Proclamation Delivered by William Lyon Mackenzie, on Navy Island,” <http://www.uwo.ca/english/canadianpoetry/cpjr/vol18/poem.htm>, accessed May 1, 2012.

33. Carl Ballstadt, “Secure in Conscious Worth: Susanna Moodie and the Rebellion of 1837,” *Canadian Poetry* 18 (1986): 88–98, 97.

34. Susanna Moodie, “Lines: Written upon the Prospect of a War with the American States; A Result Which It Is to Be Devoutly Hoped, Will only Exist in the Dreams of the Poet,” *The Literary Garland* 4.7 (1846): 297.

35. Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush* (Toronto: Hunter & Co., 1871), 453.

36. Robin Matthews, “Susanna Moodie, Pink Toryism, and Nineteenth-Century Ideas of Canadian Identity,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 10 (1975): 3–15.

37. Susanna Moodie, *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush* (London: Bentley, 1853), 49. All future references are to this edition.

38. Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It*, 21.

39. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 451–52.

40. Susanna Moodie, *Life*, 49.

41. Susanna Moodie, "Introduction" to the 1871 edition, in *Roughing it in the Bush: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism*, Michael Peterman, ed. (New York: Norton, 2007), 347–48.
42. Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels and Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010) 458.
43. John Richardson, *Westbrook, the Outlaw; Or the Avenging Wolf* (Simcoe, ON: Davus Publishing, 2004).
44. The real Andrew Westbrook was a Loyalist who settled near the Grand River. As a trader and land speculator, he often balked at the Crown's restrictive immigration policies and clashed with the local government's chief representative in the area. During the War of 1812, he switched sides, and served as a spy and agent for the Americans. See D. R. Beasley in [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/westbrook\\_andrew\\_6E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/westbrook_andrew_6E.html), accessed June 1, 2021.
45. Dennis Duffy, "Present at the Creation: John Richardson and Souwesto," *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études canadiennes* 28 (3), 1993: 75–91, 79.
46. Duffy, "Present," 84.
47. Dennis Duffy, *A World under Sentence: John Richardson and the Interior* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1996), 115.
48. John Richardson, *Eight Years in Canada* (Montreal: Cunningham, 1847), 73.
49. Richardson, *Eight Years*, 78.
50. Michael Hurley, *Borders of Nightmare: The Fiction of John Richardson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 66.
51. Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 65.
52. Coleman, *White Civility*, 53.
53. Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers; Or, the Prophecy Fulfilled: A Tale of the Late American War* (Montreal: Armour & Ramsay, 1840), Vol. 2, 101. All further references will be to this edition.
54. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 2, 86.
55. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 2, 221.
56. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 2, 221.



## Chapter Two

# Law

In 1790, Edmund Burke, mused on the consequences of the French Revolution on reshaping social relations in Britain:<sup>1</sup> “When antient opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us, nor can we know distinctly to what port we steer.”<sup>2</sup> From Burke to Thomas Macaulay, from Walter Scott to Samuel Coleridge, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British philosophers and writers voiced their skepticism toward the rule of the people, toward universal suffrage and any radical change in general. They viewed society as an organic whole, functioning as a natural partnership between the living, the dead, and the unborn.<sup>3</sup> Since individual reason was by default faulty and unreliable as a guide, tradition and religion represented the only sources of wisdom of societies. Changes in society, although inevitable, were to happen gradually and surreptitiously, so as not to disturb the greater social fabric woven by generations. To the French and American glorification of the rights of men, and to John Locke or John Stuart Mill’s definitions of freedom, Burke and his followers opposed the rights of individuals as part of a community of traditions. The masses could not be expected to reason because “all values are not the same, nor all impulses, nor all men.”<sup>4</sup> From this perspective, the right to live by the law was one of the fundamental rights of nineteenth-century men, alongside Jefferson’s “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” In contrast to the ‘republican’ understanding of liberty discussed in chapter 1, this was true even if the individual was not directly involved in shaping that law. To Burke “law is . . . beneficence acting by a rule”;<sup>5</sup> limiting other men’s passions for their own good emerges as one of the fundamental rights and moral duties of the individual living in society.

The year 1776 had projected the American colonies on the European consciousness as signatories not only of a Declaration of Independence from Britain, but also from law itself. As Eliga Gould points out, what outraged Britons the most about the American Revolution was its extra-legal character. By questioning the binding status of laws created by a government that lost

popular support, the rebel colonies had replaced a vertical system of authority with a horizontal one predicated on the individual (or group of individuals) as the source of rights. This change had opened the door to a multifaceted and potentially endless rejection of the deeper conventions structuring political authority and European affairs since the seventeenth century—the belief in the necessity of a set of rules which should transcend historical contingencies or popular plebiscites.<sup>6</sup> Soon, this political Original Sin was believed to have percolated in all aspects of American social life, shaping ideas about an American ‘character.’

This chapter focuses on the impact of British North American ideas about law and legality on perceptions about the United States, its political system, and its overall culture in the first half of the nineteenth century. It discusses relevant plot lines and characters in the writings of Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton, arguing that the three authors depict the American system as informed by the belief in the individual right to reject any legal arrangements that lost popular support, and that they interpellate their audiences—metropolitan and colonial—as co-participants in an imperial culture distinct from that of the United States. Across the different genres they used, the three authors dramatize American collective political arrangements via the individual proclivities of the American characters they create. By contrast, early Canadian attitudes toward centralized authority are codified in a colonial context as imperial law, British tradition, or genteel social norms. In short, my reading of the writings of these three colonial authors indicates that, in pre-Confederation British North America, the memory of the American Revolution functioned as both the cause of American mores and political arrangements, and the subsequent expression thereof.

The irregular power which the American Congress had created by rejecting the legal authority of the British Parliament derived its authority from popular consent rather than from an existent body of laws. Eliga Gould concluded that, as a result of this emphasis on affect, rather than on reason and legality in the early representations of the American Revolution, the thirteen colonies emerged as “permanent symbols of subverted authority, dangerous examples for dissidents both within Europe itself and among the outlying possessions of [Britain’s] other imperial powers.”<sup>7</sup> To wary continental observers, the hidden flaw at the heart of the American experiment—the rejection of central authority—also could potentially endanger the republic’s own fragile internal cohesion. As the nineteenth century wore on, the fragmentariness and tenuousness of the bonds keeping the Union together appeared more and more visible. Britons on both sides of the Atlantic watched anxiously the South fretting in the federal union, and feared the consequences of a civil war for their own territories in North America.

These anxieties were acutely felt in the Canadian colonies. As we have seen in the previous chapter, fears of American intrusion were common here, either in the form of alien political ideologies (for Haliburton), military attack (for Richardson), or individuals that surreptitiously entered the colonies changing their social fabric and mores (for Moodie). To the fragility and fragmentariness of American society, Haliburton opposes his highly idealized view of the stable, layered, organic, harmonious British and colonial society, which he posited as the antithesis of the republican whirlpool to the south. For Richardson too, Canada's Britishness was directly dependent on a self-critical commitment to the larger project of imperial tradition and civility that gave Canadian society structure, harmony, and a set of laws that fostered freedom, not coercion. In their prose, political contingencies became the crucible of essentialized, immutable national characteristics that announced the shape of the future.

### THE LAW SHALL MAKE YOU FREE: RICHARDSON'S GARRISON MENTALITY

John Richardson's fiction translated in the language of personal choice the centrality of the law in constitutional liberty, articulated in the categories of honor and civility.<sup>8</sup> What imperial law is for the community, honor and British civility are for the individual: they assume the subordination of individuals and communities to higher authorities and values that transcend them, and provide them with the mission to spread those sources of authority and values throughout the empire. In *The Clockmaker*, Haliburton describes the United States using the tropes of decentralization and fragmentariness which he identifies in American life at all levels, from people's political choices, to the country's religious factionalism, to the diversity and impermanence of social interactions. In similar fashion, Richardson's novels offer plots and characters whose evolution is marked by the characters' reliance on, or resistance to, law and civility. Relinquishing part of one's individual liberties in order to obey the rules of the community (nation, fort, or garrison) becomes simultaneously a condition of survival in the harsh world of the frontier and a moral duty.

Law and honor are not always synonymous; Richardson's plots suggest that going too far in either direction can cause harm. In *Wacousta*, Colonel de Haldimar is a case in point. He is the embodiment of military order as leader of the fort, but also of the rigid colonial order which the imperial project tries to impose on the North American frontier. As such, he represents the interface between two levels of authority. As a soldier and colonial officer, he is part of a larger imperial and military apparatus; as a representative of the British

Empire, de Haldimar is the source of authority for his subordinates, must implement the law in the fort and on the frontier, and has to toe a fine line between sternness and despotism. His life is shaped by constant exposure to military hierarchies and rules. Back in England, de Haldimar is said to have lost the emotions and human sensitivity of his young age during his time in the army; his use of the law became abusive and inflexible. He uses the letter of the law to rid himself of a love rival, and, later in Canada, he court-martials an innocent soldier for putting personal loyalty above his orders. In doing so, de Haldimar abandons the code of honor and morality that his authority rests upon, and triggers the conflict that follows him to North America and causes the demise of his entire family.

Richardson's two American novels, *Hardscrabble* and *Wau-nan-gee*, share a similar dynamic between the garrison and the wilderness, but from a U.S. perspective. Taken together, the two related plots tell the story of the 1812 Indian assault on Fort Chicago (Dearborn), as the background of a tragic interracial love triangle between a young officer, Ensign Ronayne, Maria Haywood, and the young Native Wau-nan-gee. The garrison's commanding officer, Captain Headley, is a slightly more humane version of de Haldimar, enamored of rules and regulations, proud and impetuous, and prone to making bad decisions. Richardson describes him as a "strict disciplinarian" who had acquired "habits of deference to authority, which caused him, on all necessary occasions, to regulate his conduct by the orders of his superiors."<sup>9</sup> By contrast, the charming Ensign Ronayne consistently balks at the rules that Headley sets up for the fort, pushes against the captain's authority, and moves in and out of the garrison under the cover of the night to pursue his interests. In *Hardscrabble*, with the support of the friendly Pottawattomie Indians, the garrison successfully defends the fort and the farmers outside the fort against the attack of a marauding band of hostile Winnebago Indians. In its sequel, as the War of 1812 starts, we learn that part of the Pottawattomies are swayed to the side of the British and plan to attack the Americans, despite the fact that their leaders remain loyal to the United States. Maria Heywood is removed from the fort prior to the attack by the handsome Pottawattomie Wan-nan-gee, who is infatuated with her, and who tries to save her life, as well as Romanye's life. Captain Headley decides not to defend the fort against either British or Natives, and instead follows orders to move to Fort Wayne with all the inhabitants of the garrison, including the women and children, despite all his officers opposing the plan as risky. Predictably, the attempt ends up in a massacre where a band of hostile Indians attacks the convoy as soon as they are out of the fort, and kills most of the soldiers, including all the children. In the end, the Americans surrender and are taken by their Indian captors to the nearest British fort. Throughout the book, Ronayne consistently rejects Headley's orders, first in his desperation to locate his fiancée, then

during an aborted trip out of the fort. He is mortally wounded in combat and dies in the arms of his loving wife. The rigid Captain Headley and his wife survive, while Maria Heywood and Wan-nan-gee flee in the wilderness after Ronayne's death, an ambiguous ending that leaves open the possibility of an interracial romantic relationship.

The importance of the law in defining the community is clearly spelled out in Richardson's two Canadian novels, where national distinctions are developed through both plot construction and character building. Law and authority are essential for survival in the dangerous and volatile North American frontier environment. Transgressing rules endangers the community and degrades the soul; the responsibility for the consequences of any transgression is shared between the doer and the punisher. The events that set *Wacousta's* plot into motion are the result of the temporary desertion of young Wacousta; later in the story, Frederick de Haldimar's unauthorized journeys outside the fort causes a tragic confusion which brings about the execution of an innocent man at the order of his father.<sup>10</sup> Wacousta represents the forces of passionate individualism. Passion drives his disregard of rules. His Byronic younger nature thirsts for love and pushes him to desert his post, his older nature thirsts for revenge, driving his choices as the blood-thirsty Wacousta. If de Haldimar's coldness and rigidity were the by-product of his army career and of his obedience to the law, Wacousta's passionate nature and risk-taking are the result of his Romantic resentment toward the external limitations represented by all rules.

Richardson dramatizes Wacousta's individualism as a form of narcissism, an unhealthy fascination with himself, with the workings of his own sensibility, and with his own emotions. In his transition from Morton to Wacousta, the protagonist gradually descends into savagery first by shifting national allegiances to the French and joining the French army against the British in Quebec, then by 'going Native.' He persuades Pontiac's warriors to attack the British garrison and he himself commits the most barbarous acts in the attack. *Wacousta's* plot confirms the stability—and desirability—of order. Once Wacousta/Morton is killed, harmony returns to the forest. The Natives and the British in the garrison find ways to cooperate, the community thrives on the edge of the Canadian wilderness, as the end of the novel paints an idyllic picture of interracial cooperation. The colonial law may be occasionally stifling, but it allows the individuals to curb their selfishness and live together in society obeying the rules for the greater good; by contrast, Wacousta's freedom and pursuance of his own desires are not presented as exhilarating or liberating, but debasing and grotesque to himself and damaging to those around him.

In *Wacousta's* sequel, Richardson adapts the idiom of the loyalist legacy of Canada with its emphasis on honor, sacrifice, and defeat, integrating it into



a national framework: de Haldimar's descendants are Canadian, while the descendants of the individualist Wacousta are American. The essential features that de Haldimar and Wacousta embody in the 1832 novel become distilled into two sets of national characteristics in *The Canadian Brothers*. The young Granthams represent the Canadian civilization that the British Empire transplanted into the wilderness. Conversely, Matilda and Desborough represent the spirit of lawlessness of the North American wilds and of American individualism.<sup>11</sup> Always in the subtext are the differences between the two nations and two sensibilities that these four characters dramatize in their interactions on the porous American-Canadian borderland.

While *Wacousta* illustrated the clash between what Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye famously called "the garrison mentality" and the appeal of the wild, its sequel exposed the dangers of the tempting but profoundly dangerous American alternative conceptualized as a modern rejection of imperial law and order.<sup>12</sup> Richardson's frontier in *The Canadian Brothers* is a national one, marking the liminal space between two imagined communities. The story of the two Grantham brothers evokes the temptations of a pre-national Canadian soul torn between British and American loyalties. (Canadian) Gerald succumbs to the charms of (American) Matilda Montgomerie and abandons his (British) military position in her pursuit, while his brother vainly tries to remind him of his duty, his promises to their dying father, and his loyalty to king and country. In short, in constructing his Canadian and American characters and their dealings with the law, Richardson allows for culture-specific reactions which open the way to larger, national generalizations. The initial rejection of the imperial law in 1776 signals for Richardson the moment when the two communities became two peoples "diametrically opposed in their interests, their principles, their habits, and their attachments."<sup>13</sup> As such, the otherness of the American characters in *The Canadian Brothers* and of their ancestors in *Wacousta* can be traced back to the American rejection of the larger convention beneath it all—respect for the law, subordination to tradition, honor and collectivism, over individualism and private interest.

Loyalty and conservatism are the main directions that guide the choices of the Canadian characters in *Wacousta*'s sequel. Major Grantham, Gerald and Henry's father, is an agent of the law. He was a Loyalist, a magistrate and former officer who "had carried with him into private life those qualities of stern excellence for which he had been remarkable as a soldier."<sup>14</sup> His character is far from the rigidity of de Haldimar's, but in its exaggerated righteousness he allows less room for critiques of the imperial idiom. We are informed that he had earned "the respect and affection, not only of the little community over which, in the capacity of its chief magistrate, he had presided, but also of the inhabitants of the country generally for many miles around."<sup>15</sup> His sons embrace his military concepts of duty and honor, despite repeated references

to British snobbery toward the colonials in the imperial army. Devoid of complexities and contradictions, Major Grantham straightforwardly embodies both the law and the code of honor in his person, so that even after his death he functions as moral compass for his sons and for his former subordinates, while attracting the hatred of Desborough.

While the Granthams appear as staunch upholders of the rule, of hierarchy, of loyalty and honor, the tandem Desborough-Matilda does neither. They both pursue their own interests, challenging the established order. Desborough is the epitome of the Yankee settlers who trekked north after the Revolution in search of cheap land, effectively creating outposts of American spatial order in a British territory.<sup>16</sup> These are the same Yankees that populate Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, and whose flexibility of allegiance was held in mistrust by colonial Canadians: in case of a conflict with the United States, their loyalty was believed to be tenuous. As Moodie lamented, even in times of peace, their republican and democratic propensities could corrupt colonial society. Richardson's novel dramatizes the impact of the arrival of these late Loyalists on the background of the War of 1812: they are "men of desperate fortunes, and even more desperate characters." Upper Canada is "infested by these people, all of whom, even after taking the customary oath of allegiance to the crown, brought with them, and openly professed, all the partialities of American citizens."<sup>17</sup> In *The Canadian Brothers*, we learn that Desborough tries to avoid stating his political allegiance, and when he cannot, he resorts to perjury.

For a series of years after his arrival, he had contrived to evade taking the customary oaths of allegiance; but this eventually awakening the suspicions of the magistracy, brought him more immediately under their surveillance, when year after year, he was compelled to a renewal of the oath.<sup>18</sup>

The implication is that oaths are meaningless if taken by people who traditionally transgress rules. His own tenuous allegiance to the Crown makes Desborough suspect, but, in the context of the War of 1812, it also casts doubt over the loyalty of Canadians in general.

Like the protagonist of Richardson's last novel, *Westbrook, the Outlaw*, Desborough lives geographically and symbolically on the edge of civilization, located in a liminal space between the United States and Canada, on the Great Lakes, living in a hut in the woods. He moves back and forth across political borders, and resents Canada's legal restrictions. The Yankee's hatred for the old Major Grantham, whom he shoots in the back, came from the latter's repeated attempts to enforce the law on the frontier, and is extended to his sons after Henry tries to arrest him on suspicion of treason; as such it

stands for a symbolic and literal attack of an American over the law and its representatives.

After Henry's attempt to arrest him, Desborough hides in the forest reverting to a savagery that renders him almost nonhuman. He kills, maims, tortures, and even commits cannibalism, eating Indian flesh in a reversal of European gothic conventions. His cannibalism is presented by Richardson as supreme proof of a barbarity which connects him more to the animals, and is presented as an illustration of his severance of all human connections. But even beyond the reach of civilization, Desborough discriminates between national identities and tries to manipulate the limits of the law. He reassures the American officer who threatened to arrest him for cannibalism in the name of the United States Government: "I don't eat the United States subjects; consequently, they've had no claim to interfere."<sup>19</sup> While readers eventually get a glimpse into Wacousta's Romantic passionate nature and are able to understand the psychological transformation that led him to turn into a monster, no equivalent insight is given into Desborough's psychology. He is wholly inscrutable, and his actions label him as totally, unjustifiably, essentially evil, just as Major Grantham was wholly loyal, honorable, and just, if equally inscrutable. Although he stops short of committing cannibalism, the outlaw Westbook, in the homonymous 1851 novel, is a similarly caricatural representation of a border character who chooses to live physically and symbolically outside the bounds of civilization, in the Canadian wilds, where he can freely engage in rape, murder, and incest.

As Daniel Coleman noted, in the Canadian imaginary, the codes of civility and legality function as personal and collective guards against the chaos of a society whose very survival is threatened by the competing desires of individuals pursuing their own interests.<sup>20</sup> Through Gerald Grantham's love for Matilda, Richardson dramatizes at an individual level the test of loyalty which the entire Canadian community was subjected to during the War of 1812. The British commodore Barclay, one of the Granthams' superiors in the novel, reflects upon the larger causes of the war and on the loyalty of the Canadians: "My own firm impression is, that had England not all her troops engaged at this moment in the Peninsula, this war never would have been declared . . . ; but the result will prove how far well or ill affected the Canadians are to the British Crown. Now is the season arrived to test their allegiance." His interlocutor is General Brock, a real historical figure which Richardson fictionalizes in his novel. Brock replies: "I know not how far the United States Government may have taken in their calculation a chance of disaffection . . . but I think I know the Canadians, and may venture to assert they will remain staunch. Every where they appear to manifest the utmost enthusiasm."<sup>21</sup> As the dialogue of these British officers suggests, in the War of 1812, the Canadian nation as a brotherhood writ large had to prove its

British loyalty by fighting the Americans, just as Gerald needs to return to the community and sacrifice his selfish individualistic desires in the interest of the group.

Oaths are the locus where the novel's tension between individual desires and collective duty becomes most visible. Desborough takes a loyalty oath when he moved to Canada, but he easily breaks it. By contrast, both Gerald and Henry take oaths in front of their father, on his death bed "that they should never be guilty of any act which could sully the memory, either of their mother or himself."<sup>22</sup> At two crucial points in his life, Gerald has to take oaths; first to his father, embodiment of military honor and of imperial law, then to Matilda. The two competing oaths stand for two competing loyalties and changing allegiances can be physically painful. After his oath to Matilda, "a creeping chill passed through his frame," and "he turned away his face from Matilda, and sinking his head upon his chest, groaned and wept bitterly."<sup>23</sup> By committing to Matilda that he would commit murder in her name, Grantham deserts an entire code of honor and is ready to break the law. Yet, against all odds, Gerald eventually remembers the oath he took in front of his father, rejects the one he made to Matilda and returns to his regiment. Thus, on a collective level, patriarchal colonial allegiances guarantee the survival of Canada in North America as an independent political entity, on an individual level, it is the same law of the father that saves Gerald's split Canadian soul from succumbing in front of the American mirage. As Dennis Duffy noted, "Whether in making love or war, these loyalties make possible a Canadian identity."<sup>24</sup>

Unlike Fenimore Cooper's frontiersmen who reject the community and head into the wilderness in an attempt to save their souls from civilization's corrupting influence, Richardson's characters flee the wilderness and gravitate toward the community and its laws. The forts are safe and protective, rather than oppressive. Even in *Hardscrabble* and *Wau-nan-gee*, although their plots are set in the United States, the same dynamics are at work. The space beyond the walls of the garrison is one of uncertain allegiances, of Natives who can be allies or foes, and of death. Choosing to venture beyond those walls is done at one's peril and usually results in death or bodily harm, either for oneself or for others. Significantly, Maria Heywood finds shelter in the Indian village, but she does so in Native garb, under the protection of Wau-nan-gee. Her departure from the fort had been part of the young Indian's plan to save her life in the case of an attack; Maria accepted to run with him only if he promised her to return and save her husband as well. But Ronayne refuses to hide in the Indian village, and chooses to fight alongside his garrison, a decision which in the end will cause his death. Maria survives outside the fort, not by respecting the rules of the garrison, but adapting to the wilderness. After Ronayne's death, she openly assumes her new identity within

the Native community; standing by the body of her late husband she declares herself to be “Maria Heywood, Ronayne’s wife, the mistress of a fiend, then Wau-nan-gee’s squaw.”<sup>25</sup>

In short, both in his Canadian novels and in those written for American audiences, Richardson provides critiques of individualism and anarchy both on a national and on a personal level. For his protagonists, freedom is not rooted in individual will but rather in successfully inhabiting the framework of legitimacy provided by a higher source of authority. Law and honor offer the moral compass for the individuals negotiating their place in the community, and for the community struggling for survival in North America. This vision of freedom particularly informs Richardson’s portrayal of life in Upper Canada, from observance of the laws of a patriarchal family in *Wacousta* and *The Canadian Brothers*, to the military law of the fort, or to the larger law of monarchical and national loyalty in *The Canadian Brothers*. In *Wacousta*, those who pursue private ends (Colonel de Haldimar and Wacousta himself) die, while those who pursue a family or a nation (Frederick or Pontiac) survive. The British fort survives and the last scene of the novel focuses on the community blissfully continuing its existence in harmony with the Natives, rather than emphasize the fate of one isolated individual. In *The Canadian Brothers*, the potential fragility of Canadian political allegiances and their vulnerability to the lure of the American polity are dramatized by Gerald’s predicament. The United States emerges as a national ‘significant Other,’ whose distinctiveness is rooted in the revolutionary birth, the rejection of the past, of tradition, of hierarchy and monarchy, of established religion. The otherness of American culture is rendered repulsive and extreme in Desborough, and irresistibly fascinating in Matilda; the literary transposition of this ambiguity hints at Richardson’s colonial double vision, as well as at his awareness of Canada’s dual positioning in a continental and transatlantic political context.

Richardson’s characters struggle with multiple levels of law and allegiances. They negotiate their private interests as individuals with the need for social cooperation within the laws of a larger code of honor that transcends individual needs and desires. They may rebel against the limitations of authority, duty and tradition, but ultimately find their inner freedom by bowing to custom and to the wisdom of past generations. In Richardson’s colonial universe of the law, despite its occasionally stifling rigidity, sets free the individual Canadians struggling for survival in the wilderness. By the same token, abeyance to the rules of the imperial community guarantees their collective identity in North America. Richardson simultaneously acknowledges and resists Canada’s location at the intersection of ideological fields in North America, first by testing its allegiance to Britain, and then by describing the

colonies as law-abiding and loyal by contrast to the United States and its civil and political culture.

### THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AS UNJUST REBELLION IN *THE CLOCKMAKER*

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Upper and Lower Canada, as well as the Maritimes were the theater of radical redefinitions of the public space and of public opinion. As Jeffrey McNairn argues in his study of deliberative democracy in Upper Canada, public opinion emerged as a new form of authority and replaced the British model of the mixed monarchy as the ideological and institutional foundation of the colonies.<sup>26</sup> The colonial printed press played a crucial role in the development of this new political public sphere; events and situations were discussed in colonial newspapers and engaged public opinion in the larger deliberations surrounding the fate of British North America. In Nova Scotia, Haliburton's satirical sketches were part of this same trend; through them, the judge endeavored to engage and persuade his readers, implicitly acknowledging the value of their opinion as a legitimate source of political authority.

As we saw in chapter 1, the matter at hand to Haliburton was to persuade colonial audiences that the American political model was unsuitable for colonial needs. As a satirical creation, Sam Slick is an embodiment of cultural trends and stereotypes about Americans that circulated in the British world, rooted in older British perceptions of the American Revolution. John Carlos Rowe points out that from the very beginning the American Revolution was construed in American symbology as a national liberation movement rooted in anti-colonial revolt. This reading of the events "identified imperialist injustices with Great Britain, justified the expansion of U.S. territory in North America" and implicitly posited the separation from Britain as a legitimate path to liberty: British imperial rule was tantamount to oppression, while leaving the empire spelled freedom.<sup>27</sup> Unsurprisingly, the British saw rebellion and chaos where the Americans saw revolution and liberty. Indeed, from the eighteenth century onward, English writers described the Revolution as a civil war, using either the metaphor of conflict between brothers or that of parricide.<sup>28</sup> The family trope was used both in Britain and in early America to legitimate three different conclusions: that the colonies, as children, could have been forced to obey; that they could be enticed back; or that they had come of age and were ready to leave the family.<sup>29</sup> While it avoided framing the conflict in terms of freedom, this later matrix of interfamilial conflict betrays a deep uneasiness about the challenge that the loss of the colonies posed to British patriarchal pride and authority, and naturalized the imbalance

of power between metropole and its remaining colonies in North America by reframing the situation as part of the hierarchies of family relationships.<sup>30</sup>

*The Clockmaker* captures the competing emplotments of the Revolution, but also the larger implications of this duality for everyday individuals caught in the conflict. The American view of the Revolution as a struggle for liberty is presented in contrapuntal fashion to the British perspective. To the conservative Reverend Hopewell, to the Squire, and even to Sam's father, who was a veteran of the War of Independence and no friend of the British, the conflict is a moment when the natural order had been seized and overturned, a gesture of Oedipal separation still not healed, with palpable political and social consequences. By contrast, to the young Sam, 1776 is the glorious moment when the American nation became free. Throughout the three series of *The Clockmaker*, these secondary characters passionately engage the naively patriotic Sam and try to defend their point, illustrating their views with anecdotes where everyday situations are used to illuminate the complexities of the larger issues of independence, loyalty, and power. By showcasing the existence of this ideological polyphony within North America, Haliburton's sketches capture the tensions and contradictions punctuating the emergence of a new, more mutable regime of identity in the Anglo-Atlantic world.

Free from British political rule, the Americans could and did reinvent themselves as needed, embracing or discarding their British lineage when it served their interests. In the second series, in the sketch "Shampooing the English," Sam shows how references to the familial bonds uniting Britain and the United States are used by American diplomats as part of their negotiating toolkit in order to secure favors from London. In this context, the diplomats describe the separation from Britain as the natural departure of a grown child from home, rather than the break with an oppressive ruler: "Though years have rolled by since they left the paternal roof, and the ocean divides them, yet they cannot but look back at the home beyond the waters with a grateful remembrance—with veneration and respect."<sup>31</sup> In Slick's interpretation, many disputes that had plagued Anglo-American relations in the nineteenth century were won by the United States merely because of this ability to use a rhetoric of common descent to satisfy current territorial ambitions.

Haliburton simultaneously reasserts and subverts the claim to legitimacy of any single narrative rooted in anti-colonial struggle. When negotiating with the British, American diplomats claim to be "indebted to them for the spirit of liberty they enjoy—for their laws, literature, and religion—they feel more like allies than aliens and more like relatives than either."<sup>32</sup> When asking for support from the French, the same diplomats argue that they "never can forget how kindly how disinterestedly [the French] stepped in to aid their infant struggles to assist them to resist the unnatural tyranny of England who, while affectin' to protect liberty abroad, was enslavin' her children to home."<sup>33</sup>

The political success of the United States is predicated on the freedom of self-definition brought about by the American Revolution, rather than by any shared cultural or ideological heritage with Britain. Used on a global scale, the “soft-sawder” that Slick so successfully uses in Nova Scotia becomes American-style diplomacy facilitated by a very modern ability to reinvent oneself as needed.

Yet that liberty of self-definition does not always come easily. Like other British North American settler-colonial writers of the time, Haliburton juxtaposes the rhetorical constructions of the two imagined pre-national pasts in British North American and U.S. culture respectively, so that the same historical events in the eighteenth century are remembered from within the two concurrent political regimes in the nineteenth. The American story of freedom-by-revolution is inextricably linked to the story of the unjust British laws against which the thirteen colonies were rebelling. If those laws were not unjust, then the entire legitimacy of the American experiment floundered. In “A Tale of Bunker’s Hill,” Sam’s father describes the war in language that evokes the private experience of divided allegiances. The sketch challenges the American narrative about the significance of Bunker Hill in the national progress toward freedom by describing the battle as a brutal moment in a fratricidal war. Sam’s father remembers the massive toll it took on British lives: “Doctor Warren . . . commanded us all to resarve our fire till the British came within pint blank shot, and we could cleverly see the whites of their eyes, and we did so—and we mowed them down like grass, and we repeated our fire with awful effect.”<sup>34</sup> What makes old Slick throw his gun and run away is his own success at killing, rather than any fear of the enemy:

The British were close to us, and an officer with his sword drawn was leadin on his men and encouragin them to the charge. I could see his featur he was a rael handsom man, I can see him now with his white and black gaiters, and red coat, and three cornered cocked hat as plain as if it was yesterday instead of the year 75. Well, I took steady aim at him and fired. He didn’t move for a space and I thought I had missed him, when all of a sudden, he sprung right up straight an end his sword slipt through his up to the pint, and then he fell flat on his face atop of the blade and it came straight out through his back . . . I actilly screamed out with horror—and I threw away my gun and joined them that was retreating over the neck to Charlestown.<sup>35</sup>

The death of the British officer on the battlefield haunts the veteran in his old days. If the rebellion was “onjust or onlawful,” this and all the other “heroic” killings on the battlefield were murder. Trying to assuage his feelings of guilt, old Slick runs through the justifications behind the Revolution. “I begin with the Stamp Act, and I go over our grievances, one by one, and say ain’t they



a sufficient justification?" The list of American grievances against London is sometimes deemed sufficient to justify the war, other times it appears as merely an excuse for unlawful rebellion against legitimate authority: "But sometimes there come doubts in my mind, . . . and I say, warn't the Stamp Act repealed, and concessions made. And warn't offers sent to settle all fairly? . . . And then I say to myself, says I, oh yes but them offers came too late."<sup>36</sup>

By second-guessing the entrenched reading of the Revolutionary War as a movement for freedom legitimized by British tyranny and oppression of the American colonists, Haliburton defamiliarizes the events of 1775 and challenges readers to place them in a context which can turn patriotic killing into murder. Old Sam's account of his private experiences during the Revolution showcases the tenuousness of the line drawn between defending one's country in a just war (the American reading of the Revolution) and killing one's brothers in a useless rebellion (the British interpretation of the conflict). The story exposes the traumatic and often arbitrary decisions that individuals have to make on the battlefield, as well as the brutal dimension of proving one's national loyalty through war. Political choices turned fellow citizens into foreigners by decree, and made it patriotic to kill one another.

The initial moment of national hubris can explain away any misfortune that befell those who ventured to take part in the republican experiment. By raising the possibility that *revolution* could be *rebellion*, old Slick's account raises doubts over the dominant interpretation of the American Revolution and of its future consequences. Thus, American claims in a God-given destiny which legitimized its continental expansion to the west (as well as, potentially to the north), becomes the arbitrary, rather than the natural and necessary, result of historical circumstances. American independence translates as 'rebellion' and 'dissent.' As Sam's father warns his son, "he who preaches schism, commits a grievous sin; and . . . , if you vally your own peace of mind, have nothin to do with such folks."<sup>37</sup> Political schism and religious schism are located on the same level, as unjustified transgressions of due authority, and willful rejections of a superior law.

As a conservative British North American, Haliburton lampoons the patriotic pathos of the Yankees whenever he has a chance. In his Slick sketches, he uses many rhetorical strategies to undermine the American revolutionary rhetoric by placing it in a historical context, and challenges its claims for absolute truth. To Sam's proud discussion of the American eagle, Reverend Hopewell opposes a radically different reading, pointing out that the eagle is a bird of prey, and confessing that he doesn't "like to see him hoverin' over Texas and Canada so much."<sup>38</sup> American ideals, American freedom, American classlessness, are all challenged and humorously deconstructed through Hopewell's Tory lenses, revealing to the reader the contradictions behind their apparent inevitability.

To American beliefs about the inexorableness of U.S. supremacy in North America, Haliburton opposes the British colonial alternative. His sketches depict Nova Scotia as a space of stagnation, but whose positive flipside was its guarantee of lawfulness and stability. Respect for the law is central to Haliburton's representation of Canada. In the United States it is up to the individual to protect his property, so the law derives from personal pursuits of happiness. The example given in the sketch "Putting a Foot in It" is that of an Ohio squatter whose only right to the land is given to him by his gun, as opposed to the peaceful and orderly way in which property is guaranteed in the British colonies. Thus, behind Haliburton's critique of republican society, and his interpretation of the colonial past, hides the belief that Nova Scotians—and by implication British colonials in general—were a loyal and law-abiding people, whose institutions make them not likely to succumb to the same erratic, hectic, and ultimately dangerous behavior of their neighbors.

The Nova Scotian judge finds evidence of a deeply-ingrained American distaste for law, conventions, and control in nearly every dimension of social life; he locates the cause of the various social problems afflicting the republic in its foundational lawlessness and rebelliousness, celebrated by the revolutionaries of 1776.<sup>39</sup> This national attitude toward laws and norms can be better understood in connection to what Michel Ducharme calls 'republican liberty,' discussed in chapter 1. If laws or rules are perceived to be external to 'the people' or have lost popular support, they are no longer viewed as legitimate, and can easily be replaced. Tradition is no protector of those laws and norms, because, by definition, custom comes second to the will of the people.

### **CULTURAL "YANKEEFICATION" AS REJECTION OF SOCIAL NORMS IN SUSANNA MOODIE'S MEMOIRS**

Unlike Richardson or Haliburton, Susanna Moodie's interpretation of laws and traditions focuses on the unwritten rules that govern social interaction; these rules were challenged by the impact that American ideas and practices had on colonists' behavior and political persuasions. The decade when Susanna Moodie's immigration memoirs became transatlantic sensations were a tumultuous time. After the unrest of the anti-colonial Rebellions of 1837–1838, the Irish famine of the 1840s brought millions of starving people to Canada. Economically, the British government was struggling to redesign colonial policy, and embrace free trade, which struck another nearly deadly blow to the already ailing British North American economy. To top it all, the American claims for the northern frontier to be set at 54°50' latitude were threatening to shut off the colonies from the Pacific, while American

expansionism elsewhere on the continent was worrying colonial politicians and ordinary people alike.

Discussions about the political systems of the two countries informed the age's perception of the United States. British North America was the last bastion of monarchism on the continent, and many of the British travelers there wrote accounts of their visits precisely with this idea in mind. Hundreds of texts were published on Upper Canada in the first half of the nineteenth century, reviewed by major newspapers and magazines and translated into other languages. Colonial-born authors, such as John Richardson and Thomas C. Haliburton, and British-born ones, like Susanna Moodie and her sister Catharine Parr Traill (1802–1899), joined in describing the colony to their (mostly genteel) readers back in England, writing in genres ranging from novels, children's books, to satire, to memoir.<sup>40</sup> As Canadian literary critic John Thurston argues, the persistence of the market for this type of literature can be explained by the suspense that surrounded the fate of monarchy in the modern world; the Canadian colonies were “the final ground for proving monarchism” and “the summit of political and social organization” in the New World; books about these settlements served to either assuage or encourage fears about the inevitability of republicanism in a democratic world.<sup>41</sup>

Victorian-era travel and settlement narratives are a hybrid genre, half-way between fiction and fact. They rely on a shared ideological network of assumptions uniting their authors and their audience, and convey the exoticism of the faraway parts of the British Empire as much as they confirm the commonalities of a global British culture. Susanna Moodie's *North Americans* are part of the nineteenth-century flow of representation that was bringing the New World to the Old; they are shaped both by the expectations of her audience and by the precedents set by other writers. Class hierarchies informed these expectations, although gentility and class markers were different in North America than in Europe. In Moodie's writings, the United States function as the embodiment of the continent's egalitarian and democratic ethos which often clashed with British colonial hierarchies and with British-inspired social norms. The incompatibility was articulated in cultural and social, as much as in political terms.

Throughout her two autobiographical books, Moodie assumes that middle class or genteel status was tantamount with support for British institutions. Conversely, the settlers in the backwoods, who tended to be poor Yankees or working-class people of European origin, rejected British social practices, viewed Canada as an egalitarian society, and behaved accordingly. “Yankeeification” becomes a label for all the things Moodie dislikes both in the backwoods and in the clearings—rudeness, individualism, materialism, and a radically egalitarian rejection of social norms and conventions. The passages in *Roughing It* that describe the arrival of immigrants to North America

were excised from most nineteenth-century U.S. editions. A disclaimer was included in the conclusion to *Life in the Clearings* to explain that the offensive passage depicted not the Irish in general, but “*the very lowest class*” of Irish people.<sup>42</sup> Moodie also made several editorial changes to the 1871 Canadian edition in her efforts to make the stories more acceptable to colonial audiences, still reeling from the unflattering portrait of Canada in the 1852 edition of *Roughing It*. The Centre for Editing Early *Canadian Texts* (CEECT) edition of *Roughing It* includes a historical collation of the changes made to the text. These changes reflected the assumed readership and the intended market of the book. For instance, while in the British editions Moodie dwells at length about how Canadians—even those of middle-class background—ignore the conventions of social decorum indispensable to a civilized country, in the Canadian edition such passages are left out, as were most passages commenting directly on the Americanization of Canadian society.<sup>43</sup>

Haliburton’s negative reading of the American rhetoric of freedom focused on the consequences of removing political restraints on social mores. Similarly, Richardson’s fiction dramatized the corrosive effect of individualism on personal morality. Moodie instead identifies a shared impulse behind the rejection of decorum and social conventions and the potential openness to an alien political ideology. In the Canadian backwoods, even the most benign rules of politeness are perceived as threats to individual liberties, and Moodie views the acceptance or the rejection of these rules as a clear indicator of ideological positions: the Yankees and the “Yankeeified” British immigrants resent social conventions even more than the Canadian-born, while the British genteel immigrants live by them. The writer argues that her manners made her family to be viewed by other settlers as agents of imperial oppression “who wished to curtail their independence by expecting from them the kindly civilities and gentle courtesies of a more refined community.”<sup>44</sup>

Moodie’s remark that in the Canadian bush “the titles of ‘sir’ or ‘madam’ were rarely applied by inferiors” overtly conflates gentility and superiority. She fruitlessly attempts to encourage civilities from her uncouth neighbors by personal example: she addressed her “ragged bared-legged Irish servants” with “sir and ‘mem’ as it to make the distinction more pointed.” When she fails to change the behavior of her neighbors, Moodie dismisses it as the manifestation of the “ultra-republican spirit” with which the new environment infuses immigrants; after all, when the meaning of freedom changes, mores change with it.<sup>45</sup> The writer then explains to her readers that the American resistance to social decorum is rooted in the different nature of social relations in the colony. In the old country, the lower classes are forced by necessity to show deference to the upper classes; hence their “homage to rank and education is not sincere. . . . But let them once emigrate, the clog which fettered them is suddenly removed; they are free; and the dearest privilege of this

freedom is to wreak upon their superiors the long-locked-up hatred of their hearts."<sup>46</sup>

Moodie's memoirs dramatize Canadian political and cultural realities for British consumption. Lorenzo Veracini points out that settler-colonial cultures tend to perceive the world through nested comparisons, and that their respective collective self-definitions are constructed in relationship to external others.<sup>47</sup> The domestic transgression epitomized by the Yankee settlers in the backwoods who intrude upon Moodie's home and steal her belongings finds its political and national correspondent in contemporaneous colonial fears of territorial annexation by the United States. *Roughing It* mentions the presence of the numerous Yankee squatters in the country, a counterpart to the America Loyalists who, after 1776, had trekked North to remain within the British Empire. The sketch "Uncle Joe and His Family" tells the story of Uncle Joe, the archetypal shrewd Yankee, whose genial appearance hides a ruthless character and a merciless business style. Uncle Joe refuses to leave the house the Moodies had bought, which forces the young family to live in a poorer accommodation waiting for his improbable departure. Joe's father was one of the many Americans who, after the Revolution, took an oath of loyalty and moved to Canada in search of free land—a group generally held in mistrust by Canadians. Richardson captured the type in Westbrook, and, in *The Canadian Brothers*, in the person of Desborough, the vile American settler who also took an oath of allegiance to the Crown but abruptly changed sides after the start of the War of 1812.

By narrating the back story of Uncle Joe's family, Moodie reveals the complicated story behind the choices that many loyalists had to make; Joe's father first lost his farm in the United States because of his drinking, and then decided "that he could not do better than turn loyal and get one here for nothing. He did not care a cent, not he, for the King of England," since he believed himself his equal.<sup>48</sup> His American-born wife, the bitter and unpleasant Mrs. Joe, still remembers the decision as a personal sacrifice; she explains to Moodie that her English-born husband wanted to "live under the flag" and dragged his young family in the Canadian wilderness only to take to drinking again and fail to secure their prosperity. The son maintained the same uneasy relationship to his new country; although their presence on the property predates that of the Moodies, the right to the land of the American family is written off symbolically by young Joe's uncertain allegiance to the king, by his poor life choices, as much as by the financial transactions. The sketch captures the competing interpretations of recent history in British North America and the mutability of Canadian self-definitions, but also the unstable borders between selves and others on the continent.

Transnational class characteristics determine national allegiances. Dror Wahrman argues that in the 1830s, in Britain, the power of the middle class

was financial and cultural, rather than political.<sup>49</sup> Moodie's class-inflected worldview was shaped by a Victorian understanding of morality and social mission, order, decorum, propriety, respect for hierarchy and the state, as well as a categorization of the proper spheres of activity for men and women sanctioned by the religious discourses of the time.<sup>50</sup> Like Haliburton, Susanna Moodie distrusts the droves of uncouth Yankee settlers in the Canadian bush as much as the poor shiploads of illiterate immigrants coming from Europe. As embodiments of a transnational mob, both have the potential of disturbing the delicate ideological ecosystem of the colonies, as well as the moral tenor of Canadian society as a whole. The working-class European immigrants in particular, devoid of all sense of propriety, with no education, no status, and no intellectual sophistication, represent the tidal wave of a new order in which civility and education would be of no consequence.

These newcomers are portrayed as flocking to the New World in the hope to move up the social ladder; collectively they signify a world in which the old rules of civility are irrelevant. At the same time, settlers like Uncle Joe, who came from the United States and brought their political ideas with them, epitomize the possibility that new American ideas and social practices can be translated into, or validated by, political structures that would eventually undermine Canada's place in the Empire. The very existence of "Yankeeified" British and Canadians, side by side and often indistinguishable from the "authentic" Yankees like Uncle Joe, raises the question of whether national formations are contingent or not. In short, the appeal of the fluid, classless American ethos to working-class newcomers from Britain has the potential to undermine imperial loyalty, and rendered the fate of Canada in North America uncertain at best.

The materialism associated with the popular democracy of the New World is contagious. Moodie notes with disdain that in Upper Canada morality comes second to gain because colonial society is almost republican, and mores have been corrupted by American pragmatism. Moodie laments the lack, even among the Canadian "professional men and wealthy traders, of that nice sense of honour that marks the conduct and dealings of the same class at home," pointing out that, despite occasional exceptions, "too many of the Canadians think it no disgrace to take every advantage of the ignorance and inexperience of strangers. If you are not smart enough to drive a close bargain, they consider it only fair to take you in."<sup>51</sup> Or, as one of her female characters argue, "Honour is all very well in an old country like England, . . . but, Mrs. M—, it won't do in a new country like this. You may as well cheat as be cheated. For my part, I never lose an advantage by indulging in such foolish notions."<sup>52</sup>

Like Haliburton's scathing criticism of the brash materialism and self-centeredness of American society, for Moodie the individualism and

egalitarianism of the Yankees and Yankeeified Britons translate as mere selfishness. The general North American propensity to break free from the chains of custom and tradition is paralleled by a systematic rejection of informal laws, rules, and ultimately of ethics, a tendency which creates a world where old codes of morality are regarded as obsolete, a society where everything goes, as long as gain is achieved quickly and painlessly. Old contracts, as well as old conventions, become useless; servants brought from home abandon their old masters once landed, because “no contract signed in the old country is binding in ‘Meriky.’”<sup>53</sup> The clean slate of the New World translates into an unsettling fluidity of social relations and conventions, visible in the irreversible alteration of the old cherished notions of honor, pride, and loyalty.

Genteel newcomers from Britain are assumed to have fortune and privilege, and are resented for it by other settlers. Susanna Moodie believes that her Yankees neighbors hate her because she attempts to recreate social distinctions of class and of status in the backwoods, and thus implicitly push back against the leveling effect of frontier life. Moodie frames this attitude as rooted in the very cultural transformations brought along by the trauma of immigration. The sudden conversion from subordination to a new form of freedom rooted in equality and individualism corrupts. U.S.-born settlers and working-class British immigrants are alike, the latter being “Yankeeified” by their sudden transition from bondage to freedom. In the first edition of the book, the writer explicitly connects the political gesture behind the creation of the American polity in 1776 with the ongoing redefinition of class differences facilitated by immigration. Being exposed to a new political ideology transforms working-class Britons, successfully weakening old national allegiances, and turning them into potential supporters of American-style democracy and egalitarianism in the colonies. Interestingly, Canadian-born seem to be immune to this change, Moodie contends; being born in the colony means they were spared “the enormous reaction springing from a sudden emancipation from a state of utter dependence into unrestrained liberty.”<sup>54</sup>

Throughout Moodie’s writings, Yankee otherness is expressed through references to a rhetorical ‘Revolution’ that is never truly in the past. The Yankeeification of working-class immigrants made Canada particularly vulnerable to the appeal of republicanism. Immigration may have promised upward mobility to those Britons willing to leave home and come to North America, but, in the fluid ideological environment of the colony, this opportunity for personal improvement threatened to be a double-edged sword: Canada’s meritocratic system contained in it both the promise of a better version of Britain and the seed of a dangerous egalitarianism that could pervert the ambitious lower classes, expose them to new political ideas, and ultimately subvert their national allegiances. Therefore, British social structures, social norms, and hierarchies in the Canadian colonies function in

Moodie's atypical immigration memoirs as a necessary ideological bulwark against the threat of acculturation represented by the United States and its political model.

## CONCLUSION

For conservatives like Edmund Burke, limiting other men's passions for their own good and for the good of society was an inextricable part of the social contract. Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton contrast the Canadian willingness to respect the British framework of laws, traditions, and unwritten social norms with the American individualistic approach to the pursuit of happiness that erodes the social fabric and undermines the cohesiveness of the community. As the next chapter will show, the three writers shared a similar view when approaching the contentious topic of religious freedom in the colonies: freedom is best protected within tried and tested institutional structures and supported by traditional social practices. Across different genres, they delineate national identities by their protagonists' willingness—or refusal—to obey norms and rules that are external to the popular will. These laws and rules are not uniformly presented as unproblematic, but they are viewed as necessary; Richardson acknowledges the rigidity and heartlessness of the military law, but order and obedience guarantee the survival of the garrison when faced with the unleashed powers of the wilderness; the moral code that shapes the final decisions of Gerald Grantham saves his honor in face of the American temptation. To Haliburton, British colonial institutions are the protectors of British tradition in the face of the troubling tides of modernity, fulfilling on a societal level the same function that social mores and conventions fulfilled on an interpersonal level in Susanna Moodie's memoirs. And finally, for the latter, rigid social hierarchies and conventions may be stifling and unfair back in England, but they nevertheless provide the smooth and orderly functioning of society in Canada. In 1867, the British North America Act that marked the creation of the Confederation of Canada included the phrase "Peace, order and good government" to describe the lawmaking powers of Parliament; over the years, the phrase has become the Canadian counterpart to the American "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," as a testament to the endurance of the positive interpretation of law as a form of freedom in the Canadian imaginary.



## NOTES

1. Parts of this chapter were previously published “‘Mind Above Matter’: Work, Gender, and Social Class in Susanna Moodie’s Immigration Memoirs,” Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 56:3 (2020): 370–83, reprinted by permission of the publisher, Taylor & Francis Ltd.

2. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 172.

3. Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind from Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), 24.

4. Burke, qtd. in Kirk, 59.

5. Burke, 149.

6. Eliga Gould, “American Independence and Britain’s Counterrevolution,” *Past & Present* 154 (1997): 107–41, 116.

7. Gould, “American Independence,” 119.

8. Parts of this section were previously published in *Early American Literature* and the *Journal of American Studies*, reprinted with permission.

9. John Richardson, *Hardscrabble*, (New York: Dewitt, 1856), 16. All further references will be to this edition.

10. John Richardson, *Wacousta, or the Prophecy: A Tale of the Canadas*, CEECT edition, Douglas Cronk, ed. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1987), 150. All further references will be to this edition.

11. Dennis Duffy, *A World under Sentence: John Richardson and the Interior* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1996), 116.

12. Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye coined this phrase. The term was further explored by Margaret Atwood; both discuss it as a manifestation of Canada’s emphasis on collective solidarity as a way of assuaging anxieties about the landscape and about oppressive or intrusive nations. See Northrop Frye, “Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada,” in N. Frye, ed., *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), 213–51.

13. John Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers; Or, the Prophecy Fulfilled: A Tale of the Late American War* (Montreal: Armour & Ramsay, 1840), Vol. 1, 83. All further references will be to this edition.

14. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 105.

15. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 105.

16. Douglas Ivison, “‘I Too Am a Canadian’: John Richardson’s *The Canadian Brothers* as Postcolonial Narrative,” in *Is Canada Postcolonial? Unsettling Canadian Literature*, ed. Laura Moss (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003), 169.

17. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 80.

18. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 84.

19. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 2, 138.

20. Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 65.

21. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 75.

22. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 2, 43.
23. Richardson, *Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 2, 163.
24. Duffy, *World Under Sentence*, 116.
25. John Richardson, *Wau-nan-gee; Or, the Massacre of Chicago* (New York: H. Long, 1852), 118. All further references will be to this edition.
26. Jeffrey McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791–1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 13.
27. John Carlos Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.
28. Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 223.
29. Edwin G. Burrows and Michael Wallace, “The American Revolution: The Ideology and Psychology of National Liberation,” *Perspectives in American History* 6 (1972): 167–306, 250.
30. Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 124.
31. Thomas C. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker; Or, the Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slickville* (London: Bentley, 1852), *Second Series*, 94. All further references will be to this edition.
32. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 93.
33. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 95.
34. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 143.
35. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 144.
36. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 144.
37. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 143.
38. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 120.
39. Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 161.
40. For examples of the British authors who wrote travel memoirs on Canada, see John Thurston, “‘The Dust of Toryism’: Monarchism and Republicanism in Upper Canadian Travel and Immigration Texts,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30/2 (1995): 75–86. Also Thurston, “‘Remember, My Dear Friend’: Ideology and Genre in Upper Canadian Travel and Settlement Narratives,” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 56 (1995): 182–97.
41. Thurston, “Dust,” 77.
42. Moodie, *Life*, 380; original emphasis.
43. See the list of the editorial changes in Moodie, *Roughing It* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995): 660–65.
44. Moodie, *Roughing It* (Toronto: Hunter & Co., 1871), 238.
45. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 239–40.
46. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 239.
47. Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 24.

48. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 150.
49. Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain c. 1760–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 379.
50. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 450.
51. Susanna Moodie, *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush* (London: Bentley, 1853), 58, [https://archive.org/details/cihm\\_43989/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/cihm_43989/mode/2up), accessed July 2020.
52. Moodie, *Life*, 58.
53. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 241.
54. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 240.

## *Chapter Three*

# Religion

Religion was one of the main building blocks of identity in nineteenth-century North America. Yet the architecture of those building blocks varied, depending on where they fell on the American or on the Canadian side of the postrevolutionary political divide. On the surface, the ethnic makeup of the revolutionary colonies and of British North America was similar; yet, in pre-Confederation Canada, religious institutional arrangements signaled different approaches to individual freedom, democracy, the common good, and the limits of centralized authority, all of which circled back to the ethos of 1776. This chapter will examine how Thomas C. Haliburton and Susanna Moodie used references to religion in their writings, not only to refer to the personal experience of faith, but also to distinguish between the imagined communities of British North America and the United States.

Religious matters were part of the chain of events that led to the American Revolution. The passage of the Quebec Act of 1774 had granted citizenship to Roman Catholics living in the North American British colonies, allowing the Catholic Church to function freely in Quebec. The Act spread alarm in the thirteen colonies, was denounced by Thomas Jefferson and by the First Continental Congress, and increased popular determination among the majority Protestant colonists to oppose and resist Britain.<sup>1</sup> Even after the war, fears of a Catholic North America continued to shape American attitudes toward Canada and its ecclesiastical arrangements. The legacy of the Enlightenment continued to shape the trajectory of American institutional arrangements; the boundaries within which the struggle for religious freedom was to unfold were set by the provision in Article 6 of the U.S. Constitution that “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office” and by the provision of the First Amendment that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”<sup>2</sup> Originally, the First Amendment applied only to the federal government; over the coming decades, the states continued to struggle with the issues within their own jurisdictions.<sup>3</sup> But by the early nineteenth century, the institutional

separation of church and state in America was complete; underneath it, a Protestant consensus was firmly established, informing ideas about national identity and belonging.<sup>4</sup>

Writing about American denominationalism, Sydney Ahlstrom notes: “What the Evangelical Revival did for England, the Great Awakening did for America, with the antidoctrinal animus of the Enlightenment and the cohesifying force of patriotism furthering the process.”<sup>5</sup> This patriotic cohesion was put to the test by the demographic changes brought about by nineteenth-century immigration, by the rapid economic growth of the United States, and by the rise of popular democracy. The United States was changing from Jefferson’s agrarian republic into an urbanized, industrialized country, plagued by rampant inequality, and overwhelmed by an unprecedented wave of immigration that started in the 1820s and that was quickly changing the face of society and its religious makeup. At the same time, the Federalist-Whig tradition of American conservatism was grappling with the widening of the popular base of politics brought about by the rise of popular democracy. All of this was further complicated by the fact that the newly-enfranchised voters hailed from quite different backgrounds than the old ones. The upsurge in immigration brought some 140,000 Europeans into the United States; by the 1830s the number rose to 600,000; in the 1840s 1.7 million; and in the 1850s, two million people entered the United States;<sup>6</sup> most of these new immigrants were working-class Roman Catholics, first Germans, coming into the country via New Orleans, then poor Irish who flooded American cities, pushed out of Ireland by the potato famine in the 1840s. Soon, from an insignificant minority at the time of the Revolution, the American Catholic Church became the largest single religious group in the republic.<sup>7</sup> American Nativism and anti-Catholicism soared, violence exploded in the streets of New York, and churches and homes were burned by angry mobs. Canadians of all classes and all religious persuasions watched with anxiety the deepening societal divisions and the violence south of the border.

Colonial politicians tried to find local solutions that would avoid repeating the same trends which the United States was now barely managing to contain. After the Revolution, the Church of England expanded in Upper Canada under the leadership of the charismatic Anglican bishop of Toronto, John Strachan (1778–1867), who believed that the trifecta of church, state, and society was part of a providential order; opposing it was a sign of a dangerous sympathy for the revolutionary society of the United States. The religious experiences transforming North America were inflected differently across the political divides of the continent. Assumptions about religious affiliation filtered into the institutional arrangements that informed Canadian attitudes to law, liberty, and equality, as the previous chapters have shown; evangelicalism was equated with republicanism because both emphasized individual

choice over traditional allegiances. Yet, by the 1830s, new ideas about religious freedom coming from the United States and from France, alongside ideas about self-government, started to gradually push against London's determination to protect the privileged position of the Church of England in the colonies. Prominent Canadian Methodists, such as minister and reformer Egerton Ryerson (1803–1882) firmly rejected the accusations of disloyalty on basis of religious affiliation, thus igniting the arduous colonial conversations about religious freedoms that were to span the following two decades.

As Eliga Gould and C. A. Bayly noted, the age of the Atlantic Revolutions created a context for movements of cultural change and social reform, but also unleashed a strong counterrevolutionary response among British political and social elites.<sup>8</sup> This counterrevolutionary spirit of the Second British Empire meant that the influence of the Enlightenment was more muted in the Canadian colonies; both the American and French Revolutions were viewed negatively by the population. This allowed for a different trajectory for the debate over religious freedoms and the separation of church and state.<sup>9</sup> While Enlightenment ideas did eventually prevail in Canada, this took the form of compromises and arrangements whose moderate character paved the way for the 1867 Confederation. Religious freedom, voluntarism, and diversity in religious affairs came through a tortuous period of collective debates and experimentation during which the postrevolutionary ideological divisions between Britain and the United States seeped into the language used to describe both the continental religious spectrum and individuals' personal and institutional relationship to their faith. These debates filtered into the literary texts of the era.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN NORTH AMERICA

Susanna Moodie's relationship to religion was complicated even before her arrival in Canada in 1832. Moodie was raised Anglican, briefly converted to Congregationalism, and married a Presbyterian, but the marriage took place in the Church of England. Yet in Canada, the Moodies did not feel comfortable in either the Church of England or the Church of Scotland, presumably for social, rather than doctrinal reasons; records show that in 1844, they became founding members of a Congregationalist community in Belleville, although the Moodies soon lapsed in their responsibilities and were excommunicated a year later. In the later part of her life, after the death of a child, Moodie became very interested in spiritualism together with her husband and her sister Catharine Parr Traill.<sup>10</sup> They attended spiritualist meetings in Canada and the United States, and their correspondence of the time shows Susanna's growing interest in the practice.

As Susanna Moodie's personal experiences shows, the North American marketplace of religion provided individuals with significant freedom to choose from among many forms of institutionalized religion in the colony, highly intimate evangelical experiences at camp revivals, or even new forms of spirituality. Yet, throughout her writings, Moodie remains favorable to religion as a social institution. Her writings repeatedly voice a deep skepticism about the ability of human beings to maintain their morality in the absence of church structures, an ambivalence toward non-traditional, non-ritualic forms of worship, and a consistent view of religion as a key tool for social improvement in the colonies.

Like in the United States, by the 1830s, the postrevolutionary demographic makeup of Canada was changing. The historical forces that were reshaping the face of America were felt here too, albeit on a smaller scale. The American Revolution had brought a significant influx of Anglican Loyalists into Quebec, which turned Protestantism in that area into a significant group. Yet, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Anglicans were no longer an overwhelming majority in any of the provinces although, as Peter Williams put it, the Church of England was to remain "very much in partnership with the enterprise of imperial governance."<sup>11</sup> Catholicism, which had been largely confined in Quebec even after 1763, was now growing, fueled by the wave of immigration from Ireland; and the tide of Protestant revivalism that swept North America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries crossed political boundaries, bringing new Canadian converts into the fold of the dissenting denominations. Yet, unlike the purist approach embraced south of the border, the realities of coexistence with a staunchly Catholic French-Canadian community with long roots in the colony and the influence of the Church of England throughout the British Empire forced imperial authorities to be flexible in their institutional approach to religion in the colonies.

Susanna Moodie's literary portrayal of the Canadian religious landscape emphasizes this diversity of faith groups in the colonies, and argues for the role of institutionalized religion as a tool for social improvement. The sketches and poems included in both *Roughing It* and *Life in the Clearings* paint a landscape of relatively harmonious cohabitation in Canada among various Protestant denominations, Christianized Indians, and Roman Catholics, a space where religion functions as a social marker, as a tool of acculturation of Native populations, but also as an ethnic and even national marker of belonging. Moodie's support of religious diversity rhetorically links the dislocation of emigration to the erasure of the religious conflict that originated in Europe. Commenting on the general anti-Catholicism of the era in *Life in the Clearings*, she notes:

In Canada, where all religions are tolerated, it appears a useless aggravation of an old national grievance to perpetuate the memory of the battle of the Boyne. What have we to do with the hatreds and animosities of a more barbarous age? These things belong to the past: "Let the dead bury their dead," and let us form for ourselves a holier and truer present. The old quarrel between Irish Catholics and Protestants should have been sunk in the ocean when they left their native country to find a home, unpolluted by the tyrannies of bygone ages, in the wilds of Canada.<sup>12</sup>

Upper Canada emerges from Moodie's sketches as a contact zone between established, institutionalized forms of worship and the cross-border spillover of the American Second Great Awakening, represented by itinerant ministers in search of new converts, all framed and facilitated by the unorganized space of the frontier. In Moodie's imaginary universe, these itinerant ministers do not provide the necessary structure for the spiritual life of the colonists beyond the urban areas of Canada. *Roughing It* repeatedly laments the lack of formal religious communities in the backwoods and the impact that this absence has on the social fabric. While independence to follow the dictates of one's conscience had been one of Moodie's most important moral values, her writings also articulate her belief in the importance of a set network of social forms and church rituals "to guard against the dangers of a self-reliant conscience."<sup>13</sup> In the backwoods, these dangers ranged from drunkenness and depravity to which many genteel immigrants quickly succumbed, or to the pernicious influence of the irreligious lower classes with no moral values to guide their behavior. The many cases of alcoholism and decadence that Moodie encounters in the Canadian backwoods are also linked to the absence of churches, because the settlers' lack of formal spiritual support allows their worst nature to take over. Thus, both personal faith *and* the institutions that support it remain a universal and necessary moral compass.

The Canadians whom the family encounters in the backwoods, and whom Moodie described so colorfully in *Roughing It*, are united in their lack of religious discipline that cuts across national and ethnic categories. Mrs. Joe, the American who, together with her family, refused to leave the house the Moodies had bought, proudly declares that she "never goes to church," then proceeds to abuse the ignorant new immigrants. In the sketch "Phoebe R—, and Our Second Moving," Uncle Joe's young daughter is dying; she asks Moodie to teach her about the afterlife, God, and prayer, and confesses that she was never taught how to pray. When Moodie offers to read the Bible to her, her mother, Mrs. Joe, dismisses the girl's request: "Why should you trouble yourself about *such things*? Mrs. Moodie, I desire you not to put such thoughts into my daughter's head. We don't want to know anything about Jesus Christ here."<sup>14</sup> Working-class protagonists are usually presented as



equally ignorant and superstitious, if better-natured than the Yankee settlers on the Canadian frontier. Michael MacBride, in the eponymous sketch in *Life in the Clearings*, is a young convert to Protestantism who dies without any religious consolation because his Irish mother refuses to allow Moodie to read him the Protestant Bible, and there is no Catholic priest available to administer his last rites. Even Moodie's devoted Irish maid Jenny Buchanan, whom *Roughing It* describes as a fundamentally decent human being, could neither read, nor knit, nor sew; and although she called herself a Protestant, and a Church of England woman, she knew no more of religion, as revealed to man through the Word of God, than the savage who sinks to the grave in ignorance of a Redeemer. Hence, she stoutly resisted all ideas of being a sinner, or of standing the least chance of receiving hereafter the condemnation of one.<sup>15</sup>

Ripples of the Second Great Awakening were felt in parts of British North America, after the War of 1812, yet Canadians continued to view with suspicion the American denominations that tried to get a foothold in the colonies because they assumed they were potentially republican. In the 1830s and 1840s, American missionaries of various denominations started crossing again across the Niagara River. Some farmers even decided to become ministers, and Moodie regards such conversions with mistrust. In *Roughing It*, at the end of the sketch "Phoebe R—," when narrating the fate of the Joe family sixteen years after they finally departed the cottage the Moodies had bought from them, the writer expresses her surprise to learn "that Joe himself, although he does not know a letter, has commenced travelling preacher. After this, who can doubt the existence of miracles in the nineteenth century?" she shrewdly noted.<sup>16</sup>

American revivalism never acquired a strong foothold in British North America.<sup>17</sup> The sketch "Camp Meeting" in *Life* emplots the otherness of camp revivals through the eyes of several Canadian narrators. The revivals are described in ethnographic detail to Moodie's implied English readers, as part of the tapestry of oddities of colonial life. The account is exoticized, and Moodie's use of multiple narrators limits her readers' emotional identification with the participants. The first narrator, an old Canadian lady, shares with Moodie her experience as a young girl at a time when there were no churches in Belleville and when "travelling Methodist ministers used to pitch their tents on these plains, and preach night and day to all goers and comers."<sup>18</sup> The revivals are described as transient forms of entertainment in a frontier life barren of excitement, rather than meaningful, private spiritual encounters. They are places where people go to see and be seen, not stable places of worship for a congregation that forms a community over time. "These camp-meetings seldom take place near large towns, where the people have the benefit of a resident minister, but they still occur on the borders of

civilization, and present the same disorderly mixture of fanaticism and vanity.”<sup>19</sup> Clearly, the phenomenon is viewed by the author as merely a past stage in the spiritual development of the colony.

Moodie’s Canadian narrators, like the writer herself, remain exterior to the religious experience of the camp revivals and convey their skepticism about the authenticity—or the value—of the spiritual encounters they provide. The tone is set early in the sketch, when the second narrator reminisces about a day when, as a young girl, she was sent to a camp revival by her aunt, determined to help the girl get religion. Before the meeting started, the young girl is surprised to see the missionaries that were going to lead the revival that evening devouring a very large meal that her aunt provided for them. When the men noticed her surprise at their earthly appetites, they justify it by saying that “field preaching was a very exhausting thing, and that [they] required a great deal of nourishment to keep up their strength for the performance of good work.”<sup>20</sup> Presented as something bound to the very prosaic realities of nourishment, preaching is cast not as a vocation, but mere physical work; this turns the entire experience the itinerant ministers are about to provide into a calculated performance in the eyes of the young girl. Since what she is going to witness in the evening is filtered through that first encounter with the ravenous missionaries, during the revival, the girl has no qualms to mischievously interrupt the trance of the participants by overturning one of the benches in the tent and making everyone fall; then, hidden in the dark, she mused on the scene while reasserting her position as outsider:

[T]he moving mass of human beings who pressed around the pulpit, glaring upon clenched fists and upturned faces, while the preacher standing above them, and thrown into strong relief, with his head held back and his hands raised towards heaven, looked like some inspired prophet of old, calling down fire from heaven to consume the ungodly. It was a spectacle to inspire both fear and awe, but I could only view it in the most absurd light, and laugh at it.

At this point in the sketch, in an aside that contrasts the individual-centered nature of these revivals with the community-based religious structure of an established church, Moodie links her own religious experience before immigration to her understanding of her Britishness:

There is something very touching in this blending of human voices in the open air—this choral song of praise borne upwards from the earth, and ascending through the clear atmosphere to heaven. Leaving my friend and her curious narrative for a few minutes, I must remark here the powerful effect produced upon my mind by hearing “God save the King,” sung by the thousands of London on the proclamation of William IV. . . . It thrilled through my heart, and paled my cheek. It seemed to me the united voice of a whole nation rising to the throne of

God. . . Long, long may that thrilling anthem rise from the heart of England, in strains of loyal thanksgiving and praise, to the throne of that Eternal Potentate in whose hand is the fate of princes!<sup>21</sup>

The end of the anecdote circles back to the young girl's suspicions about the authenticity of the missionaries leading the revival, and cements her narrative position as a skeptical observer of the phenomenon, rather than a participant in it. To the question she asked her aunt: "Do these men preach for their own honour and glory, or for the glory of God? I have tried to find out, but I can't tell," she receives no answer.<sup>22</sup>

The religious experience the camp revivals provide is incomprehensible to outsiders, and depicted as almost bordering on the ludicrous. The first narrator recollects that

[o]ne young woman, after lying foaming and writhing upon the ground, like a creature possessed, sprang up several feet into the air, exclaiming, "I have got it! I have got it! I have got it!" To which others responded—"Keep it! keep it! keep it!" I asked a bystander what she meant. He replied, "she has got religion. It is the Spirit that is speaking in her." I felt too much shocked to laugh out, yet could scarcely retain my gravity, the woman remembers.<sup>23</sup>

Moodie again implicitly questions the depth of the spiritual experience the participants undergo; her narrator still remembers that one young woman, far from being transported by her religious fervor, was rather so aware of her surroundings and so concerned about damaging her dress that she carefully lay on the ground a scarf before collapsing to fully experience the workings of the Spirit.

As this anecdote shows, Moodie views the participants' display of religious zeal at the camp revival as a mixture of "fanaticism and vanity," an experiential moment that isolates rather than unites, and that does not carry forward into the choices people later make in their everyday life. As such, camp revivals fail to truly address the social ills of life on the frontier because their message does not impact the behavior of the participants, once the meeting ends:

"Ah, my dear friend," continued the old lady, "one had a deal to learn at that camp-meeting. A number of those people knew no more what they were about than persons in a dream. They worked themselves up to a pitch of frenzy, because they saw others carried away by the same spirit; and they seemed to try which could make the most noise, and throw themselves into the most unnatural positions. Few of them carried the religious zeal they manifested in such a strange way at that meeting, into their own homes. Before the party broke up it was forgotten, and they were laughing and chatting about their worldly affairs."<sup>24</sup>

The sketches that John Moodie contributed to the 1852 edition of *Roughing It* describe the Upper Canadian frontier and its proximity to the United States as a fertile environment where “the questing man, armed with reason and a liberal vision, could seek for himself his own religious beliefs. Britain could ‘claim little more than reflected rays of Spiritualism.’ . . . No country in the world could compare with the United States in this respect.”<sup>25</sup> Moodie herself experimented with the freedom to pursue spiritual truths outside the boundaries of established religion. During the 1840s, when living in Belleville, the Moodies encountered the Fox family, a group of American sisters involved in spiritualism, who travelled the region organizing séances. In the summer of 1855, Kate Fox and her cousin visited the Moodies; both John Dunbar and Susanna, still grieving the death of a child, gradually became attracted to the practice. Initially Susanna was skeptical. Then, through subsequent visits with other mediums, she seems to have gradually accepted its tenets as a reality. By 1858 her letters to her London editor Richard Bentley describe the “new revelation” that gave her a new vision about God’s beyond Christian dogma.

Scholars like Ann Braude, when writing about spiritualism in the United States, argue that its appeal to women in North America was linked with the spread of women’s rights movement across the country, an ideological association which would have resonated with Susanna Moodie.<sup>26</sup> Yet Moodie was cautious; her involvement with Kate Fox in 1850s Belleville involved a certain degree of social risk because of the rigid religious environment of Upper Canada. As Stan McMullin puts it, “public adherence to radical ideas could prove complicated in conservative Canada.”<sup>27</sup> Early Canadian spiritualism was clearly marked by its American origins and underpinned by an inherent acceptance of individual rights and freedoms in the area of religious beliefs. This ability to choose individually one’s religious truths stood in an uneasy relationship to Canadian perceptions of American political models and potential influence on colonial mores. Michael Peterman notes that Moodie “tried to maintain an enthusiastic curiosity along with a rational skepticism. Privately she allowed herself vicarious amusement . . . in reading the literature and local reports. But publicly she was scornful of seances.”<sup>28</sup> In short, irrespective of her private forays into spiritualism, publicly Moodie remains anchored in a worldview where religious communities and religious institutions linked individuals to the society to which they belong, and provided and reinforced a moral compass that benefitted both.

## RELIGION AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT

This second dimension of the presence of religion in Moodie's Canadian books is linked to her belief that religious values have the potential to improve society. Moodie's interest in social improvement preceded her immigration. After her father's death, she became involved with a family of Nonconformist printers who campaigned for disestablishment of the Church of England. This part of her life was marked by spiritual searching and activism; through her contacts with the dissenting groups in London, Moodie also joined the abolitionist movement and the London Anti-Slavery Society, where she met two such former slaves, Mary Prince and Ashton Warner. Their life accounts and struggle for freedom touched her profoundly, and Moodie served as their amanuensis, recording their stories in what became *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself* (1831), the first known and recorded autobiography by a freed West Indian slave, and *Negro Slavery Described by a Negro: Being the Narrative of Ashton Warner, a Native of St. Vincent* (1831).<sup>29</sup> This early experience of anti-slavery activism shaped Moodie's views of the peculiar institution and of the United States in *Roughing It*. At the same time, her references to religion as a tool for social improvement, need to be placed in the context of the push for social reform that characterized the nineteenth-century religious landscape in Britain as in North America, when broadly evangelical groups—Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists in Britain and North America—used their faith and energy to fight a variety of societal evils such as prostitution, alcoholism, and poverty.

Moodie's criticism of slavery builds upon the traditional rhetoric of improvement, but always has in subtext the American example. As Michel Ducharme pointed out, the republican exclusionary model was predicated on political participation of the people; in its American version, the definition of 'the people' and their access to freedom and equality were both limited by whiteness.<sup>30</sup> Moodie excoriates slavery and the hypocrisy of U.S. democracy. Unlike Haliburton who turns to race to naturalize a worldview predicated on the quasi-biological roots of class inequality, Moodie frames her argument by focusing on the limits of the republican democratic fiction of the sovereign people and by exposing the fallacy at the heart of the American claim of universal freedom and equality.

America's political structures were inspired by a historical precedent predicated on oppressive forms of inequality; the conclusion to *Life* reminds readers that "old republics were more despotic and exclusive in their separation of the different grades than modern monarchies; and in the most enlightened, that of Greece, the plague spot of slavery was found."<sup>31</sup> Both Christian and

secular history are conflated in this indictment of the false claims that the American republic was protecting freedom for all men: “The giant republic, whose rising greatness throws into shade the once august names of Greece and Rome, suffers this heart-corroding leprosy to cleave to her vitals, and sully her fair fame, making her boasted vaunt of equality a base lie—the scorn of all Christian men.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, Moodie instrumentalizes Christianity as both a tool to expose inequality but also to justify it. She defends an organic view of society predicated on a fluidly defined hierarchy of ranks; the absolute equality as the heart of popular democracy is not natural. Like Haliburton, Moodie believed that no real equality exists in the world (or in Heavens), and American slavery proved her point. At the same time, while she describes American slavery as rooted in, and reproducing unnatural and exploitative hierarchies, Moodie deems the social distinctions rooted in education as natural and even preferable forms of inequality.

In the chapter on the charivari in *Roughing It*, Moodie comments on the incompatibility between the American rhetoric of divinely-sanctioned freedom and equality and the larger sociocultural framework that legitimized the institution of slavery. In this sketch, Moodie spars over equality with an American lady who accuses her of not being a good Christian because she does not eat at the same table with her servants, although they are the same “flesh and blood.” While Moodie acknowledges the basic human nature that rich and poor share, she defends her choice not to share a meal with the help by arguing that class distinctions trump biology: “There is no difference in flesh and blood; but education makes a difference in the mind and manner.” Later, when Mrs. D— expresses her dislike of a neighboring farmer because he was black, Moodie wonders whether the farmer in question is not also flesh and blood: “after all, color makes the only difference between him and uneducated men of the same class.” When Mrs. D— defends herself, arguing that her servants would never allow her to have a black man eating at the same table with them, Moodie asks her if she believes that heaven is only for whites. The story ends with the religious American Mrs. D— disavowing even the idea of a heaven where blacks and whites would intermingle. Moodie comments shrewdly: “Alas this was the woman who had given me such a plausible lecture on pride. Alas, for our fallen nature! Which is more subversive of peace and Christian fellowship—ignorance of our own characters, or of the characters of the others?”<sup>33</sup>

As this anecdote illustrates, Moodie asserts the fundamental equality of all human beings by reducing it to the literal, biological dimension of life. “The flesh and blood” invoked by Mrs. D— in her democratic embrace of people of classes, are turned by Moodie into signifiers of basic human biological commonalities irrespective of skin color, and which delegitimize any institutionalized forms of discrimination based on race. By contrast, she viewed

the intellectual distinctions that justify the existence of social stratifications as transcending biology; they are presented as desirable, because they are encompassed in the patriarchal language of an organic hierarchical structure ruled by a system of obligation and mutuality between classes. Discriminating based on skin color is morally wrong; by the same token, group distinctions based on education and civility are acceptable and compatible both with Moodie's religious outlook and with the larger liberal spirit of the age.

In *Life in the Clearings*, Moodie makes a passionate plea for free education. The interest in public education was part of a global trend, which will be discussed in chapter 4. In the 1840s, religious education was a contentious matter, linked to the larger conversations around the disestablishment of the Church of England and religious freedom in the colonies, but also shaped by the memory of the 1837–1838 Rebellions and by the fear of creeping republican influences in the colony.<sup>34</sup> As superintendent for education, the Methodist minister and politician Egerton Ryerson was a prominent figure in the fight for a nondenominational Christian tone in the common schools, inspired by the ideas of American reformers such as Whig politician Horace Mann.<sup>35</sup> Moodie's writings voice similar ideas, driven less by a concern with religious doctrinal accuracy, and more by what she saw as the advantages that colonial society as a whole could draw from having an educated population.

Moodie views the Bible as an ideal shared common denominator of moral values, although she carefully distinguishes between the argument for moral reform and the political threat associated with the American model. After all, she notes, “unadulterated republicanism is a beautiful but fallacious chimera which never has existed upon the earth,” and “if the Bible be true . . . we are told never will exist in heaven.”<sup>36</sup> Education is a category that can be altered through both individual effort and institutional support; consequently, it has embedded in it the promise of social mobility and improvement for all. It is the duty of religious-minded people in colonies to support such efforts. As we will see in chapter 4, just like established religion, proper schooling was viewed by Moodie as another institutional guarantee of the moral health of colonial society, although the threat of its radical political outcomes always lurked in the background.

### THE SPIRITUAL POVERTY OF AMERICAN REPUBLICANISM

The radical potential embedded in particular ecclesiastical arrangements was directly linked to the rise of popular democracy in North America. Class and religion are intertwined in Haliburton's vision of colonial society in ways that have no equivalent for Susanna Moodie or John Richardson. The connection

between power and established religion was something Haliburton absorbed early in his life. The judge's entire family had always been Anglican, including on the American side, which stayed within the Church of England even after they moved to Nova Scotia after the Revolution.<sup>37</sup> Haliburton's conservative view of the organic relation between monarchy and Anglicanism informs his position on the educational potential of religion and its power to create national cohesiveness. Haliburton's interest in religion is first derived from his larger concerns with the impact of democratic ideas on the integrity of the British Empire as a whole, and second on his belief that religion ensured the stability of society. Throughout his writings, he returned repeatedly to two issues: the importance of having an established church in the colonies and, related to the first, the shortcomings of the voluntary system.

The outcome of the American Revolution had confirmed to the British colonial authorities the need to strengthen the position of the Church of England; this was viewed as part and parcel of the reassertion of the full British constitution in the region and a way to avoid the same mistakes that had led to the loss of the thirteen colonies. To achieve this goal, imperial politicians proposed that the entire British system should be recreated in the colonies, including its secular aristocracy and its ecclesiastical hierarchy. Alan Taylor noted that British officials believed that true loyalism required Anglicanism, because the latter reinforced a social order premised on equality and deference. The Anglican clergy preached an organic vision of unequal society, where "God ranked people in distinct classes and then required their cooperation."<sup>38</sup> By contrast, Baptists and Methodists emphasized individual choice over traditional allegiances defined by inherited status and residence, while evangelical religious leaders even discouraged the deference of common people toward them. All of this looked dangerously egalitarian and conducive to other, potentially pernicious, political ideas of American inspiration.

As the various Canadian colonies became organized, the status of the various churches in each varied from place to place. In 1758, the first assembly of Nova Scotia—one of the prerevolutionary British provinces in North America—declared the Church of England the established church, although it allowed full liberty of conscience to dissenters and Catholics.<sup>39</sup> New Brunswick (1786), and Prince Edward Island (1803) eventually followed suit, but no other part of the incipient nation. Outside the Maritimes, the 1791 Constitution Act, which split the province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada, did not grant the Church of England any particular privileges; as a result, "no uniform pattern of the relationship between church and state existed when the time came for an independent national church" in 1867.<sup>40</sup> In short, while initially the Church of England enjoyed some advantages in British North America, mainly because of its associations with the imperial apparatus, over time this status became challenged by other denominations



whose demographic strength increased during the nineteenth century due to immigration.

The institutional recognition of religious groups in the colonies—and the relative material privileges that came with it—was a matter of intense debate in the 1830s and 1840s. On one side of the debate stood the Anglicans and the Scottish Presbyterians who demanded recognition in the colonies as established churches of the British Empire; on the other, the Protestant denominations in the colonies used the American-inspired discourse of religious freedom to push for the disestablishment of the Anglican Church and for the transition to a voluntary support of churches by the believers. At the same time, British evangelical groups encouraged reform in areas connected to social issues such as welfare, poor relief, and education. All these movements had in common, among other things, their voluntarism and anti-Catholicism, and are explained by Thomas C. Haliburton as the manifestation in the religious realm of the republican and democratic influences of the United States, and of their potential for social unrest.

Paul Giles identified a parallel between attitudes toward the United States, and those toward the dissenting churches by the Anglican establishment starting with the end of the eighteenth century. The argument was that, wherever dissenting churches thrived, those territories failed to be successfully incorporated into the British state anymore; religious and political choices were believed to share the same impulse.<sup>41</sup> *The Clockmaker* articulates the same idea, thus naturalizing in a colonial context the link between church and state. In series 3 of the *Clockmaker*, Hopewell refers to religion as “one of the great bonds of society.”<sup>42</sup> Like education, institutional religion is described in social and structural terms. Both provided people with the necessary tools to understand their station in life, rather than with the skills to surpass it.<sup>43</sup> Rich and poor alike benefit from an established national church, although in different ways; the poor are given free education, while the rich reap the benefits of living in a law-abiding society. Religion “inculcates good morals with sound doctrines—one that teaches folks to honour the king, at the same time that it commands them to fear God—one that preaches humility to the rich, deference to the poor, and exacts from both an obedience to the laws.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, not unlike Susanna Moodie, Haliburton views established religion as the guarantor of a stable society built upon an organic hierarchical structure ruled by a system of obligations and reciprocity between classes, although he does not share her view on the potential for personal advancement that religion harbors for individuals eager to improve their lot in life.

Throughout the three series of *The Clockmaker*, Sam Slick and his interlocutors comment on the social and religious transformations in Britain and colonies, drawing a direct line between democratic impulses and the demand for freedom of worship. The sketch “A Tale of Bunker Hill” links American

republican ideas to the rhetoric of dissent in British history. An ideologically nomadic system results in both political and religious fragmentation. Sam's father, reflecting on the legitimacy and true meaning of the Revolution, muses on the impulse behind it and likens it to religious dissent:

When folks once take to emigratin' in religion . . . they never know where to bide. First, they try one location, and then they try another; some settle here and some improve there, but don't hitch their horses together long . . . they are never satisfied, and, wherever these separatists go, they onsettle others as bad as themselves.<sup>45</sup>

The conclusion of the sketch is that "*Schism is a sin in the eye of God*" in all areas of life, a position which explicitly transfers concepts from the realm of politics into Haliburton's assessment of religious affairs in general.<sup>46</sup>

To strengthen this association, and capitalizing upon anti-Catholic feeling in the colonies, *The Clockmaker* plays up the double threat of republican influences in Canada and the specter of a future Catholic North America. Haliburton views church and state as institutions that are designed to coexist, irrespective of the dominant form of government. As Sam explains to an English tourist in the sketch "Travelling in America," religion naturally follows power and can be found in democracies as well as in monarchies, so there will always be a church-state bond irrespective of the form of government. Since in the United States, political power resides with the people (a democratic republic), it is the people, rather than the government, who are in charge with supporting their own churches. By contrast, in Britain, power resides with the Crown. Therefore, Sam explains, "religion is in the hands of the Government there. Church and State are to a sartain extent connected therefore in both."<sup>47</sup> While the link between political power and religious authority is clearly visible in the case of Britain, it is nonetheless there in the case of the American republic, Haliburton's logic goes.

Second, since mankind naturally gravitates toward a center, Catholicism is bound to secure a general and permanent—if informal—domination over the New World. Its strength comes from its centralized and hierarchical (therefore to Haliburton, its natural) structure. In the first series, in the sketch "A Tale of Bunker Hill," Sam's father draws a parallel between political and religious dissent. While "the Catholic is a united family, a happy family, and a strong family, all governed by one head," "the Protestant family is like a bundle of refuse shingles." Its fragility comes from its diversity: "when all lyin' loose as it always is, jist look at it, and see what a sight it is, all blowin' about by every wind of doctrine." Where no spirit of cohesion rules, the result is discord: "They are all divided into sects, railin', quarrellin', separatin', and agreein' in nothing, but hatin' each other."<sup>48</sup> The fragmentariness of the

American religious landscape mirrors the general instability of American society, continuously weakened by the competing interests of free individuals enjoying equal power and status in a democracy.

Ironically, Haliburton has Sam Slick find agreement with a Catholic priest upon this topic. In the sketch “Father John Shaughnessy” in the first series of *The Clockmaker*, the futility of religious conflict is compared to the recent memory of the War of 1812. In one of his visits to Halifax, Slick comments on the competition between the various Christian sects: “it’s like the battles up to Canada lines last war; each side claims victory; I guess there aint much to bran on nary way, damage done on both sides and nothing gained, as far as I can learn.”<sup>49</sup> Father John sees in Slick a kindred spirit, despite his Americanness, and proceeds to lambast the spirit of dissent that divides the Protestant community. The Protestants, he argues, are

by the ears, tooth, nail, hip and thigh, hammer and tons, revilin, wrangling, and beloutin each other all sorts of ugly names that they can lay their tongues to. Is that the way you love your neighbor as yourself? *We say this is a practical comment on schism* and . . . they all ought to be well lambasted together, the whole batch on ’em entirely. (Italics in original)

The surprising common point that Slick and Father Shaughnessy seem to have found in their mutual dislike of the divisions fragmenting the American religious scene ends when the peddler calls the United States the freest “country on the face of the airth.”<sup>50</sup> The priest promptly rejects this statement; he contradicts his interlocutor by showing him the hidden Protestant consensus underpinning it, and its impact on the lives of Catholics, “Well, says he, if you were seen in Connecticut as shakin hands along with a Popish priest, as you are pleased to call me . . . as you are now in the streets of Halifax along with me, with all your crackin and boasting of your freedom, I guess you wouldn’t sell a clock agin in that State for a while, I tell you.”<sup>51</sup>

Slick acknowledges the truth of this statement, and admits that the priest is the first man in this Province to have given him “a real right down complete checkmate” since his arrival in Halifax. This conversation lays bare to readers the cultural and political power behind the informal Protestant establishment in the United States and exposes the American rhetoric of religious freedom to be restricted to certain denominations only; it also alluded to the rabid anti-Catholicism rampant at the time in the United States, and to the power of political (and cultural) majorities to limit the religious freedoms of minorities even in the absence of an officially established church. Father Shaughnessy’s example serves to contradict the idea that national church is necessarily an obstacle to spiritual freedom, and Haliburton offers the Nova Scotian colonial

model as one that can protect religious liberty for all individuals, even though granting special financial privileges for one particular church.

North American voluntarism with its resulting array of religious denominations is to Haliburton a second example of how religion is transformed in a political world governed by the republican and democratic ideas. In series 2, in the sketch “Confessions of a Deposed Minister,” Reverend Hopewell bemoans the prospects of a secular America and warns of the birth of a Catholic America, both being explained as the direct consequences of any officially-mandated separation of church and state. Paradoxically, the reverend welcomes the prospect of a strong Catholic church as a counterpart to the ills of democracy and American national narcissism:

With their exclusive views of salvation, and peculiar tenets, as soon as they have the majority, this becomes a Catholic country, with a Catholic government, with the Catholic religion established by law. . . . I hope, and trust, and pray that it may be so. . . . We are too greedy to be moral, too self-sufficient to be pious, and too independent to be religious. . . . Yes, it is the only cure that time and a kind and merciful Providence has in store for us. *We shall be a Catholic country.* (Italics in original.)<sup>52</sup>

## VOLUNTARISM

The disestablishment of churches in the United States after the Revolution led to the rise of voluntarism, a form of church funding that depended on the voluntary support of the laity, rather than on state monies. This typically American arrangement was accompanied by a rejection of church hierarchies and by a concern with practical achievements rather than doctrinal purity. At the same time, as churches competed against one another for members and received no money anymore from the government, ministers were more vulnerable to will and mood of their constituencies, because they were financially dependent upon their flocks. Haliburton’s satire attacks the system on the grounds that it erodes the moral and pastoral authority of religious leaders.

Despite Haliburton’s misgivings about the many evangelical influences in British North America in spheres connected to social issues such as welfare, poor relief, and education, most colonial religious dissenters still considered themselves staunch Britons and were committed to improving colonial society. Perhaps the most prominent illustration of this position is provided by Upper Canadian Methodist minister and reformer Egerton Ryerson. Ryerson’s passionate 1826 reply to a public sermon by prominent Anglican clergyman John Strachan challenged the scriptural and constitutional bases

of an established church in British North America, reaffirmed the loyalism to Crown and Empire of his fellow Methodists, and in the process initiated the long colonial struggle for religious equality.<sup>53</sup> Yet, a decade later, in the midst of the push for colonial reform and self-government, Haliburton's sketches still describe evangelical organizations as built on alien, republican principles. The fact that individuals worked together to build and support their parishes independent of the government was, to Haliburton, an example of how easily self-government could thrive, a situation disquietingly close to the larger American political model.

Thus, voluntarism functions in Haliburton's satire as yet another visible manifestation in the religious realm of the republican and democratic influences of the United States and of their potential for social unrest in the colonies. Haliburton does not trust popular judgment in matters of faith any more than he does in matters of government. His bleak picture of the consequences of voluntarism on religious life in the United States serves three purposes. First, it confirms nineteenth-century beliefs in the incompatibility of republicanism and religion already in place after the French Revolution; second, it presents the United States as a nation in the thralls of imminent secularism. And third, it proves his larger point that political ideologies shape all aspects of society.

In the second series of *The Clockmaker*, the sketch "The Voluntary System" attacks the practice head-on. Haliburton praises the positive influence of the presence of the clergy amid the population: priests educate the citizens through their example, refinement, and piousness, which all help to elevate the moral quality of the people surrounding them. By contrast, he argues, a religious marketplace merely lowers the overall spiritual health of society: the voluntary system makes preachers cater to the desires of the masses, rather than allow them to guide their flocks. To illustrate this point, readers are introduced to Sam Slick's friend, Ahab. Unlike Reverend Hopewell who is effectively without a job anymore, Ahab is a scoundrel turned preacher who is tremendously successful in his new career because he realized early on that he must tell his congregations only what they want to hear, rather than what the Bible says. Ahab shares his secret with Sam: "If I didn't give 'em the soft sawder they would neither pay me nor hear me; that's a fact. Are you so soft in the horn now, Sam, as to suppose the galls would take the trouble to come to hear me tell 'em of their corrupt natur' and fallen condition; and first thank me, and then pay me for it?"<sup>54</sup>

In the second part of the sketch, Sam focuses on the plight of Reverend Hopewell, casting him as the archetypal victim of a voluntarism that deprived the state of its responsibility of providing for religion and left it to the believers. The old Anglican minister ruefully remembers how he lost his entire flock to the Unitarian Church after the Revolution. It all started with the

abolishment of a state law designed for the support of the various churches; Hopewell recounts the change to Sam:

The inimy of souls has been to work among us, and instigated folks to think this was too compulsory for a free people, and smelt too strong of establishments, and the legislatur repealed the law; so now, instead o' havin' a rigilar legal stipend, we have what they call the voluntary—everyman pays what he likes, when he likes, and to whom he likes, or if it don't convene him he pays nothin'.<sup>55</sup>

The minister confesses that he was effectively thrown into poverty. More than that, not only is he not paid, but he is criticized by his flock about his habits (smoking the pipe), his decisions (he did not join the Temperance movement), and about his religious views: “One found me too Calvinistic, and another too Armenian [*sic*]; one objected to my praying for the President . . . ; another to my wearin' a gown, for it was too Popish. In short, I git nothin' but objections to a'most everything I do or say, and I see considerable plain my income is gone.”<sup>56</sup> The sketch demonstrates that the traditional balance of power between a minister and his parishioners is reversed in the voluntary system, a reversal that functions as the warning sign for larger social changes.

Not only is the fabric of society in danger, Haliburton implies, but the very moral health of the nation is jeopardized by the clergy's unnatural dependence on their flock. Hopewell paints a dismal picture of the religious landscape of the American republic. By controlling him financially, parishioners have destroyed the independence of their minister,

their minister will pander to their vanity. He will be afeer'd to tell them unpalatable truths. Instead of tellin' 'em they are miserable sinners in need of repentance, he will tell 'em they are a great nation and a great people, will quote history more than the Bible, and give 'em orations not sarmons, encomiums and not censures. Presents, Sam, will bribe indulgences. *The minister will be a dum dog!* (Italics in original).<sup>57</sup>

Behind this state of affairs are the ideas upon which the entire political edifice of the American republic rests. In series 3, in the sketch “The Old Minister,” Hopewell blames the founding fathers and their Enlightenment ideas for creating what was bound to become a secular state. In doing so, he draws a direct connection between the original postrevolutionary political arrangements and their nineteenth-century social consequences: “I try to think it warn't the fault of either me or my flock, but the fault of them are good-for-nothing' philosophers, Jefferson, Franklin, and them new-school people, that fixed our constitution and forgot to make Christianity the corner-stone.”<sup>58</sup> Hopewell evokes the iconic first president, George Washington, as embodiment of the

original republican principles of the United States from which Jacksonian America strayed. The reverend reports a conversation he and Washington supposedly had, where the latter revealed to him that he too viewed the separation of church and state as a betrayal of the divine mission God had for the United States:

Joshua, says he [Washington], the people ascribe all the praise of our glorious revolution to their own valor to me, because I am one of themselves, and are a-going to build a great city for a capital, and call it after me, Washington; but for *Him* . . . to whom all honor, and praise, and glory is due, what have we done? Why, carefully excluded the power to endow Christianity from every constitution of every state in the Union. . . . Now, Joshua, said he, you will live to see it, but I won't. . . . [Y]ou will see the natural consequence of all this in a few years. . . . We shall run away from the practice of religion into theory. We shall have more sects than the vanity of man ever yet invented, and more enthusiasm and less piety, and more pretension, and less morals than any civilized nation on the face of the airth. (Italics in original.)<sup>59</sup>

The love for theory, freedom in worship, and rampant individualism are all presented as the seeds of the immense variety of denominations thriving in the United States. But in Washington's apocalyptic view of the future, this diversity will undermine the moral foundations of the country itself. Through his fictionalized Washington, Haliburton points out the incongruity of using the logic of the market in the realm of religion. Washington supposedly blamed Benjamin Franklin as much as Jefferson for this direction:

Franklin . . . has a great deal to answer for. . . . If he had more religion and less philosophy, as he calls scepticism, it would be better for him and us to. He is always a-sayin' to me, *leave religion alone*, General; leave it to *the voluntary principle*; the *supply* will always keep pace with the *demand*. It is the maxim of a pedlar, Joshua and onworthy of a statesman or a Christian; for in religion, unlike other things, the demand *seldom or never precedes*, but almost *invariably follows* and increases with the supply. (Italics in original.)<sup>60</sup>

This fictional exchange dramatizes Haliburton's position that one consequence of the separation of church and state is the weakening of religious values as moral compass for the entire community. Washington warns about the consequences that society as a whole will feel: "[t]hey have extinguished the cry of the Church, being in danger by extinguishing the Church itself. *When reformers talk of religious freedom as a popular topic, depend upon it, they mean to dispense with religion altogether*" (italics in original).<sup>61</sup> Freedom of religion threatens to lead to no religion at all.

The American example was intended as a cautionary tale for Haliburton's own society, at a time when Lord Durham was proposing to remove all residual privileges to the Church of England in the colonies, and when the push for the reform of the religious system was seen as the first step in the direction of the dismantling of any established church in British North America. Haliburton's critique of the religious landscape of the American republic echoes the rhetoric of the Loyalist tradition. Carl Berger connected the "tendency to infuse religious emotion into secular purposes" with later forms of imperialism in Canada after Confederation, which supported a view of empire as "the vehicle and embodiment of a progressive civilization . . . designed by Providence to spread its culture, religion and cultural institutions across the face of the earth."<sup>62</sup> Church, monarchy, and Empire all worked to consolidate the Britishness of the North American colonies. By contrast, the American founding fathers left out religion from their Constitution and declared the people as the source of all power; in doing so, they repudiated all connection between moral values and politics, thus effectively removing all restraints upon the excesses of popular democracy. This reading of history conflates democracy, republicanism, and religion as products of the same ideological meta-convention.

## CONCLUSIONS

The debate around the Clergy Debates and around voluntarism epitomized the Canadian strategy in dealing with religious freedom. In 1791, the Constitutional Act had set aside lands for the Church of England from the Crown Lands. Dissenting churches in the colony, under the leadership of Egerton Ryerson, protested the exclusive advantage the Church of England derived from the use of the land. Acrimonious struggles over the Clergy Reserves continued until 1853, when the British Parliament passed an act officially separating the church from the state in Canada. The Church of England and the Church of Scotland received a large part of the money obtained from the sale of clergy reserves; the Methodist and Catholic churches much smaller ones. After this moment, the voluntary support was to become the norm.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, this development did not create a religious landscape identical to that in the United States. In Canada, the break between church and state was never very clean: state endowments continued to flow toward religious colleges and other educational establishments. Religious institutions did not become as sharply distinguished from other major institutions of the culture as in the United States and, over time, Canada's major denominations have assumed some of the functions of national churches, developing mission



programs to build a moral society, a trend which was particularly visible in the nation-building second half of the nineteenth century, after Confederation.

Writing at a time of uncertainty and social change, both Susanna Moodie and Thomas C. Haliburton reflected on the role of religion in British North America, comparing it, directly and indirectly to the cultural norms and institutional arrangements in the United States. Moodie placed her thoughts on religion within the spectrum of available spiritual individual choices. While she found more freedom of choice in the New World than back in England, the writer views formal religious establishments as crucial to the moral health of society, as they are to the personal salvation of individuals. The amoral space of the backwoods, where settlers lack any religious education and desire none, exists side by side with the settled parts of the colony, with their tolerance of difference and a large diversity of churches, but also with the fluid, highly experiential world of the camp revivals of which the writer seems highly skeptical. Yet, Moodie argues, individuals cannot be left alone to find their moral compass, and need spiritual guidance, although she does not overtly support an established church to provide this guidance.

Unlike Moodie's focus on personal experience and morality, Haliburton's satire targets specifically the political and institutional structures that he believed to be the most threatened by reform and by the influx of democratic ideas in the realm of religion: the established church and the elimination of the Clergy Reserves. His writings link religious dissent, the threat of Catholicism, and the voluntary system to colonial fears about the corrosive power of popular democracy. An officially mandated separation between church and state, inspired by the American example, would bring the colonies one step closer toward the elimination of Christianity from the very fabric of society. The American freedom of religion, voluntarism, and the dazzling array of religious denominations competing against one another in the United States are to Haliburton merely examples of a world governed by the structural fragmentariness inherent in a republican and democratic society. Two outcomes appeared possible: either American society would be completely secularized, or it would naturally gravitate toward the only 'center' available to it, namely Catholicism. In the anti-Catholic atmosphere of the nineteenth century, both options were equally undesirable, and Haliburton urged his readers to reject any arrangement that would lead to similar outcomes in the colonies. The disestablishment of the Anglican Church and the spread of dissenting denominations function as the religious manifestations of the slow but steady flow of democratic ideas in colonial institutions. As we will discuss in chapter 4, the Nova Scotian judge feared that these changes were bound to bring about a tide of stifling equality in all aspects of Canadian life.

## NOTES

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25. Stan McMullin, *Anatomy of a Séance: A History of Spirit Communication in Central Canada* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2004), 31.
26. See Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 3.
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28. Carl Ballstadt et al., “‘Glorious Madness’: Susanna Moodie and the Spiritualist Movement,” *Journal of Canadian Studies / Révue d’études canadiennes* 17, no. 4 (1982): 88–100, 97.

29. Michael Peterman, “Introduction” to *Roughing It in the Bush: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), xii. These texts are currently enjoying increasing critical attention. See Nicole N. Aljoe, “‘Going to Law’: Legal Discourse and Testimony in Early West Indian Slave Narratives,” *Early American Literature* 46, no. 2 (2011): 351–81.

30. Michel Ducharme, *Le concept de liberté au Canada à l’époque des Révolutions atlantiques (1776–1838)* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 194.

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33. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 258.

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## Chapter Four

# Equality

In his American trip, Alexis de Tocqueville briefly visited French Canada but never made it to English Canada or to the Maritime provinces. He nevertheless was optimistic about the fate of Anglophone America. At the end of the first volume of *Democracy in America*, in the chapter “The Three Races in the United States,” Tocqueville lumps together the residents of the United States with the inhabitants of the British colonies under the label *Anglo-Americans*. He explains that the English Canadian population is virtually “identical with that of the United States” and that the “English race is not stopping at the Union’s borders but continuing to advance well beyond them, toward the northeast.” At the same time, the writer acknowledges the animosity between the two communities: “There is no hatred more venomous than that which exists between the Americans of the United States and the English.” But, temporary rivalries aside, he concludes that “neither differences in law nor differences of situation—war or peace, order or anarchy—had any perceptible effect on the successive phases of Anglo-American expansion.”<sup>1</sup>

This ethnic interpretation of national allegiances obscured for Tocqueville the existence of two competing forms of Anglo-nationalism on the continent in the first half of the nineteenth century, the complex mix of democratic impulses and conservative inertias that characterized the society of the British colonies, and the different readings of equality that were to shape the region’s path toward democracy and reform. This chapter sets out to discuss how Susanna Moodie and Thomas C. Haliburton approached the structure and dynamics of their colonial communities in relationship to the United States. While both engaged British, as well as British North American and U.S. audiences, a constant theme of their writing is that the ethnic and demographic similarities between the United States and the English-speaking parts of British North America were less important than the political institutions upon which the two societies were built.

In the 1830s, debates surrounding reform and democracy in Britain went in parallel with increasing cultural anxieties about the imminent

Americanization of British society. Paul Giles points out that, at the time, the American political experiment was viewed by some as the materialization of Whig radical dreams.<sup>2</sup> Yet, five decades after the end of the Revolutionary War, the dominant image of the United States in British culture was that of a full-fledged ideological and political rival, rather than that of an offshoot of the mother country. As American Studies scholar Seymour Martin Lipset noted, the United States functioned throughout the nineteenth century as “the extreme example of classically liberal or Lockean society, which rejected the assumptions of the alliance of throne and altar, of ascriptive elitism, of mercantilism, of *noblesse oblige*, of communitarianism.”<sup>3</sup>

Travel literature endeavored to report on the new, yet strangely familiar, society that grew out of these ideas. From Cooper’s *Gleanings in Europe: England* (1837) to Frances Trollope’s *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), or Charles Dickens’s *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–1844) and *American Notes* (1842) to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *English Traits* (1856) and Haliburton’s *Clockmaker*, travel logs, memoirs, and fiction rushed to show the ways in which the United States and British societies were fundamentally different. At the same time, the New World was glamorized in popular genres that targeted those middle class and working-class Britons interested in improving their lot in life by emigration.<sup>4</sup> A subtype of this booster literature showcased the settler colonies and emphasized the advantages of immigration within the culturally and politically familiar framework of the British Empire. This body of texts actively urged readers to move to Canada or Australia rather than to the United States because these colonies were believed to be closer culturally to Britain than the American republic.<sup>5</sup> Although two thirds of immigrants still chose the United States, by the end of the century the population of the British colonies across the Empire had nonetheless increased significantly.<sup>6</sup>

This collective exodus was informed by the age’s liberal ideas about the theoretical equality of all human beings and their freedom to pursue their interests. Yet, the respective political systems of British North America and of the United States approached quite differently the institutional instruments through which equality was to be delivered in practice. The American expansion of the franchise in the 1830s and the populist revolution of Andrew Jackson plainly showed that political reform could lead to social upheaval. The excesses of Jacksonian America were very disquieting to British North American colonial officials who viewed strong institutions as the only safeguard from mob rule and from what Tocqueville would famously call “the tyranny of the majority.” As Canadian political philosopher Janet Azenstat noted, these colonial reformers “used the term ‘democracy’ to mean mob rule” or ‘oppression and tyranny,’ just like other nineteenth-century liberals. They supported a mixed government in British North America, because they

believed that model to be best suited to keep in check the rapid process by which social equality could translate into a political system that would give the uneducated masses too much power.<sup>7</sup>

### AMERICANNES AS CLASSLESSNESS IN *ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH* AND *LIFE IN THE CLEARINGS*

The literary texts produced in and about the British North American colonies echoed shifting ideas in nineteenth-century Britain, where class was predicated on a hierarchical worldview that naturalized differences between the various walks of life. The British Empire had been exporting this worldview abroad for over a century; in David Cannadine's words, a large part of the British imperial enterprise consisted of "the effort to fashion and to tie together the empire abroad in the vernacular image of the domestic, ranked social hierarchy."<sup>8</sup> But the realities of life in the colonies often thwarted these intentions. Two parallel interpretations of class coexisted in the colonies. One was the socioeconomic language inspired by the political changes in Britain, where, in the age of the Reform Bill, the middle class was beginning to be defined in material terms; the other viewed society as a natural, continuous hierarchy of groups, "defined by behaviour as much as by circumstance."<sup>9</sup>

These parallel definitions were reflected in new colonial political and social arrangements that demonstrated that, by the time Moodies arrived in Canada, the Tory dream of creating an aristocracy had failed here. First, the colonies lacked the extremes of wealth and poverty of England; second, the political institutions originally intended to recreate the mixed government of the home country were fairly homogeneous, populated mostly by Canadians of the middling classes, who defined their place in society not by their pedigree, but by their newfound wealth. And lastly, public opinion slowly became a source of legitimacy during the political struggle of the late 1830s, which seemed to confirm conservative fears about the inevitability of democracy in the colony.<sup>10</sup> The arriving genteel emigrants from Britain who hoped to reinvent themselves as colonial gentry and become part of a landed aristocracy, found their own aspirations hampered by rigid colonial oligarchies that did not welcome outsiders and had no sympathy for their imperial vision. Furthermore, in the explosive political environment of the 1830s and 1840s, any criticism of colonial arrangements was labelled treason and viewed as a first step toward either republicanism or outright annexation by the United States. Reformers in British North America clamored against the power of the colonial oligarchy and demanded more representation in local governance; but colonial reform was also feared by London as potentially opening the way to democratic institutions which could erode support for the Crown.



America's aggressive expansion into Texas, the Oregon Territory dispute, and the U.S. assistance to 1837–1838 revolutionaries, validated these fears that British North America would be the next target of American land grab. Dissent was unpatriotic.

Susanna Moodie's literary engagement with the debates around issues of democracy and equality revolves around the connection between the erosion of social hierarchies under the influence of American culture, and the weakening of Canada's imperial bonds. Her observations about colonial social realities become the entry point into a larger conversation about the advantages of each system for genteel immigrants like herself and for working-class immigrants who chose Canada over the United States. Moodie's texts present her story as an authentic account of the real tribulations of a genteel woman resettling across the Empire, and were unlike the boosterist propaganda of the time, which presented immigration as an easy path to wealth.

The contested interpretation of gentility in the colonies occupy a large part of her musings. In the 1852 introduction to *Roughing It*, Moodie pondered upon the "sarcasms" that were "too often hurled at the less-wealthy by the purse-proud, common-place people of the world."<sup>11</sup> The Moodies' decision to emigrate had been due to the rigid social hierarchy of Britain, where birth and wealth were the prerequisites for status and where the impoverished, yet genteel, young family could not find its place. In Canada, the Moodies were hoping to find a society that respected educated and civility, and where Britishness would be an asset; a place where "the masses will bow down to superior intellect, and the wealth and importance which such minds never fail to acquire."<sup>12</sup> Reality failed to meet these expectations.

In *Roughing It*, Moodie notes that life on the frontier made "superior intellect" irrelevant at best, and a hindrance at worst; in *Life in the Clearings*, she laments the crass materialism of the colony's wealthy but "[u]neducated, ignorant people," whose idea of gentility revolved solely around having "fine clothes, fine houses, splendid furniture, expensive equipages, and plenty of money."<sup>13</sup> The upward mobility offered to immigrants in Canada might have provided material advantages, but Moodie did not see these new rich as her equals. In a long passage excised from the Canadian edition of the book, the writer explains her position: "[t]he aristocracy of wealth is bad enough, but the aristocracy of dress is perfectly contemptible."<sup>14</sup> Value should be rooted in something more than the modern fascination with material things, she argues. The Canadian new rich value matter over spirit, and ironize the Moodies for their poverty; in an 1853 letter to Richard Bentley, Moodie amusedly reported that the editor of the *Examiner* magazine, when reviewing *Roughing It*, called her "an ape of the aristocracy. Too poor to lie on a sofa and too proud to work for [her] bread."<sup>15</sup>

Moodie views Canadian social egalitarianism as dangerous because of the implied links with the United States and its political models. Her earlier sketches and poems, written at the time of the Canadian Rebellions soon after her arrival in the colony, had linked rebellion against British rule to American influence, and were discussed in chapter 1. Even if her writings never acquire the vehement overtones of Haliburton's satire, it is plain that republican democracy remains for Moodie a potential destroyer of ethical standards and of spiritual values. This leads sometimes to amusing comparisons; thus, 'democracy' is the term that comes to Moodie's mind when she contemplates a donkey; she notes that the animal could prove to be very useful to the colony, even though he is "rather an untractable democrat, insisting on having things his own way." Similarly, a few paragraphs later, the Canadian thistle is described in equally political terms. "Often have I gazed upon the Canadian thistle—that prolific, sturdy democrat of the soil, that rudely jostles aside its more delicate and valued neighbours . . . and asked myself for what purpose it grew and flourished so abundantly."<sup>16</sup> Such associations of democracy with equality, the rule of the recalcitrant lower classes, and the elimination of the elites reveal Moodie's difficulty at reconciling her support for certain aspects of colonial reform with the larger anxieties about the social equality of American inspiration that was threatening her status.

The same parallels are made, albeit less frequently, via indirect commentaries on current political events. One example of the latter category is the patriotic poem "The Burning of the *Caroline*." Included in the 1852 edition of *Roughing It in the Bush*, it was inspired by an episode during the 1837 Rebellions when William Lyon Mackenzie retreated on the Navy Island, pursued by British troops. Various supporters—American as well as Canadians—brought supplies to the rebels in an American-owned ship, the *Caroline*. British forces crossed into U.S. territory to pursue them, set the *Caroline* on fire, and hurled it, all ablaze, into the Niagara Falls. Several people on both sides of the skirmish were injured and one was dead. The entire incident occurred on American soil and caused repeated clashes between British forces and U.S. and Canadian private militias throughout the following year, as well as a decade-long diplomatic headache for both countries.<sup>17</sup>

Moodie's poem locates the origins of the *Caroline* affair in the Rebellions themselves. The burning of the boat is punishment for the betrayal: "So may the traitor's hope expire / So perish all our country's foes!" The poem does not romanticize revolution; instead, it juxtaposes "British honor" to the "democratic influence, low," whose appeal Canada must resist. The British officer who led the attack, becomes a "Defender of an injured land!" who has paid a "debt of vengeance" against his "outraged country," a country which is strategically left unnamed, thus allowing readers to symbolically overlap Britain and Canada at the center of this poem's affective geography.<sup>18</sup>

A similar organic connection between a putative Canadian identity in North America and the defense of the British Crown and institutions is naturalized in the metaphor of the family connections in other poems and sketches written by Moodie during the 1830s and later included in *Roughing It*. The writer's exhortations to current or future British emigrants to Canada in chapter 2 of *Roughing It* link the past of the empire with the present of the colony in the form of a promise of a better life across generations: "British mothers of Canadian sons! . . . learn to feel for their country the same enthusiasm which fills your hearts when thinking of the glory of your own. Teach them to love Canada—to look upon her as the first, the happiest, the most independent country in the world."<sup>19</sup>

In *Life in the Clearings*, Moodie hints at the dangerous appeal of the U.S. alternative next door: "Should [Canada] ever be so unwise as to relinquish the privileges she enjoys under the sovereignty of the mother country, she may seek protection *nearer and fare worse*" (italics in original).<sup>20</sup> The "solid advantages" and privileges Canada enjoys under British protection would be lost if the country becomes the "humble dependent on the great republic."<sup>21</sup> Any relationship that Canada may develop with the United States is presented as unnatural, while the one toward Britain is natural because of the kinship bonds uniting an imperial imagined community that shares one understanding of freedom, society, the state, and the individual. Thus, a possible Canadian turn toward the United States is read both as a betrayal (an emotional argument) and as a bad choice (a rational argument), because, despite claims to the contrary, Canada will never be an equal within the American republic and will be absorbed into it.

*Roughing It* opened with a patriotic poem that describes Canada not as "a child of bondage" but as a land of liberty enjoying the "freedom's crown" represented by British colonial rule. The freedoms guaranteed by the British rule include the promise of upward mobility for immigrants, as well as political freedom:

Joy, to the sons of want, who groan  
 In lands that cannot feed their own; . . .  
 No more oppress'd, no more a slave  
 Here freedom dwells beyond the wave.<sup>22</sup>

However, the implied promise of economic equality that Canada offers "the sons of want" is never a promise for social equality. Moodie's worldview seems generally to reflect the traditional paternalism and reciprocity of old British understandings of social divisions; it does not imply strictly delimited categories of collective identity with the notable exception of national identity. Indeed, one can argue that class and gentility function in Moodie's prose as interchangeable signifiers of national or imperial belonging.

Moodie's infamous portrayal of the Irish immigrants in *Roughing It* is a case in point. She describes their arrival upon Canadian shores in excoriating terms: the Irish remind her of "barbarians . . . perfectly destitute of shame or even of a sense of common decency," and clearly inferior to "the wild man in delicacy of feeling or natural courtesy." Moodie laments that the fever of equality brings out the worst in people; even in the "chiefly honest Scotch labourers and mechanics [who] no sooner set foot upon the island than they became infected by the same spirit of insubordination and misrule, and [become] just as insolent and noisy as the rest."<sup>23</sup> Her account is imbued with class prejudice: "the poorest and the worst-dressed, the least-deserving and the most repulsive in mind and morals, exhibited most disgusting traits of self-importance. Vanity and presumption seemed to possess them altogether."<sup>24</sup> Later in the book, Moodie explains the phenomenon in political terms: both the servants brought from home and "the Yankeeified British peasantry and mechanics" are corrupted by the "ultra-republican spirit" of the continent as soon as they set foot on Canadian soil, because of the sudden transition to a state of "unrestrained liberty."<sup>25</sup> North American freedom threatens civility, as well as established British social hierarchies.

Not only American ideas are encroaching upon Canada, but so are American people whose social practices shape life on the frontier for the Moodies, as we have seen in chapter 2. In the backwoods, Moodie identifies the Yankeeified European settlers collectively through their shared social practices, particularly the habit of borrowing and their universal lack of manners. 'Borrowing' is a misnomer for a hybrid practice in-between begging and stealing, Moodie finds. Neighbors simply 'borrow' from one another items they never intend to return, and everyone understands the rules of the game, except for the Moodies. The American Emily Satan, her father Old Satan, Betty Fye, and other unnamed settlers abuse the confused newcomers, cheat them out of their belongings, and take advantage of their ignorance of local customs. Moodie's exasperation leads to multiple failed attempts to unmask the social reality behind the local custom, which she describes as a "method of living upon their neighbours . . . most convenient . . . to unprincipled people, as it does not involve the penalty of stealing."<sup>26</sup> By labelling theft as merely 'borrowing,' she implies, the American settlers construe the social practice as a system of commodity exchange based on the equivalence of the two parties through the assumption that the goods will be eventually returned. Moodie rejects these egalitarian implications in her rebuke of her Yankee neighbor:

Mrs. Fye, it surprises me that such proud people as you Americans should condescend to the meanness of borrowing from those whom you affect to despise. . . . If you would come honestly to me and say, "I want these things, I am too poor to buy them myself, and would be obliged to you to give them to me"; I

should then acknowledge you as a common beggar and treat you accordingly, give or not give, as it suited my convenience.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, to Moodie, borrowing merely serves to obscure the class inequality between the various groups of immigrants in Canada, hiding behind words the unavoidable differences between groups of people. Like the Yankee rejection of social norms discussed in chapter 2, the writer sees as a symptom of a deep egalitarianism which, in a continental context, can become a first step toward republicanism. The presence of the “Yankeefied” British and Canadians, side by side and often indistinguishable from authentic Yankees like Uncle Joe, raises the question of whether collective loyalties in Canada could withstand the appeal of American ideas infiltrating society both via working-class immigrants from Britain and from American immigrants to Canada, in an age when popular democracy was legitimizing everyone’s involvement in the political arena.

### EDUCATION AGAINST YANKEEFICATION IN MOODIE’S WRITING

Education is the antidote that Moodie proposes against the Yankeefication of Canada. She believed that true class distinctions should be informed by intellect and manners, not just wealth differences, and was a strong supporter of universal schooling as the path to improvement, both personal and collective.<sup>28</sup> Public education in pre-Confederation Canada, as in many other parts of the Western world at the time, was a rather haphazard affair. Local authorities were following the British model, but also looked to the American example where, as early as the seventeenth century, New England states had made provisions for tax-funded public education.<sup>29</sup> The dominant nineteenth-century liberal philosophy about education argued the best way to deliver it was via a plurality of institutions that reflected the social divisions in society, and that respected social hierarchies, rather than by the government. This laissez-faire approach had opened the path to voluntarist religious and benevolent organizations to become the sole providers of education in England until 1870.<sup>30</sup> In the Canadian colonies, with the exception of common schooling, formal education was mostly available to the wealthy and to the rising middle class until the end of the century; before 1840, very few working-class Canadians had access to any education whatsoever.<sup>31</sup> Overwhelmingly, educating working-class Canadians was achieved through the effort of middle-class individuals like Moodie, most of whom “hailed from the rising group that believed in social and political reform and the value of the individual.”<sup>32</sup>

In *Life in the Clearings*, Moodie devotes an entire chapter to her plea for universal education. In “Free Schools,” she enthusiastically describes and

defends the educational reform that was in the making in Upper Canada throughout the 1830s, and was inaugurated by the Common School Act of 1841.<sup>33</sup> While specific arrangements of colonial education were to be hammered over the next decades, the tide of change was moving toward free nondenominational free schools available to all children, funded by property taxes. Moodie lists the main criticisms of the new arrangement: by religious leaders because the schools were secular, and by property owners, because they did not want to pay for the education of the poor. Her case for universal education uses the language of religion as well as that of patriotism:

The want of education and moral training is the only real barrier that exists between the different classes of men. Nature, reason, and Christianity, recognise no other. . . . Take away the wealth from an ignorant man, and he remains just the same being he was before he possessed it. . . . But let that wealth procure for him the only true and imperishable riches—knowledge, and with it the power to do good to himself and others.<sup>34</sup>

The free schooling for the children of poor Canadians, which Moodie identifies as a “liberal provision” and a “blessing,” is supposed to “increase the wealth and prosperity of the province” by “calling out and making available all the talent in the colony.”<sup>35</sup> This is because education can work on two plans: it can fulfill that promise of human perfectibility and raise the quality of life in the colonies by creating a better trained and reflective population. But education could also help to maintain a loyal British society in the colony by teaching working-class Canadians not to challenge the existing social system and the political institutions reflecting it.

Moodie enthuses over both prospects. An educated man is a man that “has indeed changed his nature, and is fast regaining the resemblance he once bore to his Creator.”<sup>36</sup> Individual cultivation will also lead to collective prosperity, and Moodie urges the upper classes to support education as part of their vocation, to cultivate “those barren minds,” and to raise them “from the mire of ignorance in which they at present wallow, to share with them the moral dignity of thinking men.”<sup>37</sup> At the same time, Moodie’s glorification of the benefits that poor children in the colony will reap from being given access to free nondenominational education does not radically challenge the hierarchical, organic view of a society predicated as much on social inequality and social rank, as on reciprocity and duty toward one another.

To Moodie, the impact that public education could have on children is bound to guarantee the long-term success of the colony and its place in the Empire. First, schooling the young would support the political and social status quo rather than subvert it: the various ranks in society would continue to work harmoniously for the general good. In a nutshell, this second argument is that educated servants make better servants because they fully understand

and accept the reasons behind their position of inferiority in society, and was presumably intended to persuade the upper classes to financially and politically support universal education in the colony.<sup>38</sup> Education is what made Britain prosper and will continue to do so:

To the wisdom of her educated men, Britain owes the present position she holds among the nations. . . . From her educated men have sprung all those wonderful discoveries in science, which have extended the commerce of Great Britain, enlarged her capacity for usefulness, and rendered her the general benefactress of mankind.

Not surprisingly, Moodie's utilitarian views about education makes her discourage "the sons of the poor emigrant" from "wasting their valuable time in acquiring Latin and Greek."

Let the boy be taught to think, to know the meaning thoroughly of what he learns, and, by the right use of his reflective faculties, be enabled to communicate the knowledge thus acquired to others. A comprehensive knowledge of the arts and sciences, of history, geography, chemistry, and mathematics, together with a deep and unbigoted belief in the great truths of Christianity, would render a man or woman a highly intellectual and rational companion.<sup>39</sup>

The young would also benefit from learning early on that there is "no disgrace in labor, in honest, honourable poverty, but a deep and lasting disgrace in ignorance and immorality."<sup>40</sup> A practical education of the poor will add to the well-being of the entire community by reducing crime rates, and not encourage them to start a revolution, she opined. It seems ironic that Moodie advocated understanding one's position in life as the key to both individual happiness and collective stability, given that she and her family had emigrated to Canada precisely to change their own situation in life.

Despite such glaring blind spots, Moodie's writing cannot avoid acknowledging the potentially subversive influence that the language of political equality and social mobility had on working-class immigrants. As more educated colonists became politically mobilized, they were more likely to resist a hierarchical society and institutions that excluded them. Consequently, a literate, politically-conscious public, more attuned to public debates and more aware of its role in conferring legitimacy to political decisions, was also more likely to be receptive to the radical reformers' rhetoric of popular sovereignty and republicanism—at least in principle. Herein lies Moodie's own dilemma: the very rhetoric of improvement via education has embedded in it the promise of equality for those colonists whose fate could be changed under the generous patronage of the enlightened imperial elites.

In a North American context, the promise of economic equality went hand in hand with the embrace of a different understanding of liberty, duty, and

community that had the potential of overturning the same paternalistic system that was pushing for improvement. Even more dangerously, those alternative definitions of liberty and community could lead Canada closer and closer to the American republic. Given this, Moodie is at pains to make it clear to her readers that support for universal education is fully compatible with the larger imperial project of improvement and that it is not meant to challenge the monarchical and colonial nature of Canada:

My earnest wish for universal education involves no dislike to royal rule, or for those distinctions of birth and wealth which I consider necessary for the well-being of society. . . . Perfect, unadulterated republicanism, is a beautiful but fallacious chimera which never has existed upon the earth, and which, if the Bible be true (and we have no doubts on the subject), we are told never will exist in heaven. Still, we consider that it would be true wisdom and policy in those who possess a large share of the good things of this world, to make labour honourable, by exalting the poor operative into an intelligent moral agent.<sup>41</sup>

Moodie qualified her support of education by emphasizing its function as a tool of social control, rather than of subversion of the status quo; this signals her awareness of the extent to which the language of political ideologies contaminated debates over education. While Yankee otherness is preserved through references to a rhetorical ‘American Revolution’ that is never truly in the past, the Canadian colonists can still be remolded into British subjects a generation later through an education that would mitigate the impact of the colony’s constant interaction with American political culture. Moodie was not alone to promote this idea; renowned Upper Canadian educational reformers such as Dr. Charles Duncomb, who toured the United States, its schools, as well as its jails and lunatic asylums, promoted educational reform in the hope that providing all Canadian children with free education would mitigate the social ills of rapid industrialization which he saw at work in the United States.<sup>42</sup>

In conclusion, in her autobiographical sketches as well as in her poetry, Moodie emerges as an indirect participant in the larger conversation surrounding reform and democracy in the colony. She supported the equal right of all humans to improve their minds through education; at the same time, she defended social hierarchies—whether through social mores, institutions, or education—as a way of protecting the Britishness of Canada. By addressing her writings primarily to a metropolitan audience, Moodie brought to the attention of her English audiences the consequences of a more egalitarian and democratic society in the colony, under the influence of American institutions and American mores, but also the role of public education in ensuring the future stability of colonial society.



## THOMAS C. HALIBURTON ON POLITICAL EQUALITY AS POTENTIAL MOBOCRACY

Despite British North American assumptions about American society in the early 1800s, equality and popular democracy were contested ideas even in the United States.<sup>43</sup> In *Taming Democracy*, Terry Bouton compellingly demonstrated that in the Early Republic, “the elite founding fathers had waged—and won—a counter-revolution against popular democratic ideals,” which were “consolidated into institutional and constitutional changes meant to provide barriers against popular democracy.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, initially the patriot leaders had espoused a hierarchical view of society where enlightened elites would guide the masses toward freedom.<sup>45</sup> With the advent of Andrew Jackson, universal white male suffrage became the norm, yet popular democracy remained a contentious terrain. It was to remain contentious for decades to come, as more and more disenfranchised groups—women, the poor, Blacks—began to clamor for their rights, a struggle still very much alive today. American political philosophy embraced and adapted for its own needs the liberal principles of the day, its emphasis on anti-statism, on individual reliance and rejection of communal rights and obligations, abandoning the organic conservatism of Tory extraction that existed in Europe.<sup>46</sup> By the 1840s, both Whigs and Jacksonian Democrats were reclaiming the idea of democracy and embracing a rhetorical view of America as an egalitarian, classless society. Equality and democracy had become the acknowledged grand narrative of the United States, pushing aside alternative conservative views and making the survival of a hierarchical, elitist political system increasingly challenging.

This hierarchical political philosophy, however, survived and thrived in British North America, where it adapted British conservatism to colonial realities. Rather than supporting the American telos of the unavoidable evolution from colony to nationhood via revolution, the alternative narrative emphasized the continuation of colonial ties with Britain, and the maintenance of bonds that would reconcile the independence of the settler colonies with a role in the British Empire. Thus, across British North America, reformers pursued self-government and self-determination quite cautiously. At one level, this colonial movement for self-government (or ‘responsible government’) was a conversation over institutional reform and a collective search for the best government for the colonies within the framework of the empire. At another, it was a fierce debate over the cultural bases of local institutions, and over the regional identity of the various colonies.

As discussed earlier, Thomas C. Haliburton began his career in the Atlantic province of Nova Scotia as a reformer, fighting against the privileges of the colonial oligarchy. He turned to political satire in order to promote a specific

political issue of his province: he was determined to use Sam Slick and the negative example of the United States to persuade colonial audiences that electing their representatives was a bad idea. While elective councils seem even in retrospect a rather bland topic to write satire about, Haliburton's portrayal of American realities and American attitudes turned the Connecticut Yankee Sam Slick and his wise saws into classics of North American humor. By using Sam as the mediating consciousness of his portrayal of American society, Haliburton constructs a critique of popular democracy via a representative of the masses.

Sam's patriotic praises of all things American echo in exaggerated form the political rhetoric of the time, while simultaneously revealing the shortcomings of American democracy: time and again, Sam's stories point out that human nature is deeply flawed and in need of checks and balances. American democracy is an imperfect by-product of the country's national narcissism; while at a superficial level the United States is the ideal 'go-ahead nation,' ruled by a new religion of progress, Sam's stories signal the hidden dangers of popular democracy. The most common are the erosion of the social fabric, the threat of mob-rule, and the vulnerability of the masses to the appeal of demagogues. From Slick's amusing stories, Haliburton draws very serious conclusions: the American political system of republican democracy was built on an optimistic view of human nature, and provided insufficient institutional buffers to mitigate its excesses in an age of rapid technological and social change.

Such negative views of popular democracy were not new. Tocqueville voiced similar ideas at roughly the same time; Haliburton called *Democracy in America* "the best book that has ever appeared on the United States."<sup>47</sup> *Democracy* takes for certain the victory of the democratic principle over the aristocratic principle, and posits equality as an unstoppable drive of humanity, although for Tocqueville 'democracy' merely promised an "equality of conditions" rather than represented an absolute status.<sup>48</sup> Haliburton's approach to democracy is less subtle than Tocqueville's, partly because of the judge's own strong Tory stance and possibly because satire is not a literary genre particularly suited to nuance. Like Tocqueville, Haliburton had one overarching fear: that people would love equality more than they love liberty and would be willing to sacrifice the latter for the sake of the former. Unlike the French thinker, however, Haliburton saw political equality as unnatural. In his opinion, a society organized on the basis of class, and supporting the monarchical principle was better at protecting individual freedoms. Such a society would provide a stable environment and would be forever safe from the violence of the mobs which was illustrated poignantly by the periodic outbursts of street violence in the United States.

Haliburton's thinking operates with the opposition 'democratic' versus 'aristocratic,' to which is added the dichotomy of 'mobocracy' versus 'democratic freedom.' Almost two decades after the publication of *The Clockmaker*, in *Rule and Misrule of the English in America*, in 1851, the judge revisited his comments on democracy and republicanism applying them to the revolutions that had rippled across Europe in the 1840s. His conclusion was the same: when combined with popular rule, unrestrained freedom can easily turn into a violent tyranny of the majority.

Nearly every country in continental Europe has been deluged by blood, or devastated by fire and sword, to spread the fraternity of liberty, and diffuse the inestimable blessing of having no God, no kings, and obeying no law but the free and unbridled rule of animal instinct or passion, which has been deified and worshipped under the specious name of reason and the immutable right of man.<sup>49</sup>

As mentioned in chapter 1, at the heart of Haliburton's construction of American otherness was not republicanism itself, either as a form of government or as a particular conceptualization of the political community—after all, the original struggle of the colonists could be at least partially explained as a fight to secure the freedoms deserved by British citizens abused by a tyrannical monarch. The writer feared unchecked popular democracy. *The Clockmaker* unsettled the centrality of freedom in American narratives of national identity by examining the consequences of introducing the principle of absolute equality in the political realm. The Loyalist Reverend Hopewell ruefully notes the new definition of American freedom as “that happy condition of mankind where people are assembled in a community; where there is no government, no law, and no religion, but such as are imposed from day to day by a mob of freemen.” The celebrated American liberties amount to “the right of openly preaching infidelity” to “a licentious press,” “the absence of all subordination,” and culminating in “the insufficiency of all legal or moral restraint”<sup>50</sup> when all people are equally free to invent the rules.

American history is reread by Haliburton as a continuous confirmation of the original move of the colonies away from the hierarchical center of order and lawfulness guaranteed by the Crown, toward an egalitarian system where everyone can choose their own truth at any time, a system that, to Haliburton, limits personal freedoms rather than protects them. It bears repetition. Haliburton was no progressive, and the minorities he was worried about most likely were white, propertied men like himself. As his biographer Richard A. Davies aptly puts it, “anthologists in the present day are hard-pressed to find a passage of *The Clockmaker* that will not offend our sensibilities.”<sup>51</sup> But similar views were in the zeitgeist; Haliburton's blatant racism, misogyny, and rabid conservatism, while profoundly unpalatable to contemporary readers

today, did not harm his popularity in England, where the upper classes were reeling from the social transformations brought about by industrialization and urbanization.

## DEMOCRACY AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

In *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville did not touch upon industrialization and its possible effects on democracy. Haliburton, by contrast, experienced North American industrialization firsthand (or the lack thereof in Nova Scotia), and wrote extensively on its effects on American society. His imperialist anti-democratic and anti-republican rhetoric expressed the fears of an entire colonial elite about the blurring of class lines at a time of rapid economic and technological change. Even if later in his work he voices his admiration for a form of republicanism that would maintain class distinctions and leave to the elites the mission of educating and leading the masses, Haliburton consistently lamented the negative effects of democracy in an industrialized classless world that trapped individuals into a national morass of intellectual mediocrity.

This does not mean that the judge was a nostalgic agrarian. Haliburton was very critical of the lack of industrial development in the Maritime colonies, which he attributed to imperial mismanagement, and praised American entrepreneurial spirit and booming economy. Nonetheless, he feared the social impact of modernization and industrialization in North America because he believed that democracies were woefully unequipped to deal with the reshaping of social relations when transitioning from an agrarian society. Reverend Hopewell explains to Sam the connection between republicanism and democracy:

There never was any thing so true, as that are old sayin, "man made the town, but God made the country," and both bespeak their different architects in terms too plain to be misunderstood. The one is filled with virtue and the other with vice. One is the abode of plenty, and the other of want; one is a ware-duck of nice pure water, and t'other one a cess-pool.<sup>52</sup>

The early decades of the nineteenth century were a rapidly changing world; industrialization was changing the face of cities and the nature of work, while Jacksonian democracy had paved the way for direct political participation for all white men. To Haliburton, the mobs of America's industrial cities were a far cry from the enlightened and independent yeomen of Jefferson's republic. "A republic is only calculated for an enlightened and virtuous people, and folks chiefly in the farmin' line," says Hopewell.<sup>53</sup> The judge decried the

progress and transformations that industrialization brought about, because nefarious social and moral transformations seemed to follow in the footsteps of technological progress. These modern mobs represented to Haliburton a by-product of a dangerous system which placed power in the hands of disorganized masses of self-interested individuals who lacked any stable moral compass and were easily manipulated by demagogues, “Our towns are gettin’ so commercial and factoring, that they will soon generate mobs, Sam, . . . and mobs will introduce disobedience and defiance to laws, and that must end in anarchy and bloodshed.”<sup>54</sup>

That moral compass was necessary because Haliburton viewed humanity as deeply flawed and corruptible. Reverend Hopewell struggles to temper Sam’s enthusiasm for American political arrangements with his pessimistic take on human nature. Hopewell identifies national narcissism as the main flaw of the American character. Americans are “image worshippers,” worshipping at the same time “the golden image” of material success and “the American image. . . . An image of perfection . . . the personification of everything that is great and good—that we set up and admire, and everybody thinks it is an image of himself,” he laments. Nothing can redeem the individual from the new gospel of egotism and materialism birthed by American popular democracy. National narcissism is the new civic religion of the American republic: “Oh! It is humiliatin’, it is degradin’; but we are all brought up to this idolatry from our cradle: we are taught first to worship gold, and then to idolize ourselves,” Hopewell laments in “The Confessions of a Deposed Minister.”<sup>55</sup>

Echoing Susanna Moodie’s distaste for the materialism of the New World, Haliburton states that, once the distinction of classes is dismantled and once moral leaders lose their leading ability, all that remains are the artificial and arbitrary distinctions derived from material possessions. In his historical work *Rule and Misrule of the English in America* (1851), Haliburton explains the link between materialism and democracy: “Where all men are politically, they soon become practically equal. . . . When such is the case, distinction must be sought where it can alone be found—in wealth.”<sup>56</sup> Yet wealth inequality creates divisions among people, and undermines a cohesive community. The countless—and competing—individual pursuits of happiness have a corrosive effect on the cohesiveness of the American social fabric.

Throughout the three series of *The Clockmaker*, Sam pontificates on the advantages of the American system for shrewd individuals: the main source of humor in the adventures of the Yankee peddler are in fact stories about individuals double-crossing one another and pushing at the limits of honesty and decency, from Sam Slick himself, who tricks his customers in buying clocks that don’t always work, to the seller of wooden nutmegs, to the many other tricksters that populate the pages of the three series of *The Clockmaker*.

In the second series, Haliburton moves from stories of individuals to comments on the larger national dynamics. In the sketch “Confessions of a Deposed Minister,” Hopewell articulates this point in an elaborate deconstruction of the flag and the eagle as American national symbols: “It’s a law of nature, Sam, said he, that things that grow too fast, and grow too big, go to decay soon. I am afeard we shall be rotten afore we are ripe.”<sup>57</sup> The reference to growth and decay is developed in two directions. The first hints at the neo-imperial tendencies of the United States, while the second focuses on slavery, as twin manifestations of abuses of power within and without the boundaries of the American nation.

On the one hand, the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny that legitimized American growth as a nation is undermined by the image of the American eagle as a bird of prey, attacking those unable to defend themselves: “Our eagle that we chose for our emblem is a fine bird, and an aspirin’ bird; but he is a bird of prey, Sam, too fond of blood—too prone to pounce and on the weak and unwary. I don’t like to see him hoverin’ over Texas and Canada so much.”<sup>58</sup>

On the other hand, slavery represented the most visible internal contradiction at the heart of a republic predicated on liberty and equality. Its existence undermines American claims to equality, and Haliburton lampoons the patriotic pathos of the Yankees whenever he has a chance. Thus, in the second series of *The Clockmaker*, the fourth of July is described as “[a] great day, a great national festival; a splendid spectacle; fifteen millions of free men and three million of slaves acelebratin’ the birth-day of liberty; rejoicin’ in their strength, their freedom and enlightenment.”<sup>59</sup> The incongruity of the image reveals the American rhetoric of equality for all to be a sham, and hints at the deep divisions within American society around the issue of slavery. Earlier in the sketch, Reverend Hopewell exposes the tenuousness of any association between the American flag and the idea of freedom in the context of an internally divided the United States: “Our flag that you talk of is a good flag; but them stripes, are they prophetic or accidental? Are they the stripes of the slaves risin’ up to humble our pride by exhibitin’ their shame on our banner? Or what do they mean?”<sup>60</sup>

Unlike Alexis de Tocqueville, the judge believed that equality was a fallacy, a profoundly unnatural state. Virtually all the protagonists in *The Clockmaker* turn, sooner or later, to examples derived from nature to prove their point. The United States is presented as a profoundly *unequal* society masquerading as an egalitarian one. In “The Body without a Head,” Sam cynically explains to the Squire the truth about American democracy: “In our business relations we bely our political principles—we say every man is equal in the Union, and should have an equal vote and voice in the Government,” yet in the business world “every man’s vote is regilated by his share and proportion of stock; and if it warn’t so, no man would take hold on these things at all.” Family

relations and race relations all serve to support Sam's point, which is that "it would not do for all to be equal there." Inequality reigns even in heaven; the universe "is ruled by one Supreme Power," and the Angels have no special voice in its government.<sup>61</sup>

### THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF AMERICAN REPUBLICANISM

Haliburton's teleological view of political history is informed by a quasi-Darwinian process whereby the fittest political system is bound to survive through natural selection. Using multiple mouthpieces—from Sam, to Hopewell, to Everett—the judge consistently argues for constitutional monarchy as the most suitable form of government for the New World, and even for the United States: a monarchical society, he contends, would always preserve in its institutions the hierarchical principle which governs all things in nature.

In "A Body without a Head," Hopewell prophesizes a future of mixed government throughout the continent. The monarchy "will come sooner or later" even to the United States, although with some variations required by the difference in environment: "Now the Newtown pippin when transplanted to England don't produce such fruit as it does in Long Island, and English fruits don't preserve their flavor here neither; allowance must be made for difference of soil and climate. . . . So it is, said he, with constitutions." As American society matures, a hybrid system would emerge, presumably still organized around the Crown. Hopewell concludes: "As they lose their strength of executive, they will verge to republicanism, and as we invigorate the form of government . . . we shall tend toward a monarchy. If this comes on gradually, like the changes in the human body by the approach of old age, so much the better."<sup>62</sup> Since inequality is a natural state, time will provide naturally the 'cure' to American unruly egalitarianism, transforming its political system into a constitutional monarchy.

The American federation in the 1830s was a system in which all parts were believed to be equal: no hierarchy, no center, no head, so to speak.<sup>63</sup> Not surprisingly, this model, with its emphasis on decentralization—but also with its endless squabbles over state rights—was viewed by Haliburton as a cautionary example of centrifugal forces gnawing at the fabric of any republican society, undermining its unity and cohesiveness. At the end of the sketch, Sam shoots a partridge in the head in the middle of the conversation, and the Squire draws a parallel between the quivering decapitated body and the decentralized American government. The metaphor of the headless body of the partridge, which gives the sketch its title, is intended to make the point

that the egalitarian, federative model of the American republic invites chaos on a political level, just as the blurring of class lines does on a social level.

To Haliburton, a monarchical Nova Scotia would have been the prototype of an ideal model of governing, where the conservative ideas of Edmund Burke would meet the Yankee-inspired genius of frontier practicality and industry, but keep the latter's mobocratic impulses in check. The first two series of *The Clockmaker* articulate a defense of the British model. Although by the time he published *Rule and Misrule of the English in America* in 1851, Haliburton seems to have resigned himself to the inevitability of democracy, he remained unmoved in his beliefs. His 1851 defense of monarchy alternates religious rhythms with lyrical effusions:

The effect of monarchy on the state of society is directly the reverse of republicanism; instead of depressing, it elevates its tone. It adds grace to beauty, polish to wit, ease to conversation, and elegance to letters; it adorns all that it touches. . . . It has no republican pride, that disdains to acknowledge a superior; . . . it gives place and honor to rank and virtue, and countenance and encouragement to timid or retiring merit. It is unselfish, it yields to all to captivate all. It has no argument, no politics, no schisms. Its very mirth is gentle. It is gay, but not boisterous; playful, but not personal; scrupulous, but not captious.<sup>64</sup>

This highly idealized take on the British monarchy no longer excludes its compatibility with democracy: "It has its own laws as well as the state, and rigidly enforces them; but it is no leveler . . . it limits and defines with precise accuracy and delicate shading the various minute differences that always exist in society, and assigns with equal skill and impartiality, to rank reputation, and talent, their respective places."<sup>65</sup> In other words, by 1851, Haliburton was contending that some degree of equality can exist within a hierarchical system, but still sought to confine it within the boundaries of distinct social classes. The mobility of individuals beyond their rank in life would be limited, thus preserving what Haliburton saw as an orderly society. British society would remain hierarchical, yet be seamlessly integrated, led by institutions that reproduce social divisions, with the Crown at the top. The result would be a series of concentric social circles "of various extent and circumference, in proportion as they become more and more distant from the center; they touch closely on each other, and yet leave room for independent action; they are nearly assimilated, and yet sufficiently distinct to admit of a selection that best suits the income or the taste of those who prefer to associate on a footing of perfect equality."<sup>66</sup>

In its concern with the cultural and social consequences of reform, Haliburton's political satire posits institutions as crucial agents in shaping state formation, as the means by which ideas get implemented in society



and social structures are protected from change.<sup>67</sup> To the judge, the British Parliament and the Constitution that represented it in the colonies were the only legitimate sources of power, protecting a political system that reflected British ideas about class. Therefore, their institutional manifestations in British North America, including the unelected legislative and executive councils, needed to remain unchanged.<sup>68</sup> Failing to do so was bound to open the floodgates to ideas about equality, transform the face of colonial society, and weaken its imperial allegiances. Haliburton's organic view of society corresponded to the Tory conservatism which was already on the wane in Europe at the time when he was writing. It relied on a fantasy of various social classes harmoniously interacting with one another, and selflessly contributing to the stability of the whole, a fantasy that was not to survive the liberal era that shaped the political and cultural arrangements of the Confederation.

## CONCLUSION

Haliburton's and Moodie's writings paint an image of the United States as a fundamentally egalitarian space, whose proximity could and did influence social and political mores in British North America. Despite regional differences, British North America emerges from their writing as a contact zone where national allegiances could be determined by one's social class as much as they were by one's ethnicity or religion. Both authors acknowledge the age's liberal enthusiasm for individual rights and freedoms, but fear the impact that the spread of American democratic ideals on the social fabric of colonial society in an age of rapid industrialization and mass emigration. Moodie's observations minutely chronicle the big and small ways in which ideas about equality transform social interactions and popular attitudes in Upper Canada. Britain remains the center of her affective geography, and the writer strives to demonstrate that class distinctions can provide the necessary social buffers to the appeal of American democratic models: a hierarchical system, with the Crown at the top, would guarantee both social stability and an enduring imperial connection. An egalitarian, democratic Canada, could very easily abandon its loyalty to the Crown, become an independent republic, or be absorbed into the United States, collapsing forever in New World materialism where matter rules over mind. Haliburton had a more sophisticated understanding of political institutions which, to him, were designed to fulfill the same function as Moodie's social norms and class distinctions, but his conservative position is more extreme. His sketches urge Nova Scotian readers to reject the introduction of electoral councils and any other colonial reforms because they would unleash the mobocratic potential of a politically empowered populace and potentially lead to absorption into the United

States. As we will see in the following chapter, Haliburton turns to the institution of slavery and mobilizes his racist discourse in order to shock his readers into accepting that American ideas about human equality were unnatural.

## NOTES

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840; rept., New York: Library of America, 2004), 886.

2. See Paul Giles's analysis of the image of the United States in English literature in *Atlantic Republic: The American Tradition in English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

3. Seymour Martin Lipset, "Historical Traditions and National Characteristics: A Comparative Analysis of Canada and the United States," *Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* 11, no. 2 (1986): 113–55, 3.

4. David M. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 28.

5. Anna Johnston, "Our Antipodes: Settler Colonial Environments in Colonial Travel Writing," in *Victorian Environments: Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth Century Writing and Culture*, G. Moore and M. J. Smith, eds. (London: Palgrave Macmillan), 57–75, 58.

6. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2007), 15.

7. Jane Ajzenstat, *Once and Future Canadian Democracy: An Essay in Political Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2003), 42.

8. David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xix.

9. Nancy Christie, "'The Plague of Servants': Female Household Labour and the Making of Classes in Upper Canada," in *Transatlantic Subjects: Ideas, Institutions, and Social Experience in Post-Revolutionary British North America*, Nancy Christie, ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 83–132, 91.

10. See Jeffrey McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791–1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 30–38.

11. Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush* (Toronto: Hunter & Co., 1871), 8. All further references will be to this edition.

12. Susanna Moodie, *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush* (London: Bentley, 1853), 381, [https://archive.org/details/cihm\\_43989/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/cihm_43989/mode/2up), accessed July 2020. All further references will be to this edition.

13. Moodie, *Life*, 57.

14. Moodie, *Life*, 217.

15. Susanna Moodie, "Letter 51," in *Susanna Moodie: Letters of a Lifetime*, eds. Carl Ballstadt, Elisabeth Hopkins, and Michael Peterman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 137–40, 93.

16. Moodie, *Life*, 232.
17. The incident, albeit minor, led to the international law principle of self-defense known as the Caroline Test, in place since the nineteenth century and reaffirmed during the Nuremberg Trials.
18. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 454.
19. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 45.
20. Moodie, *Life*, 383.
21. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 45.
22. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 23.
23. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 36.
24. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 46.
25. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 240.
26. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 119.
27. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 127.
28. The ethos of improvement that characterized colonial policies in the nineteenth century manifested itself in the form of hosts of voluntary organizations targeting various colonial problems, from the need for a modern agriculture, to that for a strong temperance movement. On the discourse of improvement in a South American context, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). For improvement in Nova Scotia, see Daniel Samson, *The Spirit of Industry and Improvement* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).
29. See Billy D. Walker, "The Local Property Tax for Public Schools: Some Historical Perspectives," in *Journal of Education Finance* 9, no. 3 (1984): 265–88.
30. Ann Margaret Doyle, *Social Equality in Education: France and England, 1789–1939* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), chapter 4, [https://doi-org.proxy.lib.miamioh.edu/10.1007/978-3-319-94721-1\\_5](https://doi-org.proxy.lib.miamioh.edu/10.1007/978-3-319-94721-1_5).
31. Richard A. Jarrell, *Educating the Neglected Majority: The Struggle for Agricultural and Technical Education in Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), xi.
32. Jarrell, 6.
33. Susan E. Houston, "Politics, Schools, and Social Change in Upper Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* 53, no. 3 (1972): 249–71.
34. Moodie, *Life*, 76.
35. Moodie, *Life*, 73.
36. Moodie, *Life*, 76.
37. Moodie, *Life*, 76.
38. Moodie, *Life*, 57.
39. Moodie, *Life*, 82.
40. Moodie, *Life*, 83.
41. Moodie, *Life*, 78.
42. Houston, 253.
43. Sandra Gustafson, "Histories of Democracy and Empire," in *American Quarterly* 59, 1 (2007): 107–33, 114.

44. Terry Bouton, *Taming Democracy: "The People," The Founders and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4.
45. Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 8–9.
46. Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double Edged Sword* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 24.
47. Haliburton, *Nature and Human Nature* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1859), 338.
48. For a comparison of Haliburton's and Tocqueville's views on democracy, see Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy, "The Political Other in Nineteenth-Century British North America: The Satire of Thomas Chandler Haliburton," *Early American Studies* 7, no. 1 (2009): 205–34.
49. Haliburton, *Rule and Misrule of the English in America* (New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1851), 366, <https://archive.org/details/rulemisruleofeng02hali>, accessed July 2020.
50. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 121.
51. Richard A. Davies, *Inventing Sam Slick* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 76.
52. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 121.
53. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 123.
54. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 124.
55. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 122.
56. Haliburton, *Rule and Misrule*, 366.
57. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 120.
58. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 120.
59. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 165.
60. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 120.
61. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 140.
62. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 140.
63. David E. Smith, *The Republican Option in Canada*, 116.
64. Haliburton, *Rule and Misrule*, 366.
65. Haliburton, *Rule and Misrule*, 366.
66. Haliburton, *Rule and Misrule*, 366.
67. Elizabeth Mancke, "Early Modern Imperial Governance and the Origins of Canadian Political Culture," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 32:1 (1999): 3–20.
68. Ducharme, 191.



## *Chapter Five*

# Whiteness

As participants in a colonial and international book market, Susanna Moodie, Thomas C. Haliburton, and John Richardson were members of the educated transatlantic elites who wrote not only for local readers, but also—if not mostly—for Anglophone genteel audiences far beyond British North America.<sup>1</sup> These authors' worldviews were unavoidable shaped by their class, their gender, and above all, by their race. Their complex and often confusing engagement with whiteness reflects this positionality. In the 1830s and 1840s, ideas about 'race' were in flux; prior to the rise of scientific racism, the early modern scientific paradigm of natural history explained human variation in relationship to the natural environment, and legitimized the unequal balance of power across the Americas between the settler communities and their metropolitan homes.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, the authenticity of the Europeans born in the colonies was allegedly corrupted by local cultures and environments; the colonials became "Creoles," a term which in recent years literary historians have been increasingly using detached of its original racial connotations in order to capture this shared trans-American mode of belonging across different political regimes throughout the hemisphere.<sup>3</sup> As Lorenzo Veracini pointed out, in such settler contexts, whiteness functioned as a vital tool for asserting sameness with the metropolis and superiority over the *Indigenes*.<sup>4</sup>

As new scientific theories in the nineteenth century turned races into immutable categories, whiteness acquired an increasing significance in North America. This relevance was inflected differently in a national versus an imperial context. While "early America" designates a distinct American nation-state in the process of inventing its nationality, nineteenth-century "early Canada" was a colonial compound, loosely held together by a sense of Britishness and commitment to the British Empire. Kariann Yokota pointed out that, in the United States, whiteness allowed American creoles to assert a postrevolutionary European lineage that "linked white Americans to the civility that had been the property of Europeans."<sup>5</sup> Race functioned therefore as

a powerful ideological tool that gave legitimacy to U.S. neocolonial policies toward other groups in the Americas: by 1856, whiteness had become a condition for full citizenship of all American males, and all states adopted some form of universal white manhood suffrage.

British North America experienced a similar, but less radical shift toward whiteness in the early decades of the nineteenth century. There, the continued symbolic membership in the Empire offered colonial elites an alternative path to Britishness that did not rely explicitly on whiteness. Instead, racial tolerance became a litmus test for British civility. Despite their own global colonial ventures, Britons everywhere liked to believe that the Natives in the Canadian colonies enjoyed a far superior fate to those in the United States. Some imperial policies seemed to validate this perception: Britain ended global slave trade in 1807; in 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act bought off the slave owners across the empire, theoretically ending slavery, although the practice continued in modified form in the Caribbean until at least 1848<sup>6</sup> and British slave owners were immediately compensated by the government for the loss of their property through a public debt that the British public only finished paying off in 2015.<sup>7</sup> But in the first half of the nineteenth century London was the center of a global anti-slavery movement; British North America was to remain the destination of Blacks fleeing slavery through the Underground Railroad from the end of the eighteenth century and until the American Civil War.

Overall, Britishness was believed to embody a unique mix of liberty and order favorably contrasted to the American *laissez-faire* capitalism and unbridled popular democracy, which opened the path to abuse of vulnerable minorities at the hand of the white majority. Across the empire, references to American slavery and to American abusive policies toward the Natives served to showcase the superiority of British ideals and institutions over those of the former colonies. In British North America, U.S. proximity and influence on popular mores made it essential to identify clear cultural and institutional differences between the two political spaces when it came to race.

Native policies served this purpose beautifully. First, as we saw in chapter 2, underpinning all colonial policies in British North America was the idea of an orderly frontier; legality in all settlement matters played a symbolic and ideological role in distinguishing the British Empire from the United States. Second, colonial political culture was not philosophically opposed to an active government role in economic development and social policy. While in the United States the Indian question became yet another contentious point in the endless debates over states' rights and the limits of federal authority, in British North America the role of the government in colonial settlement or land policies was never seriously challenged by the population. And lastly, given the previously cooperative relationship between the colonial societies

in British North America and the Natives in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their military alliances during the War of 1812, and the comparatively lower flow of immigration, the region saw no strong popular anti-Indian sentiment that could lead to a systematic program of violent removal of Native communities.

This is not to say that British North American race policies were enlightened. How Britons in and outside British North America perceived and described their own position vis-à-vis other races needs to be examined alongside the age's historical realities, which included racism and widespread discrimination and genocide conducted against non-whites across the empire; these realities are being increasingly documented by British and Canadian studies scholars in recent years.<sup>8</sup> Under the rhetorical guise of Indian welfare, both in Canada and the Maritimes, Native rights and independence were systematically trampled and Native cultural survival relentlessly threatened by imperial and federal assimilationist's so-called 'civilizing' programs throughout the nineteenth century. As immigration from Europe to the East Coast of the United States accelerated, and as settlers spilled into the West, popular demand for Native land increased, which translated in a vocal popular support for the sweeping and brutal removal programs that punctuated the post-Jacksonian years. British North America did not develop a comparable Indian removal policy, but, starting with the 1830s, it too pursued a set of policies of protection, separation, and civilization designed to Christianize the Natives and assimilate them into Canadian society, against their will if necessary.<sup>9</sup> The true impact of the horrors of these residential schools is recently beginning to be revealed, as national conversations in Canada have started to engage the extent and impact of these policies.<sup>10</sup> In short, although with different degrees of brutality, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the two Anglo-creole governments in North America engaged in parallel relocation and reeducation programs which profoundly altered the nature of the Native communities, curtailed their agency and freedoms, and sometimes wiped out entire communities. Yet, these decisions were emplotted in political and cultural discourses that reflected different engagements with whiteness and civility from within the two concurrent political regimes.

### THE NATIVES AS "GENTLEMEN OF NATURE" IN *ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH*

Robert Young points out that early-nineteenth-century British attitudes to race were informed by the "Enlightenment emphasis on the human race . . . allied to an Evangelical Christian belief in the family of man."<sup>11</sup> These beliefs were compounded by the general appeal that the biblically-sanctioned theory



of monogenesis exerted on racial theorists and the public at large, and were politicized by the various religious groups involved in the abolitionist movement. British imperial expansion in the Victorian era, and the subsequent consolidation of imperial hierarchies globally, coincided with a shift toward a more racialized worldview. This turning point was marked by three events that were decoded by the British public primarily in racial terms: the 1857 Indian Mutiny, the American Civil War (1861–1865), and the Jamaican Insurrection of 1865.<sup>12</sup> Moodie's writings chronologically situate her on the cusp of this change; her narrativization of race relations in a Canadian context reflects the gradual shift toward new ideas about whiteness when discussing American political and social realities, alongside the parallel survival of older racial ideological framings shaped by Christianity. American mores and American practices toward racial Others are an intrinsic part of Moodie's portrayal of Canadian race relations, whether her focus is on slavery, on education as equality of opportunity, or when she enthuses over the gentility of the Natives she encounters in the Canadian bush.

Moodie devotes more time writing about American abuses against the Natives than about American slavery, although both themes can be encountered in her books. In fact, even before her immigration to Canada, the young Susanna Strickland was actively involved in the London Anti-Slavery Society that occasionally offered shelters and jobs to Caribbean slaves seeking their freedom in London. Quite surprising, given this abolitionist pedigree, there is a scarcity of Black characters in her Canadian texts. The most prominent such character in Moodie's sketches is Mollineaux, an independent farmer in the bush, who occasionally does business with her family and is repeatedly mentioned in *Roughing It*. This can be partly explained by the demographic realities of the time; by the Confederation about half of the Black population in British North America was concentrated in Nova Scotia, around the Halifax area, rather than in Ontario.<sup>13</sup>

Both *Roughing It* and *Life in the Clearings* acknowledge the gap between the legal arrangements and the cultural practices of the colony when it came to race; Canada emerges as a space where Blacks could *in principle* enjoy political and economic freedom, but were not protected from the racism of society at large. The relative economic independence of people like Mollineaux is framed by references to their uneasy place in the racial hierarchy of the colony; chapter 11 in *Roughing It* mentions that the marriage of another free Black man to an Irish girl led the local community to organize a "charivari," a social ritual explained to Moodie by her interlocutor as a popular way that marked and punished deviations from cultural norms. Yet, when intended to punish the interracial marriage, the charivari effectively turns from harmless collective fun into full-fledged lynching, a change which Moodie narrates without any commentary on its larger implications for Canadian society:

Some of the young gentlemen in the town joined in the frolic. They went so far as to enter the house, drag the poor n----- from his bed, and in spite of his shrieks for mercy, they hurried him out into the cold air . . . and almost naked as he was, rode him upon a rail, and so ill-treated him that he died under their hands. . . . The ringleaders escaped across the lake to the other side; and those who remained could not be sufficiently identified to bring them to trial.<sup>14</sup>

By labelling this lynching as a mere “frolic,” Moodie avoids addressing the issue of responsibility for the outcome of the charivari onto the Canadian community. Sidestepping this inconsistency, she continues with an excoriating account of the racism of an American interlocutor, who confesses her deep dislike of Mollineaux and all Black people because she believes that “they are the children of the devil. God never condescended to make a n-----.”<sup>15</sup> The larger focus of Moodie’s discussion of the incident remains Mrs. D—’s false Christian pretenses and misinterpretation of the Bible to justify her racism. Nevertheless, when taken together, the two parts of Moodie’s charivari story demonstrate that similar attitudes toward Blacks spanned the political borders that separated slave-holding America from free Canada. The unstated racism of the Canadian population, which led to the death of an innocent man, may not have been institutionally encoded in the laws of the province; as the story shows, it was in no way less pernicious than Mrs. D—’s open discrimination.

By contrast to these cursory references to Black Canadians, Moodie devotes a significant amount of space describing her interactions with the Natives during her time in the backwoods. In *Roughing It*, the Natives function as the racial counterpart to the political and cultural Others represented by the lower-class Yankee settlers whom Moodie judges “as ignorant as savages, without their courtesy and kindness.”<sup>16</sup> Social hierarchies and social rituals are at the crux of her portrayal of the Natives. In itself, a comparison of class with race was not unusual in Victorian England; Robert Young reflects on the connection between whiteness and class: “As the defining feature of whiteness, civilization merged with its quasi-synonym ‘cultivation,’” thus widening the ideological gap separating the white from the other races. As a result, “culture became the defining feature of the upper and middle classes. It . . . marked out their differences from the working classes—and promoted the science of eugenics.”<sup>17</sup> This comparison went both ways, in a circular motion that validated both racial and class inferiority: one of the reasons why the Natives in the empire were considered to be collectively inferior was because they were seen “as the overseas equivalent of the ‘undeserving poor’ in Britain.”<sup>18</sup> The masses crowded in the industrial cities of the north became the equivalent of the dark continents overseas; their uneducated workers were racialized and perceived as hard to understand, unruly, and dangerous.

Whiteness for Moodie is fragmented along the lines of civility and of national belonging. As chapter 3 showed, Moodie's desire to maintain social hierarchies in the colonies informs her othering of the Irish and Scotch lower-class immigrants whom she describes as dangerously Yankeeified the moment they touch Canadian soil and become contaminated with republican and democratic ideas. By contrast, Moodie inscribes the Natives in the imagined geography of North America as co-participants in a British imperial community, unlike the Yankeeified white settlers. Metaphorically, Moodie grants both groups an equivalent, even consistently reaffirming the cultural and moral superiority of the former over the latter: the Natives are culturally sympathetic to British hierarchies, which makes them 'more British' than the white settlers on the frontier whose loyalty is uncertain.

In an overt challenge to the romanticized mode of representation of the American Indian in British culture, Moodie frames her portrayal of her new neighbors as a realistic picture: "It was not long before we received visits from the Indians, a people whose beauty, talents, and good qualities have been somewhat overrated, and invested with a poetical interest which they scarcely deserve."<sup>19</sup> As Carole Gerson noted, this self-conscious emphasis on a realistic rather than idealized portrait of the Native indicates the extent to which Moodie's engagement with her "original cultural context, [her] humanitarian ideals contained within a framework of social class based on 'education,' meaning good manners as well as academic knowledge" were also simultaneously an engagement with the European stereotype of the Noble Savage.<sup>20</sup> The resulting gallery of Native characters that inhabit the pages of *Roughing It* is profoundly ordinary and touching in their flaws, tragedies, and interests. The reader is introduced to the "old chief, Peter Nogan," fascinated with Moodie's Japanese sword; to his son, John Nogan, and his dog Sancho; to Mrs. Tom Nogan, the homely, yet good natured sister-in-law of Old Peter; to Jacob, who wants Moodie to paint his portrait; to old Snow-storm, "rather too fond of the whiskey-bottle";<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Iron, whose son dies; Susan Moore, the little orphaned girl, and the various members of the Muskrat family.

For Moodie it is not clothes or material goods, but behavior and manners that function as signifiers of civility. After dispensing with the Eurocentric myths of the noble primitives, she turns to the language of religion to point out the Natives' shared humanity. "Their honesty and love of truth are the finest traits in characters otherwise dark and unlovely. But these are two God-like attributes, and from them spring all that is generous and ennobling about them."<sup>22</sup> The moral attributes that Moodie consistently recognizes in her Native friends automatically acknowledge a kinship with them which she fails to identify either in the Yankee settlers or in the Irish immigrants. Reciprocity and equivalence are the main principles under which the writer recounts her interactions with her Indian friends. They exchange what

amounts to social visits: Moodie paints for them, presents them a map of Canada, tells them the story of her Japanese sword, and John Moodie plays the flute for them. In return, the Natives bring fruit for the children, model for her portraits, offer baskets, make conversation, and share with the Moodies their concerns and personal dramas. Most significantly, the writer invites them to her table, which is never the case with her servants. This gesture validates her view of the Indians as equals, but confirms her previous position that class trumps race, although not for everyone; we learn that, when the Moodies invite their Indian friends to eat with them, their servants “viewed them with the same horror that Mrs. D— did black Mollineaux [*sic*].”<sup>23</sup>

Exchange is not limited to commodities, or to emotions. The plots of the various anecdotes in the chapter “The Wilderness and Our Indian Friends” revolve around the mutual appropriation of objects and customs, from the exchange of gifts to the exchange of skills. The Moodies lay no personal claim to ‘civilizing’ the Natives in any way. If anything, the relationship is tilted in the Moodies’ favor, because they acquire from their Indian neighbors many skills that are vital to surviving in the woods: John Dunbar learns how to make cherry-wood paddles, Susanna learns how to cook fish and how to use medicinal herbs. Most importantly, the Natives provide the Moodies with a support network that crosses racial lines. The reciprocity of their relations included pure acts of charity; during hard times, “when dearer friends looked coldly” upon the impoverished Moodies, they knew they could still rely on the Natives.<sup>24</sup> The writer remembers: “For many a good meal I have been indebted to them, when I had nothing to give in return, when the pantry was empty, and ‘the hearth-stone growing cold,’ as they term the want of provisions to cook at it.”<sup>25</sup>

The trope of intrusion that dominates Moodie’s discursive construction of the Yankee settlers in the bush and her discussions of borrowing analyzed in chapter 4, is conspicuously missing from her accounts of the Indians, although her anecdotes include many equivalent instances of transgression of the domestic space. Yet, in the case of the Natives, Moodie never perceives the physical act of entering her house as threatening. Their “stealthy entrance” is described in quasi-ethnographic style, as a cultural particularity—“they all walk like cats”;<sup>26</sup> when she hears the sound of “a moccasined foot” on the floor of her cabin, late at night, Moodie is neither frightened, nor annoyed. “I raised my head, for I was too much accustomed to their sudden appearance at any hour to feel alarmed.”<sup>27</sup> Clearly, rather than one-sided preludes to abuse, these spatial intrusions are merely visits among friends and are not paralleled by class transgressions, as in the case of the Yankee settlers.

Far from the admiration that Haliburton conveyed for the resourceful, if cunning and dishonest Sam Slick as representative of all Americans, Moodie presents the honesty of her “Indian friends” as a morally superior, and

therefore preferable, approach to social relations in the bush. She and the Natives are often on the same side in the struggle against various ruthless Yankee settlers who “think it no crime to overreach a red-skin,” a symbolic opposition that appears elsewhere in her writing, and which continues the trend of viewing all Americans as potential aggressors.<sup>28</sup> While the Yankee settlers keep their word only as long as it suits them, the Natives “invariably act with the strictest honour towards those who never attempt to impose upon them. . . . The genuine Indian never utters a falsehood, and never employs flattery . . . in his communications with the whites.”<sup>29</sup> Any character flaws of the Natives are explained through both the “vicinity of European settlers” and the “intercourse to with the lowest order of civilized men (who in point of moral worth are greatly his inferiors).”<sup>30</sup> The “cunning which they display in their contests with their enemies, in their hunting, and in making bargains with the whites (who are too apt to impose on their ignorance)” is merely a form of self-defense which springs “more from a law of necessity, forced upon them by their isolated position and precarious mode of life, than from any innate wish to betray.”<sup>31</sup> The frontier environment and their interactions with the unscrupulous Euro-settlers are changing Native ways.

David Cannadine showed that, historically, a profoundly hierarchical worldview influenced British strategies in dealing with the Natives in the empire at large. Native societies had hierarchical structures and a gradation of status that could be translated into terms familiar to those in the British world; such societies were perceived as familiar, easier to understand, and therefore easier to make alliances with. Cannadine argues that, in the larger colonial sphere, Native American societies of this kind existed in a theoretical relationship of equivalence within the empire, albeit the real balance of power was often unequal.<sup>32</sup> The hierarchical, tradition-loving society of the Natives with whom Moodie interacts gives her access into a familiar environment, governed by values similar to her own. The American Indians she encounters keep their customs and rules of conduct and viewed them as permanent, not in flux, which is less threatening to the writer than the chaotic fluidity and the lawlessness of the Canadian frontier. The Indians “never forget any little act of kindness,”<sup>33</sup> which again sets them apart from the proud Yankees who, by adopting the “borrowing system” manage to exploit their neighbors without even owing them “the debt of gratitude.”<sup>34</sup> As Carol Gerson wrote: “To a gentlewoman like Moodie, Indians . . . can be perceived as less Other than the lower classes of Great Britain, especially the Irish.”<sup>35</sup> By contrast, the Yankees, despite their European ancestry (or precisely because of it), are more culturally alien to Moodie than the Natives.

As sites of colonial meaning-making, Moodie’s writings simultaneously articulate both the settler-colonial desire to erase and replace the Native by the new true heir to the land, and the yearning to belong to the new space.

Moodie remains blind to the role of European immigrants like herself in the plight of the Natives on the continent, but is keenly aware of abuses that the Yankee settlers on the frontier commit toward the Natives, and consistently marks the former as the intruders. The process of belonging to the new space is centered around her own identification with the Natives and the simultaneous rejection of the low-class, republican and democratic frontier communities—whether Yankees or Yankeeified. Moodie, and implicitly, other genteel British settlers like herself, become symbolically indigenized in the triangulating dance between Britain, North America, and the colonies, where the genteel settlers emerge as the only worthy heirs of both British civility and Native authenticity on the continent.

### WHITENESS AS COLONIAL LEGACY: RICHARDSON'S FRONTIER FICTION

Although often described as an epigone and imitator of Fenimore Cooper, John Richardson can be better understood as a translator of Cooper's literary model into a cultural paradigm informed by specific transatlantic and hemispheric power relations. On the one hand, his historical novels contrast the imperial British discourse of racial tolerance and British military alliances with the Natives in the War of 1812 with the brutality of American policies toward the Natives, in order to demonstrate American differences from the Canadian colonies. On the other hand, Richardson's critical attitude toward all European military and commercial interventions in the New World highlights the links of both creole settler colonialisms to European imperialism and its investment in whiteness.

John Richardson was a multicultural product of the first British Empire in North America, part-Ottawa through his mother, part-Scottish through his father. In the War of 1812, he fought alongside Tecumseh against the United States; then, as a professional soldier, he spent the next twenty-three years sailing the seas of the British Empire. During his two-year stint in Barbados and Grenada he was appalled by the realities of race relations there and wrote *Recollections of the West Indies*. The essay was first published in London in the early 1820s, then serialized in Canada in *The New Era* journal (1841–1842) and denounces in no uncertain terms the brutality of British slavery in the Caribbean.<sup>36</sup> However, Richardson was also able to easily manipulate racial literary conventions when trying his pen at frontier fiction for the popular market.

Richardson's first New World novel, *Wacousta*, came out in London, at a time when the British literary market was clamoring for frontier fiction. Stories about America and its Natives already had a history in British

literature; Indians were cycled and recycled as text from New York to London and back by white authors at the same time that settlement was physically displacing them in North America. Throughout the British Empire, this was a time of feverish administrative experimentation, as policies toward Native populations were transformed by the new political and demographic needs of the colonies. In the Canadian colonies, such policies were also shaped by the example of the United States and the rise of scientific racism, discussed earlier. The resulting arrangements responded to the specifics of colonial and American political cultures, respectively.<sup>37</sup> Richardson's historical novels dramatize the tension between Europeanness and indigeneity as a characteristic of settler culture, but complicates it by emphasizing its continental dimension. Like in Moodie's case, in Richardson's historical fiction, Canadian identity is triangulated twice: once between British culture and the indigeneity promised by the New World; and a second time, between the two political communities represented by Britain and the United States. Whiteness represents the point where the two intersect and partially overlap, and the point where the limits of national civility—British, Canadian, and American—are most clearly marked.

Richardson's writings highlight national variations in attitudes toward race, as much as they silently acknowledge continental similarities. In his foundational loyalist diptych formed of *Wacousta* (1832) and *The Canadian Brothers* (1840), whiteness is fragmented along national lines. The only character that appears in both books is a faithful Black servant, Sambo, whose reassuring loyalty to the Grantham brothers serves to bolster the assumptions of white civility of the Canadians. He represents Richardson's only reference to Blackness in Early America in these two texts.<sup>38</sup> Sambo's character does not threaten Anglo-creole whiteness, but rather problematizes it. On the one hand, his longstanding relationship to the (Canadian) Grantham family validates the existence of two sets of creole values, and punctuates the transition from the colonial stage to the national stage in the history of the continent. On the other hand, as the only witness to events in both novels, Sambo stands for the untold story of Black slavery and servitude in North America. His engagement with both sets of characters, Canadian and American, speaks to the shared cultural attitudes toward Blackness that span political borders and which are developed in Matilda's story: she asks Gerald to murder her former fiancé because the latter has falsely accused her of sexual relations with a slave, an accusation whose scandalous nature is never questioned in the novel, and is assumed to be accepted as such by American and Canadian characters alike.

Richardson's approach to whiteness and belonging is more complex when he is dealing with the Natives. If Moodie racializes the Yankeeified settlers—Irish and Americans—based on their behavior, in Richardson's

frontier fiction, power translates as whiteness, which makes the latter more flexible. In *Wacousta*, the French Canadians occupy the same position vis-à-vis the British characters as Pontiac's warriors. The introduction to the first edition explains the alliance between French Canadians and Natives after the British conquest of Quebec, because then "the cause of the Indians, and that of Canadians, became . . . identified as one."<sup>39</sup> In other words, the shared experience of colonization blurs racial differences between the two groups. The reader is told that French-Canadian resentment toward their British occupiers "eventually died away under the mild influence of a government that preserved to them the exercise of all their customary privileges" and that, "as the Canadians have felt and acknowledged the beneficent effects arising from a change of rulers, so have the Indian tribes been gradually weaned from their first fierce principle of hostility."<sup>40</sup>

As Edward Watts has shown, the racialization of the French colonial world in the American literary imagination was already linked to France's demise as a continental power in the Americas, and it fueled an Anglo-Protestant exceptionalist narrative. American writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century imagined the North American French as "somehow less than white," lazy, and too prone to indiscriminate *métissage* with the Natives, too vulnerable to the appeal of Indigenous lifestyles.<sup>41</sup> In *Wacousta*, "going Native" involves a multistage transformation that includes Frenchness, as epitomized by Wacousta's own metamorphosis from British officer into Indian chief across the narrative arch of the novel. Joining the French army is the first step in Morton's transformation; as Wacousta, even his body morphs into a new "present gigantic stature" and his complexion acquires "the swarthy hue of the savage."<sup>42</sup> Yet his indigenization ends in evil, and is paralleled by the literal and symbolic loss of whiteness which anticipates the protagonist's ultimate defeat by the forces of the garrison. When Wacousta abandons his whiteness, he also rejects his European heritage: he abandons his Britishness, forgets his Cornish background and Scottish experience, assumes a French identity and then a Native identity. All these are presented as stages in his Kurtzian descent into the unstructured space of the New World. In short, Richardson's racialization of the French Canadians does not eliminate them as actors in his fictional history of the Canadas. They are placed on the same level of agency with the Natives, but remain subsumed to the larger imperial community. A loss of power translates into a loss of whiteness for the French Canadians.

Settler indigeneity is predicated on knowledge of the land *and* on alliance with the Native peoples. It grants Canadian-born characters an advantage over the British, and distinguishes them from the American characters that invariably refer to the Natives as savages and enemies. The plots of all Richardson's historical novels, whether the well-known *Wacousta* and



*The Canadian Brothers*, or those of his later novels *Hardscrabble* (1850), *Wau-nan-gee* (1851) and *Westbrook, the Outlaw* (1851), build upon historical realities: the concessions and changes in policies that the British made to the Native tribes in response to the Pontiac Wars in the eighteenth century for *Wacousta*, and the various episodes of the War of 1812, for the others. In *Hardscrabble* and *Wau-nan-gee*, the borders of whiteness are fluid, and the military alliances between whites and Natives do not serve to distinguish between American and British characters, the way they do in *Wacousta* and *The Canadian Brothers*. The protagonist of *Hardscrabble*, Ensign Ronayne has a solid knowledge of Native customs and of the land beyond the fort. Another American protagonist, Captain Wells, who came with reinforcements from Fort Detroit upon news of the start of the war, grew up among the Miamis; by his adulthood, he had become one of the most formidable warriors in this tribe, and killed many Americans in the Indian-American Wars before switching sides and joining the U.S. Army. Ronayne is a close friend of the young Wau-nan-gee whom he physically resembles to the point that he is able to pass for an Indian, tricking both Native warriors and his own comrades. His wife, Maria, can also pass for Native. She finds shelter in the tent of Wau-nan-gee's mother, dressed in Indian and blending in among the other women in the Pottowattomie encampment. Unlike Cooper, Richardson does not shy away from hinting at romantic relations that cross the race lines; when Maria was believed to have willingly eloped with the handsome Wau-nan-gee, the officers in the garrison and their wives do not condemn the relationship on racial grounds, nor does Richardson signal anywhere that such an affair would have been transgressive or shocking, the way Matilda Montgomerie's suggested affair with a Black slave is implied to have been in *The Canadian Brothers*. Wau-nan-gee loves Maria platonically, and is devoted to his friend Ronayne, a loyalty that is mutual and which places the two under the sign of equality. Even more than a simple infatuation, by the end of the novel, with Ronayne dead, Wau-nan-gee becomes Maria's sole protector and potential romantic interest, another unusual departure from the literary conventions of the genre.

In *Hardscrabble* and *Wau-nan-gee*, the Native tribes are not presented monolithically; some tribes collaborate with the Americans and settle in the immediate vicinity of the fort, while others are hostile. Taken as a group, Native allegiances can change, and therefore cannot be counted upon permanently, as Captain Headley discovers. On an individual level, attachments and friendships transcend racial boundaries; the most trusted messenger between the American forts is the chief Winnebeg, who remains loyal to Captain Headley throughout. When half of his tribe decides to join the British and attack the American fort, Winnebeg serves as negotiator toeing a delicate

diplomatic line between the two groups, and eventually saving the lives of Headley and the few survivors.

Interestingly, Richardson explains the decision of the Pottowattomies to join forces with the British as inspired strictly by the whims of a vile young chief, Pee-to-tum, rather than by any collective strategy. Pee-to-tum is a monstrous figure, animated by animalic instincts and whose physiognomy mirrors his temperament:

With low, heavy features; a dark scowling brow; coarse, long dark hair shading the restless, every moving eye . . . ; the broad, coarse nose; the skin partaking more in the Chippewa, . . . with all these loathsome attributes of person yet with a soul swelling with the most unbounded vanity and self-sufficiency based on ignorance and assumption.<sup>43</sup>

Richardson describes Pee-to-tum in the same terms of savagery that he reserves for Desborough and Westbrook. The Indian chief is a slave to his worst instincts. Attracted by Maria Heywood, when he has the opportunity, he rapes her; drunk on power, he incites the young warriors of his tribe to violence; he is cruel and ruthless on the battlefield, and even eats the still-beating heart of Captain Wells, whom he kills. Explained as a result of his malefic influence over the younger members of the tribe, the decision of the Pottowattomies to join the British in the war becomes an arbitrary move, devoid of any geopolitical explanations.

Unlike this sensationalized account of frontier warfare, in *The Canadian Brothers*, Richardson provides a complex and nuanced analysis of the interactions between Natives and Euro-Americans, where he discusses the strategic decisions made by the Native tribes in the War of 1812 using the same conceptual categories applied to European nations engaged in warfare in the Old World. Chapter 6 of the novel opens with a lengthy defense of the British policy of using Indians in the war against the United States, and evolves into a sophisticated exploration of the local entanglements of colonial (British) and postcolonial (American) interventions in North America. Richardson's imaginary creation of the Canadian polity as tolerant and humanitarian is predicated on the existence of the United States as racist and intolerant. The latter's institutional and cultural investment in whiteness distinguishes it from the 'civil' Britishness of the colonies, although Richardson's analysis of American and British racial policies exposes the link between whiteness and power on the continent. The pretext of the chapter is a conversation at a dinner party where the Canadian, Colonel D'Egville, invited his British fellow-officers, Tecumseh and his Indian chiefs, as well as an American, Major Montgomerie. After the meal, the conversation drifts toward a general account of Indian affairs in North America. Major Montgomerie's delight at

having met Tecumseh leads into a philosophical exploration of the ethics of using “savages” in a “civilized” conflict.

Fictional and nonfictional characters voice their opinions on the matter: the British Brock and Barclay, and the Canadian D’Egville argue with the American officer, Major Montgomerie. Brock and Barclay voice common British criticisms of American policies toward the Natives as justifications for Tecumseh’s animosity toward the United States. U.S. land policies and territorial expansion are interpreted in a transnational framework; Montgomerie invokes the growth in population that determined the Americans to forcibly take land away from the Indians, but Commodore Barclay’s reply exposes the tenuousness of the justification: “were the citizens of the United States condensed into the space allotted to Europeans, [they] might safely dispense with half the Union at this moment.” Barclay further challenges Montgomerie’s argument by applying it to a hypothetical situation involving European actors: “What would be thought in Europe, if, for instance to illustrate a point . . . Spain, on the principle of might, should push her surplus population into Portugal, compelling the latter kingdom to retire back on herself, and crowd her own subjects into the few provinces that might yet be left to them.”<sup>744</sup>

The American major rejects the comparison; he views the Natives as completely outside the realm of civilization, therefore exempt from any rights and protections that derive from it. This position reveals Montgomerie’s Eurocentric reading of ‘civilization’ as merely a convenient shorthand for ‘whiteness’; the officer reverts to a discourse of race, where the logic behind one system of exploitation (slavery) is used to legitimize another (the displacement of the Natives).

Both [Spain and Portugal] are civilized powers, holding the same rank and filling nearly the same scale among the nations of Europe. Moreover, there does not exist the same difference in the natural man. The uneducated negro is, from infancy and long custom, doomed to slavery, wherefore should the copper coloured Indian be more free?<sup>45</sup>

This fictional conversation allows Richardson to showcase the existence of two discourses about civilization that reflect the age’s competing views on race. The American officer explicitly links civilization to whiteness; all liberal ideas of freedom, equality, and individual rights apply to whites only because they are “civilized.” From within this ideological system, American land policies and Native policies are legitimate, moral and consistent, the Natives have no right to retaliate, and the British military alliance with them in the War of 1812 amounts to an unfair warfare practice. By contrast, Barclay, Brock, and D’Egville place their Native allies *within* the bounds of

civilization by emphasizing those qualities that renders them compatible with British ideas of civility and law.

North American Indian realities are explained using European concepts and forms of organization: Tecumseh is the patriot leader of a country, and the warring Indian tribes are likened with European nation-states. Even the violent Native war practices are judged by General Brock within a shared moral framework that is not fractured along the line of whiteness:

After all, Indian cruelty does not exceed that which is practiced even at this day in Europe . . . I have numerous letters, recently received from officers of my acquaintance now serving in Spain, all of which agree in stating that the mutilations perpetrated by the Guerilla bands, on the bodies of such of the unfortunate French detachments as they succeed in overpowering, far exceeds anything imputed to the Indians of America.<sup>46</sup>

This account of intra-European, white-on-white, barbarity exposes the Eurocentric rhetoric of civilization as hypocritical, and goes against the stereotype of the Native as irrational purveyor of violence. Brock's point is that, when whiteness is removed from the equation in an intercultural comparison, the Native peoples of North America deserve the same freedoms and individual rights as Europeans. From this vantage point, American Native policies were abusive and immoral, even illegal. The Natives have been wronged by the United States in ways unacceptable in a European context, their retaliation was therefore legitimate, and their alliance to the British in the War of 1812 was a calculated and justified strategic decision.

Richardson does not present the demise of the Native Americans as an inevitable result of the spread of civilization; in doing so, he subverts the ideological closure of the imperial narrative of conquest and settlement of the New World. Even in *Hardscrabble* and *Wau-nan-gee*, although written for American readers, the Natives are not picturesque or tragic figures, doomed to disappear in front of white settlement. Rather, their personal and collective choices and their military alliances effectively decide the fate of the Americans of European descent. The end of *Wau-nan-gee* in particular, through its suggestion of an interracial relationship between the eponymous protagonist and Maria Heywood, hints at new forms of indigeneity and creolization that bypass whiteness as prerequisite to American belonging. In *The Canadian Brothers*, D'Egville even more explicitly posits the Natives as crucial political players on the continent; he places the legacy of cooperation between Britain and the Indian nations in the context of recent events in colonial history, concluding that the Natives still have the power to shape the fate of the two Anglo creole communities in North America.<sup>47</sup> Far from being a dying race in the political ecosystem of North America, the Natives have the

power to remake the power dynamics on the continent: “At whatever epoch of her existence the United States may extend the hand of conquest over these provinces, with the Indian tribes that are now leagued with us crowding to her own standards, not all the armies England may choose to send to their defense will be able to prevent it.”<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, in the same chapter, Richardson also highlights Canada’s role as colonizer vis-à-vis the Natives, by reminding his readers of the link between whiteness and European imperialism on the continent and beyond. To do so, he uses the American, Major Montgomerie, as his mouthpiece. When Montgomerie challenges the imperial narrative of a color-blind British civility, he also points out that all European imperial ventures are rooted in the systematic exploitation and eradication of Native peoples all over the world. The major dismisses the importance of any political and ideological differences between Britain and the American republic as hypocritical, by foregrounding the economic imperative behind colonialism. Native-European conflicts stem from imperialism and colonialism in general, both of which preceded the creation of the American republic. When General Brock grandly argues “against the right of a strong power to wrest from a weaker what may be essential to its own interest” as a way of criticizing the American land grab, Major Montgomerie ironically encourages his interlocutor to

merely glance . . . upon those provinces which have been subjugated by more civilized Europe. Look at South America, for instance, and then say what we have done that has not been far exceeded by the Spaniards in that portion of the hemisphere. . . . Look again at the islands of the West Indies, the chief of which are conquests by England. Where are the people to whom Providence had originally assigned those countries, until the European . . . tore them violently away? Gone, extirpated, until scarce a vestige of their existence remains, even as it must be, in the course of time, with the Indians of these wilds.<sup>49</sup>

Montgomerie’s analysis redraws the line of difference across the Atlantic, separating the New World—as recipient of European colonialisms, from the Old World—as agent of colonialism, and questions the implied contrast between the supposedly civil imperialism of Europe and the non-civil imperialism of the United States; British claims to tolerance and progress are revealed to be as empty as the American ones.

This critique of European colonialism is intended to legitimize American policies toward non-whites in North America: if other “civilized” powers do it, violence against the Natives merely confirms the place of the United States as a rising world power. Upon a closer examination though, European imperial and colonial abuses overseas are not so different. Civility is exposed to be merely a label that obscures the hegemonic power over discourse, territory,

and bodies given by whiteness, whether the country yielding this power is physically located in Europe or in North America. By making an American officer expose the double standard which the British applied to American race politics, Richardson's text also challenges the early Canadian reliance upon the British rhetoric of civility as a way of constructing a coherent American national Other. Britons and Americans may relish in their narcissism of minor differences, but to the Natives they are the same. Montgomerie makes this point to his British and Canadian interlocutors: "although we are a distinct people in the eyes of the civilized world, still we are the same in those of the natives, who see in us, not the emancipated American, but merely the descendant of the original Colonist."<sup>50</sup> To Brock's Eurocentric gaze, which projected European concepts and ideas about political organizations upon existing tribal structures, Richardson opposes Montgomerie's position that exposes the British idea of civility as a sham.

Richardson's reading of European imperialism in North America illuminates the complexities of his position as a settler subject in a liminal space of empire, complicit in, and yet able to criticize imperial policies from the periphery. At one level, Richardson's intervention in *The Canadian Brothers* goes against the triumphalist, loyalist ethos of the rest of the novel by subverting British civilizational certainties and its narrative of pro-British Canadian allegiance. At another, it indicates Richardson's awareness of the constructedness of national identity and of its imagined dimension. Thus, both British and Canadian claims to moral superiority over, and difference from, the Americans on account of their attitudes toward the Natives are exposed to be constructed and situational. In Richardson's British North America, whiteness is inextricably linked to power and the legacy of imperialism.

### WHITENESS AS POWER IN HALIBURTON'S POLITICAL WRITINGS

Whiteness is linked to power and imperialism in Haliburton's satire, but with very different results than in those of Richardson and Moodie. Much of Haliburton's literary output is deeply racist; offensive racial stereotypes punctuate *The Clockmaker*, making many parts shocking for contemporary audiences.<sup>51</sup> Such attitudes were common among his contemporaries and echoed the racist tone of the popular culture of the time; Haliburton's use of race also aligned with his positions on the larger ideological context of the battle between American democratic republican and British conservative ideas in North America. Haliburton instrumentalizes whiteness in order to make his political point about the incompatibility of elective U.S.-style institutions with British mores, and to argue for a better management of the

colonies, lest they should go the way of the original thirteen colonies. First, the judge rhetorically erases all British imperial practices from the history of Nova Scotia and of North America, at the same time that he erases all memories of the Indigenous peoples that once occupied what are now colonial lands. The Yankees remain the only “Natives” on the continent; before them came other Euro-creoles—French and Spanish; after them followed the motley immigrant masses from Europe, clamoring for political power. Allowing American-inspired political arrangements to take root in the Nova Scotia would open the way for American radical ideas about equality and political participation in the colony, which in turn would threaten the ethnic and racial homogeneity of Nova Scotia, and potentially undermine the empire as a whole.

Haliburton’s writings make it clear that the judge did not view slavery as a morally reprehensible institution. Rather, his writings present it as the only American institution that confirms the natural inequality of the universe and protects it, and Haliburton gives no evidence that he repudiated it. He uses race in order to shock his readers into grasping that absolute equality is unnatural, and that a classless world would be as absurd as one governed by racial equality. In the sketch “Slavery,” in the second series, Slick explains the peculiar American institution to the Squire, rehashing many of the Southern arguments. He compares the enslavement of African-Americans to labor and marriage, both construed as naturally hierarchical and unequal types of relations, yet perfectly acceptable:

Take away corporal punishment from the masters and give it to the law, forbid separatin’ families and the right to compel marriage and other connexions, and you leave slavery nothin’ more than sarvitude in name, and somethin’ quite as good in fact. Every critter must work in this world, and a labourer is a slave; but the labourer only gets enough to live on from day to day, while the slave is tended in infancy, sickness, and old age, and has spare time enough given him to aim a good deal too. A married woman, if you come to that, is a slave, call her what you will, wife, woman, angel, termegant, or devil, she’s a slave.<sup>52</sup>

In “The White N-----,” in series 1, slavery functions as a metaphor for both hierarchy and powerlessness, and provides an entry point into Haliburton’s larger argument about American popular democracy. The sketch opens with the Squire’s observation that the American claim to freedom in the Declaration of Independence is “a practical untruth, in a country which tolerates domestic slavery in its worst and most forbidding form. It is a declaration of shame, and not of independence.”<sup>53</sup> Sam’s quick reply to the Squire’s observation conflates race with class in order to expose the commonality between American slavery and Nova Scotian poor laws in the context of the incipient

industrial capitalism in the colony: “Now, we deal in black n----- only, but the Bluenoses sell their own species—they trade in white slaves.”<sup>54</sup> The colonial practice that Sam comments on is the selling of the Nova Scotian poor in indentured labor for the year. His subsequent comments indirectly exculpate slavery as the more “natural” practice: Americans “deal only in blacks,” while the Nova Scotian (and British) color-blindness merely means that any individual, “when reduced to poverty, is reduced to slavery, and is sold—a White N-----.”<sup>55</sup> Unlike Moodie’s critique of the materialism and egalitarianism of the New World that proposes education as a pathway to personal improvement, Haliburton turns to biology to explain why no such pathway can—or should—exist. In an industrializing world in flux, where material differences replace class differences rooted in lineage, Haliburton sees whiteness as the last and unchangeable guarantor of privilege. By describing poverty as a putative loss of whiteness, the language of the sketch “The White N-----” becomes a commentary on the fluidity of social categories transplanted from Britain into a North American context, which allows Haliburton to racialize the Maritime colonies as white, and therefore truly British.

The strategy was not new. Kathleen Wilson noted that in early America, “racialized notions of nation were put to work in the colonies to define the grounds for inclusion in the local community.”<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, in their original conflict with the British Parliament, the American revolutionaries had emphasized their presumed whiteness as proof of their Britishness, which guaranteed them rights and freedoms, played up a racialized notion of nation, and played down the actual ethnic and racial diversity of the colonies. Haliburton uses the same rhetorical strategy of racializing Britishness in order to undermine the legitimacy of the American republic in claiming any Anglo-Saxon lineage: a white British North America is the only ideological (and biological) heir of the British Empire in the New World. To Haliburton, racial miscegenation is to the purity of the nation what democracy is to the stability of social relations, and American republicanism has endangered both.

Alan Lawson points out that the nineteenth-century construction of the Natives as a “dying race” “enabled a narrative of ethnical indigenization in which the settler simply assumed the place of the disappearing Indigene without the need for violence.”<sup>57</sup> Terrie Goldie shows that white writers in Canada underwent a rhetorical process of indigenization as they crafted a narrative of belonging to the new land either by using the Natives as symbols of the land, or by erasing them from the story altogether.<sup>58</sup> Illustrating these points, Haliburton narrativizes the continental past as a contest between the Americans and the Bluenoses; this approach leaves out virtually all mentions of any Indigenous presence on the continent prior to the arrival of European invaders. His refusal to acknowledge the presence of the Natives in British North America is different from Moodie’s own blindness to her own role



in the displacement of her Indian friends in *Roughing It*. The judge rhetorically evacuates the land of prior discursive and human occupation, and Nova Scotia becomes empty, merely territory, an exploitable resource, rather the locus of some elusive national spirit determined by geography or climate.<sup>59</sup> British North American indigeneity is undermined by American claims to ownership of the continent, justified by the American superiority at using the resources of the land. If the British cannot properly use Nova Scotia, the Americans will.

Lorenzo Veracini noted that “settler colonialism is . . . a form of peer reviewing: even when Indigenous and settler agencies are the only ones left contending on the ground, there is always an absent presence, metropolitan or otherwise, that contributes to shaping the settler colonial situation.”<sup>60</sup> Yet Haliburton’s satire pendulates between British and American points of reference, with no Indigenous presence to speak of. Whatever Natives still exist on the continent, they are pushed Westwards by the tide of settlement and industrialization overtaking the United States, a fate that, Haliburton implies, awaits the Bluenoses too. Being incorporated into the United States is at times an appealing prospect for British North America as a whole (other neglected colonies like Nova Scotia could benefit from better management), and at other times a frightening one (American democracy is mobocratic and chaotic). The region is at times imagined as either the last true outpost of European culture and whiteness in North America, still safe from the treacherous appeal of popular democracy and republicanism, or as a dying and decaying culture doomed to fail. In this latter case, the colonies are described in terms that echo Haliburton’s scant reference to Native Americans, as communities devoid of agency and doomed by history to be swept aside by the improving energies of the American republic. Slick comments on the future of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia as seen from a Yankee perspective:

They must recede before our free and enlightened citizens like the Indians; our folks will buy them out, and they must give place to a more intelligent and active people. They must go to the lands of Labrador, or be located back of Canada; they can hold on there a few years, until the wave of civilization reaches them, and then they must move again, as the savages do.<sup>61</sup>

Haliburton uses a Eurocentric lens to foreground settlement and conquest as two interrelated and mutually constitutive dimensions of the British Empire in North America.<sup>62</sup> *The Clockmaker*’s narrative arch stretches from pre-revolutionary times, via Hopewell and old Slick, to the present and into the future, through the various speculations about the fate of the British Empire in general. Nova Scotian colonial culture starts with the arrival of the Puritans, a narrative strategy which blurs the line between imperial selves and American

others, and foregrounds the whiteness of the settler-colonial voice: both imagined communities are Euro-creoles, sharing a past of European invasion and settlement. However, these historical and ethnic commonalities are less important than the political break represented by the American Revolution.

In the sketch "Canadian Politics," Haliburton describes the Acadians as "the lineal descendants of those who made the first effective settlement in North America in 1606," and who now play the role of the good savage, faithful to their old ways and untainted by the evils of civilization. They "have retained to this day the dress, customs, language, and religion of their ancestors. They are a peaceable, contented and happy people, and have escaped the temptations of English agitators, French atheists and domestic demagogues."<sup>63</sup> They have no political power, are picturesquely passive, were scattered across North America by the British troops, and struggled for decades to return to their homeland in Nova Scotia. This racialization of the Acadians via an emphasis of their lack of agency corresponds to Richardson's racialization of the French Canadians in *Wacousta*, substitutes the Acadians for the Indigenes, and translates into cultural form the link between a loss of political power and creole whiteness in North America.

The power lost by the original colonizers of the continent is now transferred to the American republic. Like Sam Slick, the Americans can genuinely understand the potentialities of the new continent and do not hesitate to make the most of them. The Squire, and through him the Nova Scotians and other British North Americans, become examples of a decadent colonial civilization; they lack an understanding of the land and the ability to make good use of its resources. They are therefore doomed to disappear. The tropes of the "garden" and of the "wilderness" are common in writing about the New World, where they function as ideological markers of two spaces—those in the garden are manifestly good and deserve to acquire more territory.<sup>64</sup> This reworking of the tropes of the garden and of the wilderness in a transnational context undermines the imperial claims for ownership over British North America and legitimizes the American project over both the American West and, potentially, over Nova Scotia. Thus, Haliburton's political satire brings together a narrative of American settlerism and an origin story for both communities.

The success of American settlerism over North America legitimizes U.S. expansionism. Sam explains the advantages of the democratic system for the societies brought into the fold of the republic. He explains to the Squire that American industriousness is not due to government support, but to the aggregate effect of individual efforts to improve one's lot in life. Although "the land between Boston and Salem would starve a flock of geese . . . Salem has more cash than would buy Nova Scotia from the King."<sup>65</sup> The American work ethic created the garden, which legitimizes U.S. potential ownership of

the entire continent: “We rise early, live frugally, and work late; what we got we take care of. To all this, add enterprise and intelligence—a feller that finds work too hard, had better not go to the States.”<sup>66</sup> Power and land ownership are deeply connected. Consequently there is a political connection between Sam’s rhetoric about American potential rights over Nova Scotia and the assumptions about the model of the society that was to be built on these lands.

Yet, the admiration that superficially underpins Haliburton’s portrayal of Slick is paralleled by his disavowal of the principles upon which American society is built. In “Confessions of a Deposed Minister,” Hopewell presents the United States as indigenized both through its mastery of the land and through an assimilation of Native ideas about self-government. The American political experiment becomes an offshoot of European liberalism and colonialism, hybridized with Native ideas about democracy and equality. Reverend Hopewell explains how the ideological influence of Native ways over the original republican project of the thirteen colonies will doom the American political experiment:

The North American Indians, said he, had tried it afore in all its parts. They had no king, no nobles, no privileged class, no established religion. Their mobs made laws. Lynch law too, for they had burned people before the citizens at Mobile was ever born, or was even thought on, and invaded also other folks’ territory by stealth, and then kept possession. They, too, elected their presidents and other officers, and did all and everything we do. They, too, had their federal government of independent states, and their congress and solemn lookin’ boastin’ orators. They, too, had their long knives as well as Arkansas folks have, and were as fond of blood. And where are they now? Where is their great experiment?—their great spectacle of a people governin’ themselves? Gone! where ourn will go; gone with the years that are fled, never to return!<sup>67</sup>

In this reading, popular democracy was a Native political model which corrupted the original project of the thirteen colonies by empowering the masses; the fate of the Natives awaited the Americans, Haliburton’s logic went. Furthermore, mass immigration altered the original ethnic fabric and, as Haliburton implies, radically altered its whiteness, which made participatory democracy even more dangerous.<sup>68</sup> The loose and chaotic Union lacked a strong central idea that could contain its unmanageable diversity, or bind the states together; all these factors taken together spell doom for the republican project. In the second series of *The Clockmaker*, in the sketch “The Schoolmaster Abroad,” Sam’s initial praises for the advantages of Nova Scotia are followed by a quasi-apocalyptic picture of the United States in the thralls of its own diversity. Self-destruction seems inevitable, hastened by immigration of non-Anglo-Saxon stock and by the weakness of American republican institutions and of its federal model. Haliburton uses New Orleans

as the epitome of the United States: an attractive and carnivalesque young land, with no past, no hierarchies, and no tradition, inhabited by people from the four corners of the world.

The carefree ethos of the city stems from a certain child-like innocence that disregards taboos and dismisses future and past alike. Its inhabitants are compared to “children playin’ in a churchyard, jumpin’ over the graves, hidin’ behind the tombs, a-larfin’ at the emblems of mortality, and the queer old rhymes onder ’em.”<sup>69</sup> The ominous tone of the passage hints at the potentially catastrophic consequences of such transgressions. The fragility of the space evokes the fragility of an entire country devoid of solid foundations:

That ’ere place is built in a bar in the harbor, made of snags, driftwood, and chokes, hauled up by the river, and then filled and covered with the sediment and alluvial of the rich bottoms above, bought down by the freshets. It’s peopled in the same way. The eddies and tides of business of all that country centre there, and the froth and scum are washed up and settle at New Orleans. It’s filled with all sorts of people, black, white and Ingians, and their different shades, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch, English, Irish and Scotch, and then people from every state in the Union. . . . It’s all a great caravansary filled with strangers.<sup>70</sup>

By contrasting American diversity with the supposed ethnic and racial homogeneity of Nova Scotia, the sketch validates Haliburton’s racialized view of Britishness. In the context of Haliburton’s skepticism about democracy, the danger of chaos and of disintegration inherent to a republic appear already contained *in embryo* in the ethnic and racial diversity of a society of immigration.

“Travelling in America” examines the local impact of the global myth of America as land of opportunity which drew immigrants from all over Europe to the New World; Sam overenthusiastically describes the American melting pot as miraculously converting a motley gathering of lowlifes from the Old World into “the greatest nation on airth” through the mysterious workings of democracy.

Well, Squire, our great country is like that are Thames water—it does receive the outpourin’s of the world—homicides and regicides, jailbirds and galley-birds, poorhouse chaps, rebels, infidels, and forgers, rogues of all sorts, sizes and degrees—but it ferments, you see, and works clear; and what a’most a beautiful clear stream o’ democracy it does make, don’t it?<sup>71</sup>

The global fascination with the United States is depicted in ironic and ominous terms: the country has the power of attraction of a vortex. It is “a great whirlpool—a great vortex—it drags all the straw and chips, and floatin’

sticks, driftwood and trash into it. The small crafts are sucked in, and whirl round and round like a squirrel in a cage—they'll never come out."<sup>72</sup> The passage lends itself to a double reading; as Sam's praise for the process of selection by which only the strongest survive in the United States, or as a warning about the uncontrollable power of that vortex. In the American republican and democratic system, ethnic, class, and cultural mixing create a society where immigrants from all over Europe are racialized as white, and empowered politically in a democratic republic. The resulting society is diametrically opposed to the world Haliburton clamors for, one where conservative social structures and political institutions would guarantee that class and racial groups remained distinct, and where political power was reserved to the elites, like himself. All vestiges of the original Britishness of the thirteen colonies have disappeared in the time of immigration that transformed the ethnic and racial makeup of the United States, compromised its whiteness, and whose unnatural, egalitarian political structures opened the path for direct political participation for everyone.

## CONCLUSION

According to historian Elizabeth Mancke, in the middle of the nineteenth century the British Empire was transitioning between "an imperial constitutional system that was structured primarily for white settlers and one with 'vernacular constitutions' that reflected adjustments for Indigenous populations, non-British settlers, and the peculiar circumstances in which British subjects found themselves."<sup>73</sup> These institutional adjustments were paralleled by, and reflected in the colonial public sphere via a vibrant print culture in which Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton were all participants. Racial policies and racial attitudes were part of the ideological building blocks used to differentiate the United States from the British North American colonies, as they were part and parcel of the evolution of the British vernacular constitutions and cultural norms on the continent. As the previous pages have shown, in this ideological context, all three authors engaged with whiteness in distinct ways, but they all consistently depict colonial mores and political structures as superior to the American ones. Richardson links Canadianness to the ability to cooperate with the Natives, and Britishness as the antidote to the American lure. Moodie and Haliburton view social hierarchies as desirable cultural buffers against American democratic tendencies, albeit with radically different attitudes toward race. Moodie's abolitionist past and religious worldview inform her negative views of slavery and her favorable attitudes toward the Natives, although she remains consistently blind to her own positionality. To her, the Natives are compatible with the British imperial project

because of their innate gentility and respect for hierarchies, quite unlike the Yankeeified European settlers in the backwoods whose loyalties can always be swayed by American democratic ideas. Richardson's fictional reworking of the Indian-American Wars and the 1812 War in his historical novels draws the line between the Canadian polity and the American republic in their incompatible attitudes toward the Natives who are British allies and who have been repeatedly abused by American institutions and people. By contrast to Moodie and Richardson, Haliburton's argument against American-style institutions revolves around his belief that American democratic ideas, when combined with the ethnic diversity of the country, would expand ideas of equality beyond class, to race or gender, which he viewed as an unnatural arrangement. His treatment of race in *The Clockmaker* demonstrates that, in addition to his ideas about the dangers that mobocracy posed to the rights of individuals, the judge's opposition to democracy was also driven by his desire to protect the supremacy of whiteness in the colonies.

As settler-colonial authors, Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton are all caught in the racial bind of the imperial apparatus that linked Britishness, whiteness, and belonging. Their positions on race, expressed directly and indirectly across the variety of literary genres they wrote in, reveal the spectrum of nineteenth-century sensibilities and the extent to which institutional arrangements and cultural norms within the British Empire were evolving in dialogue with ideological models that informed ideas about liberalism and participatory government in the United States.

## NOTES

1. Sections of this chapter were previously published in *Early American Literature* and *The Journal of American Studies*, reprinted with permission.

2. Ralph Bauer, "The Hemispheric Genealogies of 'Race': Creolization and the Cultural Geography of Colonial Difference across the Eighteenth-Century Americas," in *Hemispheric American Studies*, Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine eds. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 36–56, 53.

3. See for instance Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti, eds., *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas: Empires, Texts, Identities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). Also see Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy, "Creole Frontiers: Imperial Ambiguities in John Richardson's and James Fenimore Cooper's Fiction," *Early American Literature* 49 no. 3 (2014): 741–70.

4. See Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), esp. 16–28.

5. Kariann Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 222.

6. See Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, Nick Draper, Kate Donington, Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership* (London and NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

7. See Kris Manjapra, “When Will Britain Face Up to Its Crimes Against Humanity?” *The Guardian*, April 17, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/29/slavery-abolition-compensation-when-will-britain-face-up-to-its-crimes-against-humanity>.

8. See Jewel L. Spangler and Frank Towers, eds. *Remaking North American Sovereignty: State Transformation in the 1860s* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020); Amanda Nettelbeck, *Indigenous Rights and Colonial Subjecthood: Protection and Reform in the Nineteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Jane Rhodes, “The Contestation Over National Identity: Nineteenth-Century Black Americans in Canada,” in *Canadian Review of American Studies* 30 (2): 175–86; Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, *Frontier Fictions: Settler Sagas and Postcolonial Guilt* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Nina Reid-Maroney, “Possibilities for African Canadian Intellectual History: The Case of 19th-Century Upper Canada/Canada West” *History Compass* 15, no. 12 (2017): 1–9.

9. For more on the civilization policy in Canada, see *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015), <http://trc.ca/about-us/trc-findings.html> (accessed July 2020). For a discussion of the multiple ways in which violence toward the Natives was part of the process by which the myth of the early Canadian ‘orderly’ society was created, see Elizabeth Mancke, Jerry Bannister, et al., eds., *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America 1749–1876* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019).

10. In May 2021, the remains of 215 Indigenous children as young as three years old were found in a mass burial grave on the site of a former residential school. <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/29/1001566509/the-remains-of-215-indigenous-children-have-been-found-at-a-former-school-in-can>.

11. Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York, Routledge: 1995), 118.

12. Young, *Colonial Desire*, 119.

13. See Robert Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 233.

14. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 252.

15. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 257.

16. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 107.

17. Young, *Colonial Desire*, 95.

18. David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

19. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 298.

20. Carole Gerson, “Nobler Savages: Representations of Native Women in the Writings of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill,” in *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d’études canadiennes* 32, no. 2 (1997): 5–21, 11.

21. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 306.
22. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 298.
23. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 285–86.
24. This fragment was taken out of the 1871 Canadian edition. See *Roughing It*, CEECT edition, “Historical Collation,” 664.
25. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 310.
26. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 310.
27. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 295.
28. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 308.
29. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 294.
30. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 294.
31. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 293.
32. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 6.
33. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 297.
34. Moodie, *Roughing It*, 127.
35. Gerson, 12.
36. See Richardson’s essay in *A Canadian Campaign: Operations of the Right Division of the Army of Upper Canada, during the American War of 1812, by a British Officer* (Simcoe, ON: Davus Publishing, 2011).
37. For more, see Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy “Fictions of Race: American Indian Policies in Nineteenth-Century British North American Fiction,” in *Journal of American Studies* 52, no. 1 (2018): 91–113.
38. Phanel Antwi, *Hidden Signs, Haunting Shadows: Literary Currencies of Blackness in Upper Canadian Texts*, PhD dissertation (Hamilton ON: McMaster University, 2011), 42.
39. Richardson, *Wacousta*, 15.
40. Richardson, *Wacousta*, 12.
41. Edward Watts, *In that Remote Country: French Colonial Culture in the Anglo-American Imagination, 1780–1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 9.
42. Richardson, *Wacousta*, 221.
43. Richardson, *Wau-nan-gee*, 77.
44. Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers; Or, the Prophecy Fulfilled: A Tale of the Late American War* (Montreal: Armour & Ramsay, 1840), Vol. 1, 63. All further references will be to this edition.
45. Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 63.
46. Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 78.
47. Richardson’s comment was based on historical facts. In 1837 and 1838, disgruntled colonists in Upper and Lower Canada staged violent Rebellion and American supporters crossed the border to help them. These colonial Rebellions and the American involvement in them reminded British officials of the military and political risks involved in abandoning the Indians or removing them from Upper Canada.
48. Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 72.
49. Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 65.
50. Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers*, Vol. 1, 68.



51. See George Elliott Clarke, “White Niggers, Black Slaves: Slavery, Race and Class in T. C. Haliburton’s *The Clockmaker*,” in *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 14 (1994): 13–40. Also, Ruth Panofsky, “Breaking the Silence: The Clockmaker on Women,” in *The Haliburton Bi-centenary Chaplet: Papers Presented at the 1996 Thomas Raddall Symposium*, ed. Richard A. Davies (Wolfville, NS: Gaspereau Press, 1977): 41–53.

52. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 55.

53. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 128.

54. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 128.

55. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 131.

56. Kathleen Wilson, *Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 12.

57. Alan Lawson, “Postcolonial Theory and the ‘Settler’ Subject,” in *Essays on Canadian Writing* 56 (1995): 20–36, 157.

58. Terry Goldie, “Semiotic Control: Native Peoples in Canadian Literature in English,” in *Unhomely States*, 191–203, 194.

59. Lawson, “Postcolonial Theory and the Settler Subject,” 175.

60. Veracini, *Theoretical Overview*, 24.

61. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 48.

62. In *Rule and Misrule*, Haliburton makes a systematic historical analysis of the Puritans, opposing them positively to the Acadians. He describes the Puritans as “enlightened people” who “subdued the uncultivated nature.” The Yankees had inherited the thrift of their Puritan ancestors; therefore, Slick’s cunning can be traced to his Puritan forbearers and even the framework of the American nation can be traced back to their institutions. Haliburton, *Rule and Misrule of the English in America* (New York: Harper, 1851), 48.

63. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 126.

64. W. H. New, *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 24.

65. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 14.

66. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 14.

67. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 123.

68. See Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy, “‘A Great Caravansary Filled with Strangers’: American Popular Democracy in T. C. Haliburton’s Political Satire,” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 51, no. 3 (2016): 387–40.

69. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 157.

70. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 157–58.

71. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, Second Series*, 34.

72. Haliburton, *The Clockmaker, First Series*, 41.

73. Elizabeth Mancke, “The Age of Constitutionalism and the New Political History,” in *The Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (2019): 620–29, 636.

# Conclusion

In 1865, when bidding farewell to his constituents in the borough of Launceston, UK, where he had served as an MP, an aged Thomas C. Haliburton warned them not to be deluded by William Gladstone's claims that "the doctrine of manhood suffrage is the true principle of the British elective system"; he also predicted dire consequences for the country if Britain was to embrace all the "democratic blessings of the American constitution."<sup>1</sup> The warnings of this last Tory were not to be heeded; two years later, the second Reform Bill was introduced in the British Parliament and passed the House of Commons. It enfranchised about a million new voters, the majority working-class men in towns and cities. The new law confirmed history's inexorable march toward a widening arena for participatory politics, even if universal suffrage was still a distant dream. On the other side of the Atlantic, the British North American provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island were casting worried glances at the United States torn apart by the Civil War. After negotiating incommensurable differences, the colonies begrudgingly united to form the Dominion of Canada, a political gesture that marked the symbolic end of the colonial age in North America. Despite Haliburton's fears, the move was not a first step toward the incorporation of Canada into the United States, nor did it signal a wholesale embrace of American-style democracy and republicanism. Rather, it paved the way for new imperial developments that built upon, and strengthened the British dimension of Canadian identity and the institutions that were to foster Canadian democracy beyond the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

While the Dominion of Canada was effectively born as soon as the British North America Act was passed by the Parliament at Westminster, what this meant for the birth of a national literature was less clear. As Canadian literary critic W. H. New points out, by the mid-1860s, there was already a sense of

belief in a set of commonalities identified as a coherent Canadian character.<sup>3</sup> However, this idea of an overarching ‘Canadianness,’ applicable to all the inhabitants of the new Dominion, irrespective of their origins, religion, race, or gender was an uneasy construct. The ‘Canada’ that came into being in 1867 continued to grapple with its British lineage, with its North American dilemmas, and with the fragmentation and diversity within. The literary output that followed Confederation continued the trends that preceded it. The fictionality of a shared Canadian identity to be encoded in a ‘national canon’ needed to transcend geography and to build upon the notion of the imagined community of empire. It also needed a shared external threat—which, before 1867, had been the specter of a still-belligerent post-Civil War America eager to expand North—in order to find a shared starting point for a self-conscious Canadian cultural nationalism. In short, colonial self-definitions depended on continental political and ideological tensions, at least as much as they depended on ideas of Britishness and imperial belonging.

This study has approached class, race, political ideology, and democratic institutions as tropes of otherness in a colonial context. Colonial self-images in the first half of the nineteenth century betray their awareness of their ambiguous position in the British Empire, just as twenty-first-century Canadian writers struggle with Canada’s global and postcolonial complexities today. The main objective of any study of national images in literature is to discover the image’s inner logic in relationship with the context. This book has been such an attempt; it has argued that the cultural confrontation of two ideological systems that intersected in early nineteenth-century North America had as its by-products new models of national identity rooted in political, rather than ethnic differences. I did not attempt to solve the mystery of whether institutions shape societies, or whether societies create the institutions that represent those values. But I contend that the literary imaginings of Britain and the United States in this transitional moment were structured by colonial reactions to institutional reforms in Britain, which were given an emotional immediacy by fears of popular democracy, by the unknowns of this new model of government, and by the rapid industrialization of North America.

The evolution of British North American political and literary cultures before Confederation should be considered as a local manifestation of other models of transition to modernity that bypass the nation-state paradigm and that rely heavily on political tropes to articulate collective difference. Pre-Confederation Canadian literature provides a fertile ground for investigating the connections that anchored the colonies in the Atlantic world of the nineteenth century. At the same time, the hemispheric connections linking the British North American experience to that of the United States and of other settler colonial spaces in Latin America represent another, related, research

path that has been drawing increasing attention in recent years.<sup>4</sup> The tone of this body of literature offered a stark contrast with the nationalist tenor of American literature during the same period, when the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, or Henry David Thoreau, James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman imagined the national mythology of the young republic optimistically and confidently. Yet, even the ebullient literary nationalism of antebellum America could not entirely hide the hemispheric contingencies from which it emerged, nor did it manage to completely silence the alternatives to its linguistically, racially, and culturally homogeneous stories of belonging.<sup>5</sup> The British North American colonies represented such an external alternative to American exceptionalism.

A moment of comparable sustained literary nationalism in what is today Canada was to come only after 1867. And even then, it preserved the multivocal articulation of local identities contained within a narrative of the allegiance to the larger imperial family that shaped the body of texts produced before Confederation. The works of Richardson, Moodie, and Haliburton reveal a remarkably diverse catalog of transatlantic affiliations, anxieties, and practices. These writers were included in this study together because they were the first internationally successful colonial authors in Anglophone British North America, published and read in Britain as well as in the United States. Taken together, their literary output echoes the main public debates over their communities' place on the continent, in the Empire, on democracy, and on American-style elective institutions. By virtue of what John Carlos Rowe dubs the "representation of a common historical subject," such texts provide a literary explication of the ideological discursive formations of the age.<sup>6</sup>

The illusion of a coherent, ideologically monolithic American national Other was partly a reaction to settler-colonial anxieties about their status in the British imperial family. All settler-colonial cultures share the double need to identify with the imperial center *and* to assert one's indigeneity. In the case of early Canada, this need is partly fulfilled by the existence of the United States as ideological Other to both the British Empire and the putative Canadian nation-to-be. The impact of the American ethos and political philosophy on British self-definitions had already transformed the British world; for almost a century before the Constitution Act of 1867, the two Anglo-Celtic imagined communities had been engaged in a transatlantic dialogue that, as Dror Wahrman argued, had shaken to the core the *ancien régime* of identity, and paved the way for newer models of belonging. The perceived 'Americanness' of Manifest Destiny and the Westward Expansion, of slavery and the Indian removal, of Jacksonian mob rule, classlessness, and sectional conflict were explained in British literature as stemming from the degree to which these phenomena confirmed the original move of the thirteen

colonies. From a fluid understanding of law and order, to institutional decentralization, or aggressive and disorderly territorial expansion, all were justified by a nationalist rhetoric that sought to legitimize American dominance over the continent. The second American popular revolution enfranchised most white men and redrew the boundaries of American citizenship around whiteness in the 1830s and 1840s. It also confirmed in the British imperial imaginary preexisting ideas about political models, projecting them to the whole of the American nation.<sup>7</sup>

In British North America, popular democracy and republicanism functioned as related markers of otherness in colonial fiction. Richardson, Moodie, and Haliburton were not rabid anti-American; nor were they naively uncritical of British society and British institutions. After all, by the 1840s most colonists were open to the idea that people should have some say in their government, and supported moderate reform. Their grasp of philosophical and ideological doctrinal subtleties about popular sovereignty is less important than the fact that they all perceived American forms of government as fundamentally alien to their vision for the various communities forming British North America. Their books consistently describe American institutions, political arrangements, and social practices as irreconcilable with the colonial vision of a well-functioning and equitable society. Like their—usually Anglophones, white, educated, upper-middle-class—literary contemporaries, Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton used American and British institutional differences and political ideologies as signposts delimiting national selves and others. This practice survived well into the twentieth century; similar ideas about an ‘American’ and a ‘Canadian’ character were later reworked in other Canadian texts going from William Kirby’s *The Golden Dog* (1877) or Sara Jeanette Duncan’s *The Imperialist* (1904), to Margaret Laurence’s *The Diviners* (1974) or Margaret Atwood’s *Surfacing* (1972), or in literary criticism, the most notable example being Atwood’s *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972).

The early Canadian literary images of the United States were inextricably connected to the social imaginary of the times. The subsequent institutional development of the Dominion of Canada reflected this trend beyond the historical moment covered by this book. As historian David Smith pointed out, “The origin of Canada’s strong executive lies in the suspicion, even hostility, the Fathers of Confederation felt towards popular democracy. It is no difficult task to unearth quotable passages to this effect in the Confederation Debates. Much more of a challenge it is to find in that record some positive reference to popular government.”<sup>8</sup> The Dominion of Canada built its claim to national distinctiveness on its imperial history and on its leading position in the empire. The reign of Queen Victoria in an age of mass literacy and communication technology further strengthened the associations between monarchy

and the nation at a time when republicanism was expected to rise.<sup>9</sup> As Canada consolidated its position on the international stage, its national rhetoric did not relinquish the trope of the empire for that of continental solidarity, but rather combined the two.<sup>10</sup> Democratic ideals informed Canadian institutions into the twentieth century, yet the institutions behind them reflected a different approach to these ideals than that of the American republic.

In the age of nation-building after the Confederation, the United States continued to instantiate this different approach self-consciously, in a continental context. In its role of senior dominion and of interface between an old global power and a new one, in the 1930s Canada even took upon itself to play a role in the North Atlantic of mediator between the United States and the British Empire. This position continued, albeit in a different form, through the reinvention of Canada as a Middle Power after World War II, a point marked by the Quebec conference in 1943, which reunited W. L. Mackenzie King—the longest-serving prime minister of Canada and grandson of the 1838 rebel William Mackenzie—Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill; it continued in various guises throughout the Cold War years, and in the anti-globalization era of the 2010s.<sup>11</sup>

In January 2021, an angry mob took over the U.S. Capitol, trying to overturn the results of the presidential election. Politicians, writers, and pundits alike rushed to explain what this aggression on the symbolic seat of U.S. democracy meant for American national identity. The attack had built upon a decade-long narrative of anti-government resistance among American conservative groups; it was replete with Revolutionary symbolism and calls for ‘the people’ to take back power, most notably the Gadsden flag, designed in 1775 and repurposed as a symbol of limited government as the flag of the Tea Party movement since the early 2010s. The participants’ rhetorical use of ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ to legitimize their insurrection against their own government is a modern reworking of an older understanding of liberty that, as this book has shown, was present in American culture since its inception. This ‘republican liberty’ discussed by Canadian historian Michael Ducharme in the context of the Atlantic revolutions, defines democracy by positing ‘the people’ as the sole source of government authority. The legitimacy of American republican and democratic institutions was therefore always contingent upon the willingness of citizens to accept those institutions and their rituals, including the peaceful transition of power: American democracy grew out of the Jacksonian years and beyond as a daily plebiscite. At the same time, the cultural glorification of the revolutionary violence that birthed the American republic allows for the continuous, implied threat of future anti-government violence if the institutions of the government lose legitimacy in the eyes of a significant part of the population. This discursive threat that ebbed and flowed under the surface of political moods for decades eventually

morphed into a real attack on the Capitol: if in 1775, the ‘Don’t tread on me!’ message of the Gadsden flag was addressed to the British king, in 2021, the imagined interlocutor was the U.S. federal government as a whole.

Like their colonial contemporaries, Moodie, Richardson, and Haliburton commented upon what they saw as the key vulnerability of American republicanism: its decentralization and fragmentariness, its vulnerability to instability and to popular unrest, and the backlash, even violence, that accompanied every political enlargement of the category of ‘the people,’ from the Revolution, to the Jacksonian expansion of the franchise to all white men, irrespective of ethnicity or religion. Despite the obvious differences between January 2021 and nineteenth-century North America, there are many common trends that span the *Zeitgeist* of then and of now: antebellum American national identity, as in 2021, was defined by the country’s democratic and republican ideals and institutions; a threat to the later becomes an existential threat to the very idea of America. Furthermore, the January 2021 attacks illuminated the still-contested character of the category of ‘the people’ whom democratic institutions are bound to represent and defend, in a historical moment when the American electorate is deeply, but narrowly divided. And, perhaps more than ever before in the previous century, they exposed the fragility of global democracies in the face of division and misinformation. In their future reflections on liberty, community, and the limits of individual agency, contemporary writers now, like then, are bound to interpret and weave into stories the violent convulsions of our political imaginaries, turning politics into the stuff of literature.

## NOTES

1. *The Letters of Thomas Chandler Haliburton*, Richard A. Davies, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 256.

2. See Carl Berger, *A Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

3. W. H. New, *A History of Canadian Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2003), 78.

4. See Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti, eds., *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas: Empires, Texts, Identities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Annie Coombes, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Colleen C. O’Brien, *Race, Romance, and Rebellion: Literatures of the Americas in the Nineteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press,

2013); Helmbrecht Breinig, *Hemispheric Imaginations: North American Fictions of Latin America* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2016).

5. Brickhouse, *Transamerican*, 20.

6. John Carlos Rowe, *Literary Culture and US Imperialism from the Revolution to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 23.

7. See Paul Giles, *Atlantic Republic; The American Tradition in English Literature* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006). Also Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

8. David Smith, *The Invisible Crown: The First Principle of Canadian Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 63.

9. David Smith, *The Republican Option in Canada, Past and Present* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1999), 29.

10. See David Smith, “The Senate of Canada: Renewed Life to an Original Intent,” in Nikolaj Bijleveld, Colin Grittner, David E. Smith, and Wybren Versteegen, eds., *Reforming Senates: Upper Legislative Houses in North Atlantic Small Powers 1800–Present* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 75–88.

11. See Adam Chapnick, *The Middle Power Project: Canada and the Founding of the United Nations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006); John Courtney and David E. Smith, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Arthur Andrew, *The Rise and Fall of a Middle Power: Canadian Diplomacy from King to Mulroney* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1993); Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick, eds., *Canadas of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 2007).





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