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THE MAGIC OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS

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By

SHANNON P. GRATTAN, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Shannon P. Grattan, B.A. (McMaster University)

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ABSTRACT

An exploration of the relationship of Indian legends and myths of fabulous beings to Canadian fiction reveals an important literary development in the presentation of wilderness. This development may most clearly be expressed by the image of the Sasquatch running into the mind of "Man" in Margaret Atwood's poem "Oratorio for Sasquatch, Man, and Two Androids", for such an image demonstrates the movement of the fabulous wilderness from a physical, concrete, and external reality, to a mental, abstract, and internal one.

Chapter One establishes some of the mythical and legendary dimensions of the wilderness through the motif of lost children. One of the more difficult experiences of the early settler was the loss of children to the woods, and writers soon came to fictionalize such incidents. Novels of lost children contain such fabulous elements as supernatural, cannibalistic Indians, anthropomorphic bears, Crusoe figures, Indian monsters, and primitive transformations into trees, wolves, and other animals. The novels included in Chapter One established the fundamental myth of the wilderness as a place both of potential order and meaning, as well as of potential chaos and worthlessness. Its potential for chaos is present in many of its fabulous

elements, particularly the Indian, while its potential to be ordered is symbolized by the White children. Thus the novels of lost children set up the dichotomy between Red and White, wild and civilized, which runs through all of the works studied in this thesis. Perhaps most importantly, the novels of lost children establish for this study the myth of the North American as a half-Red, half-White being, because their immersion into the primitive landscape alters their wholly white identities.

In Chapter Two the leap from establishing some of the mythical dimensions of the wilderness to exploring more extensively its realization in Canadian fiction is made. The focus is upon the Indian, and Indian legends, in order to demonstrate that they mythologize the North American landscape in the same way that Greek and Roman legends mythologize Europe. It is also shown that they serve to sensationalize the North American continent, and to undercut the rational principles of western civilization.

While the earlier writers studied in Chapters One and Two mythologized, or sensationalized, the landscape in spatial, physical terms, the contemporary writers studied in Chapter Three do so in non-spatial, psychological ones. In relatively recent fiction, the fabulous potential of the wilderness is not so much "out there" as it is "in

"here". The despatialization and interiorization of the wilderness and its monsters into the minds of various characters examined in Chapter Three is shown to be a necessary and positive development.

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INTRODUCTION

The wilderness is the single most distinctive and significant presence in Canadian fiction, particularly when it is presented as a place of Indian magic, fabulous beings, and extraordinary occurrences. Great hairy monsters, and airy wood nymphs have long established the unpeopled regions of the world to be the haunts of supernatural creatures. Though different cultures have given such creatures different names, the creatures retain the same essential identity around the world. The pan-human character of myths of fabulous beings is explained by C. G. Jung's theory that myths are the manifestations of the "collective unconscious". In this theory, mythological beings and happenings are not confined to one culture in one time, but instead to "collective structural elements of the human psyche in general".¹ Thus the Greek myth of Persephone, which is a personification of the earth's cycles of life and death, is analagous to a Tsimshian legend utilized by Howard O'Hagan in his novel, Tay John. Though the characterization in the Tsimshian legend is different from the Greek, its structure is the same.

All monsters may be understood to stem from the ancient myth of the "Wild Man", who in Hebrew thought is

the accursed offspring of Cain, and in Christian thought the symbol of man's fallen condition. For many writers the Indian himself is a "Wild Man" figure, and in Canada he is one of the most popular "monsters" in the wilderness.

Ironically, Indian culture is very rich in its store of supernatural beings, including the highly feared cannibalistic "Wendigo" spirit. In attempts first to mythologize the North American continent, and later to symbolize the "Wild Man" within everyman, writers have turned to the figure of the Indian and to Indian legends. The "Wild Man" ultimately represents the "other", or the primitive attributes of irrationality, intuition, and feeling. Characters who enter the immense and lonely reaches of the wilderness carry with them all of the rational and technological values of their White civilization, according to which they attempt to order the landscape. However, the wilderness is not without its own ability to disorganize the White Man, and it is hinted that those within its confines become "wild" in the same sense as the Indian. The power of the wilderness to de-humanize, or transform White people into more primitive beings is ultimately creative, rather than destructive, for the mingling of the Red and White worlds results in the establishment of a new order of man, perhaps best called a "North American". In The Vanishing American, Leslie Fiedler remarks that a North American is one who has

seen an Indian, but as we shall see, wilderness characters do much more than just perceive the Indian.

Anna Brownell Jameson touches upon the near magical power of the wilderness in Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada:

I cannot, I dare not, attempt to describe to you the strange sensation one has, thus thrown for a time beyond the bounds of civilized humanity; nor indeed any humanity; nor the wild yet solemn reveries which come over one in the midst of this wilderness of woods and waters.²

Jameson not only seems to indicate that she "cannot" describe her wilderness experience, presumably because language is inadequate, but also that she "dare not". This may mean either that she fears a reduction of the experience to language is somehow a violation of it, or that a revelation of her response would provoke public censure. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the wilderness has served as a catalyst for a "strange", personal development within Jameson. It was perhaps this kind of "strange" human response to the reality of wilderness which first gave rise to its supernatural character.

Many people, despite all scientific evidence to the contrary, still believe in the supernatural character of the wilderness, as is evidenced by the common sightings of the Sasquatch which haunts the forests. Atwood includes the Sasquatch in her poem "Oratorio for Sasquatch, Man and Two Androids", of which the following is an excerpt:

Man:

I came to know him first when I was young;
 I wanted to learn wisdom.
 He met me in a dream,
 we struggled and I named him.
 He ran towards me
 and disappeared into my head.
 Since then I have talked with him many times.
 Some say he is an animal: he has fur
 like an animal's and sharp teeth; his hands are a man's,
 his eyes face forward.

To me he is neither,
 what he is for you
 will depend on what he wishes to show you,
 what he is for you
 will depend on what you want from him.

Atwood's image of a Sasquatch disappearing into the mind of man provides an excellent cameo for this study of the relationship of Indian legends and myths of fabulous beings to Canadian fiction. Just as the "Man" in Atwood's poem first encounters the fabulous when a child, so this study begins with lost children's experiences of the fantastic in the wilderness.

The wilderness is a magical place in Canadian fiction. It may lack the dryads and hamadryads missed by Traill in The Backwoods of Canada, but it is haunted by the ghosts of lost children, Wild Men and Women, Wendigoes, anthropomorphic bears, and hermaphrodites. The function of such beings to mythologize, and sensationalize, the North American continent is to be clearly demonstrated in Chapter Two.

But the function of Indians, Wendigoes, and Sasquatches, in contemporary fiction is much more complex and powerful

as they have become despatialized and internalized.

D. H. Lawrence was perhaps amongst the first to foresee this trend, for in his Studies in Classic American Literature, he understood the Indian to be the "daimon" of the North American continent whose influence upon the White Man would become more potent as he became assimilated into the "great white swamp". It now seems that, in fictional terms at least, Lawrence has been correct, for though the Indian has been removed from the wilderness, he inhabits the forests of the North American psyche.

CHAPTER I
LOST CHILDREN

As to ghosts or spirits they appear totally banished from Canada. This is too matter-of-fact country for such supernaturals to visit. Here there are no historical associations, no legendary tales of those that came before us. Fancy would starve for lack of marvellous food to keep her alive in the backwoods. We have neither fay nor fairy, ghost nor bogle, satyr nor woodnymph; our very forests disdain to shelter dryad or hamadryad. No naiad haunts this rushy margin of our lakes, or hallows with her presence our forest-rills.¹

Thus does Catharine Parr Traill announce the lack of ghosts in Canada, a problem reiterated by writers such as Douglas Le Pan in "A Country Without a Mythology" and George Grant in Technology and Empire. Traill vaguely perceives where some Canadian ghosts might be found when she reports that a friend has discovered some scope for the imagination in the Indian,² but this is perhaps not the only place. Fancy might find "marvellous food" in the numerous accounts of settler's children becoming lost in the interminable forests of early Canada. What happens to them in these mysterious regions? Fourteen years after writing The Backwoods of Canada, Traill explores the fictional and even mythical possibilities offered by lost children when she writes Canadian Crusoes. Perhaps she began a tradition. While the nature of this "tradition" is to be

explored later in the chapter, it is first pertinent to examine its roots, which, interestingly enough, may be discovered in the early settler's accounts of children lost in the backwoods.

In Life in the Clearings, Susanna Moodie includes a chapter entitled "Lost Children", apparently inspired by her discussion with a woman whose greatest trial in the bush has been the loss of her son:

She had been for many years a resident in the woods, and had suffered great hardships, but the greatest sorrow she ever knew, she said, and what had pulled her down the most, was the loss of a fine boy, who had strayed away after her through the bush, when she went to nurse a sick neighbour; and though every search had been made for the child, he had never been found.³

This story brings to Mrs. Moodie's mind the "many tales" of people who "had perished in this miserable manner".⁴ In the stories she relates children wander away from known pathways in the forest and become lost. A friend of Mrs. Moodie's, a Mrs. H--, surmises that panic is the cause of becoming lost:

Persons, when once they get off the beaten track, get frightened and bewildered, and lose all presence of mind; and instead of remaining where they are when they first discover their misfortune -- which is the only chance they have of being found -- they plunge desperately on, running hither and thither, in the hope of getting out, while they only involve themselves more deeply among the mazes of the interminable forest.⁵

Thus the forests are imaged as "mazes" within which people can become lost, and if lost, "lose all presence of mind".

It is the failure of reason in such circumstances which Mrs. H-- cites as the cause of children becoming permanently lost.

Those children who are not found are believed to have been devoured by wolves, to have drowned in swamps, or to have been carried away by the Indians. Yet there is also a permeating sense of mystery in the loss of children to the wilderness. How, or why, they leave known tracks, or what happens to them afterwards, is often not discovered, and although their fate usually falls into one of the forementioned explanations, this is not true in the story of "young Brown":

His mysterious disappearance gave rise to a thousand surmises. The whole settlement turned out in search of the boy. His steps were traced off the road a few yards into the bush, and entirely disappeared at the foot of a large oak tree. The tree was lofty, and the branches so far from the ground that it was almost impossible for any boy, unassisted, to have raised himself to such a height. There was no track of any animal to be seen on the fallen snow -- no shred of garment, or stain of blood. That boy's fate will always remain a great mystery, for he was never found.⁶

While little is said by Mrs. Moodie in response to this story, it seems to be hinted that something really mysterious may happen to children who become lost in the wilderness: not because the explanation cannot be discovered, since the child cannot be found, but because there is no common, or

usual explanation. Here, one cannot avoid Mrs. H--'s implication that young Brown has been transformed into a tree.

The Reverend Joseph Hilts has written Among the Forest Trees, a book similar in purpose and content to Life in the Clearings, in which he reports of bush people gathering to welcome new-comers. The first thing which the people warn the new-comers about is the danger of children becoming lost. One spokesman tells various tales of the sad and often unexplained fate of children who have disappeared and never returned.⁷

The frequency of such occurrences, and the mystery with which they are surrounded, seems to have made them a popular topic of conversation, thus becoming part of local oral traditions. Many of these stories, such as that of young Brown in Life in the Clearings, must have attained a legendary status.

One wonders at the possibility that Indian legends and myths may have contributed to these tales. Cornelius Mathews has re-edited many Indian legends, based on Henry R. Schoolcraft's original interpretations, in his book The Indian Fairy Book. Included among other tales is one entitled "Leelinau, the Lost Daughter". Leelinau is a nymph-like girl who prefers the solitude of the magic forest which surrounds her village to the company of man. She

therefore one day leaves her village and disappears into the forest.⁸ More intriguing than this transformation-into-tree parallel to Mrs. Moodie's young Brown, is the myth's similarity to Charles G. D. Roberts' Heart of the Ancient Wood, which shall be discussed later. Leelinau, and Miranda who is the central character of Roberts' novel, are two extra-ordinary girls who feel a powerful attraction to the forest, a forest which in both cases is magical. Upon entering the woods they become something not wholly human. In Miranda's case the transformation is more animal than vegetable in nature, and there are numerous Indian stories of children changing into animals.

In Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, Anna Jameson includes a Chippewa story entitled "The Forsaken Brother", told to her by Henry Schoolcraft. It is a lamentable tale of the abandonment of a young boy in the wilderness by his older brother and sister, his subsequent adoption by wolves, and his pitiful transformation into one. The older brother and sister had been specifically charged by their dying father not to forsake their younger brother, but they do so anyway. Sheem, the young boy, is driven to search for food, and thus leaves the lodge. Abandoned, homeless and hungry, he eats the scraps left by wolves, who eventually include him in their "society". The wolves understand

that Sheem has been abandoned by his own family, and wonder that such a thing could ever happen. The relative "humanity" of the savage wolves exists in stark contrast to the cruelty of Sheem's own kind. The tale begins with a sense of disillusionment about mankind, for the father of Sheem had isolated his family in the wilderness to escape the "unkindness", "ingratitude", and "wickedness" of his own kindred. Sheem learns the same disillusionment, and when he sees his older brother one day, he sings out to him: "My brother! My brother! Since you left me going in the canoe, a-hee-ee, I am changed into a wolf, E-wee. I am changed into a wolf, E-wee". It is a sorrowful song, and it inspires a return of affection in the older brother for Sheem. But it is too little, too late, and before his very eyes Sheem is completely transformed into a wolf, and disappears into the woods forever. This wolf-boy legend demonstrates the transformative power of the wilderness which is hinted at in Moodie's story of "young Brown".

The proliferation of Indian legends which deal with child transformation is probably largely due to their ancient belief that at the beginning of the world all animals were people. The distinctions between the human and the animal are very vague in much of Indian folklore, and for this reason they contain a rich storehouse of Wild Man and monster figures. One of the more notable of the monsters is "Wendigo",

a malevolent, cannibalistic spirit who has proven a source of Indian terror for many long years, and presently exerts influence in Canadian fiction.

In Canadian Crusoes the Indian figure itself often seems to be likened to a Wild Man, and the lost children in the novel make approaches to becoming so themselves. Other novels which deal with children lost in the wilderness who there undergo some kind of primitive transformation, are Charles G. D. Roberts' Heart of the Ancient Wood, Dillon Wallace's Wilderness Castaways, and Farley Mowat's Lost in the Barrens. Yet primitive transformations are not the only motifs of the myth of the wilderness in these novels. The children become Crusoe-like in Canadian Crusoes, Lost in the Barrens and Wilderness Castaways, while Miranda becomes Eve-like in the Eden of Heart of the Ancient Wood.

Traill notes in her "preface" to Canadian Crusoes that Daniel Defoe's hero "has become synonymous for all who build and plant in a wilderness cut off from humanity's reach".¹⁰ The Canadian pioneer thus becomes a Crusoe figure, and one of the most important similarities between the pioneer and Crusoe is, for Traill, their ability to win the sympathies of those who know of their struggles. As Traill says:

It will be acknowledged that human sympathy irresistably responds to any narrative, founded on truth, which graphically describes the struggles of isolated human beings to obtain the ailments of life.¹¹

Yet, perhaps because she feels the hardships of the Canadian pioneers to be greater than those of Crusoe, she goes to greater lengths to procure reader sympathy. Not only are her protagonists "isolated human beings" in a strange land, they are young and innocent Christian children. In Canadian Crusoes three children, Catharine who is twelve, and Hector and Louis who are fourteen, wander from their path in the forest to search for strawberries, and are unable to regain it. In consequence they live in the wilderness for two years. As in Defoe's masterpiece, a great deal of Traill's fiction is devoted to describing the abilities of her protagonists to adapt to their environment. Almost immediately they demonstrate an unusual degree of preparedness for wilderness survival, a preparedness explained by the practical quality of their education:

They had known every degree of hunger and nakedness; during the first few years of their lives they had often been compelled to subsist for days and weeks upon root and herbs, wild fruits, and game which their fathers had learned to entrap, to decoy, and to shoot. Thus Louis and Hector had early been initiated into the mysteries of the chase.¹²

This "wild man" education serves the children well in the wilderness. However conveniently contrived such able, wood-

wise children may appear, Traill's purpose is to redeem English impressions of ill-educated Canadians. Certainly Catharine and Hector have lacked the benefits of formal education, but, on the other hand, English children lack the practical knowledge possessed by these colonial children. Traill suggests that the difficulties facing the lost children "would have crushed the spirits of children more delicately nurtured",¹³ thereby endorsing the rugged training of her Canadian protagonists.

The children are lost in the woods without the provisions necessary for survival, but their inventiveness is quickly evident: Louis makes a fishing rod from a slender tree sapling, a hook and line from bits of tin and string he has in his pockets; a water jug is moulded from the bark of trees and flour is acquired from scraping tubers. With their store of materials growing, the children's standard of living increases, and soon they build up a physical imitation of the world which they have lost. The boys construct a shanty, Catharine a chimney. Even a broom is made by binding cedar boughs together. They make a table, shelves, platters, dishes, stools, bedsteads and even mattresses. Every material possession is a symbol of their success and progress in the wilderness. But the children's wilderness experience is Crusoe-like in more than a physical way.

Clara Thomas notes that E. M. W. Tillyard in Myth and the English Mind discovers in Robinson Crusoe the "myth of retirement",¹⁴ and she offers a refinement of Tillyard's observation:

Crusoe is not the myth but one manifestation of it and I would add to that the suggestion that the novel has two mythic understructures: one is, as Tillyard argues, the myth of man's retreat from the world and subsequent redemption in solitude and in nature; the other is the equally powerful and pervasive myth of the exiled, alienated man.¹⁵

Although Traill's children are devoutly Christian, and although they do not challenge God's authority as does Crusoe, they share with him the state of moral exile and alienation from God. At various times throughout the novel, the children move in circular patterns; unbeknown to themselves they return, after a day's journeying, close to the very spot from which they earlier began. They remain for two years in a wood only two miles from their home, which is obscured only by "melancholy pines". Traill utilizes this frustrating pattern as a metaphor for man's fallen state:

Thus is it often in this life: we wander on, sad and perplexed, our path beset with thorns and briars. We cannot see our way clear; doubts and apprehensions assail us. We know not how near we are to the fulfillment of our wishes; we see only the insurmountable barriers, the dark thickets and thorns of our way; and we know not how near we are to our Father's home, where he is waiting to welcome the wanderers of the flock back to the everlasting home, the fold of the Good Shepherd.¹⁶

Even Traill's good Christian children are separate from God as a result of the human condition. It is this pattern of exile and alienation which somewhat allies the children with Crusoe, and, in turn, Crusoe with the figure of the Christian Wild Man. According to St. Paul, the Fall resulted in "species corruption" which "is transmitted from Adam to all humanity and that prevents all men from living according to God's law without the aid afforded by special grace".¹⁷ There is a Christian sense then, that all of humanity is "wild", since existing in exile from God. Thus at a basic moral level Traill's civilized Christian children share monstrosity with the wild Indians.

The wilderness becomes most malevolent when the Indians are present in Canadian Crusoes, and Catharine remarks that she is more afraid of them than she is of wolves.¹⁸ Traill represents the Indian as a cruel, cannibalistic monster. Louis' first description of the Indians concentrates on their animalistic appearance. They are "naked savages" who run around fires "like a parcel of black ants on a cedar log", and who "yell like a pack of ravenous wolves on a deer track".¹⁹ Such is the children's fear of Indians that they believe them to be "superhuman" in their "powers of sight and motion".²⁰ Traill's inclusion of Indiana's history is singular in the extent to which it exhibits Indian vengeance and cruelty. When Bald Eagle, the

Ojibwa chief, sacrifices his only son to be eaten in a feast over which he himself shall preside, the monstrous aspect of the Indian is highlighted. The Indians seem to operate as a foil for the children; their savagery and vengefulness is dramatically contrasted to the children's Christian gentleness and mercy. Through Hector, Traill pronounces the oppositional nature of White man and Indian:

"The wolf and the lamb do not lie down in the fold together", observed Hector. "The Indian is treacherous. The wild man and the civilized man do not live well together, their habits and dispositions are so contrary the one to the other. We are open, and they are cunning, and they suspect our openness to be only a greater degree of cunning than their own -- they do not understand us. They are taught to be revengeful, and we are taught to forgive our enemies. So you see that what is a virtue with the savage is a crime with the Christian. If the Indian could be taught the word of God, he might be kind and true, and gentle as well as brave."²¹

The two mythical substructures of Robinson Crusoe previously outlined by Clara Thomas, suggest the oppositional nature of the wilderness experience; one is wilderness as a place of redemption, of potential order and meaning, the other is wilderness as a place of exile, of potential chaos and insanity. The Indian, in Canadian Crusoes, is a symbol of the latter, negative aspect of the wilderness, while the children are the former, positive aspect.

Traill never suspects that the Indians have more to offer white civilization than practical, survival techniques. She presents the wilderness as a place compatible

with faith and reason, even though the spectre of the cannibalistic Indians hints at her awareness of its other possibilities. Traill's confinement to a strictly Christian, rational viewpoint limits the extent of the children's wilderness experience. As one critic has noted: "Catharine can't penetrate the great beating heart of the wilderness snipping with the scissor-blades of faith and reason".²²

Although Traill does not "penetrate to the great beating heart of the wilderness", she does approach it. It has been suggested that the children's "wild" Christian condition indicates their own monstrous capacities. This reality is perhaps subtly linked to the increasingly Indian-like quality of their existence and appearance. Traill often refers to them as "simple children of nature" to signify their difference from children of civilization. Like Indians, the children find all that they require to survive abundantly provided in nature. They make bows, arrows, and a wigwam. Their near physical transformation into Indians seems most apparent when they begin to wear animal-skin clothing. This transformation is also suggested when Indiana adorns Catharine's hair with feathers, but it reaches its peak when Catharine is kidnapped by Indians, for a time living with them and threatening to become one of them. Their fallen state, their living so closely with nature, their Indian appearance, all of these factors tend

to jeopardize the children's civilized identities, and suggest quite another one. Yet this suggestion works at a very quiet level, and Traill stresses the difference between the children and the Indians much more than the similarities. These differences are primarily centred upon their Christian identities, which they carry into the wilderness like shields. As Hector has made plain, the only acceptable Indian is a Christian one, and Traill must christianize Indiana, the Mohawk girl who becomes the children's friend, before admitting her into White civilization.

Two powers, the wilderness, and Christianity, operate as transforming influences in the novel. Thus the wilderness physically changes the White children into Indians, while Christianity spiritually changes Indiana into a White man. While the Christ-influence is the more obvious in Canadian Crusoes, the wilderness or Indian influence is very subtle, working at an almost subliminal level. D. H. Lawrence early understood the Red Man to be the "daimon of America", the power and significance of whom would become more obvious as his assimilation became more imminent.²³ The "daimon's" power in Canadian Crusoes is sufficient enough to half-create a new being. The tentative, superficial mingling of European and Indian worlds indicates that this being is neither White nor Red, neither wholly civilized or wholly wild. Thus does Canadian

Crusoes fulfill the promise of mythical wilderness transformation suggested by Mrs. Moodie's young Brown, a promise also fulfilled by succeeding stories of children lost in the wilderness.

We enter the world of myth and legend as Charles G. D. Roberts begins The Heart of the Ancient Wood. The ancient wood is quickly established as a fragile, mysterious world:

It was somehow like a vast bubble of glass, blown to a fineness so tenuous that a small sound, were it but to strike the one preordained and mystic note, might shatter it down in loud ruin.²⁴

Furthermore, there is something magical, fairy-like about it:

Its magical transparency was confusing to an eye not born and bred to it, making the far branches seem near, and the near twigs unreal, disturbing the accustomed perspective, and hinting of some elvish deception in familiar and apparent things.²⁵

Kirstie Craig and her daughter, Miranda, enter the ancient wood to live in an achingly lonely cabin far from any settlement. Kirstie Craig's exile is self-imposed as her decision to live in the wilderness is based upon a desire to escape the malicious gossip of her small-minded community. If life in this semi-mythical forest is exile for Kirstie, it is a home-coming for her daughter.

Miranda is the central character of the novel, and she, like the ancient wood, is not quite ordinary. We are told that she was a "queer baby -- more a fairy or a wild thing than a human youngster --",²⁶ and that her

father had one time predicted that she would "grow up to be a faun woman or wood goddess".²⁷ Whenever man enters the ancient wood, Roberts makes us aware of his "alien status, but when Miranda enters it she becomes part of it. Much significance is attached to Miranda's eyes in the novel, for in them is centred her singular ability to penetrate the "magical transparency" of the forest. Such an ability allows her access into the heart of its sylvan mysteries, while excluding all other human beings. Throughout The Heart of the Ancient Wood, there is a subtle link established between the appearance of Miranda's eyes and that of the forest:

Her eyes, in which, as we have seen, lay very much of her power over the folk of the wood, were very large and dark. They possessed a singular transparency, akin to the magical charm of the forest shadows.²⁸

The animals in the wood became confused by Miranda, for when they look into her eyes they sense a certain strange and powerful kinship which makes them wish to accept her as one of themselves. This is Miranda's greatest wish as well -- to get to know and to talk to the animals, to be admitted into their world.

The forest is the constant object of Miranda's attention. Strictly confined to her mother to the relatively "civilized" region of the clearing, Miranda stares longingly into the forbidden woods. If the lonely log cabin within

which she lives is an early manifestation of what Northrop Frye has termed the "garrison", Miranda is one of the earliest examples of a character who wishes to embrace and participate in the wilderness.

Despite the power of her eyes the animals remain aloof. Such restraint is largely due to the red ribbon she wears about her neck. Miranda begins to conform to her wilderness setting soon after her arrival, and one of the first signs of this is her symbolic divestment of civilization in the guise of "gay pink calico", which she exchanges for more appropriate "dull, blue-grey homespun".²⁹ The homespun makes her feel "at one with her quiet surroundings", and the only remaining vestige of her alien human identity is represented by the red ribbon she wears throughout the novel. It is this ribbon which makes the animals doubt their sense of kinship with her:

This was a puzzle to all the folk of the wood, continually reminding them that this quiet-flitting creature did not really belong to the wood at all,³⁰

Bur Miranda's exclusion from the sylvan world is ended on one memorable day. Lured into the woods by her desire to touch a "browncat", Miranda discovers that she has run far from the cabin and is lost:

She knew that she was lost. All at once the ancient wood, the wood she had longed for, the wood whose darkness she had never feared, became lonely, menacing, terrible. She broke into loud wailing.³¹

It is now that a remarkable bear named Kroof begins to play an important role in the novel. Kroof has just lost her cub in a trap, and when she hears Miranda's wails she starts to look for her with the vague hope that Miranda may prove a replacement cub. Roberts seems to be influenced by the famous and widespread myths of children who are raised by animals, in this case by bears.

Bears seem to provide popular adoptive parents in Canadian fiction. In his book Three Boys in the Wild North Land, Egerton R. Young presents the story of Wenonah and Roderick, two children who become lost in the forest and are later discovered in the custody of bears. Another story involves a bear's attack on an Indian woman who had gone into the forest to gather fire wood. The mother fought the bear until she was unconscious, and awoke to find her baby missing. The bear had taken the child to its den, where, when attacked by rescuing Indians, it "seemed in its ferocity to think more of defending the child from them than of saving its own life".³² Furthermore, the baby showed signs of missing its bear-mother after she had been killed. In R. D. Symons' "The Sign of the Bear", a white child is adopted by a mother bear until he is found by an Eskimo hunter and adopted into his family. The child displays

remarkable powers of prescience and wisdom attributed to his bear heritage. The most important aspect of myths and stories which deal with children adopted by animals would seem to be the break down of the distinctions between man and animal.

In The Heart of the Ancient Wood, Kroof's adoption of Miranda is elemental to her acceptance into the animal world. Kroof is the most powerful force in the woods, and when the animals see that Kroof has made herself Miranda's guardian they accept and respect her. While Kroof's adoption of Miranda is limited (Miranda remains at least half-human), it is a symbol of Miranda's fellowship with the animals:

After this experience Miranda felt herself initiated, as she had so longed to be, into the full fellowship of the folk of the ancient wood.³³

Now, despite her red talisman of humanity, Miranda is part of what increasingly becomes an enchanted kingdom. Between the amazing power of her eyes and Kroof's guardianship, Miranda becomes mistress of the woods. All animals obey her, panthers sleep by her side while birds and squirrels vie for her attention. The Eden note thus struck, one is reminded of Roberts' descriptions of the fragility, the magic, of the ancient wood, and wonders where the serpent lies.

Young Dave, one of the few people who visits the cabin, and who falls in love with Miranda, is repeatedly struck by the "lost World" quality of Miranda's existence in the wilderness:

The clearing seemd to Dave a little beautiful lost world, and it gave him an ache at the heart to think of the years that Miranda and Kirstie had dwelt in it alone.³⁴

This perception of the clearing as a "beautiful lost world" is perhaps a reminder of the Eden-like quality of Kirstie and Miranda's world, but it also is connected to the lost child theme of the novel. Looking at the domesticated cabin in the clearing, whose only neighbour is "the solitary sky", Dave thinks of a lost child:

The cabin and the barn were hedged about with shining thickets of sunflower, florid hollyhocks, and scarlet-runner beans. It gave the young woodman a kind of pang, -- this bit of homely sweetness projected, as it were, upon the infinite solitude of the universe. It made him think, somehow of the smile of a lost child that does not know it is lost.³⁵

The scarlet of the runner beans seems to suggest Miranda's scarlet ribbon, and both are touches of "homey sweetness", of the tame and civilized in the midst of the wild. The lost child image is an indication that Miranda has entered a world to which, in her innocence, she does not realize that she does not belong. It proves to be Dave's role to shatter Miranda's innocence, the result of which is her recognition of her human reality.

In this "lost world" Miranda seems to be part of the forest itself, more wild than human. As her mother says, the wood has moulded Miranda: "The woods and the sky have made you. They're in your blood. You live and breathe them".³⁶ Tales of her strange mastery over the animals reach the settlement, where the prevailing opinion is that she is some kind of witch. Miranda's physical appearance is further testimony to her non-human identity:

At seventeen she was a woman mature beyond her years but strange, with an elfish or a faun-like strangeness: as if a soul not at all human dwelt in her human shape. Silent, wild, unsmiling, her sympathies were not with her own kind, but with the wild and silent folk who know not the sweetness of laughter.³⁷

The ancient wood is Miranda's home. She is a semi-mythical creature in the mould of those porcelain nymphs and fairies who dip delicate toes into rounded ponds while birds flutter colourfully around their silken tresses. In short, it is a very artificial wilderness. Roberts tells us that Miranda understands the animals as "gentle people, living for the most part in a voiceless amity",³⁸ and to a large extent it is his intention to allow Miranda the impression that she is correct. Kroof is little less than anthropomorphic; she cares more for Miranda than her own cubs. All of the animals create a pax which requires that they avoid violence and bloodshed whenever Miranda is near. Thus all that Miranda sees is the gentleness, the amity of the forest creatures. Such a romantic vision of a benign

wilderness is much more indicative of a British than a Canadian manner. But Roberts counterbalances this synthetic wilderness with the real one. We are made aware of a strange blindness in Miranda's remarkably perceptive eyes. Throughout the novel, Miranda refuses to recognize the predatory character of many wilderness animals. She is shocked by blood and death, and when she discovers Kroof eating a rabbit one day, she punishes her and buries the half eaten remains. It is then that Kroof and the other animals try to appease her through their pax, so that Miranda never sees the reality of their existence. Roberts says: "Her seeing eyes quite failed to see the unceasing tragedy of the stillness".³⁹ Blind to nature "red in tooth and claw", she nevertheless is unconsciously part of the "unceasing tragedy". Her unexamined passion for fishing places her squarely within the omniverous cycle:

Even Miranda of the sympathies and the perceptions had no sense of fellowship for these cold-blooded, clammy, unpleasant things. She had a fierce little delight in catching them; she had a contented joy in eating them when fried to a savour brown in butter and yellow corn meal.⁴⁰

Miranda's lack of vision is explained by the horror of the reality that the survival of one creature is dependent upon the death of another. Given this hard truth, Miranda rejects the value of life: "What's the good of living, anyways, if it's nothing but kill, kill, kill, and for one that lives a lot have got to die!"⁴¹ Thus does Miranda prove her prefer-

ence for her illusory peaceable kingdom to the actual violent one.

Miranda's blindness is an implicit indication of her humanity, for it entails a morality which is totally inappropriate in the amoral wilderness. When young Dave forces the truth to dawn in Miranda's dark eyes, she wishes to leave the wilderness. The shooting of Kroof is the one mystic note required to shatter the transparency of Miranda's counterfeit Eden. She is never wild in the real sense of the word, but only in the romantic one. When she encounters the "great beating heart of the wilderness", as she does when forced to kill Kroof to save Dave, she rejects its value. Thus Heart of the Ancient Wood reverses the pattern of Canadian Crusoes where the children approach becoming truly wild and part of the primitive landscape.

Although the romantic influence is apparent in the novel, it is possible that Roberts may have known of the Indian myth "Leelinau, the Lost Daughter". Like Heart of the Ancient Wood, it is concerned with the establishment of bonds of affection which cross lines of kinship, in this case between a young girl and a pine tree. Nor is the Indian legend devoid of romantic overtones itself, for the image of Leelinau's retreat to "remote haunts and recesses in the woods" where she would "sit in lonely reverie upon some high promontory" with her face upturned in "contempla-

tion of the air"⁴² is reminiscent of Shelley or Keats. The sacred wood, called Manitowik, is suspiciously similar to Roberts' since it is a place of fairies and romantic scenes. The natures of both girls are invariably the same: gentle, sensitive, delicate, solitary, serious, silent, and not quite human. There is one important distinction to be made between the two myths however. Leelineau remains a part of her landscape, whereas Miranda is compelled to leave it when she loses her illusions about its real nature. Yet it is interesting that Indian mythology provides romantic figures similar to European ones.

There is perhaps also something of Indian influence in the figure of Kroof the bear. As noted earlier, the Indians have many legends of close relationships between animals and humans, possibly due to their belief that at one time all animals were people. Certainly Kroof is more humanoid than bear-like; if Miranda is a human with an animal soul, Kroof is a bear with a human soul.

The half-wild, half-human reality of Miranda's identity establishes her as a possible antecedent to other "Wild Women of the woods" figures in Canadian fiction, and one which irresistibly suggests itself is Marian Engel's protagonist in Bear.

In Dillon Wallace's The Wilderness Castaways, a spoilt young man named Paul, and a good-natured boy named Dan, become lost around Hudson Bay when they miss a rendezvous

with their ship. The sudden onset of winter has forced the ship out of their area, and it is unable to return. The wilderness experience causes psychic and emotional maturation within Paul. Paul comes from New York city, and the power which the wilderness exerts upon him is quick and dramatic, as a door which opens unexpectedly into another world:

It was a new world to Paul, and different from anything he had ever imagined. The utter absence of vessels, the apparently uninhabited and uninhabitable land, the awful primitive grandeur of it all gave him a vague, indescribable sense of fear -- such a feeling as one ascending for the first time in a balloon must experience upon peering over the rim of the basket at the receding earth. This sensation quickly gave place to one of exultation -- the exultation of a wild animal loosed in its native haunts after a long confinement.⁴³

An important part of Paul's character has been released merely by his seeing the wilderness. That part is the "wild animal" within him, so that again the power of the wilderness to bring out the repressed otherness of civilized existence is made plain. Wallace explains that the "wild animal" in Paul is part of his "primitive instinct" which he has inherited from "prehistoric ancestors". The greatest attribute of this instinct is "freedom", and it is through freedom that man gains a sense of himself:

. . . freedom of the great wide wilderness where individual man stands supreme in his own right and where he may roam at will without restraint; where he feels that he is a person and not an atom; where he may meet nature face to face, and fearlessly match his human skill against her forces.⁴⁴

The awakening of the primordial instinct⁴⁵ causes Paul's soul to "expand", he feels himself "grow", and thus it is that the wilderness is presented by Wallace as something essential to the good of man's soul. He says the primitive instinct is too often "smothered by the luxuries and pampering of civilization",⁴⁶ and it is the smothering of this instinct which has caused Paul to be a weak character. The goodness of the wilderness is indicated by its holy purity. For Wallace the wilderness is "the world just as God has made it, untouched by the hand of man",⁴⁷ and since "undefiled", it resembles a temple.

Nowhere does one get so close to God as in the wilderness. The wilderness is the temple of pure thoughts, of high ambitions. Here man's soul expands as nowhere else on earth.⁴⁸

By the end of his wilderness experience, Paul is a whole new person, a much more admirable person. The resemblance of his story, at least superficially, to *Crusoe* is apparent, for Paul is cast out into the wilderness and is there redeemed. It is interesting that his redemption depends upon the awakening or release of his "primordial instinct", or the wild animal within himself, for it approaches what D. H. Lawrence has termed the "daimon" of America in a positive and overt manner. It thus resembles more modern fiction, especially Atwood's Surfacing, where the protagonist's submergence into her primordial identity transforms her into a wild animal, and resurrects her into a new being.

Farley Mowat's Lost in the Barrens involves the struggles of two young boys, Jamie and Awasin, to survive in the Arctic barrens. Awasin is a Cree Indian, and Jamie is his closest friend. Just as Catharine and Indiana in Canadian Crusoes exert White and Red influences upon each other, so too do Jamie and Awasin.

After many years of living in the subarctic forest, Jamie and Awasin are well prepared for difficulties when they become stranded in the barrens. Like Traill, Mowat devotes great attention to describing the ways in which the children adapt to their harsh environment. Perhaps because his protagonists are well acquainted with knowledge of wilderness survival. Mowat places them in the most difficult environment imaginable. Relatively defenceless in enemy Eskimo territory during the severe winter season, the boys face a very real challenge to their survival. They become Crusoe figures as they build a home for themselves in an alien world. The building is gradual and requires all of their energy and resourcefulness. They begin with the most rudimentary materials but constantly improve their situation. Thus the pitifully inadequate tent is abandoned for the relative comfort afforded by a primitive stone igloo, which in turn is replaced by a cabin. A similar pattern exists in Canadian Crusoes where the children begin their adventure by sleeping under trees, then acquiring a wigwam, and finally a cabin. But if the material comforts become

more sophisticated and civilized, their physical appearance becomes more primitive and wild. If in Canadian Crusoes the children are transformed into Indians, in Lost in the Barrens the children become Eskimoes.

The boys are not concerned with the physical replication of their home, as are Traill's children, neither do they perceive the benevolent bounty of a Christian God in the wilderness surrounding them. Indeed, it is an old, old world which Jamie and Awasin have entered, and it is haunted by Eskimo gods. One of the more dramatic images in the novel is of Denikazi, leader of a band of Chipeweyans, stretching his arms out over the wilderness:

On a hillock a hundred yards from camp the chief stood against the gray sky like a squat, powerful monument of rock. His hands were uplifted and his voice cried out over the dark landscape. Denikazi was calling on his gods -- ancient gods -- for help in finding the deer.⁴⁹

Indian and Eskimo gods colour Lost in the Barrens, emphasizing the primitive, distinctively non-European character of the vast arctic barrens. Jamie is frightened by the "wild and barbaric sight" of the Chipeweyan camp whose members "lived a life that had been almost unchanged for a thousand years".⁵⁰ Thus these ancient Indians are as primitive a part of the landscape as those in Canadian Crusoes.

The novel develops the idea of an alien-haunted landscape which is only hinted at in Canadian Crusoes through the figure of the cannibalistic Indian. As Jamie and Awasin

travel with the Chipeweyans into the unknown wilderness, Jamie notices that they mysteriously avoid a deserted cabin referred to as "Red-Head Post". Knowing the story of the red-haired Englishman who had once inhabited the cabin, but inexplicably disappeared one winter, Jamie wonders at the Chipeweyan nervousness. Awasin suggests that they "know something about the trader's disappearance that nobody else knows".⁵¹ The implication is that a Wendigo has gotten the red-haired trader. The legend of the Wendigo operates at a subtle level in the novel. Wendigo is a cannibalistic Indian spirit who haunts the wilderness and he is first introduced into the novel by the bard Telikwzaie, who tells of a discovery of Wendigo tracks at a place called "Great Stone House".⁵² Later, when the boys discover mysterious tracks around their stone igloo they are extremely frightened, and when they return after a few days a "flicker of movement"⁵³ over the snow makes them remember the Wendigo legend. The unexplained tracks fill their evenings with nightmares, while the howling of the wind takes on an eerie quality.

The use of the Wendigo figure, as well as the ghostly presence of Viking and Eskimo spirits, work to indicate that the barrens are a very old world, a world of the past which in the present takes on the shades of myth and legend. Mowat describes the Kazon River as a "gigantic prehistoric monster",⁵⁴ and the atmosphere as "unreal, as if it belonged to another, older world than ours".⁵⁵ The ghosts of the

past are a near tangible presence in Lost in the Barrens, and this is most obvious when Jamie recovers an Eskimo soapstone lamp from an ancient grave site. The lamp lends their cabin a homey touch, and Mowat informs us that:

The dead out on that lonely, wind-swept ridge were friendly spirits. They had made gifts to the living of another race, across a century of time.⁵⁶

Thus the spirits of the North, within their own limits are benevolent.

It is important that Jamie, a white boy, and Awasin, a Red boy, become lost together, for they work a change upon each other. Awasin's superstitions are tempered by Jamie's unquenchable curiosity. It is Jamie who enters the ancient Viking grave to discover its mysteries, while Awasin is terrified by the many tales which have warned against such an act. Significantly, it is Awasin who later comes to recognize the absurdity of superstition, and he adopts a more objective outlook. Jamie, on the other hand, constantly disregards the character of the arctic, and attempts to work it to his own will. Whenever he defies or ignores the laws of the north, he is punished. After Jamie confides to Awasin his acquired understanding that you cannot dominate the north, Awasin responds:

"I never thought you'd understand about that, Jamie", he said at last. "White men don't as a rule. Most of them think they can beat the northland in any fight. A lot of them found out differently, and didn't live to tell about it. My people know differently. It's hard to put

into words, but I think you understand. If you fight against the spirits of the north you will always lose. Obey their laws and they'll look after you."⁵⁷

Mowat calls this "the most important single piece of knowledge"⁵⁸ that is acquired by Jamie, and it is this knowledge which now distinguishes him from the White Man. Thus is a new being created by Mowat in Lost in the Barrens, just as by Traill in Canadian Crusoes. Neither totally White, nor Red, Jamie becomes a North American.

The phenomenon of children lost in the wilderness as recorded by Susanna Moodie and Reverend Joseph Hilts, and as fictionalized by various authors, reveals some of the mythical dimensions of the wilderness. The myth of the benevolent wilderness has been evident in all of the novels so far studied, as has the myth of the malevolent wilderness. These dual aspects of the wilderness are in part expressed through the Crusoe legend in Canadian Crusoes and Lost in the Barrens, since this legend involves the concept of wilderness as a place both of potential order and meaning, and of potential chaos. It has been established that the Indian, and Indian legends, embody the wilderness's capacity to be anarchic. Furthermore, the lost children become influenced and transformed by this capacity of the wilderness. In succeeding chapters the focus is increasingly upon the dark, primitive power of the wilderness to transform characters into the monsters and

"Wild Men" it has been popularly imagined to conceal. But perhaps the most important occurrence in the wilderness, which the lost children reveal, is the merging of the primitive and the civilized, of Red Man and White Man, for this presages the establishment of a new order of beings. The motif of lost children therefore contains a creation myth of the North American identity.

CHAPTER II
LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES

One of the most distinctive aspects to stories of lost children involves their introduction to the Indian and his culture. Contemporary writers are increasingly utilizing the possibilities of Amerindian mythology in their fiction, thus discovering a coyote god and a Wendigo spirit where before timid fauns and gentle nymphs were so appropriately missing. The wilderness and the Indian or Eskimo are inseparable entities in much Canadian fiction, and the Indian, or Indian legends, in early Canadian fiction are a part of the landscape. They are beings out there somewhere, exterior to White civilization but always subtly influencing it.

Throughout John Richardson's Wacousta, the garrisoned soldiers cast fearfully expectant eyes upon the engulfing forest. They know that in its depths lives their fiendish enemy, the Indian, who is ever ready to pounce, kill, and mutilate their small and isolated unit. The Indian is an extension of the malevolent forest which nearly circumvents Fort Michilimackinac. The lake relieves the monotony of the surrounding of wilderness, and Richardson conducts a revealing comparison between the lake and the

forest. He says that, "When the eye turned woodward it fell heavily and without interest upon a dim and dusky point known to enter upon savage scenes and unexplored countries".¹ Thus the forest is representative of the Indian menace and of the unknown. No one, other than the Indian, wishes to enter the forest in Wacousta. Frederick de Haldimar only does so because it is absolutely necessary. It is not a frontier of adventure and challenge but of certain horror and death. The garrison inhabitants are restricted to the small, civilized compound of the fort, and thus appear to become the forest's inmates. This is especially clear when Richardson remarks that: "The forest, in a word, formed, as it were, the gloomy and impenetrable walls of the prison-house".² Nor is the "prison-house" without its guards, for the forest is "hemmed in by the savages"³ as much as by verdant barriers. The lake is the antithesis of the forest. Rather than suggesting the unknown, the lake suggests the known; rather than being dark and oppressive, it is light and gay. When the eye turns lakeward, it recalls the past,⁴ and the way back to Europe. If the forest is a prison of wretchedness and constraint, the lake is a "portal through which happiness and liberty could be again secured".⁵

The malevolence of the forest seems vocalized in the hideous yell of the Indian. Richardson remarks that the shouts seem to emanate from the heart of the wood.⁶ The forest is a dark shield which defends the Indian, while it is an offensive, aggressive force as well. When a detachment is sent to secure the body of the supposed Captain De Haldimar, the Indian yell is sounded, and Richardson says that "every tree along the skirt of the forest gave back the towering form of a warrior".⁷

Never is the forest presented that it is not full of "skulking Indians", real or imagined, so that every time a White Man looks into the woods he sees "the dark and flitting forms of men gliding from tree to tree along the skirt of the wood".⁸ Their "flitting" and "gliding" suggests something ghostlike, something insubstantial. The two "hideously painted" Indians who eventually kill Baynton are "silent as the spectres they resembled",⁹ and Richardson at one point describes the Indian as a "dark spirit moving cautiously on its course of destruction".¹⁰ Thus is the Indian confirmed as a supernatural, malevolent entity. He is represented, in fact, as a devil. The Indian yell sounds as if it comes from "a legion of devils",¹¹ and when the ill-fated Baynton runs from the fort with Clara De Haldimar, characteristically unconscious, in his arms, his friend in the rescue boat warns him to "fly" because the Indian "devils are levelling from the windows"¹² and are giving chase. When

one over-zealous warrior chases the rescue boat and gains the gunwale, "his grim face looking devilish in its war-paint, and his fierce eyes gleaming and rolling like fireballs in their sockets",¹³ we realize that not only are the Indians supernatural spectres and devils, but they are also quite mad. They are obsessed with the death and destruction of the White Man, and when they see that the rescuing schooner is escaping from their tomahawks, with which they have already massacred most of the inhabitants of Fort Michilimackinac, they are "frantic with rage".¹⁴ Such blood-lust is excessive in the extreme, and is an element of their insanity. Richardson makes a major point of their cruelty as well, for it is one of his favourite remarks that the Indian likes to attack the defenceless. At Fort Michilimackinac the Indian mercilessly kills and scalps supplicating women and helpless children. Kindness and good-will are masks which the Indian only assumes to deceive the White Man. Thus Richardson remarks that the Indian uprising in the summer of 1763 saw "the whole of the Western tribes" throw off "the mask" of amity.¹⁵ Such a negative attitude towards the Indian is in part explained by Richardson's need to sensationalize him to attract European readership. Obviously Richardson himself did not conceive the Indian to be as demonic as Wacousta, but he exaggerates the Indian's savage qualities for artistic purposes.

The nature of the Indian in Wacousta may best be discovered through an exploration of the central character in the novel. Wacousta himself represents the most savage qualities of the Indian, and this introduces the greatest irony of the novel, for Wacousta, alias Reginald Morton, is a White Man who is yet more monstrous than any Indian. His stature is Herculean, as is his strength and speed. As Wacousta chases Sir Everard Valletort, the most recent recipient of Clara's still unconscious form, he is described as being "in tall relief against the heavens, the gigantic form of the warrior".¹⁶ Wacousta's impressive dimensions render him a symbol of all that the White Man most fears in the Indian.

One of the things which the White Man most fears in the Indian seems to be indicated by the frequency of the appellation of "savage" whenever he is present. What might "savage" have meant to John Richardson writing in the early nineteenth century? Olive Patricia Dickason in "The Concept of L'Homme Sauvage", considers sixteenth and seventeenth French definitions of savagery as "most pertinent to our early Canadian experiences".¹⁷

Briefly outlining the sources of those centuries' Wild Men, Dickason looks to Roman, Hebrew, and Christian traditions. The Wild Man stems, in the Roman tradition, from Saturn, who "symbolized life-devouring hunger and insatiable

desire".¹⁸ Interestingly Dickason notes that he has also been identified with Hercules.¹⁹ In the Hebrew tradition, the Wild Man symbolizes the spiritual condition of the out-cast; the offspring of Cain which are "insane", "accursed", and "destructive".²⁰ In Christianity he is "a folk version of the Antichrist."²¹

Certainly Wacousta's Roman qualities are evident in his Herculean stature and in his "life-devouring hunger" for vengeance against Colonel De Haldimar. The murder of Donellan, Charles and Clara, as well as of untold numbers of soldiers, have all borne witness to Wacousta's destructive appetite. Nor is this hunger restricted to others, for in the most profound way Wacousta is self-devouring. John Moss, in "Frontier Exile", neatly identifies Wacousta's wolf-dog, Onondato, as an extension of his master.²² That singular episode in which Onondato is seen lapping up the brains of the unfortunate Frank Halloway is, by extension, symbolic of Wacousta's own "unnatural appetite".²³ Like Onondato, Wacousta is "lycanthropic, a beast, howling inarticulately from cover to cover of his context, the embodiment of natural chaos".²⁴ When it is revealed that Frank Halloway's real name is the same as Wacousta's -- Reginald Morton -- Moss remarks that "the image of Wacousta's spectral self-devouring Halloway" is "a grotesque metaphor for actuality".²⁵

Like the Hebraic Wild Man, Wacousta is an outcast; he is "insane", "accursed", and "destructive". As Frederick De Haldimar watches from his hidden vantage the altercations between Wacousta and Oucanasta's brother, Richardson remarks that Wacousta's anger is "urged probably by one of his wayward fits".²⁶ Wacousta's insanity is most obvious in his inflexible vengeance to destroy Colonel De Haldimar's happiness, for the price of revenge is the death of three innocent people (as well as others instrumental to his cause), and this is excessive and indicative of an unbalanced mind.

A victim of Colonel De Haldimar's treachery, Wacousta (when Reginald Morton) is denounced as a "rebel and an outlaw"²⁷ by his own regiment. He is subsequently "compelled to live wholly apart from his own species".²⁸ An outcast, Wacousta tells Clara, "I at length learned to know that man is the only enemy of man upon earth",²⁹ and it is this belief that serves as the curse in his own life. He becomes Cain, the murderer of his fellow creatures.

Wacousta's supernatural identity, his misanthropy, and spirit of vengeance set him up as an Antichrist figure reminiscent of the Christian Wild Man tradition. This is most apparent when he appears as an apparition at the window of the Fleur de Lis, frightening Frederick De Haldimar and Everard Valletort:

A human face was placed close to the unblemished glass, and every feature was distinctly revealed by the lamp that still lay upon the table. The glaring eye was fixed on the taller of the officers, but though the expression was unfathomably guileful, there was nothing that denoted anything like a recognition of the party. The brightness of the wood fire had so subsided as to throw the interior of the room into partial obscurity, and under the disguise of his hood it was impossible for one without to distinguish the features of the taller officer. The younger, who was scarcely an object of attention, passed comparatively unnoticed.³⁰

This apparition of Wacousta is interesting, for although it does not seemingly recognize Frederick De Haldimar, still it focuses all of its vengeful attention upon him. It is almost as if it somehow knows without recognizing the son of his enemy. This suggests Wacousta's reality as a symbol of enmity against all De Haldimars, but it has wider implications as well. After the apparition has gone, De Haldimar wonders at the paradox of "the human face divine",³¹ which is able to look absolutely evil and more loathsome than any other creature. Thus Wacousta is the dark side of the Janus face of man, and rather than a symbol of opposition to a single family, he is a symbol of enmity to multitudinous humanity. As Frederick De Haldimar says: "It is that man, naturally fierce and inexorable, is alone the enemy of his own species".³² Therefore Wacousta is the antithesis of Christ, preaching hatred instead of love, vengeance instead of forgiveness, cruelty rather than kindness.

Dickason notes that "in the days of courtly love", the Wild Man "was the embodiement of brute sensuality as opposed to the chivalrous love of the knight".³³ The wonderful scene where Wacousta is splayed out on a rude couch with Clara while Sir Everard Valletort, tied to a tree, is forced to watch, is surely imitatives of the opposition of brute and knight (the names alone suggest as much). While Wacousta imprints "a burning kiss" upon Clara's unwilling lips,³⁴ we are introduced to many of the noble, courageous, gallant, and courteous qualities of Sir Everard. Apparently this Renaissance Wild Man was known for uncontrolled passion, and "assaulted lone women in the woods".³⁵ Wacousta's abduction of Ellen Halloway allies him with this thirteenth century progenitor.

While the Wild Man is traditionally hairy, symbolizing "his enormous strength on which he depended as he stood alone against all, even his own kind",³⁶ Wacousta is not. Perhaps as a replacement, Richardson has him sport a fantastic hat: ". . . he wore a strange outlandish sort of hat, covered with wild bird's feathers in front".³⁷ Such a hat distinguishes him even from the Indians, who have bare, shaven heads. Thus he stands out emphatically alone, while his Herculean stature and prowess attest to his strength. Usually the Wild Man is depicted as carrying "a knotty club or an uprooted tree",³⁸ and in Wacousta this perhaps becomes

translated into the ever-present tomahawk. Interestingly, the Wild Man was most closely associated with "bears and devils",³⁹ and thus Wacousta's relationship with the devilish Indians.

As the soldiers cast apprehensive glances at the forest, Richardson says, "At times they fancied they beheld the dark and flitting forms of men gliding from tree to tree along the skirt of the wood".⁴⁰ Such a fancy seems ape-like in its conception, and it is evident that the Wild Man tradition owes something to anthropoid apes.⁴¹ Explanations for ape-like creatures tremendously varied in the Middle Ages, one being that of "dual creation, of the Devil acting in competition with God but being capable only of producing a distorted version of the original".⁴² Thus the ape is an imperfect man, and, according to Christian folk-love, an ape symbolizes "carnal desire".⁴³ Though this, we have seen, has applications to Wacousta as Wild Man, it is most interesting to note that the ape was renowned for "remembering injuries and harbouring hatred for a very long time".⁴⁴ Thus it was logical that: "men who were of a vengeful disposition or who nursed the desire for revenge were acting in the manner of apes rather than as full-fledged human beings".⁴⁵ Therefore the vengefulness of Wacousta may not only be attributed to Richardson's inter-text, The Revenge (1721), by Edward Young.

Ghost, devil, and Wild Man, there is yet another dimension to Wacousta. Sometimes he seems to be an in-defineable monster, a dark invisibility suggestive of an inner psychological reality. Such is the case when Wacousta captures Frederick De Haldimar as he first attempts to escape from the dull forest where he has overheard the Indian plans to destroy Fort Detroit. De Haldimar is in a ravine and the light is very poor when he turns to see "bending over him a dark and heavy form, the outline of which alone was undistinguishable in the deep gloom in which the ravine remained enveloped".⁴⁶ Before he is able to fire his pistol, he feels "a powerful hand upon his chest, and with as much facility as if he had been a child was raised by that invisible hand to his feet".⁴⁷ The gloomy setting, the presence of a dark, oppressive and yet invisible power, are all suggestive of a haunting psychological force. That Wacousta may be partly perceived as a figure from the subconscious is early indicated by Valletort when he remarks that the intruder Colonel De Haldimar sensed in the fort is "but the creation of his disturbed dreams".⁴⁸ Throughout the novel the soldiers see the Indian phantasma whenever they look woodward, and often it is as much a projection of their own minds as a reality. The overwhelming presence of the forest in Wacousta is symbolic of the unconscious, and in folk-lore it has long been established as the home of

all sorts of monsters -- like the bogey-man in children's tales. Such monsters hint at the dangerous tendencies of the unconscious to be irrational and uncontrolled.

John Richardson presents the Indian, via Wacousta, as the Wild Man of the Woods in Wacousta, and it is ironic that the Indians themselves have countless numbers of such figures in their own legends and myths. One well known legend is that of D'Sonoqua, the Wild Woman of the Woods in the British Columbian forests who makes a memorable appearance in Emily Carr's Klee Wyck. D'Sonoqua eats children lost in the woods, and her appearance is always heralded by an eerie, paralyzing cry which Carr translates as "OO-oo-oo-oeo". She thus seems related to Wendigo, sometimes spelt Windigo, another Indian monster who eats people (not specifically children), and who is also identified by an eerie cry. Wendigo is the most feared monster of the Cree and Ojibway Indians.⁴⁹ He usually attacks in winter, and was at one time a human being:

The Windigo was once a normal human being but has been possessed by a savage cannibalistic spirit. When a human is possessed by windigo, ice forms inside the human body, hair grows profusely from the face, arms and legs and an insatiable craving for human flesh develops.⁵⁰

The Wendigo is known for its cruelty:

When the ugly creature attacks, it shows no mercy. This monster will kill and devour its own family to try and satisfy its lust for human flesh. The Windigo is inhuman because of the powerful spirit of cannibalism and destruction residing in its body.⁵¹

Wendigo is usually accompanied by high winds and blizzards,⁵² while its scream is able to paralyze a man, "preventing him from protecting himself".⁵³ Richardson, whose maternal grandmother was reportedly an Indian,⁵⁴ and whose interests were centred upon the Indian, most certainly was aware of the Wendigo legend. Wacousta manifests various resemblances to such a figure. His terrifying yell haunts the White soldiers and nearly paralyzes them with "superstitious awe".⁵⁵ Certainly Wacousta is cruel and merciless in his pursuit of vengeance. There is a powerful spirit of destruction in his soul and he lusts for the deaths of Colonel De Haldimar's children as Wendigo lusts for human flesh. It is also hinted that Wacousta is cannibalistic, for he remarks to Oucanasta's brother that the wound he received from the "Saganaw" (White soldiers) is without pain for the Saganaw "only prick the skin like a thorn",⁵⁶ but when he, Wacousta, strikes, he "drinks the blood of his enemy",⁵⁷ and, gruesomely, "it is the blood next to his [the enemy's] heart".⁵⁸ The fact that Wendigo was once normal, but became possessed by a malevolent spirit suggests the pattern of Wacousta, who, before the treachery of Colonel De Haldimar, was balanced and rational.

Wendigo is one of the most popularly exploited Indian legends in Canadian fiction. His earliest appearance seems to be in E. W. Thomson's short story "The Red-Headed Wendigo"

(1895), in which he is reduced to a practical joke. The story is set in the winter forests of Quebec where a few superstitious French Canadian lumber-jacks discover the tracks of a Wendigo. They are all mortally terrified and ready to flee from the woods, but their cool-headed English supervisor, Tom Dunscombe, insists that there is a rational explanation and that he shall discover it. The story adopts a detective structure as Tom goes on the trail of the purported Wendigo to discover its mystery. Like all good detectives, Dunscombe solves the problem, for the tracks have been manufactured by one "Red Dick Humphreys", a singular individual who enjoys frightening people. The story is really one of the triumph of reason over superstition, of order over chaos, and thus it represents an inversion of the expected use of the Wendigo legend.

Stephen Leacock utilizes the Wendigo in his novel Adventures of the Far North (1920), an historical fiction-alization of Sir John Franklin's ill-fated Arctic expedition. As the expedition moves toward shelter they are exposed to the intense cold of the arctic winter. They are also starving since there is a scarcity of game. Starving and freezing, the men become increasingly weak and a few finally drop from fatigue. Franklin and the stronger men continue towards the shelter with desperate determination and are joined after a number of days by Michel, the Indian guide who had remained behind with the other men. Michel tells Franklin that the

others had tried to follow, but had gone astray in the snow. Yet there is something unusual about Michel. Leacock says "he was strange and sullen, sleeping apart and wandering off by himself to hunt",⁵⁹ and when Michel returns with meat from his hunting one day, which he declares to be wolf-meat, the men realise that he "killed his companions and was feeding on their bodies".⁶⁰ Michel is described as a "powerful madman",⁶¹ and when two of Franklin's men return to camp one afternoon they discover that Michel has murdered Lieutenant Hood and is about to eat him. They are too enfeebled to fight the possessed Indian, and much time elapses before Franklin manages to kill him with a gun. It is important that the Wendigo possession occurs only to the Indian, and not to the White Men. Leacock maintains distinction between the two cultures by suggesting that transformation into Wendigo is an Indian phenomenon alone.

In "The Wendigo" by Algernon Blackwood (1910), the author maintains no such racial prejudices in Wendigo possession. Blackwood presents us with a hunting party located north of Rat Portage and characterized by amateur psychologist Dr. Cathcart of Aberdeen, his nephew Simpson, who is a divinity student from Aberdeen, as well as two guides, Hank Davis and Joseph Défago, and an Indian named Punk.

The story centres upon Joseph Défago, the French Canadian woodsman, who, says Blackwood, is exceedingly responsive to:

that singular spell which the wilderness lays upon certain lonely natures, and he loved the wild solitudes with a kind of romantic passion that amounted almost to an obsession.⁶²

Dr. Cathcart, the figure of reason in the story, objects to one of Défago's characteristics -- moroseness. Interestingly, Défago's moroseness is usually precipitated by "too long a spell of civilization".⁶³ One cannot escape Défago's resemblance to Mrs. Moodie's Brian, in her story "Brian, The Still-Hunter", Perhaps there are other tales in Canadian fiction of morose men who are mad about the wilds. There may also be some basis in myth for such a figure, as the Rat-Trapper legend might provide.⁶⁴

Blackwood suggests that Défago's predilection for the woods is like a "strange fever of the wilderness",⁶⁵ which afflicts some men so that they wander around uninhabited regions "half-fascinated, half-deluded, to their death".⁶⁶ Défago's "fever" appears to render him particularly vulnerable to superstitious beliefs about the wilderness and makes him the appropriate victim of the Wendigo spirit.

The lack of game causes the hunting party to split up; Défago and Simpson leave to investigate regions for moose. For Simpson, the wilderness is a totally new experience, and he finds that it changes his values:

It was one thing, he realized, to hear about primeval forests, but quite another to see them. While to dwell in them and seek acquaintance with their wild life was, again, an initiation that no intelligent being could undergo without a certain shifting of personal values hitherto held for permanent and sacred.⁶⁷

This, in a nutshell, seems to be Blackwood's purpose in "The Wendigo"; to show that experience of the wilderness can undermine previously accepted values. Simpson himself shows signs of catching Défago's "fever" for the wilderness, and this challenges his devotion to the church. Yet this passage is ironic, for Simpson does not yet know how powerful his "initiation" is going to be.

He and Défago, having left the main camp in search of moose, arrive upon a blasted, nightmarish landscape of "brulé":

. . . where the fires of the previous year had raged for weeks, and the blackened stumps now rose gaunt and ugly, bereft of branches, like gigantic match-heads stuck into the ground, savage and desolate beyond words.⁶⁸

It is appropriately here that the Wendigo comes and takes Défago, and Simpson's common sense and logic are tested to their utmost. Horrified to the depths of his soul, he eventually does the only rational thing -- he returns to the main camp to procure help. Dr. Cathcart immediately rationalizes Simpson's story, but soon he too comes to realize that there is no reasonable explanation. He smells, hears, and sees the transmuted form of Défago, now a monstrous

Wendigo. The experience for Cathcart is a lesson in the inexplicable, by which he previously held little store. Characterized by calm empiricism, and abounding confidence in his own powers of ratiocination, he is humbled by the mysterious events.

Blackwood leaves it to Simpson to best explain the nature of their experience in the wilderness. Simpson believes that there is something out there in the wilderness, something terrifically primitive since it has not evolved or progressed as other beings:

He envisaged it rather as a glimpse into pre-historic ages, when superstitious, gigantic and uncouth, still oppressed the hearts of men; when the forces of nature were still untamed, the Powers that may have haunted a primeval universe not yet withdrawn.⁶⁹

Thus is the Wendigo explained as a remnant of primal chaos.

As in Thomson's "Red-Headed Wendigo", in Blackwood's "The Wendigo" a superstitious French Canadian challenges cool British rationality. Unlike Thomson however, Blackwood has reason and order defeated by madness and chaos. Unlike Leacock, Blackwood demonstrates that Wendigo possession, or the forces of irrationality, are pan-human. The Wendigo legend is one of the world-wide myths of the powers of darkness contending against those of the light, and winning.

Wendigo is not the only supernatural Indian being stalking the pages of Canadian fiction. In Howard O'Hagan's Tay John, a Shuswap tribe holds superstitious beliefs about

a dark and disturbing valley close to their encampment. The water flowing from the valley is black and magical:

It was said that if a man drank of that water he would lose his voice and go from the sight of his fellows, roaming the hills at night to bark at the moon like a coyote. The coyote men saw by day was not the same they heard by night, for the coyote they heard by night was the voice of a man whose hands had become claws and whose teeth had grown long and tusk-like, who sat on his haunches, lifted his head to the sky and lamented the human speech gone from him.⁷⁰

The Indian's believe the valley to be inhabited by a cruel spirit that might "take the form of a great white bear", and, while they sleep, transform them into creatures with a coyote's voice and hands; a creature alone and lonely, for as legend says, "each man would be forever a stranger to his neighbour".⁷¹ This legend recalls the strong identification of Wacousta to his wolf-dog, Onondato, which Moss has perceived as an extension of Wacousta's lycanthropic aspects. The were-wolf tradition is related to that of the Wild Man, but whereas the Wild Man is a dominant figure in Wacousta, he is relatively inconspicuous in Tay John.

Tay John is a half-breed who isolates himself from both Red and White worlds by living alone in the western wilderness. He is not a malevolent being, but it is suggested that he is supernatural, and this perhaps partly explains why he is unable to find an appropriate society for himself. He is wild in so far as he actually lives in the wilds, and his one act of insanity in the novel does

not arise from his savage Indian nature, but from his White identity. Like his crazed evangelical father, Red Rorty, Tay John is prone to literal interpretations of the bible. Thus Tay John one day cuts off his own hand when it offends him.⁷² Tay John's half-breed status, his solitary existence in the wilderness, and this isolated case of insanity, ally him somewhat with a Wild Man figure. But whereas Richardson seems concerned with mythologizing the landscape in a negative way through the Indian, O'Hagan does so positively. He finds that Indian legends provide the appropriate way to comprehend the West.

The novel begins with the story of Red Rorty, a tall, nordic-looking trapper and hunter who lives near the Athabaska river. In his isolation and solitude, Rorty shows signs of becoming mad, yet he does not really become so until he goes to Edmonton one spring and becomes obsessed with evangelism. He decides to teach The Way to the Shuswap people. The Shuswap's are most receptive to Rorty, not because of his religion, but because he may be the leader foretold in their legends. This leader, legend said, would be blond-haired, tall, and he would guide them back through the mountains to be reunited with their original tribe -- the Salish. They hope Rorty is the long-awaited leader, but when he breaks their law by taking the wife (Hanni) of one of the tribesmen (Swamas), they tie him to a tree and burn him.

Hanni places a small stone in his mouth, and when it is still there after Rorty is no more than a smoking skeleton, she says: "he was a great liar, and the word has choked him!" Hanni is pregnant with Rorty's child, but she dies before it is born. O'Hagan now incorporates a Tsimshian Indian legend found in Diamond Jenness' work Indians of Canada.⁷³ In this legend the husband of Hanni cannot be reconciled to her death. He sleeps on her grave every night and ages rapidly. Significantly, it is in the spring that Swamas discovers a small blond-haired boy collecting firewood and flowers on top of Hanni's grave. The boy disappears into the grave, and it is apparent that he has been born, and continues to live, however paradoxically, in a place of death. When captured the child does not easily adjust to life above the ground; he disintegrates to such an extent that only a few yellow wisps of hair remain, and the medicine men blow upon these hairs and shake their rattles for three days before he is revived. Though revived, the child is still only half-alive, and he cries because he wishes the "full, free life of a man -- not the half-life he had in the grave".⁷⁴ To realize this wish he must go with his cousin into the mountains and there stand under spruce trees that the people have set on fire so that the gum falls upon them. Then they must be washed in a waterfall. Now the child is fully alive but he lacks a shadow. He was

born in the ground, where there are no shadows, so now he must go find one for himself. He goes to the top of a high eastern mountain where the shadows come from in the morning and where they return at night",⁷⁵ in order to do so. The Shuswaps name him "Kumkleseem", and he is believed to be the great leader who will guide them back through the mountains to Salish. But Kumkleseem comes to know the White Man from whom he acquires the name Tay John. He becomes increasingly alienated from his people until he one day leaves them altogether. He lives alone in the wilderness, hunting and trapping and sometimes moving around the perimeters of White civilization.

The purpose of thus detailing the first chapter entitled "Legend", is that it contains the symbols, images, and themes necessary to an understanding of the story of Tay John. In "Hearsay", O'Hagan introduces us to Jack Denham, the bard of the Tay John legend. In his role as bard, Denham establishes the mythical dimensions of the West. Two of these dimensions are its newness and its revelatory possibilities. Man, says Denham, is drawn to unexplored mountains and valleys even though he knows they will be much like others he has seen:

Yet still he goes up it hoping vaguely for some revelation, something he has never seen or felt before, and he rounds a point or pushes his head over a pass, feeling that a second earlier, he would have surprised the Creator at his work -- for a country where no man has stepped before is new in the real sense of the word, as though it had just been made, and when you turn your back upon it you feel that it may drop back again into the dusk that gave it being.⁷⁶

The sense of newness is so strong in the western wilderness that the land seems like a just-born babe, a babe so acutely proximate to the oblivion from which it has emerged that it threatens a return. The West is thus connected with images of emergence and dissolution, of life and death.

It is in the new and possibly prophetic West that Denham first encounters Tay John, and this is appropriate for Tay John is a symbol of the western landscape. Throughout the novel we are to hear of his close relationship to the land. Denham early remarks that:

He seemed to stand for something. He stood there with his feet planted apart upon the ground, as though he owned it, as though he grasped it with them. When he moved I would not have been surprised to have seen clumps of earth adhere to the soles of his mocassins. . . .⁷⁷

Tay John's relationship with the land begins even before his birth, for he was conceived in its darkness. Tay John's battle with a bear ends as a metaphor for his birth from the ground, for he emerges from under the bear like a baby being born: "A man's head appeared inside it, bloody, muddied, as though he were just being born, as though he were climbing out of the ground".⁷⁸ The land is Tay John's "mother", and

this is again clear when Alderson saves him from drowning in the river and drags him to shore where he lay face down "as if he were taking suck from the earth".⁷⁹ Alderson remarks that Tay John seems to have been formed by the landscape: "He -- well he was something shaped by the river, by the hills around us to their own ends".⁸⁰ Denham says that Tay John's muscles did not represent physical so much as abstract strength: "They represented strength in the abstract. Endurance, solitude -- qualities that men search for".⁸¹ This reminds us of Tay John's shadow, which is as solitary and enduring as the mountains from which it came.

Tay John is not only a symbol of the land, but of the newness of the land. Denham has said that unexplored country is new in the real sense of the word, "as though it had just been made", and throughout the novel when characters came upon Tay John they feel he has just been made:

His legs were spread, each foot firmly set. Yet it was not an impression of solidity he offered, so much as one of emergence -- from the ground itself, as though he had sprung up there a moment before my arrival. I looked to see soil disturbed ever so slightly where his trim high arched feet held their mocassins upon it.⁸²

Tay John's emergence here is reminiscent of his legendary appearance on the grave of Hanni where he is collecting firewood and flowers to take back into the ground with him.⁸³ He ascends complete and new from within the earth,

and it is so fresh a newness it seems that, like the land, he shall "drop back again into the dusk that gave [him] being".⁸⁴ Thus after the bear fight Denham remarks: "It was growing dusk now", and Tay John "vanishes" into the forest "as though he were leaving one form of existence for another".⁸⁵ This is just as in "Legend", where he threatened to leave life above the ground for life below. The Shuswaps are continually afraid that Tay John will leave his existence in the light for that of the grave, and they therefore cover Hanni's grave with stones.

O'Hagan sustains the threat of Tay John's dissolution throughout the novel. When Tay John escapes from the brawl caused by Ardith Aeriola and Dobble, he leaves behind a few strands of hair: "One of the men remained standing in a dazed fashion gazing at some yellow hair clutched in his fist".⁸⁶ This is reminiscent of Tay John's childhood disintegration into a few stands of hair. Of course, the end of the novel realizes Tay John's return to his birth-place, to the "dusk that gave [him] being":

Blackie stared at the tracks in front of him, very faint now, a slight trough in the snow, no more. Always deeper and deeper into the snow. . . . He had the feeling, he said, looking down at the tracks, that Tay John hadn't gone over the pass at all. He had just walked down, the toboggan behind him under the snow and into the ground.⁸⁷

Having established Tay John as a symbol of the land, and of the land's newness, it is now pertinent to consider what this may mean. In "Evidence -- Without a Finding", O'Hagan at first appears to contradict the idea of newness:

Yet there is nothing new -- these words, nor their meaning -- nothing really new in the sense of arrival in the world unless an odd meteor here and there.⁸⁸

The West may be new to man, but it is not new to the earth. What is, has always been, for all things are a part of the cyclical patterns of existence. Out of the darkness, says O'Hagan, comes light, and to darkness must the light return. Tay John dies in Hannie's womb and is buried with her in a grave. Yet the darkness of this grave becomes the womb of the living earth and from it Tay John emerges into the light of life. He is the personification of spring, all new and fresh, following upon the death and decay of winter. Thus in "Legend" he first appears in the spring gathering flowers to take into the grave. "Evidence -- Without a Finding" represents the downward aspect of the cycle of existence, for here Tay John is in winter, and instead of bearing flowers he bears the burden of Ardith's dead body. They go down into the ground to death, but not without the same promise of life to come as when Hanni died, for Ardith too has an unborn child in her womb. Thus will Tay John be newly born in the spring. The Tsimshian legend is very similar to that of Persephone.

Thus is Tay John not only a symbol of the new, unexplored West, but also of the eternal cycles and processes which characterize it. In "Legend" Tay John achieves the "full -- free life of a man" by standing under a tree which drops gum upon him. The life generating power of the tree is realized by Denham when he discovers the school-marm tree upon which father Rorty has tied himself:

I went to the clearing's edge and stood against that tree. Its crotch was somewhat higher than my head, but I held my arms along its arms. It moved against me with the wind. The branches above me sighed, the roots below me stirred in dark soil. There in that tree, against my body, pulsed the strength beyond all strength. I felt the earth, caught in the noose of time, lurch beneath me. The hum of stars was out beyond my fingertips, for the arms of the tree in those moments were my arms, and its movement mine. I felt I was being lifted, my feet pulled from the ground. Our fathers worshipped trees. I think I understand.⁸⁹

Here, the tree seems a symbol of the "life of the cosmos: its consistence, growth, proliferation, generative and regenerative processes".⁹⁰ The eternal cycles of nature underlie the apparent transience of life, and thus reality is the ceaseless repetition of old interminable processes.

O'Hagan condemns the White Man who would find the new as being an illusionist or a fantastic.⁹¹ O'Hagan understands the motivation behind the desire to find the new to be the hope of breaking down the eternal cycles which limit man's existence:

Give us new earth, we cry; new places, that we may see our shadow shaped in forms that man has never seen before. Let us travel on so quickly, let us go so far that our shadows, like ourselves, grow lean with our journeys. Let tomorrow become yesterday, now, this instant, while we speak. Let us go on so quickly that we see the future as the past. Let us look into the new land, beyond the wall that fronts our eyes, over the pass, beyond the source of the river. Let us look into the country beyond the mountains.⁹²

Father Rorty wishes to discover something new --

". . . a light, so awful, so stupendous, never before seen by man . . .".⁹³ He wishes to discover the "secret of the Cross";⁹⁴ to exceed the limitations of human existence.

O'Hagan brutally demonstrates that there is no power which can make man other than what he already is, for he is made by the immutable laws of nature. Thus when Father Rorty ties himself to the tree and awaits the "stupendous light", nature seems to attack him for his vanity. It rains dreadfully hard, the wind blows, and then it snows. By the time he is ready to come down from the tree the rain has shrunk the ropes, disallowing his release. Ironically, the storm lasts for three days, but Father Rorty does not arise from the dead.

Since Tay John is a symbol of the eternal generative and regenerative powers of nature, he is also connected to ideas such as immortality and absolute reality. He and Ardith therefore have much in common, and Denham describes her in terms reminiscent of Tay John:

When you met her you felt you had found something. Reality of some sort -- what that is no one ever knows in a world of make-believe. She had a presence -- but it was her consciousness of that presence that gave her power. She was arrogant, as one is arrogant who comprehends her destiny and can meet it without fear or equivocation -- and humble too, for she saw herself, as well as those drawn to her, as the victims of that capricious and inscrutable force.⁹⁵

Ardith herself becomes part of the mythology of that "inscrutable force" when she moves with Tay John into the western landscape. When RCMP officer Flaherty discovers Ardith and Tay John after they have moved far into the wilderness, it seems that Ardith has turned into an Indian, for she wears buckskin clothing, is burnt almost black by the sun, and wears her hair in two braids. Officer Flaherty asks Ardith when she shall return to her own people, and the circle she traces with her mocassin in the grass before she answers symbolizes that she has chosen to remain within the reality of the Indian concept of existence rather than to return to the make-believe one of the White Man.

When Blackie meets Tay John pulling the dead bodies of Ardith and his unborn child, Tay John asks him where he might find a doctor. But then, as if he realizes the answer to his problems, he remembers there is a church nearby. Blackie believes Tay John means the church of God, but Tay John means the church of nature, which makes doctors obsolete. The resurrecting power of nature is implicit in the oblivion of the winter world at the novel's end.

As Denham has said, one of the mythical dimensions of the new land is its possible revelatory power. Having already established Tay John as representative of both the land and the new, it now remains to establish his revelatory power, thus completing his metaphoric role.

When Alderson and his wife Julia enlist Tay John as their hunting guide, there is a great deal of suggestion that Julia is attracted to Tay John and shall bring him trouble. McLeod, the fur-trader who is Tay John's friend, senses this when her loud perfume makes him think "of the beaver castor men rub upon their traps".⁹⁶ Julia is very young, naive, and girlish. She, particularly, but also those around her, are different from Tay John, for Tay John has some secret knowledge which makes him wise:

But something about him was, suggesting a wisdom the others searched for, a knowledge of the Dark Stranger who moved in their words, one whose voice he knew, whose call he had heard, whose gaze he had met.⁹⁷

Tay John is as much a creature from below, as above, the earth. His associations with darkness and graves is early established in his legendary beginnings. His existence under the ground has given him knowledge of the Dark Stranger of death.

Julia seems to acquire knowledge of this dark existence when she spends a night alone with Tay John, and it is hardly what she bargained for. She is transformed when she returns to her husband's camp, and Denham notes that

"her blue eyes were wide as if they had just looked upon a revelation".⁹⁸ She appears suddenly and mysteriously in front of the anxious men, " -- a white face woman on a white horse out of the white hung trees".⁹⁹ She therefore seems like a being from legend herself, and the suggestion is that she has been under the ground with Tay John, has experienced that dark existence and met that Dark Stranger. This explains her superior attitude when she surveys the less knowledgeable men, and her regarding them as "unreal".¹⁰⁰ Compared to the reality of where she supposedly has been, he must seem unreal to her. But we are told that this "mood passed like a shadow",¹⁰¹ and with the leave-taking of its darkness, she is once more a creature of the light. There is a marked change in her previous youthful and foolish character. Denham says: "She seemed suddenly mature. Lines were in the corner of her eyes, webbed. Spiders had been working there".¹⁰² Yet in her confusion to explain what has happened to her, she implies that Tay John has raped her. It is quite evident that this is not the case, and in consequence of her charge Tay John removes himself from his already slight association with White civilization. Yet this does not occur before he proves his revelatory power again, for when RCMP officer Porter journeys with Tay John to bring him to trial, Tay John teaches him how to see the incredible abundance of game in the wilds. Porter had

never been aware of such abundance, and we are told that his life took on a whole different direction because of Tay John's teaching.

Thus far, Tay John has been discussed as a symbol, and not as an individual. This is because there is much more of the abstract about him than there is of the concrete. Yet it is of some importance to note that as an individual Tay John has looked for the new just as the White Man.

O'Hagan says:

Tay John had met the new -- the world of authority and discipline moving with the railway into the mountains. Yet, perhaps it was only the memory of an earlier authority and discipline -- that of the people among whom he was born, who lived beyond the mountains, from whose ways and exactions the discordant heritage of his yellow hair had promoted him to flee.103

Tay John's "discordant heritage" has caused him to flee from the Red and White worlds, indicating that there are deficiencies in them both. Through the mingling of Red and White in this blood and culture, he perhaps moves into the symbolic realm again by representing a new being. This adds another dimension to newness in the novel. This new being worships nature, and he possibly partakes of the "rugged individualist" philosophy. Tay John moves into the wilderness as a strong, solitary, and different sort of man who shuns discipline and authority. One of the popular myths of the West is that it is populated by just this type of being.

In Wacousta, Tay John, Klee Wyck, and the Wendigo stories, the figure of the Indian and the legends connected to his culture operate as forces which mythologize the Canadian landscape. Contrary to Traill's early assessment of Canada as too "matter-of fact" a country for supernaturals to visit, there exists no shortage of monsters or heroes. Traill's complaint of a lack of ghosts in the backwoods surely signifies an implicit realization that the nymphs and gods from Europe and Greece are inappropriate here.

Though the appearance and mannerisms of Wacousta and Tay John are more appropriate to primitive North America than to civilized Europe, their mythological function, or their essential reality, is the same as that of the Wild Man and of Persephone in western mythology. One might echo Howard O'Hagan and say that, after all, there is really nothing new in this old world. But the use of Amerindian mythology in Canadian fiction does not stop at the external function of translating the landscape into a purely North American context. Instead, as we shall see, it has become increasingly internalized into White civilization.

CHAPTER III
DESPATIALIZATION

For Traill, Mowat, Richardson, O'Hagan and others, the Wild Man was "out there" somewhere, stalking the new found land, and designating its unknown possibilities. He was an entity upon whom "the 'civilized' imagination could project its fantasies and anxieties",¹ but only as long as he remained a mystery. There are no longer any unknown territories in Canada; the technology and science of the modern age has mapped and ordered the entire landscape, and, not surprisingly, no island of hairy giants mars its systemized space. The Indian, or what remains of him, has been corralled in reserves since his "terrible spectre" proved no match against the White Man. Since science has brought unknown wildernesses under control,² the Wild Man has ceased to be a spatial being.³ Hayden White, in "The Forms of Wildness", discovers the Wild Man's "despatialization"⁴ to be "attended by a compensatory process of psychic interiorization",⁵ and the result has been that

modern cultural anthropology has conceptualized the idea of wildness as the repressed content of both civilized and primitive humanity. So that, instead of the relatively comforting thought that the Wild Man may exist out there and can be contained by some kind of physical action, it is now thought . . . that the Wild Man is lurking within every man, is clamoring for release within us all, and will be denied only at the cost of life itself.⁶

Perhaps the "despatialization" of the Wild Man in Canadian fiction can be seen to begin in Emily Carr's Klee Wyck. In this artful novel Carr utilizes the Kwakiutl legend of D'Sonoqua to mythologize the British Columbian coastal landscape, and to discover new aspects of herself.

Carr images the B.C. forests as misty, magical places throughout Klee Wyck. They were once the haunts of the Indian, who, as Margaret Atwood observes in Survival, are "a potential source of magic, of a knowledge about the natural-supernatural world which the White Man renounced when he became 'civilized'".⁷ The magical quality of the forest is concentrated in the totem of D'Sonoqua, which Carr dramatically encounters while sketching in a remote Indian village:

Her head and trunk were carved out of, or rather into, the hole of a great red cedar. She seemed to be part of the tree itself, as if she had grown there at its heart, and the carver had only chipped away the outer wood so that you could see her. Her arms were spliced and socketed to the trunk and were flung wide in a circling, compelling movement. Her breasts were two eagle-heads, fiercely carved. That much, and the column of her great neck, and her strong chin, I had seen when I slithered to the ground beneath her. Now I saw her face.

The eyes were two rounds of black, set in wide rounds of white, and placed in deep sockets under side, black eyebrows. Their fixed stare bored into me as if the very life of the old cedar looked out, and it seemed that the voice of the tree itself must have burst from the great round cavity, with projecting lips, that was her mouth. Her ears were round, and stuck out to catch all sounds. The salt air had not dimmed the heavy red of her trunk and arms and thighs. Her hands were black, with blunt finger-tips painted a dazzling white. I stood looking at her for a long, long time.⁸

D'Sonoqua is a common supernatural being among many coastal Indian tribes, and although legends of her vary from culture to culture, she retains essentially the same character throughout. She is the "Wild Woman of the Woods", who, among the Kwakiutl Indians at least, is depicted "as a female with enormous breasts and a cultivated hunger for children".⁹ D'Sonoqua's role as a man-eating monster is gruesomely evidenced in the second totem which Carr discovers:

She was unpainted, weather-worn, sun-cracked, and the arms and hands seemed to hang loosely. The fingers were thrust into the carven mouths of two human heads, held crowns down. From behind, the sun made unfathomable shadows in eye, cheek and mouth. Horror tumbled out of them.¹⁰

Carr is told by Indian Tom that D'Sonoqua is "sometimes bad . . . sometimes good",¹¹ and this indication of D'Sonoqua's positive aspects remains puzzling until Carr discovers the third totem:

She appeared to be neither wooden nor stationary, but a singing spirit, young and fresh, passing through the jungle. No violence coarsened her, no power domineered to wither her. She was graciously feminine.¹²

This third pole of D'Sonoqua fulfills the promise of her double nature already implicit in the Kwakiutl depiction of her as "a female with enormous breasts and a cultivated hunger for children"; life-granting, and life-denying powers are here brought paradoxically together.

D'Sonoqua is a symbol of the forest in Klee Wyck. Her man-eating role in Indian mythology is imaginatively

utilized by Carr to portray the omniverous character of the British Columbian coastal forests. Thus the forests in the novel are depicted as devouring monsters. Paradoxically, the result of the forests' voracious appetite is not only death and destruction, but also life and regeneration. Thus is the double nature of the forest consistent with its symbol.

Carr is intensely aware of the vibrancy of the forest. We are first made aware of her sensitivity to individual trees in "Ucluelet", where she is so absorbed in "a grand balsam pine tree"¹³ that she forgets she is participating in a social prayer. When she sleeps outside at Tanno and is afraid of its "wide black space",¹⁴ she wants the tent flaps open so that she may "feel the trees close".¹⁵ These subtle indications of Carr's affinity to trees is suggestive of a popular Indian belief that trees are "human beings".¹⁶ This largely means that trees are believed by the Indians to share with them a supernatural capacity. Furthermore, when trees become totems their supernatural attributes are not destroyed, but "transformed",¹⁷ and thus totems also are considered to be "human beings". Carr's special interest in trees is consistent with her interest in totems, and for similar reasons, for they are both more like rooted people than dumb substances.

In Klee Wyck the "humanity" of D'Sonoqua is most clearly demonstrated in her near ability to see, hear, and speak. Thus in Carr's first description of her she says that D'Sonoqua's eyes "bore" into her "as if the very life of the old cedar looked out". D'Sonoqua's voice seems almost to "burst" from her mouth, and her ears "catch" all sounds. D'Sonoqua is therefore very much alive, and so is the forest.

Carr discovers that the deserted Indian villages along the coast are rapidly disappearing beneath a "rush of wild growth", which "gobbles up all that was foreign to it".¹⁸ The forest is constantly "eating" everything in its reach. In Ucluelet where Carr walks along "a strip of land that belonged to nothing",¹⁹ she explains that it belongs to "nothing" because the sea had made it too salty to be "palatable" for the forest. Carr describes the inlet at Cha-atl as a "mouth", and as "the jaws of something too big and awful even to have a name".²⁰ Thus the forest, like D'Sonoqua, is a devouring monster. The incredible fecundity of the land is such that:

every seed which blew across her surface germinated and burst. The growing things jumbled themselves together into a dense thicket; so tensely earnest were things about growing in Skedans that everything linked with everything else, hurrying to grow to the limit of its own capacity; weeds and weaklings alike thrived in the rich moistness.²¹

It is this "hurrying to grow to the limit of its own capacity" which causes the measureless hunger of the forest, and it is so measureless that it even threatens to swallow the sea. In "D'Sonoqua", Carr watches the land from a boat and remarks:

The trees crowded to the very edge of the water, and the outer ones, hanging over it, shadowed the shoreline in a velvet smudge. D'Sonoqua might walk in places like this.²²

Presumably Carr can imagine D'Sonoqua walking "in places like this" because here the forest's appetite imperils the ocean itself. Carr's representation of the forest as an omniverous monster ever increasing its own dimensions aptly expresses the rampant and prolific growth of the coastal rain forests of B.C.

Significantly, it is in cemeteries that the symbol of D'Sonoqua gains its greatest power. In "Cumshewa", Carr visits a house that "has been full of dead Indians who had died during a smallpox epidemic".²³ "Bursting growth" soon takes over the buildings, covering the bleached bones with a maze of green life and Carr remarks: "These strong young trees were richer perhaps for that Indian dust".²⁴ When she visits the Indian cemetery with Sophie, Carr finds many of the tombstones "under a tangle of vines",²⁵ and in "Century Time" she notes that "death had not spoiled" the cemetery at all because "It was no time at all before life spread a green blanket over the Indian dead".²⁶ Death brings a new surge of growth to the land:

Persistent growth pushed up through the earth of it -- on and on eternally -- growth that was the richer for men's bodies helping to build it.²⁷

So it is that life is that much more luxuriant for having "devoured" other life. D'Sonoqua is the personification of devouring, and in Klee Wyck she is a symbol of the omnivorous cycle of existence. All things eat something else so that they may live. It is this reality from which Miranda shrinks in Heart of the Ancient Wood. The mythical foundation of D'Sonoqua is that death is necessary to life; from her destructive act of devouring, life ensues. Thus she is "sometimes bad . . . sometimes good".

While D'Sonoqua provides a very fine mythologization of the B.C. forests, she also exerts a powerful influence upon Carr. Thus she becomes something more than an appropriate symbol of the forest. When Carr first discovers D'Sonoqua, she stands "looking at her for a long, long time".²⁸ Carr informs us that the "fierce wooden image" of D'Sonoqua often comes to her in her "waking" and "sleeping"²⁹ years after the initial meeting. Apparently she is profoundly drawn, not by the totem itself, but by the sincerity of the carver's belief in what it represents. She conducts a staring contest with D'Sonoqua one day, and is overcome:

But her stare so over-powered mine, that I could scarcely wrench my eyes away from the clutch of those empty sockets. The power that I felt was not in the thing itself, but in some tremendous force behind it, that the carver had believed in.³⁰ 30

The "force" which the carver believes in seems to be the community of living creatures. Carr says of the carver: "He wanted some way of showing people things that were in his mind, things about the creatures and about himself and their relation to each other".³¹ 31 The totems are a means of communication between the creatures, the carver, and the people. Throughout Klee Wyck, Carr emphasizes the Indian's harmonious relationship with nature and stresses that the Indian belongs in the forest, not in the "alien" cities of the White Man. D'Sonoqua's stare, and indeed, the ever-present and overwhelming stares of all the totems depicted in the novel are near tangible pleas for the return of the Indian to his forest home. The stares also become an indictment of the White Man's destruction of Indian culture. Carr laments the disrespect of the White Man for the power of the totems:

By and by they would rot and topple to the earth, unless white men came and carried them away to museums. There they would be labelled as exhibits, dumb before the crowds who gaped and laughed and said, "This is the distorted foolishness of an uncivilized people".³² 32

But Carr is not like the other White people. Throughout the novel one is struck by her acceptance into Indian communities, sometimes even hostile ones. The strange power which D'Sonoqua exerts upon Carr seems to form a bond between Carr, the forest, and the Indians. Carr hints that this "strange power" is of a supernatural character, for more often than not D'Sonoqua and the other totems are surrounded by other beings with fabulous associations: cats. Under the third pole of D'Sonoqua Carr counts a dozen cats. As Carr says: "There we were -- D'Sonoqua, the cats and I -- . . .",³³₄₀ and she emphasizes the peculiarly feminine quality of the situation. She thus seems to allude to a supernatural, feminine, community of being. D'Sonoqua makes Carr recognize the "Wild Woman of the Woods" within herself; "wild" in the sense that "forest creatures are wild -- shy, untouchable".³⁴₄₀ This perception of a supernatural, feminine community gains credence when one considers that almost all of the characters in Klee Wyck are Indian women, and Carr is particularly close to Sophie, who bears an unhappy resemblance to D'Sonoqua in her life-granting yet life-denying motherhood. Sophie gives birth to twenty-three children, yet mysteriously, all twenty-three die at a very young age.

Through the Indian totem poles Carr comes to perceive the power which binds all living things together. It is this vision which partially transforms her into an

Indian. Her reception of an Indian name, "Klee Wyck", or "Laughing One", signals her new semi-Red identity. D'Sonoqua seems to release a new artistic and personal spirit in Carr, and for perhaps the first time in Canadian fiction, a character discovers self-knowledge and inspiration through Red culture. There is a sense in Klee Wyck that D'Sonoqua awakens in Carr an inherent, but hitherto unrecognized affinity to the Indian and his culture. This sense, and the fact that D'Sonoqua affects Carr psychologically, indicate the tentative beginnings of a "psychic interiorization" of the Wild Man. That is to say that in Klee Wyck, D'Sonoqua's reality exists as much inside Carr as it does outside in the magical forests.

In Margaret Atwood's Surfacing, the process of "despatialization" and "psychic interiorization" of the Wild Man as perceived by Hayden White, is completed. The heroine in Surfacing is an unnamed, alienated city woman who returns to her home in northern Quebec to search for her missing father. She moves into the wilderness with her boyfriend, Joe, and two friends named David and Anna. The heroine is the narrator of her own story, and she comes to believe that her father has gone "bush" when she discovers some of his unintelligible drawings. The landscape adopts a haunted atmosphere as she imagines her father "transfigured by age and madness",³⁵ hiding behind the trees and watching the

cabin. The narrator perceives her father as a "Wild Man" who might attack her friends and herself, and she is therefore reluctant to leave Anna alone in the cabin:

I don't want to leave her alone. What I'm afraid of is my father, hidden on the island somewhere and attracted by the light perhaps, looming up at the window like a huge ragged moth; . . .³⁶

The insane spectre of the narrator's father is not the only monstrous presence in Surfacing, for the "Americans" also haunt the Quebec wilderness. If the "Wild Man" is a symbol of the primitive, irrational and emotional capacities of mankind, the "Americans" are symbols of his sophisticated, rational, and mechanical attributes. While the narrator's father is imaged as something half-wild and half-civilized, as half-animal and half-human, the "Americans" are "halfway to machine",³⁷ and have "skins galvanizing, heads congealing to brass knobs, components with intricate wires ripening inside".³⁸ The "Americans" are technological monsters and their truly malevolent natures are apparent in their drive to dominate nature. Their murder of innocent creatures, such as the Heron, are proofs of their will to subject nature to their own power. Comparable to Hitler, the "Americans" force their own "super race" mentality upon existence, the super race being mankind: ". . . for them the only things worthy of life were human, framed in the proper clothes and gimmicks, laminated".³⁹ The narrator tells us that "Americans" would not recognize a "natural" woman as being

human since "they think of that as a tanned body on a beach with washed hair waving like scarves".⁴⁰ Their inability to recognize a natural human being demonstrates just how far removed they are from nature; how unnatural they are themselves.

The spectres of the narrator's irrational father, and the rational "Americans" set up a dichotomy between the excessively primitive and the excessively civilized in Surfacing. Such a dichotomy has been apparent in Canadian Crusoes, where its two aspects are represented by the Indian and the Christian. It is also present in Wacousta, where the irrational Reginald Morton, alias Wacousta, is antithetical to the calculating Colonel De Haldimar. In Wacousta, Canadian Crusoes, and Surfacing, the Indian is the symbol of the "Wild Man"; of the unconscious and uncontrolled impulses of the psyche.

The narrator is an "American" herself throughout the first movement in Surfacing. She is identified with the technological society that has severed the head (rational) from the body (emotional):

I didn't feel awful; I realized I didn't feel much of anything, I hadn't for a long time. Perhaps I'd been like that all my life, just as some babies are born deaf or without a sense of touch; but if that was true I wouldn't have noticed the absence. At some point my neck must have closed over, pond freezing or a wound, shutting me into my head; . . .⁴¹

Part of the narrator's wish in her home-coming is to discover when she had lost her "other-half" which allowed her to feel, for life without this lost self is "terminal":

No hints or facts, I didn't know when it had happened. I must have been all right then; but after that I'd allowed myself to be cut in two. Woman sawn apart in a wooden crate, wearing a bathing suit, smiling, a trick done with mirrors, I read it in a comic book; only with me there had been an accident and I came apart. The other half, the one locked away, was the only one that would live; I was the wrong half, detached, terminal. I was nothing but a head, or no, something minor like a severed thumb; numb.⁴²

Significantly, in order for the narrator to gain self-unification, to become whole again, she must become like that which she imagines her father to be, a Wild Man. Like the pattern of the Fall, the narrator must descend in order to transcend. The Fall in Surfacing takes on the pattern of retrogradation; the narrator becomes a human being in his most primitive form and is thus a sort of Sasquatch figure.

The forest wilderness is, of course, a most appropriate place for transformations. It is early established in the narrator's mind to be a place of potential magic. While she and the others trek through the lush, jungle-like woods, she remembers the times she had played hide-and-seek with her brother and father:

. . . it was different from playing in a house, the space to hide in was endless; even when we knew which tree he had gone behind there was the fear that what would come out when you called would be someone else.⁴³

Besides being a place of transformation, the narrator had sensed the forest's housing of unknown terrors:

. . . sometimes I was terrified, I would shine the flashlight ahead of me on the path, I would hear a rustling in the forest and know it was hunting me, a bear, a wolf or some indefinite thing, with no name, that was worse.⁴⁴

Thus the magical possibilities of the forest are alluded to before the narrator's involvement in its sorcery. Of course, a major source of the supernatural ambience of the wilderness in Surfacing is derived from the Indian rock paintings, drawings of which the narrator first mistakes for evidence of her father's derangement. But she discovers that the drawings are copies of petroglyphs made by her father for a Professor researching such things. The Professor's letter to her father thanking him for copying the rock paintings extends as well an hypothesis on their significance:

Some state that the sites of the paintings are the abodes of powerful or protective spirits, which may explain the custom, persisting in remote areas, of leaving offering of clothing and small bundles of "prayer" sticks. One gives more credence to the story that the paintings are associated with the practice of fasting to produce significant or predictive dreams.⁴⁵

This explanation of the drawings forces the narrator to realize that her father is not insane, not a "Wild Man", but dead. Rather than becoming overwrought with grief at

this juncture, however, the narrator perceives in the numbers of the six Indian rock drawings a special code that she believes her father has left her to decipher. Her decision to match the drawing to the original by following her father's numbered system is apparently based on her desire to make it all seem like a game that they are both playing, for this "would make him seem less dead".⁴⁶ But what begins as a game becomes something else, for by following her father's "rules", she discovers the original rock paintings which direct her towards self-discovery.

The "magic" immanent in the wilderness becomes apparent when the narrator recovers her memory while diving to discover one of the petroglyphs. The discovery of her father's drowned body pursuant to her dive forces her to remember her abortion through the body's resemblance to a fetus. She had suppressed the knowledge of the abortion because it threatened her sanity: "It was all real enough, it was enough reality for ever, I couldn't accept it, that mutilation, ruin I'd made. I needed a different version".⁴⁷ We now realize that the narrator has fabricated much of her recent past in order to maintain a semblance of reason. Her purported marriage and divorce have operated as a cover-up for a disastrous affair. In suppressing the reality of this affair she has effectively severed her head from her body, making herself an "American". It is therefore predictable

that the "surfacing" of her memory should restore her capacity to feel, as well as presage her descent into the madness she has fought to avoid. The surfacing of the narrator's memory is the surfacing of her unconsciousness, and for much of the rest of the novel she is excessively dominated by her unconscious feelings, just as previously she had been excessively dominated by her conscious logic. She changes from a technological "American" monster into a primitive "Wild Woman". After the portentous dive, the novel becomes a dream-scape, a strange and primitive world in which there no longer exist any rational points of view.

The narrator thinks of the fetus-like form she has seen in the lake as a vision given to her by the Indian gods symbolized in the rock paintings. She perceives the place where she dived as sacred:

The Indians did not own salvation but they had once known where it lived and their signs marked the sacred places, the places where you could learn the truth.⁴⁸

The vision afforded by the petroglyphs is "true vision"⁴⁹ which can only be attained "after the failure of logic".⁵⁰ She had been "imprisoned" in her own head after the abortion, and the failure of such a mental existence is evidenced in the meaninglessness of her life in the city. Significantly, Indian religion is seen to offer more to the narrator's redemption than Christianity:

I regretted the nickels I'd taken dutifully for the collection plate, I got so little in return: no power remained in their bland oleotinted Jesus prints or in the statues of the other ones, rigid and stylized, holy triple shrunken to swearwords. These gods, here on the shore or in the water, unacknowledged or forgotten, were the only ones who had ever given me anything I needed; and freely.⁵¹

Perhaps influenced by the Professor's letter, the narrator understands the sacred place where she has dived to be "the abodes of powerful or protective spirits", and she feels immense gratitude for the vision they have bequeathed her. She wishes to leave them a thank offering; a piece of her clothing. The Indian gods are associated with her new vision, her new "true vision", which has seemingly transported her into a new dimension. This new dimension is that of the unconscious, the dream state, and we first become aware of this when the narrator sees Joe after "surfacing". She feels detached from him, though not in her former unfeeling way, rather it is as if he is actually very far away from her, and she says: "It was as though I was seeing him through a smeared window or glossy paper".⁵² She now exists on one side of a "window" which separates her from everyone else.

She becomes like a Shaman, her own medicine-woman, through her capacity to commune with, and control, supernatural powers. Shamans are distinct "individualists"⁵³ who are "solitary"⁵⁴ due to their need for "ritual purity".⁵⁵

The protagonist always seems remote from the other characters, but after her "surfacing" she becomes increasingly solitary until she is, in fact, left alone on the island. Her need for ritual purity is evidenced in her abhorrence to Joe making love to her: ". . . I didn't want him in me, sacrilege, he was one of the killers, . . .".⁵⁶ When David attempts to win her favour and touches her, she says: "You're interfering",⁵⁷ and this means interfering in her ritual process. She wipes her arm where he has touched her. Shamans have spirit helpers, spirits which help the Shaman attain his goal. The spirit guides for the protagonist are the copies of the petroglyphs left to her by her father, and the picture of the pregnant woman and the man with horns and a barbed tail left to her by her mother. The acquisition of shamanistic power is very laborious, and requires a fall into a prolonged state of unconsciousness.⁵⁸ The narrator is unconscious from the time her memory surfaces to the moment she sees her parents' true forms. It takes her quite a while to gain the power she seeks, and she is much concerned with doing "everything in the right order".⁵⁹ She listens to the power flowing to her from the Indian gods and obeys its laws, thus she fasts, she avoids all man-made places and items, she sacrifices all of her belongings, she purifies herself by bathing in the lake, and she becomes, by degrees, part of the natural environment. The power to which she is connected after her surfacing allows her to see David's

posturings,⁶⁰ and to discover the true form of her dead parents. Since a child she had understood her parents to be gods, but she has never seen their true forms because "to see them in their true shape is fatal"⁶¹ while one is human. In order for the narrator to see her parents, the gods, truly, she must become non-human, for "after the transformation they could be reached".⁶²

Many commentators on Atwood's poetry have remarked upon her pre-occupation with transformation, and one remarks that her

poetic vision is a strong opposition between fixed and transmuting forms. Fixed forms imprison and isolate man and he can be released only by adopting the fluid contours of other realities.⁶³

Certainly this may be applied to Surfacing, where the narrator oscillates between becoming a plant and an animal. She grows "tentacled feet",⁶⁴ and her skin becomes leaf-like, her body tree-like:

I'm ice-clear, transparent, my bones and the child inside me showing through the green webs of my flesh, the ribs are shadows, the muscles jelly, the trees are like this too, they shimmer, their cores glow through the wood and bark.⁶⁵

When she is not a plant, she is a "Wild Woman of the Woods"; naked and unkempt she roots for vegetables like any other animal and sleeps in a lair. When she has intercourse with Joe it is because it is the "right season",⁶⁶ and she wants a child. She gains no pleasure from it because "pleasure is redundant, the animals don't have pleasure".⁶⁷ She

realizes that from any rational point of view she is absurd, but, as she says, "there are no longer any rational points of view".⁶⁸ She becomes the "stereotype" of madness:

I turn the mirror around: in it there's a creature neither animal nor human, furless, only a dirty blanket, shoulders huddled over in a crouch, eyes staring blue as ice from the deep sockets; the lips move by themselves. This was the stereotype, straws in the hair, talking nonsense or not talking at all. To have someone to speak to and words that can be understood: their definition of sanity.⁶⁹

The fluidity of the narrator's identity is indicated by the difficulty of naming her. Names are constricting because categorical, they define and fix form; above all they are rational. Significantly, a name is one of the first things that the transforming narrator disclaims: "I no longer have a name. I tried for all those years to be civilized but I'm through pretending".⁷⁰

In the light of her dream vision, the narrator understands that in order for her to "see" her parents she must "approach the condition they themselves have entered",⁷¹ which is that of indefinability, symbolized in their antipathy to borders:

They can't be anywhere that's marked out, enclosed: even if I opened the doors and fences they could not pass in, to houses and cages, they can move only in the spaces between them, they are against borders.⁷²

Enclosed spaces are not natural, rather they are imposed by the ordering and rational principle of the human mind. This

is most clearly shown in the protagonist's perception of the garden: "The garden is a stunt, a trick. It could not exist without the fence".⁷³ The fence has been made by man to order a specific space; without "enclosures", such as fences provide, there can be no gardens, or any ordered spaces. The narrator's parents are primitive; they no longer have names, they are no longer fixed and definable by words. They represent the "other", the "Wild Man". The narrator has fought long and hard against the "other"; her repression of her memory has kept him at bay, but now with her memory's return he threatens to overwhelm her and she is terrified. Thus, after the others have all left and she is alone on the island, she feels the presence of her parents all around the cabin waiting for her to let them in. She says:

"I willed it, I called to them, that they should arrive is logical, but logic is a wall, I built it, on the other side is terror".⁷⁴ Despite herself she clings to logic, and fears logic's "other side". Her later rejection of the cabin in favour of the lair is symbolic of her movement from the walls of logic to the open spaces of irrationality.

In Surfacing, transformation provides a "means of access to a different kind of reality 'an undivided space' where form is abolished, where categories explode".⁷⁵ When the narrator has approached the same "undivided space" condition as her parents, she demonstrates that she has learned

"the other language",⁷⁶ and this is literally the language of the "other", of the instinctual, irrational, emotional and unbounded "Wild Man" within herself. Having approached becoming "other" she meets her parents. She first discovers her mother, who quickly changes into a bird, and then her father, who appears first as a wolf and then as a fish. She wonders: "How many shapes can he take",⁷⁷ and the answer is doubtless limitless. Myths of shape-shifters abound in almost every culture, and in Indian mythology most gods are endowed with the power to transform themselves into any shape they choose. Myths of transformation indicate the unity of all living entities as well as the cyclic nature of existence. It seems important to the protagonist that she be accepted by nature as part of the landscape and the cycle of life. Thus when she finds herself beside a leopard frog, she calls it "ancestor", and says that its look "includes me".⁷⁸ Her understanding of the transformative powers of her parents seems to help her accept their death, for they have not really died, but only changed their shape. When she sees her wolf-father she says: "I see now that although it isn't my father it is what my father has become. I knew he wasn't dead".⁷⁹

The "true vision" offered to the narrator by the Indian gods has required her approaching the same condition as her parents. It is a condition which exists on logic's

"other side", and it is typified by constant transmutations of identity, so that identity remains unclassified, undefined, unknown. When the narrator has reached this level of dark, undifferentiated being, perhaps analagous to primal chaos, she can go no further.

Throughout her period of transformations, the narrator has been as a dreamer watching her own dream. After meeting her parents as bird and wolf, she becomes fully conscious, and regains apparent normalcy. The Indian gods recede, and, says the narrator, "they're questionable once more, theoretical as Jesus".⁸⁰ But they have healed her self-division, have made her a whole person. It is clear that they have never been "real" in any actual physical sense, but only in a psychological one. Thus Keith Garebain, in "Surfacing: Apocalyptic Ghost Story", points out that the ghosts of the parents and the gods in the novel are interior, rather than exterior phenomena:

Where many ghost stories suggest that their spectres are phenomena outside the person who sees them, Surfacing reveals cumulatively that its ghosts are essentially projections of the protagonist's troubled mind.⁸¹

Garebain substantiates this claim by the fact that the protagonist is the only character who senses spirits in the novel, and these are "forms of people whom she has either known intimately or imagined into existence".⁸² The "ghosts" she sees are suspiciously relevant to herself; they have no significance to the others. Of course, the entire section

of Surfacing dealing with ghosts, or spirits, has plainly been based on the altered consciousness of the narrator. After her portentous dive she feels herself to be on the other side of a "window", behind which there are no rational points of view. The sacred place of the Indian rock paintings is reported to "produce significant or predictive dreams", and this anticipates her movement into a dream state of unusual power and meaning. The "surfacing" of her unconsciousness also signals to the reader that she is not in the same state of mind as the other characters. In such an unconscious, dreamy condition, it is hardly surprising that the "ghosts" seen by the protagonist are peculiarly noticed, and known, only by herself.

Garebain perceives the protagonist's immersion into "otherness" as "an impassioned myth whereby she hopes to redeem herself in a world of victims and killers with whom she shares guilt".⁸³ To counter-balance the "American" monster within herself she becomes the "other" monster. While she gains self-unity and self-knowledge through the Indian gods, she ultimately rejects the reality they offer: "I regret them; but they give only one kind of truth, one hand:."⁸⁴ Presumably they deal only in the framework of the "other", and this is as monstrous in its own way as being an "American". The answer, if there is one, lies in existing somewhere between these two extreme visions of Red and White

culture. The protagonist has been re-born, for through an interiorization of Indian beliefs she has gained psychological unity and spiritual strength. She is ready to become part of civilization again, but with a difference, for her aim is not to join the "Americans", but to fight them: "They exist, they're advancing, they must be dealt with, but possibly they can be watched and predicted and stopped without being copied".⁸⁵ This possibility of the establishment of a new order of being is centred upon "the time-traveller, the primaeval one",⁸⁶ the unborn child which the narrator believes she carries. That there is this promise of a new order is clear when the narrator says of her child: "It might be the first one, the first true human",⁸⁷ and this because of its associations with both Red and White culture.

Through Indian culture the narrator not only discovers a new vision for her own identity, but for mankind as well. Such a vision is connected with the deepest and darkest levels of the human psyche, and Atwood reveals the positive healing and prophetic effects of a descent into primal madness and back again. Atwood's Surfacing is in perfect accord with Hayden White's observation that the Wild Man has been internalized, that he "is lurking within every man, is clamoring for release within us all, and will be denied only at the cost of life itself".⁸⁸

There is perhaps a suggestion of the myth of Robinson Crusoe in Surfacing, since it involves a human being isolated on an island wilderness. The two mythical substructures perceived by Clara Thomas to exist in Robinson Crusoe were previously related to Traill's Canadian Crusoes, and they may also be usefully related to Surfacing. They include the myth of wilderness as a place of redemption, of potential order and meaning, and the opposite myth of wilderness as a place of exile, of chaos and insanity. Both of these substructures are evidenced in Surfacing, for the narrator is redeemed and discovers a new sense of meaning in her life, but she also embodies a figure of exile. There is a monstrous, Sasquatch-like aspect to her transformation into a "Wild Woman", which aligns her somewhat with the offspring of Cain. Indeed, one might read into the novel that her abortion has placed her on the same moral and spiritual plane as that first murderer. The fact that both of these opposing substructures of the Crusoe myth are present in Surfacing does not seem to render the wilderness an ambivalent experience for the narrator. Rather it seems that in order for the wilderness to be a creative, redemptive experience, the narrator must first "go through the fire" so to speak. She must suffer through chaos and madness in order to find meaning and truth. Thus there are echoes of the Fall in Surfacing as well.

The two substructures of the Crusoe myth are discovered in Marian Engel's unusual novel Bear, and they are utilized in much the same manner as in Atwood's Surfacing. Engel seems to make much more of the Crusoe analogy in her novel, since she stresses the fact that her heroine is particularly drawn to islands, and Lou calls the one she inhabits for a summer her "kingdom". Bear is the story of Lou, a lady archivist who discovers self-knowledge and attains a renewed faith in life through her relationship with a bear in the northern Ontario wilderness. A certain Colonel Jocelyn Cary from England bought an island in northern Ontario in 1826, built upon it, and his daughter, also named Colonel Cary, inherited it. She later bequeathed the estate to the historical Institute in which Lou works. It becomes Lou's assignment to go up north to Cary Island to conduct an inventory upon the estate and to ascertain its significance to the historical development of the region.

In Bear, the northern wilderness in general, and Cary's Island in particular, contains many of the mythical dimensions often associated with it; it is a place of freedom, joy, romance, hope, dreams, and regeneration. In stark, though predictable contrast to the North, is the city, which is a place of constriction, routine, despair and decay. Engel reveals the dichotomy between the city and the wilderness immediately. We are first introduced to Lou in her

workplace in Toronto; a basement room of the Institute, hemmed in by steam pipes, nooks, cabinets, and the decaying memorabilia of the past. Thus Engel stresses the confined, gloomy, and lifeless aspects of Lou's city existence. Perhaps most significantly, Lou's work is associated with the idea of order, as the overwhelming presence of yellowing maps, of delineated, defined spaces indicates. Thus the city is a rational, ordered workplace; there is no room for gay dreams or wild hopes. We soon realize that Lou has absorbed the devitalized essence of her environment: her arms are "slug-pale", "her finger-prints grained with old, old ink",⁸⁹ and "her eyes would no longer focus in the light".⁹⁰ Her dark, dull existence is not alleviated, but rather compounded by her uninspiring rounds of copulation with the Director: "There was no care in the act, only habit and convenience. It had become something she was doing to herself".⁹¹ It is only, we are told, with the coming of spring and sunshine that Lou might possibly realize that "the image of the Good life long ago stamped on her soul was quite different from this, and she suffered in contrast".⁹² But before summer in the city makes Lou recognize that she is living the life of a "mole", while her true form is really that of an "antelope",⁹³ she is sent to Cary Island. It is on this wilderness island that Lou discovers her true form and is rejuvenated. The city, therefore, remains a place of winter and death, while the North is its opposite.

Upon leaving the city and heading North, Lou experiences an uplifting feeling of freedom; she is like a butterfly shedding its cocoon. The land is "hectic with new green",⁹⁴ and Lou quickly ascertains a corresponding sense of new life within herself. She writes the Director an impulsive note which says: "I have an odd sense" . . . "of being reborn".⁹⁵ The immediate opposition between city and wilderness is perhaps most startlingly revealed when Lou regards the vacant summer cottages still shuttered against the winter: "In this country, she thought, we have winter lives and summer lives of completely different quality".⁹⁶ Lou's joyless and restricted existence in the city and her movement into a vibrant summer life is suggestive of a familiar southern Ontario pattern; in the winter Torontonians hibernate in their office buildings, working and waiting for summer to escape to their cottages. To go North for the weekend is a favourite Ontarian dream. It represents a journey to good times, freedom, and romance. One critic of Bear has understood the "opposition of a "winter" world of order and a "summer" world of anarchy" evident in the novel to place it in the "tradition of a midsummer madness, which, though temporarily chaotic, leads to a higher sanity".⁹⁷ This tradition reveals the obvious parallel of Bear to Surfacing, for in both these works a female protagonist descends into madness upon an island wilderness, only to

ascend into a higher realm of self-knowledge and understanding. Perhaps part of the strong appeal of the North for many Torontonians lay in this "tradition of midsummer madness".

When Lou arrives on Cary Island, she receives quite a shock. It is quickly evident that Colonel Cary was not the typical nineteenth-century immigrant; he was an acquaintance of Byron, and a romantic at heart. Lou believes that Cary came to the northern wilderness because it had room for his idealistic dreams: "He came, she thought, to find his dream, leaving his practical wife behind him in York. He was adventurous, big-spirited romantic. There was room for him in the woods".⁹⁸ Cary's idealism is evidenced by the home he has built in the wilderness, for it is not the usual square log cabin with the dirt floor well known to us through the writings of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill. Rather it is a gleaming white, many windowed, Fowler's octagon. Lou's reaction to such a home is divided; her practical, rational mind tells her the house is unsuitable, and even pretentious in the wilderness:

A house like this, she thought, in these regions was an absurdity; too elaborate, too hard to heat, no matter how much its phrenological designer thought it good for the brain. To build such a place in the north, among log houses and sturdy square farm-houses, was colonial pretentiousness. She shivered as she thought of the open stairwell in howling winter.⁹⁹

Yet such a home is more than a symbol of colonial pretentiousness. The octagon is a symbol of regeneration, and recalls the shape of a baptistry.¹⁰⁰ The house is thus an apt shape in the north, which is also associated with regeneration. Though Lou is aware of its absurdity, she responds to its beauty and spirituality:

She went up towards the light, complaining in her practical mind about immigrant idiocies. Stopped dead at the top of the stairs in a blaze of sunshine. . . .She waded around the room slowly, reverently. It was a sea of gold and green light.¹⁰¹

By the end of the novel Lou comes to think of the house as a "fine building" dedicated to immortalizing the Cary family: "It spoke only of a family who did not want to be common clay, who feared more than anything being lost to history".¹⁰²

It is this aspiration for distinction and immortality which causes Lou to confuse Cary, Trelawny, and the bear. The bear is immortalized in mythology, Trelawny in his book about Shelley and Byron, Cary in his house. Lou recognizes "some connection, some unfingerable intimacy" among Cary, Trelawny and the bear, "some tie between longing and desire and the achievable".¹⁰³ Yet Lou is affected by the same longing which tie these three together. "The image of the Good Life long ago stamped on her soul" asserts that she is an "antelope", yet she lives the life of a "mole". At least she does so until this mad summer when the romantic spirit of

the house releases her aspiring soul, and like Cary and Trelawny she reaches for immortality. She hopes to achieve this through the bear, and appears to place faith in the myth that the result of a human coupling with a bear is an heroic child. That she wishes this, or some such impossible claim to fame, is symbolized on the "night of the falling stars",¹⁰⁴ when she and the bear lie together under the evening sky. It seems to Lou that the stars are falling on her, but when she reaches up to one, it eludes her grasp, and the stars remain "always out of reach".¹⁰⁵

Just as Cary's house is out of place in the rugged wilderness, so too is the airy, transplanted European romanticism which is symbolizes. For a long while Lou is seduced by impossible longings, while blind to the more earthly possibilities offered by her wilderness experience. The anarchic wilderness, in which anything may happen, is, of course, associated with the Indian. Lou's closest neighbours on Cary Island are the Indians Joe King and Lucy Leroy, and the sovereignty of their surnames suggest the Indians to be the true inheritors of the land. People like the Cary's are "tourists"¹⁰⁶ in their own country because they "have Robert Adam do their drawingrooms, Humphry Repton their facades and Capability their gardens".¹⁰⁷ The real Canadians are the Indians, and Lou and Lucy are linked in the novel. Beyond the hinted similarity in their names, Lucy seems to be a figment from Lou's childhood:

She looked like the woman who used to peddle bittersweet on the street when Lou was a kid, a toothless old Indian crone in many cardigans and running shoes, ten cents a bunch, and Lou bought it and her mother said it was a waste of money, a form of begging.¹⁰⁸

Lucy is not only linked to Lou's past in the form of the old peddler, which alludes to the White Man's responsibility for the plight of the Indian, but also to her future. When Lou meets Lucy she says:

She was totally withered. Lou imagined the body under the old pinned clothes, imagined its creases and weatherings, the old thin dugs: I will be like that, she thought.¹⁰⁹

In the present, Lou shares with Lucy a peculiar oddity: her relationship with a bear. It is hinted throughout the novel that Lucy's relationship with the bear is, or has been, sexual. It is obvious that she loves the bear, and Lou comes to love it as well. Myths of women who become the wives of bears, among other animals, abound in Indian mythology. There is some sense of a husband and wife kind of relationship between Lucy and the bear, and Lou soon wishes a permanent arrangement with him as well. She imagines making herself "strange garments out of fur",¹¹⁰ in order to stay with him through the winter.

In many of the Indian myths dealing with the human wives of bears, the women are unaware that their husbands are, in fact, bears, because of the bears ability to change his shape at will. The women only become aware of the true

nature of their spouses when some crisis occurs. The ability of Engel's bear to change his shape, and especially his ability to look human, seems to imply Engel's awareness of these Indian myths. The coupling of human and animal is not unusual in Indian mythology, and harks back to the early belief that animals are people. Such a belief reveals an awareness of the community of all living things, and if Lou does not achieve something immortal in the north, she does achieve an acceptance into the natural world. When she first arrives on Cary Island and enters the forested area behind the house she feels a pair of goshawks "ill-wishing her"¹¹¹ from the branches of a dead tree. This sense of the enmity which the natural world extends to humanity is reminiscent of The Heart of the Ancient Wood. Lou, like Miranda, is accepted into the sylvan kingdom, albeit through the agency of a very different sort of relationship with a bear. Near the novel's end Lou again enters the forest and this time feels the "eyes of the goshawks upon her, without fear";¹¹² the enmity between human and animal is gone.

In much Indian mythology the bear is the most powerful of spirit helpers. Testimony to this fact is most famously recorded in Rudy Wiebe's Temptations of Big Bear. The bear in Engel's novel guides Lou to a vision of her true identity and purpose in life; she cannot be the legendary

mother of a hero and wife of a bear, but she can be something good and natural:

What had passed to her from him she did not know. Certainly it was not the seed of heroes, or magic, or an astounding virtue, for she continued to be herself. But for one strange, sharp moment she could feel in her pores and the taste of her own mouth that she knew what the world was for. She felt not that she was at last human, but that she was at last clean. Clean and simple and proud.¹¹³

As the Indian gods in Surfacing directed the protagonist to a new vision, so the bear does in Engel's novel, and it is a vision which first demands a transformation into the "other", into madness. The little notes on myths of bears researched by Colonel Cary are discovered by Lou, and they establish a sense of the legendary, supernatural reality of the bear. The notes seem to cause Lou to regard the bear with an ever increasing sense of mystery. He seems to be able to change his shape; one day he looks like a baby, another a raccoon, and one day he is like a man. More startling than these apparent transformations is the depth of Lou's response to the bear. The unbounded spirit of the north seems to be causing the ascent of primitive levels of consciousness in Lou. She herself becomes bear-like after she has taken the bear as a lover:

They lived sweetly and intensely together. She knew that her flesh, her hair, her teeth and her fingernails smelled of bear, and this smell was very sweet to her.¹¹⁴

After weeks of living thus "intensely" with the bear, Lou discovers that she has become a "Wild Woman":

She looked at herself in the female colonel's pierglass. Her hair and her eyes were wild. Her skin was brown and her body was different and her face was not the same face she had seen before. She was frightened of herself.¹¹⁵

While her appearance motivates her to clean herself up and to establish a human relationship with Homer, she finds that she can feel nothing with him. Homer himself is surprised to see her, and his remark that he thought she had gone "bush"¹¹⁶ is more correct than he knows. When he sees her again later he warns her about being alone too much:

"People get funny up here", said Homer, "when they're too much alone",¹¹⁷ and he tells numerous stories of various individuals who began to act peculiarly after being isolated in the wilderness for extended periods of time. Like one of the mythic substructures of the Crusoe legend, wilderness is here a place of potential chaos and insanity. Despite Homer's warning, it is not long until Lou reverts back to her wild appearance and her bear lover.

Lou's descent into madness is not only due to the bear, for she has a "crisis of faith"¹¹⁸ after Homer tells her the story of the female Colonel Cary. The female Colonel Cary is a symbol of the "new being" established by the mingling of Red and White cultures. The child of an

aristocratic British family, educated in Montreal, Colonel Cary nevertheless owns a fund of wood-lore:

She was a great gardener, and a great fisherman.
 She had big hands like a man, way bigger'n mine,
 and she didn't feel around with any lotions.
 Kept her house spick and span, and all the silver
 polished that she hadn't given away. Baked bread.
 Did all those things women are supposed to do and
 she kept herself with a trap line.¹¹⁹

Even as an old woman, Colonel Cary trapped rat and beaver, and Homer says that this is "tough, cold work, you got to be part Indian to put up with it, but she did it".¹²⁰ She was very close to Joe King and Lucy Leroy, had no use for finery such as china and silver (which she gave away to visitors), but the island was everything to her. Despite her wild ways of hunting, trapping, and fishing, she was able to "put on" civilization whenever it was necessary:

She knew all the cricks and the inlets, she had a licence of course, and she wasn't afraid of the work. Yet when the Anglican missionary and his wife came through she set out the blue plates and what was left of the silver (when my wife saw the tea service her eyes popped out) and put on a dress like something out of an old Hollywood movie and make them feel like common clay.¹²¹

Colonel Cary secures herself as a legendary figure in the region when she mysteriously captures a lynx out of season. In Bear she assumes legendary proportions as the "new being", and perhaps there is something of the hermaphrodite about her. The masculine principle is very pronounced in Colonel Cary; her name and her size indicate this much. But when Homer denies that she has been "a great lady", but is rather

"an imitation man",¹²² her masculine orientation is made clear. The significance of the hermaphrodite is that it is a symbol of the union of opposites, male and female, Red and White. Lou is like Colonel Cary in three ways: her masculine name, her attachment to a bear, and her love of islands. It is perhaps hinted, through these similarities, that Lou is a potential hermaphrodite herself. Lou, the orderly bibliographer, has repressed the anarchic "otherness" of her being to her own detriment, for the action has made her a "mole":

She always attempted to be orderly, to catalogue her thoughts and feelings, so that when the awful anarchic inner voice caught her out, her mind was stocked with efficacious replies. "What am I doing here?" could be answered with lists. She had another stock of replies to "Who the hell do you think you are, attempting to be alive?" She justified herself by saying that she was of service, that she ordered fragments of other lives.¹²³

Colonel Cary's story has occasioned Lou's "crisis of faith", which causes her to question the way she lives, and helps propel her into the abyss of madness. Just like the protagonist in Surfacing, order and reason are slowly peeled away from Lou, exposing her own irrational, animal consciousness. That she becomes a "Wild Woman" has been noted, and it is left to the bear to restore Lou to her humanity, which he eventually does by drawing the line between the human and the animal. This occurs when Lou places herself in the animal mating position in front of him. He reproves her with

a punishing blow of his claws, after which Lou attains a more balanced frame of mind. Yet her descent into her own primal consciousness has caused a great change within her. She has been re-born, and thus is imaged as "a babe, a child, an innocent".¹²⁴

In Surfacing, the seemingly supernatural powers of the Indian gods were understood as an "impassioned myth" serving the important personal needs of the protagonist. This is no less true of the bear in Engel's novel. The transformations, powers, and expressions, attributed to him by Lou are no more than what her own mind projects upon him. Thus Engel tells us that Lou had "discovered that she could paint any face upon him that she wanted, while his actual range of expression was a mystery".¹²⁵ Thus, as in Surfacing, the "Wild Woman" in Bear is not out there in the woods, but hiding within. Both authors have demonstrated that a knowledge of this being is essential to the psychological and spiritual well-being of their heroines.

CONCLUSION

The magic of the wilderness in Canadian fiction has been shown to have become increasingly powerful, despite, or perhaps because of, the scientific evidence to the contrary. It would seem man needs his monsters just as he needs his gods. It is perhaps in childhood, as this thesis has attempted to hint through Chapter One, that monsters are first conceived. The novels of lost children have established for this study many of the fantastic aspects of wilderness, and the novels explored in Chapter Two have been shown to utilize many of these aspects to mythologize, and sensationalize, the North American continent. The fictional despatialization and internalization of the wilderness and its monsters demonstrated in Chapter Three, substantiates D. H. Lawrence's theory that the "daimon" of North America would become stronger as it moved out of the wilderness and into White civilization.

It is interesting to note that in contemporary fiction, monsters are presented in a very favourable light, for they are ultimately creative rather than destructive. They have come to symbolize the potentially positive capacities of the unconscious, such as intuition, feeling and irrationality. The anarchic world is a brief darkness in the visions of Carr, Atwood, and Engel. Their characters

are baptized in black waters and surface regenerated as half-White, half-Red beings. They return to civilization more complete and "human" than they were before. They carry the wilderness back into civilization, and thus they become symbols of the hope for a new order of man.

At this juncture, it is of some interest to consider the fictional future of the Indian, or the "Wild Man". If Emily Carr begins the trend of internalizing the wilderness, Leonard Cohen would seem to follow it through to its logical conclusion. Leslie Fiedler, in The Vanishing American, points to the new direction taken by the "Wild Man", and he utilizes Cohen's Beautiful Losers to substantiate his claims. The anarchic world in Beautiful Losers is not a brief darkness, but an extended, interminable one. In it, anarchy may be a baptismal pool in which one is submerged to gain a new vision, but one does not re-emerge in a state of balance, or normalcy. Insanity is the new vision; there is no integration of Red and White, of madness and sanity. Instead there is now only the Red Man and a whole world of chaos and madness. Lawrence's "daimon" has completely taken over, and one can only wonder where he goes from here.

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⁶⁴The Rat-Trapper legend is the story of Albert Johnson, an anti-social trapper of the Red River in the Arctic region, who was charged with springing the traps of an Indian who shared his trapping line. In the winter of 1931-32, he defied capture by Indians, White trappers, and the R.C.M.P. Johnson's courage and stamina repeatedly allowed him to escape his would-be captors. His success against the adversity of both man and the Arctic quickly established him as a legendary figure. He reportedly travelled 150 miles along the Arctic circle, in forty below zero temperatures, to escape from his pursuers. During this sojourn he was involved in four gun-fights, seriously wounding two men and killing one. There is no explanation for his sudden violent and anti-social behaviour, and he is generally considered to have gone insane. Despite his most magnificent efforts, Johnson was finally killed in the Yukon in February 1932.

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²⁶Ibid., p. 94.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., p. 33.

²⁹Ibid., p. 34.

³⁰Ibid., p. 36.

³¹Ibid., p. 51.

³²Ibid., p. 52.

³³Ibid., p. 40.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Margaret Atwood, Surfacing (Markham: Paper Jacks, 1980), p. 90. All subsequent references to this work are of this edition.

³⁶Surfacing, p. 66.

³⁷Surfacing, p. 198.

³⁸Ibid., p.

³⁹Ibid., p. 147.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 204-5.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 114.

⁴²Ibid., p. 117.

⁴³Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 78.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 112.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 156.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 156.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 156.

⁵²Ibid., p. 156.

⁵³Catharine McClellan, My Old People Say, An Ethnographic Survey of Southern Yukon Territory, Part II (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1975), p. 531.

⁵⁴My Old People Say, p. 531.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Surfacing, p. 157.

⁵⁷Surfacing, p. 161.

⁵⁸My Old People Say, p. 534.

⁵⁹Surfacing, p. 189.

⁶⁰Surfacing, p. 162.

⁶¹Surfacing, p. 170.

⁶²Surfacing, p. 170.

⁶³Gillian Ladousse, "Some Aspects of the Theme of Metamorphosis in Margaret Atwood's Poetry", Etudes Canadiennes, No. 2 (1976), 71.

⁶⁴Surfacing, p. 172.

⁶⁵Surfacing, p. 195.

⁶⁶Surfacing, p. 173.

⁶⁷Surfacing, p. 173.

⁶⁸Surfacing, p. 181.

⁶⁹Surfacing, p. 204.

⁷⁰Surfacing, p. 181.

⁷¹Surfacing, p. 194.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 187.

⁷⁵Gillian Ladousse, "Some Aspects of the Theme of Metamorphosis in Margaret Atwood's Poetry", Etudes Canadiennes, No. 2 (1976), 72.

⁷⁶Surfacing, p. 202.

⁷⁷Surfacing, p. 201.

⁷⁸Surfacing, p. 193.

⁷⁹Surfacing, p. 201.

⁸⁰Surfacing, p. 203.

⁸¹Keith Garebain, "Surfacing: Apocalyptic Ghost Story", Mosaic, IX, No. 3 (Spring 1976), 2.

⁸²Garebain, p. 2.

⁸³Garebain, p. 2.

⁸⁴Surfacing, p. 204.

⁸⁵Surfacing, p. 203.

⁸⁶Surfacing, p. 206.

⁸⁷Surfacing, p. 206.

⁸⁸White, p. 6.

⁸⁹Marian Engel, Bear (Toronto: Bantam, 1978), p. 2.
All subsequent references to this work are of this edition.

⁹⁰Bear, p. 3.

⁹¹Bear, p. 105.

⁹²Bear, p. 3.

⁹³Bear, p. 3.

⁹⁴Bear, p. 10.

⁹⁵Bear, p. 12.

⁹⁶Bear, p. 14.

⁹⁷Elspeth Cameron, "Midsummer Madness: Marian Engel's Bear", Journal of Canadian Fiction, No. 21 (1977-78), 93.

⁹⁸Bear, p. 105.

⁹⁹Bear, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 242.

¹⁰¹Bear, pp. 35-6.

¹⁰²Bear, p. 164.

¹⁰³Bear, p. 103.

¹⁰⁴Bear, p. 142.

¹⁰⁵Bear, p. 143.

¹⁰⁶Bear, p. 163.

- 107 Bear, p. 99.
- 108 Bear, p. 49.
- 109 Bear, p. 49.
- 110 Bear, p. 132.
- 111 Bear, p. 48.
- 112 Bear, p. 162.
- 113 Bear, p. 162.
- 114 Bear, p. 140.
- 115 Bear, p. 147.
- 116 Bear, p. 148.
- 117 Bear, p. 150.
- 118 Bear, p. 91.
- 119 Bear, pp. 87-88.
- 120 Bear, p. 88.
- 121 Bear, p. 88.
- 122 Bear, p. 90.
- 123 Bear, p. 93.
- 124 Bear, p. 161.
- 125 Bear, pp. 78-9.

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