

CONNOR AND DUNCAN: THE SCOTS-PRESBYTERIAN MYTH

THE SCOTS-PRESBYTERIAN MYTH IN THE NOVELS
OF
RALPH CONNOR AND SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN

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ABSTRACT

Ralph Connor's The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days and Sara Jeannette Duncan's The Imperialist provide two different interpretations of Canada's national destiny and the role of the Scots-Presbyterians in determining that destiny. The concurrent study of these three novels, whose authors were contemporaries, provides insight into one of Canadian literature's most potent and popular myths. Few critics of these novels recognize the importance of the myth of the Scots as nation-builders and heroes. Consequently, the study of this myth is amply rewarding and deserves serious consideration.

The Introduction provides a brief Canadian literary and historical context out of which the Scottish myth has grown. Chapter One traces the development of the Scots' myth in Ralph Connor's two novels of Glengarry and attaches specific importance to the role of the protagonist in The Man from Glengarry, Ranald Macdonald, in the manifestation of that myth. Chapter Two underlines in Sara Jeannette Duncan's The Imperialist a different estimation of the Scots' place in building the Dominion also with specific reference to the novel's protagonist, Lorne Murchison.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my uncle John S. Pettigrew. This is for you, Koko.

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INTRODUCTION

What is Canada? Who is a Canadian? These are two questions which have consistently consumed the Canadian psyche since Canada attained national status. It is a question to which the answer varies with time and changing point of view. There is ample testimony to this fact in the pages of this nation's literature. Northrop Frye maintains that the Canadian public has perpetually attempted to identify itself through its literature (823). Writers of all periods have willingly obliged their reading audience and attempted to provide the definition to that all-important question. Readers of fiction read with the expectation of having their own notions vindicated, their imaginative visions validated and the popular sentiments confirmed. Therefore, the popularity of fictional works provides a fairly accurate reflection of once current ideas some of which assumed the status of myths and legends.

Fictional works were being produced in ever-increasing numbers as the nineteenth century came to a close. For example, the number of new volumes of fiction published in the 1870's had quadrupled by the 1890's (Roper 260). Today, however, much of that literature is banished to library shelves and elicits only cursory examination or

passing mention in critical works. By modern standards some of these works may seem dated, less polished, less sophisticated and of less consequence than contemporary literary works. In their time, some of the literary efforts of particular novelists earned spectacular results. For instance, in the November 1902 issue of the Westminster Magazine, the editor had this to say about the Canadian publishing industry:

"Four thousand copies is a good sale for a novel in Canada, . . . and I gather that the average is quite under two thousand. Of course, there are a few books that have passed the twenty thousand mark. . . . Ralph Connor's The Man from Glengarry in cloth passed twenty-five thousand in Canada within ten months of its publication. But that is a rare exception with a publisher." (qtd. in Roper 270-1)

This gives some indication that Canadians were indeed prepared to accept writings dealing with their country rather than relying exclusively on novels set in nations such as the United States and England.

This thesis is not an exhaustive discussion of turn-of-the-century-Canada. It is important, however, to appreciate the historic events against which Connor and Duncan wrote. It is appropriate, therefore, prior to a specific discussion of these novelists' works, to provide a brief overview of some of the most important events and circumstances which played into Canada's emerging identity and the role which the country was coming to play in the world beyond its borders. It is only within this context that readers of Canadian literature can truly appreciate the

writings of turn-of-the-century novelists, Ralph Connor and Sara Jeannette Duncan.

From Canada's inception in 1867 until 1891 Sir John A. Macdonald was virtually synonymous with Canada. During the early period of Canada's history, Macdonald held office for nineteen of those twenty-four years. Therefore, Macdonald was, almost single-handedly, responsible for the shape Canada would assume in the next quarter century although the longevity of his tenure of power clearly influenced Canada's direction through the turn-of-the-century.

In 1879 Macdonald initiated the "National Policy" which entailed the introduction of protective customs duties designed both to raise government revenue and to secure the interests of Canadian industry from foreign competition. Macdonald's economic policies were closely allied to his strategy for national unity. In addition to protective tariffs, Macdonald counted on the C.P.R. to supply the protected national market and carry settlers west (Careless 278). The idea, of course, was to consolidate national interests along what had been the familiar commercial lines of Canada's waterways but which, it was hoped, would follow the bands of steel connecting Canada's disparate regions.

Sir John A. Macdonald promised British Columbia a railway to connect it with the eastern markets in return for its entry into Confederation. Begun in 1880 and completed

at the time of the Riel insurrection in 1885, the promise of the railway was delivered two years late. It had been earnestly expected that the completion of the railway would consolidate the provinces and allow for rapid settlement of Canada's still relatively barren western expanse. The results were disappointing.

The C.P.R. did, indeed, unify the country into a geographic entity. It remained, however, for Macdonald to make his theory of national unity into the consummate fact of Canada. Unfortunately, Macdonald's strategy was founded on the idealistic belief that certain events and circumstances would combine to make his policy a practical reality. In order to succeed, then, his policy required the the completion of the railway and rapid settlement of the West. Immigration was a prescription for the success of the scheme since to have a market for the manufactured goods there first had to be people. The resulting increase in population would then supply food for central and eastern communities at the same time that industries in those communities supplied manufactured goods to the West. The idea was to create a domestic market of transcontinental and inter-provincial trade and thereby solidify common interests. Unfortunately, settlement of the West failed to materialize at the expected rate, and the axis of the strategy collapsed. The failure of immigration in western Canada was the result of events beyond Macdonald's control.

Foremost among the conditions which strangled Macdonald's expectations was the depression which had gripped the world since 1873 (Careless 285). It continued to inhibit favourable economic conditions which, consequently, hampered Canada's nation-building scheme. Since there was little economic expansion, few could afford the move to the West and, in any case, the shrunken world market provided no incentive to move there.

Furthermore, the United States, which was already considerably developed, continued to attract many settlers to its frontier. Canada became for settlers, therefore, simply a convenient access to the American West where land was still available and where opportunity beckoned. Especially in the 1890s, the exodus to the south was almost equivalent in numbers to the combination in Canada of natural increases and arriving immigrants (Careless 291). Faced with a choice to live in the United States or Canada, many apparently viewed the prospect of living in the former with more zeal.

Of more immediate concern to the Macdonald government were the sectional grievances which had taken root in various provinces as a result of the unfavourable economic conditions. The railway boom of the early 1880s helped to mitigate to some extent the economic hardships but that temporary reprieve came to an end around 1883 (Morton 96). Although the economic havoc of this period was

largely due to foreign conditions, much of the furore in the provinces was directed at the domestic policy. Manitoba, for instance, voiced its disapproval of the monopoly granted the C.P.R. which was blamed for insufferable freight charges (Cook, Saywell, and Ricker 135). Meanwhile, in the Maritimes many were disgruntled about the shriveling industry and blamed the high tariffs for their worsening plight. Arguably, the situation was exacerbated by the fact that Macdonald's vision of Canada was based on a strong role for the central government to which the provinces were, therefore, subordinated.

Sir John A.'s strategies for ensuring Canadian unity were not limited exclusively to a domestic focus. Rather, he recognized that there existed external threats to Canada's independence and unity as a nation. For instance, Canada's position on the North American continent was, in contrast to its southern neighbour, less firmly established. Accordingly, Macdonald appreciated the need to shore up its standing to prevent dissolution and annexation by the States. Maintaining ties to Britain was one means of securing an otherwise vulnerable position on the continent.

At the same time, however, Macdonald had no intention of sacrificing Canada's sovereignty to British designs of solidifying the bonds of its Empire. This meant that Macdonald had to resist any threat to national unity whether it was initiated in America or Britain. Britain's

realization in the 1890s that its comfortable margin of prosperity was threatened by the emerging economic and military powers of Germany and the United States began to reinvest interest in its colonies as a source of strength (Cook, Saywell, and Ricker 171). Imperialism was, therefore, not antithetical to nationalism but complementary. As long as Canada's position on the continent was protected, Macdonald was willing to push for an equal share, but as a partner not a dependent, in matters of the Empire.

The failure of the "National Policy" to achieve the results sought by Macdonald was almost inevitable since, as one historian puts it, the strategy "flew in the face of facts" (Morton 121). Exterior forces and circumstances in the latter part of the nineteenth century, undermined some of the guiding principles on which Macdonald's prospect of unity rested. Therefore, the "National Policy" was foredoomed not so much by domestic forces but, rather, by circumstances which prevented the realization of a domestic situation favourable to growth. Not until the turn of the century would events bring to fruition the model of Canadian unity envisaged and formulated by Sir John A. Macdonald.

The turn-of-the-century heralded great change. Canada entered a new era in which the nation would experience a complete transformation. Change was effected not because Sir Wilfrid Laurier practiced a revolutionary developmental philosophy. Laurier's ideas, in fact,

largely resembled those of Macdonald. In addition, he and Macdonald shared a similar aim: the achievement of a unified and independent nation. Significantly, it was the change in foreign economic circumstances which allowed for the realization, with few exceptions, of those policies set in motion decades earlier. Simply put, Sir Wilfrid Laurier inherited Macdonald's framework in a period conducive to its founding principles and vigorously applied himself to its consummation.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canada's seventh prime-minister, embraced the new century with the statement: "The twentieth century shall be the century of Canada and of Canadian development" (qtd. in Hamilton 228). He was, however, not alone in his optimistic assessment of Canada's future. At the time it must have seemed to many Canadians that the nation was about to enjoy the fruits of Confederation which thus far had remained unfulfilled. The confidence that Canada was coming into its own seemed justified and bred a sense of nationalism not formerly present (Creighton, DN 395). "The concept of 'Canada'," writes another historian, "was more a reality in 1900 than it had been in 1867" (Lower 408).

The optimism associated with Western Canada in the latter years of the nineteenth century was only partially realized in its achievement. Laurier devoted his energies to change that. The West continued to be regarded as the

cutting edge in the drive for transcontinental unity. Great numbers of advertisements and pamphlets, circulated throughout Europe and the United States (Morton 122) encouraged people to migrate to the Canadian West, which was idealistically portrayed as a land of great potential where the newcomer could not help but succeed. The settlement of the West was placed in the competent hands of Laurier's newly appointed Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton (Careless 303), who proceeded to renew interest in the West.

Immigrants converged on western settlements. Donald Creighton notes that in a period of ten years (1901-1911) roughly one million of the the two million immigrants in Canada established themselves in homesteads throughout the prairie provinces and British Columbia (DN 411). Canada was to witness a magnitude of Western expansion and growth unequalled to that date. Also, by 1896 the American frontier had been exhausted (Cook, Saywell, and Ricker 157). Therefore, the migratory trend to the south reversed itself as Americans moved into the expanse of the Canadian West.

Particularly in western Canada the increased immigration was beginning to alter the racial composition of the nation. While Anglo-Saxons and French-Canadians continued to predominate, people of other ethnic backgrounds were diversifying the racial stock of the West. The countries from which these immigrants were coming included

among others Italy, Austria, Sweden, Russia, Poland and Germany (Careless 304). This increasing percentage of non-Anglo-Saxon peoples emigrating to Canada was to continue throughout the first decade of the twentieth century (Woodsworth 22-9). The cosmopolitan tradition had arrived.

In the first years of the twentieth century the major factor which had plagued Macdonald's nation-building scheme in the previous decades, the foreign market, was the primary contributor to its resuscitation. As the world-wide depression eased and European nations continued their process of industrialization, the markets for Canadian wheat expanded. The response to vaster markets triggered a wheat boom (Morton 121). The utopian vision of the West so predominant thirty years earlier was rejuvenated amidst a wave of general prosperity. Macdonald's emphasis on the importance of the West had been confirmed too late for him to reap the benefits. The influx of people to the West led to the creation in 1905 of two new provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Finally, it seemed, Canada's boat had come in.

While the flow of immigrants to the West and its consequent growth tended to overshadow other developments, Canada's economy diversified considerably during the Laurier years. For instance, interest in the nation's other natural resources increased. In Ontario and Quebec hydro-electric power industries were conceived. Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia rapidly developed their timber and pulp

trades. Mining of precious and non-precious metals took flight in Northern Ontario, and gold was discovered in the Yukon (Cook, Saywell, and Ricker 164). Furthermore, Canadian and manufacturing interests continued to thrive behind the protective barriers of the tariffs.

Other questions about the future of the nation's development occupied Canadians' minds. There was, for instance, renewed interest in Canada's role in the Empire. Could this be, in fact, "Canada's century?" Clearly, many expressions of imperial loyalty were founded on utopian optimism about the role Canada would be relegated in the Empire (Berger, SP 260-1). "Canadian imperialism," explains Carl Berger, "was the emotion evoked, not by the actual attainment of power, but by the anticipation of it" (260). Imperial connection was seen primarily as a vehicle to greater power, recognition within the Empire as a dominant force, and achievement of international prestige. Imperialism was an appeal, therefore, as much to what could or would be as it was a look back to what had been. Sara Jeannette Duncan's novel The Imperialist, which eminent historian, Carl Berger claims is "one of the most sensitive and perceptive depictions of the Canadian imperialist mentality" (SP 261), underlines the prominence of imperial relations at the turn of the century in both Canada and England. As the protagonist in The Imperialist asks confidently:

"Doesn't there come a time in the history of most families when the old folks look to the sons and daughters to keep them in touch with the times? Why shouldn't a vigorous policy of Empire be conceived by its younger nations -- who have the ultimate resources to carry it out?" (122)

Once again imperialism became one vehicle for attaining a stronger nation.

The Liberal party while sitting in opposition had advocated unrestricted reciprocity with the United States but abandoned the position as politically untenable after the 1891 election. When it assumed power its members became the exponents of imperialism. Advena Murchison refers to the reversal of policy in The Imperialist: "Imperialism in his [Sir John A.'s] time spelled Conservative, now it spells Liberal" (136). Laurier, like Macdonald before him, was not content to be dragged along on British coat tails. He reserved Canada's right to make its own decisions.

Both the preferential tariff of 1897 and Canada's position on the Boer War reflected the idea that Canada would control its own destiny. In the matter of the war Laurier agreed to send troops contingent on the understanding that they would serve as a distinct Canadian force and that after they had been outfitted the costs incurred would be undertaken by the British government. It was, then, made clear in these actions that Laurier would allow the imperial connection neither to curtail Canada's growth and development, nor impede its right to self-determination.

This, then, was the Canadian context in which Ralph Connor and Sara Jeannette Duncan were writing. Interestingly, their individual responses to it vary considerably. More specifically, their interpretations of the role played by the Presbyterian Scots in the development of the nation differ widely. The profound contrasts in their respective portraits makes the simultaneous study of these three novels important and rewarding.

Duncan and Connor were neither the first nor have they been the last to produce a social mythology of the Scots in Canada. By reason of the sheer number of his readers, however, Connor must be recognized as a prominent popularizer of the myth. In his more than twenty works of fiction, Connor, reconstructed, revised and furthered that myth. Moreover, he was able to strike a responsive chord in his reading audience and worked the vein successfully.

Doug Owram in Promise of Eden claims that "the whole myth of a utopian future remained intact in the work of western writers and promoters" (222). The importance of western Canada in the achievement of a nation permeates most of Connor's fiction. The Man from Glenarry is no exception. In that novel, the sense of rejuvenation and rebirth is almost palpable when the action shifts westward. In its expression of the promise of the West, Connor displays "overtones of a national manifest destiny and providential design" (Owram 102). For all of that, however,

it seems reasonable to assume that Connor was not intentionally creating a propaganda campaign. Connor simply responded to the buoyant expectations existing in Canada at the turn of the century. His ministerial responsibilities had carried him across the land which captivated his imaginative process in his subsequent writings. "The pictures [of the West]," Connor was to recall in his autobiography, "were from personal experience. I knew the country. I had ridden the ranges. I had pushed through the mountain passes. I had swum my bronco across its rivers" (Gordon, PA 152). It was, indeed, to this part of Canada that he was drawn, a fact supported by the east-west drive of his fiction. Northrop Frye points out that this trans-continental thrust "attracted to itself nearly everything that is heroic and romantic in Canadian tradition" (824).

Donald G. Creighton, in his Empire of the St. Lawrence certainly implies the existence of this heroic and romantic strain in his description of the fixation the St. Lawrence wielded over its travellers:

To the unfettered and ambitious, it offered a pathway to the central mysteries of the continent . . . and from the river there rose, like an exaltation, the dream of western commercial empire This was the faith of successive generations of northerners. The dream of the commercial empire of the St. Lawrence runs like an obsession through the whole of Canadian history; . . . Men lived by it, at once consoled and inspired by its promises, its whispered suggestions, and its shouted commands; and it was a force in history, not merely because of its accomplishments, but because of its shining, ever-receding possibilities. (6-7)

In a dramatic fashion, Creighton identifies the central

importance of the the east-west movement which historians regard as a realistic and credible theory of Canadian development. It seems understandable, therefore, that some of these historically documented patterns of development should give rise to modified myths of strength and courage.

The myth of the Scots' supremacy, like the northern myth, supports "the notion of a tutelary role of the stronger races in extending order and liberty to southern races" (Berger, "True North" 19). The consequences of such a belief are not difficult to fathom. Any myth that implies the predominance of a particular creed or race fosters racial elitism which, whether consciously intended or not, subordinates other races to lesser roles. Both Connor and Duncan exhibit strong racial tendencies although the manifestations of those sympathies vary.

In making that observation it may be useful, for instance, to consider briefly what place the French-Canadians and the native races achieve in this model of nation-building. The answer, of course, is that both are either omitted altogether or passed over in Connor's and Duncan's novels. Mrs. Murchison's comment in The Imperialist about the indians of the Moneida reserve is disturbing in its implications: "'But I thought they were all gone long ago'" (242). As an entity they are apparently of little consequence in the general scheme of things. Similarly, in Connor's two novels The Man from Glengarry and

Glengarry School Days the indians are simply not visible as though they did not exist. Also, the boisterous and aggressive French-Canadian in The Man from Glengarry is made to assimilate himself to the moral framework of the dominant Scots. And in The Imperialist the most visible characters are Dr. Drummond, the Murchisons, Horace Williams, and Hugh Finlay, all Scots and Presbyterians.

There are, however, significant differences in these two authors' impressions of the Scots' place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most myths are either based on solid accomplishment, or conform to popular notions, and the myth of the Scots in Canada owes its prominence to both these stimuli. Historically the Scots did play a significant role in Canada's growth; therefore, the myth must be recognized as one expression of national self-consciousness, and one interpretation of the forces engaged in building a nation.

CHAPTER I
RALPH CONNOR

Ralph Connor, a name few now recognize, was Canada's first internationally acclaimed novelist. Within four years of the appearance of his first novel, Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks, in 1897, the combined issues of his first three novels figured somewhere around five million copies (Gordon, PA 150). In her compilation of two decades of best-sellers, literary historian Mary Vipond notes that from 1899 to 1918, with the exception of six intervening years, at least one of Ralph Connor's novels was a best-seller (113-9). Such a feat is remarkable for any author and more so for an individual who, by his own admission, "had not the slightest ambition to be a writer" (Gordon PA 150-1). The popularity of Connor's works during the first decade of the twentieth century is a testimony to the confidence and earnest faith that his readers placed in the vision of the emerging Dominion which he offered them.

Of his more than twenty-seven novels The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days remain his most popular and best remembered works of fiction. Connor's fourth novel, Glengarry School Days, is probably the one most often associated with the name Ralph Connor and derives its

creative force from a series of recollections of his own childhood home. Although its setting and subject matter closely resembles that of The Man from Glengarry, its narrative structure bears more similarities to that of Connor's first two novels. Glengarry School Days unfolds, therefore, as a combination of Connor's most vivid and realistic repertoire, the Glengarry manse, and his most successful literary technique, loosely inter-connected episodic sketches.

Undoubtedly, the fact that these two novels deal, almost exclusively, with the region most familiar to Connor, accounts to a large extent for their survival. Both The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days were reissued in the New Canadian Library Series in 1960 and 1975 respectively. Where critical material on Connor exists, these two novels usually earn the most attention. It may also be significant that The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days were two of only six novels to which Connor specifically refers in his autobiography. Looking back on the enthusiastic reception of The Man from Glengarry, Connor attributes part of its success to its realistic reproduction of the Glengarry region (Gordon, PA 153).

At the outset of his literary career Connor's "sole purpose," he later recalled, "was to awaken my church in Eastern Canada to the splendor of the mighty religious adventure being attempted by the missionary pioneers in the

Canada beyond the Great Lakes" (Gordon, PA 148). As Connor's reputation as a writer developed, however, he resolved in subsequent works to offer more than religious rhetoric couched in a fictional tale of adventure and romance. For instance, his purpose, as he sets down in his preface to The Man from Glengarry, was to capture "the manner of life and the type of character . . . [and] to so picture these men and their times that they may not drop quite out of mind" (xiii). He was referring, of course, to the Scottish shantymen along the Ottawa River. S. Ross Beharriell, in his introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of Glengarry School Days, submits the following:

It was his [Connor's] intention to make readable fiction out of the vividly remembered details of his own childhood and at the same time give to his contemporaries and to future generations an historically accurate picture of the many unique facets of everyday life in Glengarry at the time when he was a child, forty years before.
(n. pag.)

The Connor novels discussed in this chapter provide a faithful picture of the Glengarry region in the years pre-dating Confederation. Beharriell further claims in his introduction that because of its record of early scenes of pioneer Ontario, "Glengarry School Days is a rare and valuable document of Canadian social history" (n. pag.). Evidence of the authentic rendering of Glengarry is seen in chapters of The Man from Glengarry such as "The Sugaring-off" and "The Logging Bee" and in the descriptions of the deepole and the shinny matches in Glengarry School Days, to

name only a few. These episodic sketches recount, in a detailed and realistic fashion, various activities once common to the region.

Connor's scope, however, transcends a simple regional portrayal. John Lennox concedes that "Gordon gave to readers in the East and the West a vision of unity and continuity, in one regional landscape that opened into a national panorama" (41). His imaginative vision extends to embrace the entire nation. Certainly The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days reflect Connor's patriotism and buoyant optimism about Canada's future. And, while his idealism tends at times to overshadow or belittle the difficulties involved in, for instance, the development of the West, it remains patently clear that this is simply a communication of his faith that the Scots and the nation would prevail. As Connor submits in his preface to The Foreigner, Canada would witness the emergence of a "race greater than the greatest of them all" (Gordon n. pag.).

In all likelihood, Connor's portrait of the Dominion conforms to the views of his contemporary readers. Consequently, in The Man from Glengarry the focus is on the continuation of the West as Canada's gateway to greatness. Doug Owram in Promise of Eden argues that interest in the potential of the west "initiated a utopian tradition that, with suitable modifications, has continued to be expressed in western writing through much of the twentieth century"

(223). Connor, therefore, formed a part of that tradition. There seems no reason to doubt that Connor, himself, subscribed to the jubilant assurances of western potential which characterize his fiction.

While Connor recreates an accurate tapestry of the Glengarry region, he initiates, concurrently, a series of interrelated and mutually sustaining myths. Paramount among * these is the idea that the Scots are destined to be prominent in the building of the nation. He enlarges upon the characteristics such as strength and virtue of his Highlander personalities. Connor creates, therefore, a form of manifest destiny for the Scotsmen in Canada. Edward A. McCourt, in his work The Canadian West in Fiction states that as a whole Connor's novels

express a serene confidence in the ability of the Briton -- and particularly the North Briton -- to bear the White Man's burden in the new land of the West and to extend control over the lesser breeds without the law in a manner beneficial to both ruler and ruled. (27)

Furthermore, Connor manipulates the setting in order to reinforce the distinctive qualities of the Scots.

The rich texture which grows out of this combination is a product, then, of a detailed memorialization and realistic rendering of the past.

Connor's ability to interweave fictional tales and factual events is crucial to an understanding of the process of myth-making in the novels. The fusion of otherwise antithetical elements informs many of the chapters in both

novels. Often he entwines vivid documentary style explanations with colourful details, the object of which is to reinforce the predominant strength and virtue of the Glengarry shantymen.

The following brief examination of a passage from "The Logging Bee" chapter in The Man from Glengarry illustrates and defines more clearly the relationship between the real and fictional worlds of Connor's novels. This chapter is one of the finest examples in either novel of the real and the imaginary coexisting. Connor manages to work in non-fictional detail into the fictional fabric of the whole novel. For example, the following excerpt integrates real and remembered aspects of the bee with mythic highlights or emphasis:

The men with the axes went first, chopping up the half-burned logs into lengths suitable for the burning-piles, clearing away the brushwood, and cutting through the big roots of the fire-eaten stumps so that they might more easily be pulled. Then followed the teams with their logging-chains, hauling the logs to the piles, jerking out and drawing off the stumps whose huge roots stuck up high into the air, and drawing great heaps of brush-wood to aid in reducing the heavy logs to ashes. At each log-pile stood a man with a hand-spike to help the driver to get the log into position, a work requiring strength and skill, and above all, a knowledge of the ways of logs which comes only by experience. It was at this work that Macdonald Bhain shone. With his mighty strength he could hold steady one end of a log until the team could haul the other into its place. (116)

In the first part of the passage, Connor calls attention to some of the requisite elements in a successful stump-pulling. At the same time, however, Connor uses the event to exhibit the strength and endurance of the shantymen in

the showdown with the forest. In the final three lines, therefore, the reader is focused on Macdonald's apparent superhuman abilities. In addition, one-sentence accolades such as "It was at this work that Macdonald Bhain shone" (116); "In stump-hauling, young Aleck McGregor was an expert" (116); and, "Ranald was a born horseman" (117) are interspersed throughout this chapter.

In his preface to the first edition of The Man from Glengarry, Connor writes: "Not wealth, not enterprise, not energy, can build a nation into sure greatness, but men, and only men with the fear of God in their hearts, and with no other" (xiii). For Connor the men who are moulding the nation into a distinct entity are those nation-builders of heroic proportions: the Scots of Glengarry. Accordingly it comes as no surprise that Connor was to explain that both The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days grew "out of Glengarry soil, out of Glengarry humanity" (Gordon, PA 152). The actions and deeds of these Glengarrians underline the character of a people who, Connor insists, were "building more than homes, and making more than farms. They were building and making a nation" (Gordon, PA 13).

The early part of The Man from Glengarry, especially the first chapters, is spent developing the collective portrait of a people whose life "bred in them hardiness of frame, alertness of sense, readiness of resource, endurance, superb self-reliance, a courage that grew with peril, and

withal a certain wildness which at times deepened into ferocity" (MFG 3-4). The events of the first chapters are punctuated by observations like the following: "Of all the shanty-men of the Ottawa, the men of Glengarry -- and of Glengarry men, Macdonald's gang -- were easily first" (MFG 4). Likewise, a narrative statement in Glengarry School Days describes them as,

a people simple of heart and manners, but sturdy, clean living, and clear thinking, with their brittle Highland courage toughened to endurance by their long fight with the forest, and with a self-respect born of victory over nature's grimmest of terrors. (25-6)

Connor creates for his readers the picture of the individual shantyman as a veritable tower of strength. *
Donald Macdonald, who is described as "a giant in size and * strength, a prince of broad-axe men, at home in the woods, sure-footed and daring on the water" (MFG 4), defines more specifically the near herculean magnificence of the shantyman. His physical characterization, worthy of a mythological figure, further exemplifies the awesome dimension of the Glengarry shantyman:



he stood, his great head and shoulders towering above the crowd, his tawny hair and beard falling around his face like a great mane, his blue eyes gleaming from under his shaggy eyebrows like livid lightning. (MFG 13)

Connor carves out the outline of a people who, if not * superhuman, are clearly elevated to a plane of supremacy. The often emphasized characteristics of size and strength are paramount to Connor's depiction of the Highlanders'

fortitude and supreme role in nation-building. That Macdonald's gang vanquishes Murphy's bunch in the first chapter is yet another indication of Connor's belief in the Scots' pre-eminence and superiority.

Connor's portrayal of women in Glenгарry School Days and The Man from Glenгарry reflects the patriarchal order associated with the Scottish clan. In Glenгарry School Days, for example, the narrator informs the reader that "Donald Finch was an obstinate man, with a man's love of authority, and a Scotchman's sense of his right to rule in his own house" (93). Similarly, "After the expulsion of the master," notes the narrator in Glenгарry School Days, "the Twentieth School fell upon evil days, for the trustees decided that it would be better to try 'gurl' teachers" (151). Furthermore, when the minister's wife tells her husband that all is not well with their son, Hughie, the minister replies,

"Well, I don't wonder at that. I don't see how any boy of spirit could take much pleasure in that kind of a school. The boys are just wasting their time, and worse than that, they have lost all the old spirit. . . . I am not going to put up with those chits of girls teaching any longer." (GSD 185)

Nevertheless, the women of Connor's world, regardless of their rank within the family and the clan, are cast in heroic roles. While his characterizations of the  Glenгарry males tend to emphasize physical size and  strength, the women are drawn in outlines which reinforce their spiritual and moral foundation. Connor's depictions

of women reflect the kind of sincere and well-meaning but shortsighted idealizations which pervade his fiction. They ^{are} living martyrs who toil ceaselessly on behalf of others without concern for themselves. Connor's idealism here is closely allied to his own experiences. For example, his personal observation that "less colorful doubtless are the lives of mothers, wives, sisters, but more truly heroic and more fruitful in the upbuilding of human character and in the shaping of a nation's history" (Gordon, PA 14), is reflected in his fiction. Many of his women, suggests one critic, owe their conception to the memory of his mother (McCourt 23) whom Connor described as "a gay and gallant saint" (Gordon, PA 11).

Connor's seeming reluctance to create immoral or at least deficient women has been catalogued by a few critics. Edward A. McCourt in his early appraisal of Connor's works insisted that his women "were more limited in range than the men" (23). Moreover, despite what he calls Connor's "highest motivation -- his sanctification of womanhood," John Lennox argues that his fantastic depiction of Mrs. Murray is unequalled in Canadian literature (40).

In both The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days Connor remains committed to an idealized portrait of women. Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Finch each personifies an example of the consummate woman. These two seraphic beings form the noble and moral touchstone for their families and

their community. Each is the image of virtue, the paragon of self-sacrifice, and the symbol of selflessness. On two occasions we bear witness to Mrs. Murray's dedication to her role as the minister's wife:

She gave herself without stint to her husband's people, with never a thought of self-pity or self-praise. By day and by night she laboured for her husband and family and for her people, for she thought them hers. (MFG 23)

She lived to serve, and the where and how were not hers to determine. So, with bright face and brave heart, she met her days and faced the battle. And scores of women and men are living better and braver lives because they had her as their minister's wife. (MFG 24)

John Lennox refers to her as "a female christ, forever crucified and crucifying herself, for others" (40). Certainly her philosophy of life appears to substantiate Lennox's observation. On one occasion, for example, she responds to her nephew's query about the demands of her life in the manse: "Fun, as you say, passes; music stops; books get done with; but those other things, the things that Ranald and I have seen, will go on long after my poor body is laid away" (MFG 225). Similarly, in Glengarry School Days Mrs. Finch, despite her ailing health, labours unceasingly for the benefit of her family:

The whole establishment, without and within, gave token of the unremitting care of one organizing mind, for, from dark to dark, while others might have their moments of rest and careless ease, . . . "the little mother" . . . was ever on her guard, and all the machinery of house and farm moved smoothly and to purpose because of that unsleeping care. . . . And through it all her face remained serene, and her voice flowed in quiet tones. (92)

These two women are in no small way responsible for the development of Ranald and Hughie into sturdy and upstanding members of the community. Their respective efforts on behalf of others assure each of them a central position in the two novels.

Because Ranald is the main character, his place in The Man from Glengarry is impossible to overlook. Ranald is, of course, the "Man" in the novel's title. More than being the protagonist, he is an important figure in perpetuating the mythical dimension of The Man from Glengarry. And, as Roy Daniells rightfully acknowledges, "The Hero, Ranald Macdonald, remains 'the man from Glengarry', individualized only by the intensity with which the common flame burns in him" (Daniells 50). Ranald possesses all the finer attributes of the Glengarry mould. He is a product, therefore, of the influences of his father's and uncle's strength and Mrs. Murray's moral fibre.

In The Man from Glengarry Ranald epitomizes Connor's upstanding Canadian. Like his father, he inherits the role of the Highlanders' figurehead. He "embodies," Beharriell claims in his introduction to The Man from Glengarry, "the whole of the Glengarry spirit" (xii). Ranald's fellow clansmen greet his successes and achievements with appropriate pride since they implicitly rise to prominence with him. Yet, he is perhaps a more well-rounded clone, an amalgamation of both his father's physical strength and Mrs.

Murray's spiritual conviction. Ranald's physical description, when he truly comes into his own, bespeaks his function as the titular head of his community.

[He was] such a man as a sculptor would have loved to behold. Straight as a column he stood two inches over six feet, but of such proportions that seeing him alone, one would never have guessed his height. His head and neck rose above his square shoulders with perfect symmetry and poise. His dark face, tanned now to a bronze, with features clear-cut and strong, was lit by a pair of dark brown eyes, honest, fearless, and glowing with a slumbering fire. . . . The lines of his mouth told of self-control, and the cut of his chin proclaimed a will of iron, and altogether, he bore himself with an air of such quiet strength and cool self-confidence that men never feared to follow where he led. (MFG 217-8)

If muscular Christianity is Connor's message, then Ranald is * the muscular Christian, purveyor of sound principles and upstanding values. The novel traces his development along lines parallel to the nation's evolution. Beharriell in his introduction to The Man from Glengarry notes that Ranald's acme occurs, not surprisingly, at the same time as the nation becomes a true Dominion (xii). Such parallels are, it seems, not unconsciously made by Connor. Just as Canada must pass through its adolescent stage so, too, Ranald becomes a man only after facing a requisite number of challenges and obstacles.

Ranald's departure from the manse does not alter the confidence that, no matter what hurdles may present themselves, he will continue to practise the teachings of his moral mentor, Mrs. Murray. Indeed, Ranald himself believes in his own abilities as he tells Maimie:

For a mile down the concession road . . . he told Maimie some of his aims and hopes. He did not mean to be a farmer nor a lumberman. He was going to the city, and there to make his fortune. He did not say it in words, but his tone, his manner, everything about him, proclaimed his confidence that some day he would be a great man. (MFG 143)

Once Ranald arrives in the city he quickly sets about fulfilling his ambitions. He is able to establish himself as a prominent member of the elite Albert Club where, as the narrator remarks,

He never drank, never played for money, and he never had occasion to use words in the presence of men that would be impossible before their mothers and sisters; and there was a quaint, old-time chivalry about him that made him a friend of the weak and helpless, and the champion of women. (MFG 217)

And when Ranald inevitably confronts his sworn enemy, Lenoir, not only does he extricate him from a brawl with the Gatineau gang, but Ranald subsequently forgives him for the assault on his father. Furthermore, Ranald sticks up for his French companion, Rouleau, when Lieutenant De Lacy strikes him a "coward's blow" (MFG 201) following a poker match. When Ranald takes up employ at the logging firm of Raymond and St. Clair he finds himself in a predicament wherein he must choose between avoiding a disclosure which potentially could thwart a sale, or remaining faithful to those values instilled in him. Ranald's choice of the latter option reconfirms the fact that he is made of finer mettle than the average individual.

True to the heroic mould Ranald succeeds in carving a new social order out of the wilderness of the West.

Although there is considerable objection, on the part of commercial interests, to Ranald's altruistic introduction of reading-rooms and libraries for the lumbermen, he persists in his philanthropic ways. This is to be expected since, as one of Ranald's admirers confides to Mrs. Murray, "He will do it as it should be done or not at all" (MFG 251). Sir John A. Macdonald confides in Ranald that he will be intrinsic to Canada's future success: "We want to make this Dominion a great empire, . . . and we are going to do it, but you and men like you in the West must do your part" (MFG 279).

Ranald's actions are, of course, exemplary as Sir John A. notes. By implication, then, Ranald is invested with the qualities that make for great leaders. The source of those notable endowments is the clan which physically he has left behind but which, in spirit, accompanies him. Hence, Ranald's moral and physical fortitude is nourished by his connection to the Scottish community in the East.

First and foremost, the Glengarry folk are bound together by a fealty to the clan. Their loyalty reflects a communal emphasis. The bonds of blood are highlighted by the shantymen who follow Donald Bhain Macdonald, the boss of the shantymen, "into the woods, onto a jam, or into a fight with equal joyousness and devotion" (MFG 4). The clan structure closely resembles the smaller, co-operative family unit:

The days were filled with work, for they each had their share to do, and bore the sole responsibility for its being well done. If the cows failed in their milk, or the fat cattle were not up to the mark, the father felt the reproach as his; to Billy Jack fell the care and handling of the horses; Thomas took charge of the pigs, and the getting of wood and water for the house; little Jessac had her daily task of "sorting the rooms." (GSD 93-4)

The common needs of the Highlanders foster an environment more conducive to co-operative effort and spirit thus reducing or eliminating the tradition of factional hostility. Therefore, the necessity of carving an existence out of the land reinforces the historic intra-clan allegiance and also engenders inter-clan harmony.

Ultimately, and least surprising, religion plays a * prominent and vital role. Because religion is a "center of reference" (Daniells 48) for Connor, it is a binding force for both the individual and the community. Presbyterianism, that "solemn and serious matter, a thing of life and death" (Gordon, PA 25), is simply ingrained in the Highlanders' experience; it is "set forth in its true light," Connor declares in his autobiography, "as a synonym of all that is virile, straight, honorable and withal tender in true men and women" (Gordon PA 150). In the preface to The Man from Glengarry Connor asserts that "deeper than all, the mark that reached down to their hearts' core was that of their faith. . . . It was the biggest thing in them" (xiii). John Craven, the young replacement teacher in Glengarry School Days, notes in his letters to his friend, Ned Maitland, the

pivotal role of religion in the Highlanders'

lives:

"the inhabitants are. . . 'tremenjous' in all their ways, more particularly in their religion. Religion is all over the place. . . , and on Sunday the 'tremenjousness' of their religion is overwhelming. Every other interest in life, as meat, drink, and dress, are purely incidental to the main business of the day." (264)

Finally, Ranald's conclusion about Mrs. Murray's devout

practices substantiates the importance of Christian charity

in day to day life:

With the minister's wife religion was a part of her every-day living, and seemed to be as easily associated with her pleasure as with anything else about her. It was so easy, so simple, so natural, that Ranald could not help wondering if, after all, it was the right kind. (MFG 64)

Like religion, violence is a basic part of Connor's fictional palette. The violent outbursts can be very graphic displays of ferocity, a fact established by the following passage from The Man from Glengarry:

Once, twice, Macdonald's fists fell. LeNoir's right arm hung limp by his side and he staggered back to the wall helpless. Without an instant's delay, Macdonald had him by the throat . . . LeNoir tried to speak, but his voice came in horrible gurgles. His face was a ghastly greenish hue, lined with purple and swollen veins, his eyes standing out of his head, and his breath sobbing in raucous gasps. (17)

Critics speculate on reasons for the violence given the seeming incompatibility of violence with novels which resound with Christian charity and virtue. Those who have noted this side of Connor's novels speculate on reasons for the outbursts of conflict. John Lennox proposes, for instance,

that violence is an essential element of Connor's doctrine of "muscular Christianity" (24) that combination of moral and physical battles. Roy Daniells argues "that violence and competitiveness are instinctive and therefore inexplicable" (50). Both these arguments hold sway and more so because of Connor's comments on the issue.

It seems clear that violence is an important facet of the portrait Connor intended the reader to witness. In reminiscences of his own life, Connor acknowledges and chronicles the Highlanders' awesome exploits:

The tales of the fierce old days survived down into my time, stirring my youthful heart with profound regret that deeds so heroically splendid should all be bad. For in spite of the Great Revival we were of the same race, with ancient lust of battle in our blood. . . . A wild lot -- Glengarry men -- as wild as the wild creatures of the forest in which they lived, fearing no man or beast or devil. (Gordon, PA 13-4)

Furthermore, he recalls, with glowing appreciation, the triumphant physical feats of his elder brother (Gordon, PA 14). He never avoided the violence simply because "the Glengarry folk were a fighting people" (Gordon, PA 17).

In all fairness, however, the violence in his novels * is not gratuitous. Its purpose, rather, is to show good vanquishing evil, to have justice not only served but seen graphically to have been served. The Glengarry shantyman, for example, refuses to fight unless "'necessity was laid upon him'" (MFG 5). In Glengarry School Days Hughie fights his arch-rival, Foxy Ross, only after Foxy delivers the first blow. Furthermore, in the final round of shinny

against the front team John Craven, master of the Twentieth school, sends Jimmie Ben crashing to the ice in retaliation for his unprovoked attack on Hughie. By focusing on the moral reasons for the blood letting, Connor effectively avoids dramatizing senseless, carnal violence. Therefore, the physical encounters constitute only part of the larger moral battles being waged in the novels.

Contests of brain and brawn are integral factors in the Glengarrrian character and experience. Hence, even seemingly mundane contests like the spelling bee in Glengarry School Days are described in terms more appropriate to a battlefield than the schoolhouse. The children, for example, "fight" in the "battle" until they are defeated and "swept off the field" (19). Similarly, in the games of shinny, members of the Twentieth school team, having whipped themselves into "decent fighting trim" (286), vanquish their "enemy" and are heralded as victorious "heroes" (287).

The Highlanders' physical prowess which gives rise to the displays of violence serves them well in their battle to establish homesteads and earn a living. This energy, which might otherwise be used to destructive ends, such as skirmishes among clans, is channeled instead into productive ventures. Their ability to do so enables the Glengarrrians to weather the hardships, confront the challenges, and overcome the obstacles which present themselves in the land

of their adopted home.

The land, and specifically the forest, forms an essential part of Connor's mythic presentation. It is a canvas upon which Connor paints the portrait of his Highlanders. Here, the setting is used once again to amplify the Scots' determination and willfulness to persevere. Their relationship with the forest and the land is necessarily ambiguous. On the one hand, as lumbermen they owe their livelihood to the profits reaped from the forest each winter. On the other, the forest is regarded as a daunting obstacle to large scale crop harvesting. Given this seeming paradoxical perception of the forest, Connor sets out a bipartite reaction to the forest. It is, therefore, described both as an awesome adversary and as an inspiring, beneficent and regenerative force.

The central and perpetual presence of the forest in the lives of the shantymen and their families is conspicuous throughout both The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days. Only occasionally "the forest loses its conquered appearance" (MFG 20). Otherwise it

dominates everything. There is forest everywhere. It lines up close and thick along the road, and here and there quite over-shadows it. It crowds in upon the little farms and shuts them off from one another and from the world outside, and peers in through the little windows of the log houses looking so small and lonely, but so beautiful in their forest frames. (MFG 20)

The forest's impressive and overwhelming supremacy, captured

so concisely in The Man from Glengarry by such passages, is echoed in Glengarry School Days:

North and south in front of the school the road ran through the deep forest of great pines, with underbrush of balsam and spruce and silver-birch; but from this main road ran little blazed paths that led to the farm clearings where lay the children's homes. Here and there, set in their massive frames of dark green forest, lay the little farms, the tiny fenced fields surrounding the little log houses and barns. (25)

The Highlanders "hew from the solid forest homes for themselves and their children" (MFG 3) creating seemingly inconsequential fortresses by comparison to the untamed forest around them. The necessity of clearing spaces for their homes creates a "common lifelong conflict with the forest" (MFG 3) which is, therefore, "dreaded and hated" (MFG 4).

Some good comes, however, of the Highlanders' struggle with the forest. As Connor sets out in Postscript to Adventure, "The clearing of the land was desperately hard work. . . . [thus] they learned by experience the need and the worth of co-operative work" (Gordon 12). In the "Logging Bee," the reader's attention is drawn to the difficulties intrinsic in the clearing of the land and the bee underscores the spirit of oneness among its participants. Camerons and Macdonalds, traditional rivals, work side by side both intent on achieving the same goal. The contest between Ranald's and Aleck McRae's horse teams reflects the spirited but generally amicable rivalries which emerge throughout the course of the bee.

Also present in both novels is the description of the forest not as a threatening element but, rather, as a realm of refuge and beauty. Indeed, Connor's picture of the forest and the land reveals a more pastoral and romantic bias. These descriptions of the forest remain, however, essentially mythical. In The Man from Glengarry, for instance, as Spring approaches the earth "knows that soon she will be seen, dancing her shy dances in the sunny spaces of the leafless woods" (58); and, with the onset of springtime,

the buds begin to swell and thrill with the new life, and when it is broad noon, all through the woods a thousand voices pass the glad word that winter's day is gone and . . . the bright, warm rays trickle down through the interlacing branches, bathing the buds and twigs and limbs and trunks and flooding all the woods. (58)

Into the forest in the west the sun was descending in gorgeous robes of glory. The treetops caught the yellow light, and gleamed like the golden spires of some great and fabled city. . . . through which the sky quivered like molten gold. (22)

The bare woods were filled with the tangled rays of light from the setting sun. . . . [T]he light fell sweet and silent about the bare trunks, filling the long avenues under the arching maple limbs with a yellow haze. (59)

It was springtime and the parks and avenues were in all the dainty splendour of their new leaves. The afternoon May sun was flooding the city with gold and silver light, and all the air was tremulous with the singing of birds. (246)

Similarly, in Glengarry School Days the lighter side of the forest is made manifest on several notable occasions:

Over the treetops the rays of the sun were beginning to shoot their rosy darts up into the sky, and to flood the

clearing with light that sparkled and shimmered upon the frost particles, glittering upon and glorifying snow and trees, and even the stumps and fences. (108)

High above [the] lesser trees towered the white pines, lifting their great, tufted crests in lonely grandeur, seeming like kings among meaner men. (88-9).

Furthermore, to the children of the Twentieth school the forest is "an enchanted land, peopled, not by fairies, elves, and other shadowy beings of fancy, but with living things" (GSD 13).

Another intrinsic part of Connor's myth of the land * is its apparent ability to purify the mind and relax the spirit. As the narrator in Glengarry School Days claims of nature,

The sympathetic silence of the trees, the aromatic airs that breathe through the shady spaces, the soft mingling of broken lights -- these all combine to lay upon the spirit a soothing balm, and bring to the heart peace. (194)

Nature's purifying power touches Hughie as he labours with Donald Finch in the potato fields:

The sweet, sunny air, and the kindly, wholesome earth and honest hard work were life and health to mind and heart and body. It is wonderful how the touch of the kindly mother earth cleanses the soul from its unwholesome humors. The hours that Hughie spent in working with the clean, red earth seemed somehow to breathe virtue into him. (GSD 214)

The children long "to feel the hug of the [deepole] waters, their soothing caress, their healing touch!" (GSD 30).

Ranald is likewise reinvigorated by his brief return to the manse after an extended period in the city:

The open air with the suggestion of the coming fall, the great forests with their varying hues of green and

brown, yellow and bright red, and all bathed in the smoky purple light of the September sun, these all combined to bring to Ranald's heart the rest and comfort and peace that he so sorely needed. (MFG 280)

While Connor's impression of the forest and the land in the Glengarry region fluctuates between friend and foe, it remains an important element in the myth he constructs around the shantymen. His focus on the land of Western Canada heavily favours the regenerative, harmonizing aspects and overlooks the threatening elements.

Ultimately, Connor's vision extends to the Canadian West where his idealism takes root and flourishes. J. King Gordon, Ralph Connor's son, asserts in his introduction to Postscript to Adventure that "He [Ralph Connor] never ceased to be a Westerner" (ix). Connor continued to believe in the promise of the West. The West is a source, in his novels, of unparalleled idealism. Critics almost invariably concur that Connor's novels provide us with what Frank W. Watt terms a "full blown myth of the West" (14). Thompson and Thompson contend, in their essay "Ralph Connor and the Canadian Identity," that for Connor "the West is the exclusive cradle of the new Canadian race" (166). John Lennox explains that by around 1897 "the West had assumed, in the minds of many Canadians, the mythical dimensions of a promised land" (17). Therefore, as Dick Harrison reminds readers, that among other writers, Connor "voiced no more than the popular conviction" (82). In addition, writers of the era, Connor among them, "chose to dramatize the promise

rather than the threat of the unnamed country. They had a popular audience and they were developing the first dominant vision of the new land" (Harrison 72). Roy Daniells concedes that at least some of Connor's creeds were shared by numerous Canadians (52). Thompson and Thompson claim that "Connor captured the imagination of his countrymen . . . because his novels confronted and answered the questions which dominated the English-Canadian mind during the first decades of this century" (160).

Connor's portrayal, then, likely expressed the aspirations of his reading audience, hence his imagination created Canada's own Eden. That is not to say that he intentionally misrepresented life in the West. Doubtless, he shared the optimism of his readers and contemporaries and believed in the ideal so prevalent in his novels. Like the Canadian expansionists, whose conceptions Doug Owram sets forth in Promise of Eden, Connor arguably

viewed the northwest as a social tabula rasa . . . [where] the physical opportunity for well-being and economic power was paralleled by the opportunity to build a society more closely approximating social ideals than any that had gone before. Canada had a chance to create a social order equal to the prospects of the vast land which it would dominate. (135)

Connor had come to see the West as "the symbol of a fully *matured Canada 'a mari usque ad mare'" (Lennox 24). He was reinforcing a stereotypical pattern which had already been placed on the Canadian West. This oasis of opportunity with its fruitful rivers, extensive timberland and great

potential becomes, for Connor, a "great and wonderful new country . . . rich in color and alive with movement" (Gordon, PA 150).

That optimistic and sometimes romantic interpretation of the West is reflected in The Man from Glengarry. From the myth of the west he fashions a coincidental ideal which foresees the Scots, and Ranald in particular, as the race worthy of the virgin land. Mr. Blair, a British Columbia MPP, provides "a rapturous description of the marvels of the young province, its scenery, its resources, its climate, its sport" (MFG 268). Furthermore, Ranald's remarks and observations about the West express the fervent hopes for its potential growth. Everywhere, there is evidence of the West as an untamed land of limitless potential. And as Ranald quietly says to Colonel Thorp, "'I have been through a good part of it [the West], . . . and I am convinced that here we have the pick of Canada, and I venture to say of the American Continent'" (MFG 270). When Ranald hears of his employers' plans to quit the province, he exclaims, "'Well, Colonel, here's my word, . . . if the company wish to withdraw, they may do so, but my future is bound up with that of the West, and I have no fear that it will fail me. I stake my all upon the West'" (MFG 272). It is Ranald's insistent belief in the West, and specifically in British Columbia, which propels him to Ottawa as a spokesman to press for the consolidation of the

Dominion:

It was Ranald's speech, everyone said, that turned the tide. His calm logic made clear the folly of even considering separation; his knowledge of, and his unbounded faith in, the resources of the province, and more than all, his impassioned picturing of the future of the great Dominion reaching from ocean to ocean, knit together by ties of common interest, and a common loyalty that would become more vividly real when the provinces had been brought together by the promised railway. (MFG 271)

Ranald's speech may "read to us," as Watt suggests, "like propaganda for the Canadian Pacific Railway," (13) but it expressed a dominant and popular view of the empire.

The Scots have little competition in the West. Connor steers clear of any outright expression of anti-American sentiment. For the most part there is an indifference to American interests. Perhaps, however, it is significant that it is an American based company, the British-American Lumber and Coal Company, which exploits the resources of western Canada. The only visible example of America is the amenable Colonel Thorpe who is unmistakably American: "The colonel, a tall, raw-boned, typical 'Uncle Sam,' even to the chin whisker and quid of tobacco, had an eye like an eagle" (MFG 232). In addition, the Colonel is not overwhelmed by pragmatic considerations attendant to business matters. When, for instance, Mrs. Murray defends Ranald's actions on behalf of his employees, Colonel Thorp is conciliatory: "'You must not be too hard on us. . . . So far as I am concerned, I think you are right, but it is a hard thing to make businessmen look at

these things in anything but a business way'" (MFG 258). With Colonel Thorp acting as a buffer between the company's material interests and Ranald's beneficent motivations, Ranald is a match for the company. It is clear, therefore, that the nation's development is less threatened by American influence than by negative aspects of British tradition.

A number of English characters in Connor's novels, two critics argue, are meant to incite the readers' contempt and aversion (Thompson and Thompson 162). There is, indeed, no shortage of occasions on which these characters are subjected to a tacitly disapproving treatment. Those, for instance, who seek to preserve an obviously outmoded class hierarchy receive the brunt of criticism. Certainly, Maimie's aunt, Frances St. Clair, claims that distinction:

Miss Frances St. Clair was a woman of the world, proud of her family tree, whose root disappeared in the depths of past centuries, and devoted to the pursuit and cultivation of those graces and manners that are supposed to distinguish people of birth and breeding from the common sort. Indeed, from common men and things she shrank almost with horror. (MFG 51)

Maimie, too, acquires uncomplimentary airs because of a combination of being spoiled by her father and being exposed to her aunt's prejudice. "The main marvel in the result," reflects the narrator, "was that the girl did not grow more selfish, superficial, and ignorant than she did" (MFG 53). After Maimie's temporary disappearance from the immediate concerns of the novel, she reappears only to emphasize her high-bred attitude and class snobbery.

A consequence of her separation from Ranald is that she is further indoctrinated with the values and perceptions native to her upbringing. As a debutante "she had developed," the narrator observes, "a rare and fascinating beauty, and had acquired simultaneously an air so distingué that even her aunt, Miss St. Clair, was completely satisfied" (MFG 168). "Fresh from the 'stately homes of England,' and from association with lords and dukes," (MFG 218) Maimie is unable to discern the implicit condescension in her aunt's remark that, "These [common] people ought to be encouraged" (MFG 186). Moreover, Maimie's brother, Harry, readily acknowledges that she is her "Aunt Frank over again; clothes and people!" (MFG 187). Ranald overcomes his initial infatuation with Maimie. His realization that Maimie's voice is "thin, shallow, and heartless" (MFG 278), easily refers to her whole character.

Maimie's male counterpart, Lieutenant De Lacy, mirrors her affectations and class consciousness. The narrator describes him as,

handsome, tall, well made, with a high-bred if somewhat dissipated face, an air of blasé indifference a little overdone, and an accent which he had brought back with him from Oxford, and which he was anxious not to lose. Indeed, the bare thought of the possibility of his dropping into the flat, semi-nasal tones of his native land filled the Lieutenant with unspeakable horror. (MFG 169).

With respect to the similarity in their outlook and philosophy of life, Connor makes it abundantly clear that they deserve each other. Indeed, Maimie favours De Lacy's

romantic attentions because his horizons appear eminently more promising than Ranald's. Her relationship with De Lacy constitutes little more than selfish opportunism since all that seems to matter is that he is "'awfully well connected, and that sort of thing, and when Lord Heathcote dies he has a good chance of the estates and the title'" (MFG 239). Her aunt approves of the union because De Lacy's mother is "a dear old lady -- so stately and so very particular -- with old-fashioned ideas of breeding and manners, and of course, very wealthy" (MFG 186).

Through the use of characters like these, Connor makes a clear distinction between Scottish and English Britons. By denigrating the latter group he effectively exchanges one elitism for another. In addition, casting the English characters in a poorer light inevitably elevates the Scot in the readers' eyes. Specifically, the reader's estimation of Ranald is further raised by the all too obvious flaws of those around him.

Finally, there is nothing tentative about Connor's depiction of the Scottish shantymen, their offspring and the role both were assuming in the development of a nation. In both The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days he pays tribute to his ancestors and childhood home. In fact Connor is able in these two novels to capture many details of life in pioneer Ontario. While the accurate documentation of early life may appear incompatible with the myth of

the Scots, these two facets of Connor's fiction are not mutually exclusive. The factual events are simply a forum for enlarging upon, among other things, the Highlanders' fortitude, courage, and moral and physical strength. The setting, too, is paramount to Connor's mythic process.

In both novels the portrait of the Scots is warm and engaging. This bears witness to Connor's charitable temperament. Doubtless his writing is firmly rooted in his own experience and personal ideals. And as F.W. Watt suggests, there is a certain "touch of grandeur" (15) in his fiction. Connor's estimation of the Canadian West demonstrates the extent to which the region fascinated him. Moreover, it underlines the degree to which Connor's idealism shaped his literary works. Obviously, Connor gives some expression to the hopes and views of his fellow countrymen. He was writing at a time when the Canadian West was entering a new and exciting era of expansion giving rise to a climate of not altogether unfounded optimism.

Popular fiction is often perceived as entertainment without intellectual merit. Ralph Connor did write popular fiction, but he deserves recognition not because he was one of Canada's first best-selling authors, but almost in spite of that fact. He does form a part of an important stage in the development of the Canadian novel. Ralph Connor was not a great writer. As Rev. Charles W. Gordon he was to write of Ralph Connor that "he made little effort after polished

literary style. Things just came to him and he put them down" (Gordon, PA 151). More important, however, is the fact that he gives expression to one interpretation of Canada's destiny and the people who were fulfilling it. The Man from Glengarry and Glengarry School Days recognize, above all else, that Canada would not fail the Scots if they did not fail Canada.

CHAPTER II

SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN

In 1904 Sara Jeannette Duncan published her only novel set exclusively in Canada, The Imperialist. It did not achieve wide acclaim and for the better part of fifty years failed to elicit much critical attention or in-depth analysis. Almost alone in his early appreciation of The Imperialist, Archibald MacMechan wrote in 1924 that the novel "stands out from the vast desert of well-intentioned mediocrity known as Canadian fiction" (139). In more recent years, however, critics and readers alike have come to recognize and explore the many facets of what is arguably Duncan's best work of fiction. For instance, Claude Bissell, in his introduction to the novel, claims that The Imperialist "is one of our best novels" (xi). Other critics have lavished praise on her collective work claiming that "Canadian fiction had before her no woman writer of such literary skill and range, and has had only two or perhaps three since" (Roper, Beharriell, and Schieder 317).

The previous chapter examined some of the myths which Ralph Connor developed or furthered in his portrait of the Glengarry people. The combination of these myths underlines the predominant myth of the Glengarry

novels, namely, the Scots-Presbyterians as heroes and nation-builders. Sara Jeannette Duncan in her portrait of Elgin, Ontario exhibits a genuine sympathy for the Scots but patently challenges their pre-eminence. In doing so, therefore, Duncan disputes the Scots' predominance in her portrait of Elgin, Ontario. In doing so, therefore Duncan rejects one influential and popular literary vision of Canada's development and destiny.

It is interesting to note that the publication of The Imperialist follows Connor's two novels, Glengarry School Days and The Man from Glengarry by only two and three years respectively. This renders the difference between the protagonists all the more dramatic. For instance, while Ranald Macdonald, in The Man from Glengarry, fulfills the prophecy of Scots-Presbyterian pre-eminence in the building of a strong and morally sound Dominion, Lorne Murchison, in The Imperialist, fails to achieve the same distinction. Consequently, although Duncan remains emotionally committed to Elgin's Scots, she does not accord them the unrivaled leadership which Connor presumes for the Glengarrians.

In The Imperialist the conflict between man and nature, which is seen to pervade Connor's novels, shifts to the individual's efforts to relate to his social environment. Lorne Murchison's struggle for political acknowledgement occupies, therefore, a considerable portion of the novel. In the end, Lorne succumbs to a stinging

political defeat and his fate remains unresolved. Implicit in Lorne's specific defeat is the larger failure of the Scots-Presbyterians to achieve pre-eminence in Elgin and by extension in Canada.

Elgin is the microcosmic, quintessential Canadian town, "the enduring heart of the new country already old in acquiescence" (73-4). Furthermore, according to John Murchison, "It's a fair sample of our rising manufacturing towns" (154). In addition, Elgin's market square, an intrinsic part of the town's economic prosperity, is described as "the biography of Fox County and, in little, the history of the whole province" (73). It is by such observations that the reader is encouraged to interpret Elgin as a representative Canadian community.

And yet interests in Elgin are confined largely to parochial concerns. As the narrator outlines,

Elgin had few distractions from the question of the court house or the branch line to Clayfield. . . . There was nothing, indeed, to interfere with Elgin's attention to the immediate, the vital, the municipal. . . . [I]t had something of the ferocious, of the inflexible, of the unintelligent. (60)

In general, the inhabitants' sphere of reference is circumscribed by the town's boundaries. For instance, "politics wore a complexion strictly local, provincial, or Dominion" (58) and descended in importance from first to last. Lorne's attempt to expand the town's social vision to encompass more than local concerns inevitably clashes with Elgin's inability to overcome its provincial disposition.

His idealism fails to take root and perpetuate itself because of the town's philistinism. Walter Winter, Lorne's Conservative political rival, aware of the political realities which he faces, runs his campaign according to sound and tested principles: "He could ask the manufacturers of Elgin to look no further than themselves which they were quite willing to do, for illustration of the plenty and the promise which reigned in the land from one end to the other" (208). "A certain rigidity of opinion is dictated," the narrator concedes, "by considerations of bread and butter" (207).

Because Elgin's electorate is unable to overcome its concentration on matters of immediate utility and self-interest, they do not respond to Lorne's ardent expressions of imperial loyalty. Affection for the mother country is rarely indulged openly. Rather, insists the narrator earlier in the novel,

the common love for the throne amounted to a half-ashamed enthusiasm that burned with something like a sacred flame, and was among the things not ordinarily alluded to, because of the shyness that attaches to all feeling that cannot be justified in plain terms. (58)

Thus, in Lorne's final, zealous plea to the constituents of South Fox, "people looked at him as if he had developed something they did not understand" (226). His appeal to their emotional attachment to England and the Empire fails to evoke appreciation. Even the Cruickshank delegation, whose charge is to push for closer ties with Great Britain,

"looked cautiously at imperial sentiment . . . and had . . . little use for schemes that did not commend themselves on a basis of common profit" (116).

Elgin's citizens are not, however, immune always to Lorne's idealism. For example, the gathered citizens applaud Lorne's handling of the Ormiston defense:

There was in it that superiority in the art of legerdemain, of mere calm, astonishing manipulation, so applauded in regions where romance has not yet been quite trampled down by reason. Lorne scored; he scored in face of probability, expectation, fact. (87)

In this instance Lorne's imaginative temperament defeats the superseded theories of the prosecution. In addition, during his political rallies at a country schoolhouse the audience sits enraptured "with open mouths, like children, pathetically used to life, to a grown-up fairy tale" (225). Ultimately, however, at critical moments the town abandons his idealism in favour of matters of more immediate utility. Therefore, in the election Lorne's "fairy tale" is dashed by "probability, expectation [and] fact." Here, it is useful to consider Duncan's observations of Ontarians in "Saunterings" which are equally applicable to Elgin in general:

We are indifferent; we go about our business and boast of the practical nature of our inspirations; we have neither time nor inclination for star-gazing, we say. The province of Ontario is one great camp of Philistines. (qtd. in Ballstadt 34)

Everything in Elgin is accomplished according to "a decent procedure" (25) and is seen to conform to the

standards generally accepted. Therefore, Elgin's townspeople contend that Bofield, a dry-goods merchant, "in putting in an elevator was just a little unnecessarily in advance of the times" (25). Any form of acknowledgeable difference from the norm in Elgin earns a dubious reputation. This is made poignantly clear from the opening pages of the novel in which the reader is introduced, for the first and last time, to an "odd character," Mother Beggarlegs who is perceived as "mysterious and uncanny" (11). The mystery attached to her ancestry characterizes the town's tradition of shunning difference and non-conformity (Peterman 52):

Difference is the one thing a small community, accustomed comfortably to scan its own intelligible averages, will not tolerate. . . . [I]diosyncrasy susceptible to no common translation is regarded with the hostility earned by the white crow, modified among law-abiding humans into tacit repudiation. (44)

Octavius Milburn, "'Father of the Elgin Boiler'" (52), could be the cornerstone of manufacturing interests in Elgin. Indeed, he considers himself "a representative man" (51). To that the narrator adds that he is "a man of averages, balances, the safe level, no more disposed to an extravagant opinion than to wear one side whisker longer than the other" (51). Mr. Milburn is, of course, a pragmatist. His opposition to the Imperial idea stems from a desire to proceed on the grounds of sound business principles. He, like the

manufacturing men of the Conservative party, whose factories had been nursed by high duties upon the goods of outsiders . . . [will not] abandon this immediate

safeguard for a benefit more or less remote, and more or less disputable. (206)

Milburn stands as the consummate figurehead for mercantilist interests in Elgin which are instinctively allied to the question of self-interest. "When a man was confronted with a big political change," Milburn tells Hesketh, "the question he naturally asked himself was, 'Is it going to be worth my while?' and he acted on the answer to that question" (212). As a prominent member of the conservative interests found in Elgin, he speaks for their objections to the imperial cause: "The Empire looks nice on the map," he tells Hesketh, "but when it comes to practical politics their bread and butter's in the home industries" (166).

Likewise, Alfred Hesketh, Lorne's English friend, shares Milburn's pragmatic self-interest and, therefore, eventually adapts to Elgin's *modus operandi*. His ability to look at things in Elgin with "the eye of a practical businessman" (121) eventually serves him well. Initially, however, he shows himself completely alien to the sensibilities of Elgin and its inhabitants. The readers is told that "it was Hesketh in his relation to his new environment that seemed vaguely to come short . . . ; he did not perceive the genius loci" (175). "One thing . . . you learned at once by visiting the colonies," Hesketh finally recognizes, "and that was to make allowances for local conditions, both social and economic" (211). Hesketh responds to the status quo, a necessity Lorne is unable to

fathom until it is too late to alter the course of his political fortunes. "'I shall make a good Canadian, I trust,'" Hesketh informs Lorne, "'and as good an imperialist . . . as is consistent with the claims of my adopted country'" (265). Lorne is forced to confront the truth of Hesketh's observation since it represents the "popular view" (265). Thus, Hesketh's engagement to Dora Milburn effectively completes Hesketh's process of adaptation and is "the most suitable thing that could be imagined or desired" (268). He shares the instincts of self-preservation and, therefore, embraces the largely conservative outlooks of Elgin's townfolk.

Despite its flaws, Elgin retains, by contrast to England, a "certain bright freedom" (49). On his brief trip abroad Lorne witnesses first hand England's near socio-economic bankruptcy:

"What has this country got in comparison [to Canada]? A market of forty million people, whom she can't feed and is less and less able to find work for. . . . London isn't the headquarters for big new developing enterprises any more. If you take out Westminster and Wallingham, London is a collection of traditions and great houses, and newspaper offices, and shops." (122-3)

Lorne's association with Hesketh offers some new insight into the English situation: "Youth and a competence, equipped with education, industry, and vigour, searching vainly in fields empty of opportunity, was to him a new spectacle" (119). "England has outlived her own body," Lorne declares in his final appeal to his South Fox

audience, ". . . in the scrolls of the future it is already written that the centre of the Empire must shift -- and where if not to Canada?" (229). Moreover, Lorne's aspirations of imperial unity are frustrated by the inherent conservative and cautious spirit of England's population:

"Pick up a paper, at the moment when things are being done, mind, all over the world, done against them -- when their shipping is being captured, and their industries destroyed, and their goods undersold beneath their very noses -- and the thing they want to know is -- Why Are the Swallows Late?" (132)

In the same vein Hugh and Advena outline the benefits of living in Canada. "We haven't any picturesque old prescribed lanes to travel" (110), Advena acknowledges. Hugh concedes that "For faith and the future. An empty horizon is better than none. England has filled hers up" (110).

Besides attacking England's lethargic domestic policy, Lorne objects to America's aggressive foreign policy. Lorne's final speech before the South Fox by-election borders on paranoid anti-American rhetoric:

"But the alternative before Canada is not a mere choice of markets; we are confronted with a much graver issue. In this matter of dealing with our neighbour our very existence is involved. If we would preserve ourselves as a nation, it has become our business, not only to reject American overtures in favour of the overtures of our own great England, but to keenly watch and actively resist American influence, as it already threatens us through the common channels of life and energy. We often say that we fear no invasion from the south, but the armies of the south have already crossed the border. American enterprise, American capital, is taking rapid possession of our mines and our water power, our oil areas and our timber limits. . . . [T]hey will menace our coasts to protect their markets -- unless, by firm,

resolved, whole-hearted action now, we keep our opportunities for our own people." (231-2)

Clearly, however, Canada must look to itself for its identity. It cannot look to England whose time has past. With its "problems of sluggish overpopulation" (125) "unready conception of things, . . . political concentration upon parish affairs, [and] . . . cumbrous social machinery" it is a "dull anachronism in a marching world" (125).

Moreover, it becomes clear from various suggestions that Canada cannot rely on its Western regions to provide a new social order. In The Imperialist the promise of the west is challenged. "'Well, what sort of a country have they got out Swan River way? Booming right along?'" asks Lorne of his Collegiate peer, Elmore Crow, newly returned from the West. "'Boom nothing. I don't mean to say there's anything the matter with the country; there ain't; but you've got to get up just as early in the morning out there as y'do anywhere'" (75). Elmore's mother subsequently informs Lorne that her son has "'wore out his Winnipeg clothes and big ideas'" (77). Only Hugh and Lorne conceive any great promise in the West. Lorne, for example, spouts empty rhetoric claiming that a higher plane of existence "lies in the great West, where the corn and cattle grow" (124). His comments are more than likely the product of his imagination rather than based on fact. Hugh insists that in British Columbia "those mining missions would give a man his chance against himself. There is splendid work to

be done there, of a rough-and-ready kind" (184).

With the exception of a few odd references to the west, the novel tends to remain concerned with the "atomic creatures building the reef of the future" (149) in Elgin, Ontario. Ironically, although the role of the Scots in that process remains, finally, nebulous, their collective portrait is unmistakably favourable and sympathetic. The same cannot be said, however, for non-Scots. As far as their characters are concerned the Scots are usually above serious reproach or contempt.

The Murchisons stand in stark relief to Elgin's practical populace. Consequently, they constitute the positive aspect of the community. Chapter three of The Imperialist, which deals exclusively with the Murchisons, is, therefore, a crucial chapter since it illustrates symbolically their finer mettle. The chapter begins with a description of the Murchison's house, "Plummer Place," so named after its previous owner whom the Murchisons supplanted. Now "overstamped" by the Murchisons "it lay about them like a map of their lives" (101). The house reflects the care of "a person of large ideas" (28) and is, therefore, eminently suited to the Murchisons who likewise demonstrate "a capacity for feeling the worthier things of life" (30). Significantly, the house is "in Elgin, but not of it" (29) and represents "a different tradition" (12).

This is, of course, an implicit comment on the

status of the Murchisons in the community. Plummer Place acquires the Murchison's distinctive character and, therefore, "gain[s] by force of contrast: one felt, stepping into it, under the influence of less expediency and more dignity, wider scope and more leisured intention" (30). The physical description of the house highlights the Murchisons' character. They are seen to disassociate themselves from purely egocentric considerations which the rest of Elgin seems so intent on pursuing. It is the Murchison's ability to transcend the pragmatic interests which distinguishes them from the rest of Elgin:

It is highly unlikely to have occurred to them that they were too good for their environment. Yet in a manner they were. It was a matter of quality, of spiritual and mental fabric; they were hardly aware that they had it, but it marked them with a difference. (44)

Specifically, John Murchison is sufficiently conscious of the exigencies of his hardware business, yet he, unlike others in Elgin's business community, is not plagued by the "conservative political views of a tenderly nourished industry" (52). He is not susceptible to philistine inclinations. Although in practice he generally keeps his thoughts to himself, he is not above indulging his son's enthusiasm:

While the practical half of John Murchison was characteristically alive to the difficulties involved, the sentimental half of him was ready at any time to give out cautious sparks of sympathy with the splendour of Wallingham's scheme; and he liked the feeling that a son of his should hark back in his allegiance to the old land. There was a kind of chivalry in the placing of certain forms of beauty -- political honour and public

devotion, which blossomed best, it seemed, over there -- above the material ease and margin of the new country, and even above the grand chance it offered for a man to make his mark. Mr. Murchison was susceptible to this in anyone, and responsive to it in his son. (260)

In his speculations about the future of imperial trade Mr. Murchison assumes an altruistic stance:

He said he was more concerned to see big prices in British markets for Canadian crops than he was to put big prices on ironware he couldn't sell. He was more afraid of hard times among the farmers of Canada than he was of competition by the manufacturers of England. (206)

Elgin accommodates John Murchison better than Lorne perhaps because Lorne's father does not indulge his idealism excessively. Of Dr. Drummond and John Murchison the narrator remarks:

The new country filled their eyes; the new town was their opportunity, its destiny their fate. They were altogether occupied with its affairs, and the affairs of the growing Dominion, yet obscure in the heart of each of them ran the undercurrent of the old allegiance. They had gone the length of their tether, but the tether was always there. (21-2)

Although he and Lorne clearly do not agree always, John Murchison remains one of the few who volunteers a sympathetic ear to his son's expressions of imperial sentiment.

Dr. Henry Drummond, Elgin's Presbyterian minister, emulates John Murchison's paternal role on a grander scale. While John Murchison occupies himself with his family, Dr. Drummond concerns himself with the collective affairs of his congregation. He is "their pivot, their focus and, in a human sense, their inspiration" (61). Dr. Drummond takes

his role seriously. With regards to the Murchison children, for example, he considers himself "responsible for the formation of their characters and the promise of their talents" (39). Dr. Drummond also takes it upon himself to rescue Hugh Finlay, the Knox Mission Church minister, from his tortuous, chivalric commitment to his Scottish fiancée. His position of prominence in Elgin's social hierarchy is significant since Presbyterianism is one of the elements which binds together the Scots of Elgin.

The family unit is an appropriate metaphor for the religious body since it bears "the strongest domestic character" (61). Consider, for instance, the perception of the religious gatherings:

There was a simple and definite family feeling within communions. "They come to our church" was the argument of first force whether for calling or for charity. It was impossible to feel toward a Congregationalist or an Episcopalian as you felt toward one who sang the same hymns and sat under the same admonition week by week, year in and year out, as yourself. (61)

Accordingly religious "gatherings of familiar faces, fellow-beings bound by the same convention to the same kind of behaviour" (60), offer a measure of security and a criterion for significance. Affiliation to the Presbyterian church is an important facet of the Scots' lives: "A pew holder had a distinct status; an 'adherent' enjoyed friendly consideration" (61). Furthermore, family tradition sets a precedent for the future generations so that in Elgin you seem to "inherit your 'denomination'" (167).

Henry Cruickshank, too, plays an important role though his is more specifically linked to Lorne's fortunes. Cruickshank's attention to Lorne's situation likely occurs because in Lorne he recognizes a temperament and outlook similar to his own. The similarities are, indeed, quite distinct:

Henry Cruickshank was an able man and, what was rarer, a fastidious politician. . . . [T]hey called him, after a British politician of lofty but abortive views, the Canadian Renfaire. He had that independence of personality, that intellectual candour, and that touch of magnetism which combine to make a man interesting in his public relations. (81)

Both Henry Cruickshank and Dr. Drummond are predisposed to sympathize occasionally with matters which transcend utilitarian considerations. Nonetheless, they are bound by circumstances, not temperament, to the town's conventions.

Drummond and Cruickshank, like John Murchison, are willing to entertain, for instance, Lorne's youthful enthusiasms but only to a point. Years of experience have taught them the extent to which those ideals can be indulged. Dr. Drummond, therefore, who is without a doubt a generous and warm-hearted minister, displays Elgin's inflexible temperament in theological matters. "Dr. Drummond," the narrator tells us, "in faith and practice, moved with precision along formal and implicit lines; his orbit was established, and his operation within it as unquestionable as the simplest exhibit of nature" (67). His sermons read off, therefore, as consistently as an

accountant's tabulated figures. Consequently, in theology his business instinct compels him to lean "in favour of the sure thing" (197).

Similarly, despite a certain independence of spirit, Henry Cruickshank is at times a slave to Elgin's conventions. The reader is informed, for example, that in the imperial delegation "Cruickshank was the biggest and the best of them; but even Cruickshank submitted to the common formulas; submitted them and submitted to them" (117). The younger generation of Scots is less willing or even able to accommodate the town's provincial attitudes. Both Advena and Lorne Murchison inherit their father's temperament but they are unable to temper it in order to escape distinction. In the Murchison children, therefore, the reader witnesses the consequences of such acute non-conformity.

Lorne, like his family, is cut from a different swatch than Elgin's average citizen. Almost from the first pages of The Imperialist we are made aware of Lorne's marked difference from the community. Lorne's sensibility to the unfair treatment of Mother Beggarlegs, the town's gingerbread and taffy lady, underlines "that active sympathy with the disabilities of his fellow beings which stamped him later such an intelligent meliorist" (12). Furthermore, the narrator tells us that "the tract was there, subconscious, plain in the wider glance, the alerter

manner; plain even in the grasp and stride which marked him in a crowd" (35). "He was," frank and open, with horizons and intentions; you could see them in his face" (34). He "had that beam of active inquiry, curious but never amazed, that marks the man likely to expand his horizons. . . . [T]he poise of his head was sanguine" (75). During one market day Lorne's dislocation from the community is drawn into sharp relief:

The sense of kinship surged in his heart; these were his people, this his lots as well as theirs. For the first time he saw it in detachment. Till now he had regarded it with the friendly eyes of a participator who looked no further. Today he did look further. (74)

In this passage Lorne is pictured apart from the very scene of which he envisions himself a part. He is effectively isolated from the very people with whom he associates his destiny (Tausky xii). He stands out for there is "something too large about him for the town's essential stamp" (75).

Lorne's father, too, underlines his son's remoteness from Elgin's ranks as he points out Lorne's misconceptions about Elgin's predilections:

"He takes too much for granted."
 "What does he take for granted?" asked Mrs Murchison.
 "Other folks being like himself," said the father.
 (150)

John Murchison's comment reveals Lorne's shortcoming. He consistently sacrifices practical considerations to his imperial fervour. He is, in the end, incapable of reconciling his personal ideals with the town's more limited outlook and mistakenly imputes to others his

expanded vision. Lorne's admirable quality of seeing "higher and further" (117) than the utilitarian motivations which beleaguer others obscures from him Elgin's intrinsic "indifferent, apathetic, [and] self-centred" (59) state of mind. Ultimately, then, Lorne defeats himself since passion as opposed to reason fuels his political ambitions.

Lorne's difference is essentially defined by his temperament which displays an absence of nugatory inclinations. His idealism struggles incessantly to assert itself in the face of a town inundated with pragmatism. Especially where England and the imperial cause are concerned, Lorne's imaginative vision takes hold. He conceives in England, for example, a moral foundation worth emulating:

"Isn't the very name great? I'll be a better man for going [to England], till I die. We're all right out here, but we're young and thin and weedy. They didn't grow so fast in England, to begin with, and now they're rich with character and strong with conduct and hoary with ideals. . . . They've developed the finest human product there is, the cleanest, the most disinterested, and we want to keep up the relationship -- it's important." (98)

Once again he is held hostage by his imaginative perception of England. He stands "for the youth and energy of the old blood" (228). Therefore, the romantic qualities with which he invests England fill his every horizon. Later in the political campaign Lorne displays an error of judgement conspicuously similar to Hesketh's blunder at one of the early Liberal rallies. He presses the imperial ideal from an

emotional standpoint without providing any economic incentive to vote for it. After the fact Lorne's former political allies explain Lorne's oversight and error of judgement:

"You see, old man," Horace Williams put in, "you didn't get rid of that save-the-Empire-or-die scheme of yours soon enough. People got to think that you meant something by it."

"The popular idea seems to be," said Mr Farquharson judiciously, that you would not hesitate to put Canada to some material loss, or at least to postpone her development in various important directions, for the sake of the imperial connection." (262)

His political partners remain committed by necessity to practical politics and, therefore, extol the virtues of imperial unity only as a "superfluous taffy" (224) to the "chink of hard cash" (234). He is so "tremendously taken up with the old country" (112) that he fails to recognize the exigencies of his political campaign. Consequently, in his last emotional oration, his "heart rebelled" (226) against the "old working formulas for dealing with the average electorate" (226).

Imperial sentiment is doomed, like Lorne's political ideals, to failure since both are grounded in emotional rather than business instincts. Lorne's idealism asks too much of human nature and his conception of national interests is too far out of touch with reality. His belief that moral values should transcend material considerations ultimately runs counter to the principles of those whose votes he requires. Mr. Farquharson, the outgoing Liberal

candidate, rightly recognizes "that above all things it lacked actuality, business -- the proposition in good set terms, for men to turn over, to accept or reject" (223).

"When you come down to hard facts," Milburn asserts, "it's Australia for the Australians, Canada for the Canadians, Africa for the Africans, every time" (211).

Lorne repeatedly misapprehends the extent to which pragmatic considerations are ingrained in the minds of Elgin's townfolk. Lorne's belief that he can convert Milburn to his thinking even though his proclivities are consistently seen to be firmly established, illustrates the extent to which he misjudges his audience and prospective constituents. Furthermore, his reading of ulterior motives into Mr. Milburn's having held the gate open for him, highlights his misunderstanding of one of the staunchest opponents of imperialism: "He saw political principle put aside in his favour, and social position forgotten in kindness to him. He saw the gravest, sincerest appreciation of his recent success" (95).

Finally, Lorne's destiny remains intricately bound to that of Elgin's. We must remember that Lorne is a product of Elgin. "Elgin congratulates . . . herself upon having produced Mr L. Murchison" (27), Horace Williams writes appropriately in the Express. Whether unwilling or not, Lorne, in the end, seems to be "fast tied in the cobwebs of the common prescription" (53). His imaginary

bond to the mother country is, by force of circumstances, denied its full bloom. Lorne's political ambitions are governed by the very people he would lead.

Further evidence of idealism stifled by Elgin's parochialism is invested in Lorne's sister, Advena. She shares Lorne's imaginative leaning and parallels his idealism although hers is spurred on primarily by intellectual fascinations rather than romantic visions. She, too, falls short of Elgin's standards, although in other ways, like her brother, she surpasses them. "Advena," observes the narrator, "bookish and unconventional, was regarded with dubiety. She was out of type; she had queer satisfactions and enthusiasms" (45). Consequently, she is "emancipated from the the common interests" (44). Advena's peculiar absorptions disqualify her from the social games of Elgin's youth. Instead, "she would hide in the hayloft with a novel; she would be off by herself in the canoe at six o'clock in the morning; she would go for walks in the rain of windy October twilights" (45). Advena goes about life oblivious to the customs of Elgin's youth; "she had taken a definite line, and she pursued it, preoccupied" (45).

Hugh Finlay, the Presbyterian minister from Scotland who comes to fill the pulpit at Knox Mission Church is also out of type:

He was a passionate romantic, . . . [with] deep dreams in his eyes . . . and the somewhat indifferent attitude to material things. . . .
 . . . [H]e had something, the subtle Celt; he had

horizons, lifted lines beyond the common vision, and an eye rapt and a heart intrepid. (68-9)

Finlay's imaginative qualities effectively differentiate him from his Canadian peers. Consequently, the process of naturalizing himself is fraught with difficulties:

he had little adaptability; he was not of those who spend a year or two in the New World and go back with a trans-Atlantic accent, either of tongue or of mind He cherished in secret an admiration for the young men of Elgin, with their unappeasable energy and their indomitable optimism, but he could not translate it in any language of sympathy. (107-8)

Finlay recognizes that his present life is at odds with his previous circumstances and environment. He tries at one point to express to Advena the feeling of disparity: "'I don't know that I have ever told you much about my life in Scotland . . . It has always seemed to me so remote and -- disconnected with everything here'" (139). Furthermore, he continues later, "'They [his aunt and fiancée], of course, will come. But the life of which they are a part, and the man whom I remember to have been me -- there is a gulf fixed --'" (140).

Hugh Finlay's connection to the old world and its baggage of values is real whereas Lorne's is imaginary and the product of his idealistic temperament. Finlay's romantically empty commitment to marry Christie Cameron, a woman several years his senior, reflects his reluctance to abandon the conventions of his homeland:

"I can't throw the woman over. The objection to it isn't reason -- it's somehow in the past the blood. It would mean the sacrifice of all that I hold most

valuable in myself. I should expect myself after that to stick to nothing -- why should I?" (162)

Although Dr. Drummond tries to convince him that his promise to Miss Cameron is "an extravagant, hypersensitive conception of honour" (162), Finlay refuses to renege on his decision. "The matter may look light here," Finlay declares, "[but] it is serious there" (161). In spite of the consequences Finlay, like Lorne, is too preoccupied with superseded and obsolete ideals. While Lorne stubbornly refuses to relinquish the imperial cause in the interests of political expediency, Finlay remains steadfast in his commitment and nearly forsakes a romantic future with Advena Murchison.

Initially Finlay's and Advena's relationship suffers from their mutual respect for archaic and superannuated conventions. "They were both too much encumbered with ideas," the narrator offers, "to move simply, quickly, on the impulse of passion" (179). After Finlay tells Advena of his imminent marriage, their relationship becomes based on ascetic conduct as seen in the following intercourse between them:

"'Isn't there something that appeals to you . . . in the thought of just leaving it, all unsaid and all undone, a dear and tender projection upon the future that faded -- a lovely thing we turned away from, until one day it was no longer there?'" (184)

Advena's and Hugh's high-minded, intellectual idealism, which nearly causes them to sacrifice their love, is ruined by the strength of their mutual affection. In Advena's case

she realizes, finally, that,

He loved her, and she him: before she would not, now she would. Before she had preferred an ideal to the desire of her heart; now it lay about her; her strenuous heart had pulled it down to foolish ruin. (250)

Appropriately, Advena and Hugh's battle of passion and intellectual idealism takes place within the private sphere while Lorne's occurs in the public arena.

Advena's and Hugh's expressions of mutual attraction through recitals of poetry jars, of course, with conventional courting practices in Elgin. Those customs which are "belittled" by adults and "laughed at" (33) by adolescents are, the narrator informs the reader, "a form of amusement almost conventional" (34). Mrs. Murchison reiterates Hugh's and Advena's atypical relationship claiming that a book is not "a natural gift from a young man who is thinking seriously of a girl" (105). The combination of their temperaments and, for Elgin, odd interests, makes the town particularly unsuitable to them. Consequently, their departure for the west is undertaken, in part, as a means of locating a less restrictive locale. However, Duncan gives the reader no indication of whether Advena and Hugh are successful in their search for intellectual freedom. Their fate, then, deliberately remains as obscure and uncertain as Lorne's.

The idealists in The Imperialist are to a large extent paralyzed by the environment in which they are forced to confront complacent pragmatism. If Elgin is indeed a

microcosm of the forces charged with formulating a social vision for Canada, then it seems quite obvious that idealism has little function in that process. The reader is continually reminded throughout the novel that "no one could dream with impunity in Elgin, except in bed" (45).

The equivocal vision proffered at the close of The Imperialist makes difficult the acceptance of statements such as "the present pretension, time-serving and prejudice of such neo-colonialists as the Englishman, Octavius Milburn, . . . are clearly to be vanquished by the rising generations" (Thomas 42). There seems to be little in the novel to support such untempered optimism. Conversely, it is impossible to entertain the idea that Lorne remains "powerless" in the face of Elgin's insular pragmatism (Allen 56). The novel does not suggest, whatever else it might infer, that Lorne is cast helplessly adrift. Duncan writes the following about Lorne's situation several pages prior to the novel's conclusion:

He was up against it [his defeat], yet already he had recoiled far enough to consider it; already he was adapting his heart, his nerves, and his future to it. His heart took it greatly, told him he had not yet force enough for the business he had aspired to, but gave him a secret assurance. Another time he would find more strength and show more cunning; he would not disdain the tools of diplomacy and desirability, he would dream no more of short cuts in great political departures. His heart bowed to its sorry education and took counsel with him, bidding him be of good courage and push on. He was up against it, but he would get round it . . . (263)

This is not the description of an idealistically impotent character. There is an implicit confidence that Lorne will

recover from what is, in the end, an object lesson in political legerdemain.

Among other things which distinguish The Imperialist from other novels of the era is its ambiguous and open-ended conclusion. Duncan fails, in one critic's words, to "provide the elaborate coda, complete with rounded-off fates for all characters, of the Victorian novelist" (Tausky xvii). In the course of critical examinations the ending of The Imperialist has attracted much attention and interest because of the uncertainty which permeates it finally. It is likely that the fact that the fate of imperialism would not, in reality, be known for several years after its publication, accounts to a degree for the irresolution at its close. However, the uncertainty of the final page in particular concerns readers since they are left, in effect, with more questions than answers.

Lorne fails in his bid to secure the South Fox seat in the election and is offered, and accepts, an invitation to join Cruickshank's law firm. Ultimately, however, Lorne's defeat has far reaching consequences since the reader is left asking to whom the mandate for the future of Elgin, and on a larger scale the country, falls. In Lorne's collapse idealism succumbs to the town's cautious, conservative, short-sighted, and self-interested temperament. Is the fate of the country to be decided, therefore, by a people whose creeds and outlook remain

restricted to practical and provincial exigencies? Is the country, like Elgin, to be left the legacy of "no fresh broken ground of dramatic promise, [and] but the narrow inheritance of the opportunity to which generations has grasped before" (73)?

Indeed, if "we are here at the making of a nation" (47), then is the country to put its faith in Octavius Milburn, "one of those who were building up the country" (52)? The Milburns' *raison d'être* seems limited to the preservation of antiquated notions of privilege and tradition which further their perceived ascendancy over the rest of Elgin. How is the reader to reconcile, therefore, such inclinations with the fulfillment of a nation's potential?

Lorne's ignominious political misfortunes are compounded by Hesketh's news of his intention to wed Dora Milburn, Lorne's former love interest. In the last encounter between Lorne and Hesketh, the latter shows "the zest of his newly determined citizenship in every observation -- the extension of the electric tramway, the pulling down of the old Fire Hall" (266). He demonstrates his sympathy with the insular interests of the town. Furthermore, what is the reader to make of the narrator's remark that Hesketh returns to Canada "to those privileges of citizenship which he so eminently deserves to enjoy" (268)? Is the reader, for instance, to presume that Hesketh

is a better or more typical Canadian than Lorne who is Canadian by birth?

Duncan seems to have both the Murchisons and the Milburns in mind as two different directions for Elgin's social vision. Neither is seen to triumph completely over the other. Like everything else it will be decided in the future. It leads Duncan to comment that "for that it is too soon, or perhaps it is too late" (268). That she chooses neither the idealists nor the pragmatists inspires pessimism rather than optimism for Lorne's vision remains unfulfilled.

In the last lines Duncan offers her readers no guarantees and no promises. Instead, the fate of the country swings in the balance:

Here, for Lorne and his country, we lose the thread of destiny. The shuttles fly, weaving the will of the nations, with a skein for ever dipped again; and he goes forth to his share in the task among those by whose hand and direction the pattern and the colours will be made.
(268)

In the end, therefore, readers are left in doubt as to what place he will glean eventually in the shaping of Canada's destiny and with whom he will share the privilege. That Duncan is unwilling to choose between the two forces may account for the novel's enduring interest to critics and readers. It is a timeless piece simply because it provides no promises which future events dispel or contradict. Canadian literature continues to grapple with what it means to be Canadian. By choosing not to choose, Duncan's The Imperialist avoids a commitment to a manifest destiny for

the Scots and challenges one of Canadian literature's most potent myths: the myth of the Scot as nation-builder and hero.

CONCLUSION

Ralph Connor and Sara Jeannette Duncan ably define the specific social characteristics of their respective childhood regions, Glengarry and Brantford. And yet, both novelists transcend simply regional biases and move into a universal interpretation of national destiny in Canada at the turn-of-the-century. Consequently, out of the local portrait in The Man from Glengarry, Glengarry School Days and The Imperialist emerges the myth of the Scots-Presbyterians as heroes and builders of a nation.

Both novelists define the Scots' myth differently and it is Duncan's and Connor's contrasting portraits which make the contemporaneous study of these three novels appropriate and useful to an understanding of turn of the century Canada as it appeared to writers and readers of the day. Connor's response to the Scots is borne out of what seems to be an earnest belief in their pre-eminent role in building a morally sound nation. He chose to manifest his optimism of the emerging Dominion in those with whom he was most familiar and with whose triumph he could sympathize. While Duncan's reaction to the Scots of Elgin is no less sympathetic it falls short of the unmitigated ascendancy which Connor grants the Scots of his novels. Perhaps it is

the failure of the Scots to achieve pre-eminence, despite the fact that Duncan's own persuasions likely ran counter to this outlook, which makes this novel so satisfying and worthy of consideration. Moreover, it may explain the novel's enduring modern popularity as a fine example of Canadian fiction.

Literature is indispensable to recording the questions with which ordinary Canadians wrestled as the nation grew up around them. Ralph Connor and Sara Jeannette Duncan were neither the first nor the last to speak to the issue of the Scots-Presbyterians in the development of a fledgling nation. Their contribution to that tradition, among other things, deserves special attention as one expression of national destiny and character. Since only the passage of time can determine the fate and value of once contemporary ideas, history records whether optimistic beliefs were justified and valid. Modern day historians, critics and readers alike have both the advantage and the privilege of studying in retrospect the content of Canadian literature. It is worth acknowledging, therefore, that what may now read like excessive optimism or idealism is, to borrow from Carl Berger, a "reminder that our own mental outlook, which seems so coherent and final, so free from extravagance, is unlikely to appear that way to posterity" (SP 265).

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