Paradise Ever Becoming: War of 1812 Narratives for Young Readers

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Résumé: Dans cet article, les auteurs examinent trois romans récents consacrés à la guerre de 1812: après les avoir comparés à d'autres récits, plus anciens, également consacrés à cet événement capital de l'histoire canadienne, ils montrent comment les attitudes face à la guerre en général et à ce conflit en particulier ont changé depuis 100 ans. Enfin, l'article résume l'évolution de la prose historique pour la jeunesse de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle à aujourd'hui.

Summary: In this article, the authors examine three recent novels centred on the War of 1812. Along with situating the novels among others that have focused on this significant event in Canadian history, the article also shows how attitudes towards war in general and this war in particular have changed over the last 100 years or so. Finally, the article traces the development of the writing of Canadian historical fiction for young readers from the late nineteenth century to the present time.

Both historians and writers of novelistic fiction have examined the War of 1812 from a variety of perspectives. According to Errington, the successful resistance of the Upper Canadians to the American incursion became the source of a "new sense of pride and self-worth" (86). She goes on to note that "By mid-century it formed the basis of an emerging Canadian nationalism" (102). For still later generations of Canadians, the War of 1812 is one of the defining moments in the development of a Canadian national consciousness (Creighton 203; Lower 182; Masters 24). A number of novels for young readers treat the war of 1812, novels such as Agnes Maule Machar's *For King and Country* (1874), E.A. Taylor's *Beatrice of Old York* (1929), John Hayes's *Treason at York* (1949), Karleen Bradford's *The Other Elizabeth* (1982), Gregory Sass's *Redcoat* (1985), Marianne Brandis's *Fire Ship* (1992) and John Ibbitson's *1812 Jeremy and the General* (1992). We propose to examine three of these novels, those by Machar, Hayes and Sass, as generally representative of a number of features, both old and new, at play in the writing of Canadian historical fiction for young people.

The varying emphases of the novels suggest something of their respective authors' concerns about war in general, about this war in particular, and about the individual's role during a time of war. Furthermore, the difference between Machar's novel in the latter part of the nineteenth century and those War of 1812 narratives in the latter part of the twentieth suggests changed attitudes about war between generations. As Judith Saltman points out in *Modern Canadian Children's Books*, other differences emerge as well. Drawing a useful distinction between Canadian children's historical fiction written before the mid-1970s and that written since, Saltman concludes, "Earlier works usually elaborated,

often with contrivance of fact, on familiar incidents of Canadian history or used history as a colourful backdrop for the rough-and-tumble adventures and daring deeds of historical romance" (75). More recent works are oriented to the milieu and mores of a particular era in an attempt to focus on the lives of ordinary people "rather than those of well-known historical or national figures" (78).

Saltman's distinction may be a useful starting point to consider the works by Machar, Hayes and Sass in order to see something of the Canadian historical imagination at work in books for juvenile audiences. In each case, the writer is, of course, working within the context of a genre which asks of its practitioners that they tell a good story in which "*adventure* is the first requirement" (Smith 167), in which there is attention to accuracy of historical fact and "an attempt to recapture the atmosphere or flavour of another time or age" (Smith 164) without crowding out human interest, and in which the writer's aim is "to give a way of looking at the past" (Smith 165) to show how history is a shaping and determining force (Fleishman 15).

Machar's *For King and Country*, written for the *Canadian Monthly* in 1874, is the third of five novels that she directed to juvenile audiences over the course of an extended writing career. The title of the novel expresses Machar's attitude towards the War of 1812. While she seems well aware of the roots of the conflict, and of the culpability on both sides, her aim in her novel, as revealed in the dedication and elsewhere[1] is to try to inspire in a later generation of young Canadian hearts some sense of that fierce patriotism to the monarchy and the Canadian way of life that she sees as having animated those who defended Canada's integrity in the War of 1812:

> To all young Canadians
> this tale is dedicated
> in the hope that the memories which it records
> may stimulate them to endeavour, in the
> strength of that righteousness which
> alone exalteth a nation, to make
> the future of Canada
> abundantly worthy
> of its past.

Interestingly enough, it is not just patriotism in the simplistic "My country right or wrong" sense that is emphasized in the dedication, the novel itself, and in her essay. Rather, Machar extols a sense of personal worthiness and moral rectitude which she sees exemplified in the behaviour of the best individuals and in the moral vision of the nation which is the collectivity of such individuals. Given that the novel was written in response to a contest sponsored by the *Canadian Monthly* at a time of nationalistic excitement following the proclamation of the BNA. Act of 1867 and against the even more immediate backdrop of the Pacific Scandal of 1873 (Creighton 334), it is easy to discern Machar's two prime objectives. The first is to remind young Canadians of their own glorious history. The second is to demonstrate that the present generation cannot simply

rest on those hard-won laurels but must continue to exemplify in their own lives those same values of self-sacrifice, honour and morality. In order to do this, one must constantly be ready to recognize and extirpate self-gratification, greed and malversation. All else in the novel is subordinated to achieve these objectives.

The novel's action does not encompass the whole of the War of 1812. Instead, it covers only the few months from the beginning of June 1812 to the 13th of October 1812; that is, roughly, from the time of the declaration of war to the Battle of Queenston Heights and the death of General Brock. But in her account of the principal historical personages (Hull, Brock, Blackhawk and Tecumseh), the run of events from the surrender of Detroit to the Battle of Queenston Heights, and in her running commentary, Machar has more than enough material to serve as the matrix from which her message can emerge.

In addition to the principal historical figures already noted, and seen in their now traditional roles (see chapters IX, XIII, XIV and XV), there are also such fictional figures as Lilias Meredith, the beautiful young daughter of Major Meredith, a retired British Army officer; Ernest Heathcote, the New England-born but Canadian-raised schoolteacher who is a special protégé of Major Meredith; and the British officers Lieutenant Payne, who tries to seduce Ernest's young cousin, Rachel; and Captain Percival, who seems to represent British upper-class reserve at its stiffest, condescendingly impatient at being stuck in this colonial Canadian backwater when there are feats of derring-do to be done in the main theatre of war in Europe.

There are also such minor figures as Sambo, the black boy; his grandmother, Old Judy; lazy Caesar, another black servant; Colonel McLeod, the very embodiment of dignified Highland Scots's courtesy; his wildly romantic and slightly fey daughter, Marjorie; and the villains such as Davis and yet another Payne (not to be confused with Lieutenant Payne), who are Yankee infiltrators and agitators; and sundry other minor functionaries whose loyalties may be in question.

Even this partial listing of characters with their accompanying descriptive epithets indicates that Machar's interest lay less with character as character than with character as moral/social/political exemplar in her historical morality "play." And in this orientation her book seems to sit in sharp contrast to those of Hayes and Sass. Machar's book functions on two levels, the first having to do with the historical events of the period, the principal personages engaged in those events, and the contextual social and political background. On this level the stage is occupied by such figures as Hull, the American general; Brock, the Canadian commander; Tecumseh and Blackhawk, the great Indian chiefs; and Colonel Thomas Talbot. Though much of the action engaged in by these figures is kept off stage, being reported secondhand by others, Machar shows her knowledge of the period by getting her facts correct. Such details as are provided about Brock's problems with the Legislative Assembly, Hull's surrender of Detroit, the Battle of Queenston Heights, and the death of Brock, for example,

accord with what we know of these events.

On the second level, Machar's romantic imagination is allowed full scope as she traces the rocky road to conjugal happiness of Lilias Meredith and Ernest Heathcote. They have been in love for some time and since Ernest is a special protegé of Major Meredith, the problems should be few. But, first, the Major has a low opinion of Ernest's more humble background and he is not prepared to countenance the marriage of his daughter to a social inferior. Second, an ugly whisper campaign has impugned Ernest's loyalty to the Crown, and he loses his post as schoolmaster. Third, a rival for Lilias's heart appears in the form of Captain Percival, who sees in Lilias the perfection of European womanhood. But the way to true love is cleared when Ernest joins the local militia, Percival is conveniently killed off, and the Major seems to forget all about social inferiority.

At the second level, too, there are hints of allegory in Machar's handling of her material. Lilias Meredith is "blossoming into a womanhood as vigorous in its apparent fragility as the graceful Canadian columbine that bloomed on her native rocks" (Machar 23). Ernest Heathcote, in his American birth but cultivated Canadian loyalties, standing ready to fight any and all invaders for "King and country ... and peace and good order — for the sacred rights of man — for home and the dear helpless ones around the hearthstone; and against murder, rapine, crime—all the countless villainies that must attend the success of reckless marauders" (Machar 55-56), is an excellent representative of the general population of Upper Canada in 1812. Further, Ernest's "fair youthful dreams were linked with Canada as firmly as with Lilias" (Machar 53). Captain Percival, the British rival for Lilias's affection and loyalty, is too British in the new world environment. Besides, there is a dark secret in his past involving another woman. The Major's debilitating class-consciousness, having had its origin elsewhere, is in the process of being transformed to accord with a new world reality by the Canadian-born generation.

In the War of 1812 Machar found the perfect vehicle for the expression of her moral history lesson. In the spirited defence of Canada, Machar sees what can be accomplished by an awakened citizenry led by those whose values are selfless and heroic. In the face of a present danger, whether the danger is an overt military/political one, or a covert moral/spiritual one, what is required is an alert, concerned, committed citizenry (there are many images of and references to indifference, inattention, somnolence, and danger in the opening three chapters of her novel), ready to sacrifice the petty and the personal for the realization of the greater good.

Throughout the novel, references to changing social values, to now-famous but once obscure literary and political figures, to wilderness become productive farmland, and to debilitating war become Canadian freedom suggest not just the progressive march toward a prosperous future, but also the price that must be paid to ensure that such a future is realized. And it is by this means that Machar tries to indicate that *sine qua non* of the writer of historical fiction, the idea of

history as a shaping and determining force (Fleishman 15; Smith 165).

For King and Country, then, is nothing less than a call to arms aimed at its juvenile audience (probably 12-16). It reminds its readers of past sacrifices made to ensure the peace, order and good government enjoyed by later generations. In turn, these people must also sacrifice to pass on to future generations similar benefits. In all this Machar shapes her material so that it is simultaneously faithful to its historical roots and true to the vision that she wishes to impart.

Similar to the blending of historical romance and didacticism deployed by Machar in *For King and Country*, John Hayes's *Treason at York* (1949) exhibits a synthesis of historical material, apprenticeship novel, and boy's adventure story. According to Harry E. Shaw, "the sense we make of a historical novel, or of any character or scene within it, depends upon our conception of its purpose" (52). Hayes's narrative reflects a triple purpose. First, he endeavours to entertain his young readers by offering them the suspense and drama of a "Hardy Boys" adventure. He also, to some extent, provides a critique of war — specifically, the War of 1812, but war in a more general sense as well. Finally, Hayes's story, like Machar's, is motivated by strong moral and nationalistic sentiments. While Machar's protagonists are of marriageable age, Hayes's younger central characters are nevertheless clearly "apprenticing" to become the kind of heroes and nation-builders their creator envisions as crucial to a strong Canadian nation.

Hayes's use of first-person narration — the story is focalized through the perspective of its fourteen-year-old protagonist Alan Crawford — serves this triple purpose well. As we follow Alan and his friend Hugh Ainsley through a series of adventures related to the outcome of certain events in the war, we also witness Alan's growing awareness of what these events mean. Like most, if not all, writers of fiction, Hayes shows an intuitive awareness of his readers' need for entertainment; thus the didacticism or lessons of war in *Treason at York* are balanced against a fast-paced, episodic adventure plot. The lessons of war offered in Hayes's novel, as we shall see, are essentially moral ones underpinning a notion of what constitutes an ideally socialized individual.

Echoing Lillian Smith, cited earlier, Martin Green asserts that, "a great many historical novels ... have adventure plots" (69), and his categorization of these plots sheds some light on Hayes's approach to historical material in *Treason at York*. Green's taxonomy of adventure stories suggests that Hayes's story of 1812 is structured as a kind of hybrid around what Green calls "the Three Musketeers Story," the "Avenger Story," and the "Frontiersman Story." Hayes's use of these patterns is revealing for the ideological assumptions, concerns and values underlying his historical adventure story of 1812.

The "Three Musketeers Story," Green points out, is "thematically associated" with "state nationalism as opposed to economic individualism, with the nineteenth as opposed to the eighteenth century, and with historical glamour or military glory as opposed to commercial and technological rationality" (69). Green adds that the "Musketeers" adventure usually involves male bonding,

tutelage, topical details, dialect, and pageantry (70-1). Hayes's novel, replete with cornmeal porridge, bannock, colourful voyageurs and military glamour, exhibits many of these characteristics. Like the mythologizing of nation-building evident from the outset in Machar's dedication to "All Young Canadians" and in its closing union of hero and heroine who lived "not for themselves," but "for the true welfare of [their] country" (265), Hayes's nationalistic message is readily apparent. The opening chapter of *Treason at York*, entitled "No Land Like This," depicts Alan working in the family garden, a typical pioneer activity but also, symbolically, a pastoral new-world setting reinforced by the boy's reflections that "we were proud of our home, for we had built it ourselves" (3), and "after the life we had left in England, this land of Upper Canada seemed more wonderful to me every day" (5). Alan's abduction by American soldiers, his incarceration in the American Fort Niagara and subsequent escape back to Canada lead him to an even fuller appreciation of his Canadian home (309).

Infused with the spirit of nation-building, Hayes's description of a "vigorous new land" (309) incorporates a value system based on co-operation, individual modesty and devotion to communal welfare. This is also a value system in which goodness is associated with nature, albeit nature tempered by the civilizing influence of humans. In a certain sense, Hayes's narrative offers its young readers a book of exemplary conduct in the new world. The model "frontiers-men" in Hayes are motivated not by personal gain, but by a sense of missionary zeal and communal good associated with civilizing the western-Canadian frontier. By the conclusion of Hayes's initiation-to-manhood story, his protagonist has, through such courageous acts as saving the York treasury, demonstrated his worthiness and ability to take on the role of moral custodian equipped to weed out potential anarchy and evil in the new society. However, any egocentric individualism that might be associated with this task is chastised by adult mentor figures in the novel as when Alan, about to join the "Nor'West Company," and highly excited about the "wild tales" he has heard about this work, has his impulsive enthusiasm and hyperbolic imagination tempered by his father's "grave" advice that it is "a man's duty" to talk about his actions "only with modesty" (311).

The emphasis on military glory, as well as male kinship and tutelage characterized by what Green calls the "Musketeers Story," is certainly evident in *Treason at York*. Not surprisingly, given that Hayes's novel is set during the war, Alan's role models are military men: his father, a naval captain and commander of the *York Belle*; Tom Murray, a Loyalist and "secret agent" for the Canadian side (106); the "pleasant and courteous" (40) General Isaac Brock; the American Commodore Chauncey; Sir James Yeo, Commander of the fleet on Lake Ontario. Of these men, Chauncey and Murray are perhaps most significant in terms of the lessons of gentlemanly conduct and self-sacrificing heroism they teach the young protagonist. The compassionate actions of the "gentleman" (136) and "chivalrous enemy" (137) Chauncey, whose ship "stands off and fires

a salute" (136) when the *York Belle* carries the deceased Brock's belongings to York, prompts Alan's father to remark that "These men, these Americans, they're just like us" (138)! The character of Chauncey invites a reconsideration, in Hayes's novel, of concepts like the enemy, as does the character Clem Murray, Tom's American brother who lives in the dangerous war zone of the Niagara Frontier. Clem's willingness to risk hiding Alan Crawford — someone from the opposing side — in his barn and to assist in the boy's escape to Canada prompts Alan to reflect, "So this is an enemy, I thought, and the whole, tragic foolishness of war made me say bitterly, 'This fight we're in is nonsense —''' (105). However, Alan's impulsive response to the war as "nonsense" is qualified by older male soldiers whose actions exhibit the seriousness and necessity of taking arms. This balancing of Alan's naïve perspective against the commentaries of older males allows Hayes to explore both the sometimes arbitrary nature of sides and the rightness of military valour and national loyalty. It allows him, in short, to critique certain aspects of war without undermining its importance in terms of national solidarity.

Ultimately, however, Hayes is less concerned with positing a critical perspective on war than with offering his readers exemplary forms of human conduct illustrated during the conflict. An exalted form of heroism in *Treason at York*, for instance, is demonstrated in Tom Murray, a runner behind enemy lines. As Alan reflects, "I realized then something of what [Tom] had gone through to serve Canada—losing the respect of his friends; leaving his wife and home to live in an enemy country; risking his life at every turn. The part he was playing in the struggle was easily the most dangerous of any he might have chosen" (104). Fulfilling as well the role of "guide figure" that Green associates with the "Frontiersman Story," Murray, a "born woodsman" (7), initiates Alan into the world of the bush, teaching him skills of outdoor survival that prove indispensable to Alan and foreshadow his later journey to "that far-away North-West post of Fort Chipewyan," where he is "stationed in the service of [his company]" (314). Because of his affiliation with both America and Canada, Tom Murray functions as a mediating figure similar to Machar's Ernest Heathcote, a New Englander who, nevertheless, is "thoroughly Canadian in feeling" (52). These men can see the War of 1812 from both sides, a dual perspective valued by Machar and Hayes.

The heroism in Hayes's novel would not be fully appreciated without the foiling contrast of villainy which is focalized mainly through an individual character by the name of Grosser. On a more general level, as already suggested, Hayes avoids categorically casting "Americans" as "the enemy." If anything, *Treason at York* celebrates the heroic virtues of any man — American, Canadian, General or lowly farmer — willing to fight for his country. As Alan reflects in a moment of epiphany, "the thought struck me that the officials who signed declarations of war and all such documents, and then whipped other people into a frenzy of hatred to carry out their orders, should be the ones made

to do the fighting—not ordinary men like Sam Lawson who seemed more concerned about his farm and family than he was about shooting somebody" (89). The critical element in Alan's thoughts concerning the injustice of war is again tempered by the right actions of older ordinary men who, despite any reservations they may have, nevertheless serve their country well.

In contrast to such men is Grosser, Hayes's villain, "a big, troublesome Irish-American who had settled on the Don" (23). It is with Alan's quest for justice and the obstacle to justice embodied in this "gross" man that Hayes incorporates elements of Green's "Avenger Story" into his historical narrative. This type of story, Green suggests, is motivated by "the basic drive" "to denounce the agents of injustice and oppression and to mobilize feeling for society's victims" (123). The story of good triumphing over evil told in *Treason at York* is foregrounded primarily in the conflict between the boy, Crawford, and the man, Grosser. As the novel's villain, Grosser, a "blustering, loutish bully" (292), embodies qualities incompatible with nation-building: he is wantonly destructive, self-interested and anti-social—with such consistency that he approaches the nearly allegorical nature of some of Machar's characters. Towards the end of Hayes's novel, it is revealed that Grosser has been largely responsible for the burning and pillaging of York. Justice is served, however, when, in the penultimate chapter, Alan and Hugh's struggle with the villain on board the *York Belle* leads to an accident which destroys Grosser, an *accident* which exonerates the boys from any moral culpability. During the struggle — imaged as military combat (297-8) — "the east wind puffed up suddenly, jerking the boom back out over the *Belle's* rail again" (298). This motion throws Grosser off balance, sending him overboard. In this key scene, nature asserts a moral agency which destroys the "unnatural," anti-communal presence (Grosser) in Hayes's new society.

The final feat of Hayes's young heroes involves their concealment and subsequent disclosure of the location of the York treasury. Buried treasure — one of the ingredients Green attributes to the Avenger Story (123) — symbolizes, in Hayes's novel, the wealth of the new nation and the assurance that it fall into the "right" hands. The decision made by Alan and Hugh to turn their reward money over to "[their] Patriotic Society which had been formed in York at the start of the war to provide help for the soldiers and their families" (302) epitomizes the virtues of self-sacrifice and altruism central to Hayes's nationalistic message.

In contrast to the mythologizing of nationhood and celebration of the altruistic, co-operative values required for the building of a prosperous and moral society evidenced in the work of Machar and Hayes, Gregory Sass, in *Redcoat* (1985), turns away from an idealized interpretation of historical events. Instead, Sass adopts a more dystopian approach to his material in a narrative which Elaine Balpataky recommends for readers from grades six to eight (168), and which Sheila Egoff calls "the harshest book in Canadian children's fiction" (118). Sass's novel also reflects the shift, identified by Elizabeth Waterston, of

more contemporary historical fiction away from "glorification" and "untroubled patriotism" (148) towards a documentation of "class struggle" and "the lives of alienated and exploited groups" (157).

Like Hayes, Sass utilizes a first-person point of view, telling his story through the eyes of thirteen-year-old Shadrach Byfield. Balpataky summarizes Sass's plot, stating that Shadrach, "from a poor Scottish borderland family, flees bullying, injustice, and cruelty at home, only to find greater injustice, cruelty, and danger as a British infantryman in 1811-12" (168). Immersed by his creator in a violent and dark underworld, Shadrach eventually deserts his regiment, lives with a band of Indians, is court-martialled, loses a hand, and is shipped back to England, finally returning to his home and father, whom he asks for forgiveness at the novel's end, an act "far more painful, than any punishment [he] had suffered" (95).

Given that *Redcoat* is suffused with brutality and violence, we must, to recall Harry E. Shaw's comment on the purpose of historical fiction, query Sass's motivation in offering such an unredemptive, dark vision to young readers. If anything, Sass often seems to be using historical material to frame what seem like distinctly contemporary concerns such as the alienation of the individual, social fragmentation, and the injustices inflicted upon young victims of social marginalization. Sass's protagonist, Shadrach, is a fugitive who runs away first from his home and then from his regiment. Even at the age of thirteen, he is acutely aware of the British social hierarchy. As he succinctly puts it, "we were poor ... our bellies shrieked with hunger most days" (7). Living in a quasi-feudal world in which survival becomes a Darwinian challenge, Shadrach's nemesis is John Quarry, son of "the master" (8) of the reapers. Eventually executed for desertion, Quarry, whom Byfield calls a "moral imbecile" (86), reflects a form of evil associated with nihilism; as Quarry states, he deserted because he "was bored" (87). Shadrach, who does possess a sense of morality and justice, observes that "John Quarry had turned his punishment into an obscenity" (89). In short, young Quarry's cynicism reflects the horrors of a morally empty universe — horrors which might reflect, on Sass's part, a contemporary sensibility grounded in post-Vietnam disillusionment and existential despair.

"Obscene" could well describe the overall depiction of war in *Redcoat*; Sass's dark vision derives in part, at least, from the inequities of class and military rank which the narrative so blatantly delineates. Unlike *For King and Country* and *Treason at York*, enlisting in *Redcoat* is presented not in terms of glory or national loyalty, but as an escape from grinding poverty and injustice. As the recruiting sergeant tells a group of young men, including Shadrach, signing up offers self-betterment, "fighting and booty," a "suit of red jacket," and "free beer in the alehouse today" (19). He adds, with patronizing cynicism, "I have been acquainted with low life myself and know most of you are poor. So come on you young fellows. I can promise you that your new life will be an improvement on the old" (19). Even Shadrach reflects that "the army was fair, which was more

than could be said for school" (21). Neither the sergeant's promise nor Shadrach's hope of "fairness" in the army is realized; Shadrach's experience in the War of 1812 is marked only by suffering, disillusionment and injustice. Soldiering, in Sass's depiction, is dehumanizing, as the novel's images of mechanization make clear: "we marched on like automatons,... our minds mechanically erased" (57). The central injustice in the novel occurs when Shadrach and Tom receive no "prize money" (60) after a dangerous assignment, and their superiors, Sergeant Barnett and Captain Thompson, receive more than their share. Once again, Sass confronts his readers with the injustices of rank and hierarchy.

Akin to the "choice of nightmares" in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Sass's Shadrach chooses the nightmare of deserting his regiment. He is taken up by a band of Indians, and it is in this latter section of *Redcoat* that Sass's taste for exotica becomes most apparent. Sass's rather stagey and stereotypical portrayal of Indians, such as "George" (so named by Shadrach) who slashes off heads without compunction, in many ways corroborates Lukács's observation, made in *The Historical Novel*, that "for the modern writers ... it is the strangeness of history which is attractive" (231). Elaborating on this "general trend towards the exotic," Lukács remarks that these "modern writers" portray a "universal disgust, an infinite disillusionment with life which has no visible goal" (232). Within the context of *Redcoat*, a historical novel for young readers, this modern disillusionment identified by Lukács also appears to have no real image of childhood. Shadrach seems strangely adult, with one or two exceptions, throughout the narrative. Perhaps this is not surprising, given that in the harsh environment he inhabits the weaker are often exploited by those more powerful and the usual advantages of childhood (being protected, for instance) become luxuries. In Shadrach's world, sheer survival becomes the all-important goal. Yet in spite of the pervasiveness of deprivation and corruption, Shadrach manages to possess a good deal of moral fibre, and it is this core of incorruptibility lighting his journey into manhood that emerges as the most affirmative element in the 1812 wasteland of *Redcoat*.

Whether we are dealing with the social and moral preconditions for a new world paradise in *For King and Country* and *Treason at York*, or the struggle for a modicum of personal dignity in the achievement of an inner paradise in the alienating world of *Redcoat*, it is evident that these three novels set during the War of 1812 represent history within a moral landscape. As a means of giving shape to their interpretations of the past, Machar, Hayes and Sass combine various fictional modes such as romance, adventure tale, and coming-of-age narrative. These three stories of 1812 re-imagine the past for us, offering both a journey into another time and an invitation to consider individual action within a broader social framework. The novels reflect, as well, the political, ideological and artistic sensibilities of their creators, and in so doing illuminate once more the participation of juvenile literature in a larger imaginative tradition.

NOTES

1 Agnes Maule Machar, "Historical Sketch of the War of 1812," *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 61 (July 1874)1-20.

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