

**A Brief History of the Writing (and Re-Writing)  
of Canadian National History**

By

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## **Abstract**

Canadian historians periodically reassess the state of their craft, including their role as conveyors of the past to the Canadian public. With each review since the late 1960s, some Canadian historians have attempted to distance the profession from the work of those scholars labelled “national historians.” Three of the most prominent of these national historians were Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton, and W.L. Morton, whose work was once popular among both professional historians and the general population. Drawing primarily upon reviews of their monographs, this thesis tracks the changing status of national history within English-Canadian historiography since 1945 by examining how Canadian historians have received the work and assessed the careers of Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton, and W.L. Morton.

National history can be broadly defined as the history of a specific nation, more typically, a nation-state. While the specific characteristics of national history have, like other types of history, changed over time, Canadian national history in the decades following the end of the Second World War used strong scholarship and clear, readable prose to communicate a specific vision of Canada to the general public. While Lower, Creighton, and Morton applied differing interpretations to their historical research, they all employed these components of national history within their work. After the Canadian Centennial, a new cohort of baby boomer historians brought a different set of values to their understanding of history, and the interpretations so widely acclaimed during the 1950s and early 1960s failed to persuade this new generation of Canadian historians. The lasting reputation of each of these three national historians has been highly dependent on whether each scholar’s preferred interpretation aligns with the new values held by the

new generation of Canadian historians. While W.L. Morton's western perspective fit in well with the regional concerns of the 1980s, and Arthur Lower retained a reputation as an early innovator of social history, Donald Creighton's career has been remembered for the strident opinions of his later life, especially regarding the growth of Quebec nationalism and the increasing influence of the United States within Canadian national affairs. It is Creighton's diminished reputation among English Canadian historians that is most commonly linked to the moniker of "national history." As the gap between the postwar understanding of Canada and the post-Beatles vision for Canada continued to widen throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Canadian historical community, on the whole, continued to equate all national history with the reactionary reputation of an aging Donald Creighton. While this simplistic view provides convenient shorthand for the genre of national history, it fails to appreciate both the substantial contributions of national historians to Canadian historiography and the widespread influence of their work on the reading Canadian public.

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Finishing this thesis is not my achievement alone. My family has borne the brunt of my academic efforts, putting up with a preoccupied mother and wife who was not always available to fully engage with family life. Benno was born just over a year after I began my MA, and now he is able to ask me himself, "Mommy, when will you be finished your thesis?" This thesis was his sibling for years before his sister, Cate, was born, and it is to him I dedicate this work. I am indebted to the many friends and family who helped to care for Benno and Cate while I trudged ahead through research and writing. Special thanks go to my parents, Tom and Diane Hamel, my sister, Laura, my brother, Jeff, and my friends Geraldine Jordan and Cyndi McCarthy. Their generosity is overwhelming.

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Jennifer Hamel  
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## **Dedication**

For Benno Thomas, my blessed son.

## Introduction:

In the fall of 1991, historian Michael Bliss delivered a paper entitled “Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada” as his contribution to the University of Toronto History Department’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. Written for the Creighton Centennial Lecture, commemorating the career of historian Donald Creighton, Bliss’ paper re-examined “the parallel relationship between the disintegration of Canadian history as a unified discipline, on the one hand, and, on the other, the withering of a sense of community in Canada which I believe partially underlies our current constitutional and political malaise.”<sup>1</sup> Later published in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* as an independent article, Bliss’ lecture recommended that Canadian historians should once again concern themselves with transmitting Canadian history to Canadians. Despite Bliss’ careful qualification of his remarks, stating that “[a]bove all, I am not advocating the limited, restricted sense of Canada as a public community that was implicit, often explicit, in the national history written by Creighton, Lower, Underhill, and the other past masters,”<sup>2</sup> his comments met with a flurry of criticism, both immediately following Bliss’ lecture at the University of Toronto,<sup>3</sup> and in subsequent issues of the *Journal of Canadian Studies*.

The controversy surrounding Bliss’ remarks revealed a deep divide within the Canadian historical profession over the place of national history in Canadian

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was delivered as part of the University of Toronto History Department’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations. The full text of it appeared in the Winter 1991-92 issue of the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. See Michael Bliss, “Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26 (4) (Winter 1991-92): 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Richard White, a former graduate student of Bliss’, recalls the negative reaction to the Creighton lecture in his article on Michael Bliss; see Richard White, “Inspiration as Instruction: Michael Bliss as Graduate Advisor, 1989-1994” in *Essays in Honour of Michael Bliss*, ed. E.A. Heaman et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 60-61.



historiography. This conflict often pitted proponents of “new history” or “social history” against historians, some of whom wrote social history themselves, who argued that national history still retained a valid place within Canadian historiography. While the immediate reactions of Canadian academics to the Creighton lecture are, unfortunately, not part of the written historical record, the responses published almost a year after the lecture and six months after the publication of the article indicate that Bliss’ comments had touched on a subject of great personal and professional interest to his colleagues.<sup>4</sup> Many of these reactions carried a distinct disdain for both Bliss’ arguments and his perceived attempts to emulate what they considered to be a dated understanding of Canadian history. Working-class historian Gregory Kealey, then of Memorial University, responded to the article, stating that

[t]he current crisis in English Canadian historical writing is two-fold. On the one hand there is a conservative, if not reactionary, lust for the good old days of central Canadian and University of Toronto dominance in both historical and historiographical terms. On the other, there is a far more serious methodological debate about the role of synthesis and theory in historical writing.... While some may regret the loss of a charming old boys’ club, it is surely more important to recognize the dynamism that came with opening the club to outsiders.<sup>5</sup>

Linda Kealey, Ruth Pierson, Joan Sangster, and Veronica Strong-Boag, all of whom explored the role of gender in Canadian history, joined in the following statement:

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<sup>4</sup> Discussion of Bliss’ article continued into the next millennium. Richard White recalls that, during a job interview in 2000, he was asked by a group of graduate students which side of the Michael Bliss controversy he was on (White, “Inspiration as Instruction,” 65, fn 19). In my own personal experience in graduate school in 2003, Bliss’ article was used to initiate a discussion of the state of Canadian historiography.

<sup>5</sup> In fact, Richard White points out that Kealey, speaking the afternoon before Bliss’ lecture, criticized what he expected Bliss to say in his lecture. White also states that Kealey’s criticisms of Bliss published in “Point-Counterpoint” were a version of that talk (White, “Inspiration as Instruction,” 65, fn 19). See Gregory Kealey, “Class in English-Canadian Historical Writing: Neither Privatizing, Nor Sundering,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27 (2) (Summer 1992): 123-124; Linda Kealey et al., “Teaching Canadian History in the 1990s: Whose ‘National’ History Are we Lamenting?” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27 (2) (Summer 1992): 129-130.

Toronto professors Jack Granatstein and Michael Bliss – habitual media gurus – have recently made their cry for political and ‘national’ history known in a number of public forums. Their latest *cause célèbre*, the restoration of ‘real’ history, is implicitly a call to reinstate the history of great men, male politicians, and high politics to our educational system.... An understanding of ourselves as a ‘nation’ or indeed as many nations within one, will not come by propping up an older national history, however comforting to a few, which is built on the suppression of women’s, native and other voices. It might come, however, from a better understanding of our diverse experiences and histories.<sup>6</sup>

These statements demonstrate the presence of a deep-seated antipathy towards national history in general and the older generation of Canadian historians in particular. Even the mention of national historians such as Arthur Lower and Donald Creighton was enough to label Bliss a conservative reactionary intent upon an elitist version of Canadian history that excluded the voices of the oppressed. This characterization, which is not sustained by a thorough examination of Bliss’ remarks,<sup>7</sup> is inextricably linked with his desire to articulate Canadian history through a national interpretive framework that, ideally, would be accessible for a general audience.

The Bliss controversy of the early 1990s demonstrates the highly contentious nature of national history within the Canadian historical profession. For some historians, the term “national history” is closely linked to a generation of historians –predominantly white males from southern Ontario – whose value system and scholarly emphasis was regarded as outdated. Many historians critical of national history entered graduate school

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<sup>6</sup> Linda Kealey et al., “Teaching Canadian History,” 129-130.

<sup>7</sup> As mentioned previously, in his lecture Bliss went out of his way to distance himself from the ideological position of historians such as Donald Creighton. Bliss also stressed that Canadian historians must find a way to integrate the stories of the suppressed into the larger narrative of Canadian history, stating that “it would be intellectually wrong to leave them and their past out of the rewriting of Canadian history”; see Bliss, “Privatizing the Mind,” 16. Bliss did, however, exhort Canadian historians to follow the example of Donald Creighton as a communicator of history to the general public, rather than to a small, closed community of historians. Speaking about the then-recent debates surrounding the Meech Lake Accord, Bliss concluded his comments by stating, “we do not know who we are as Canadians, and our historians have not been of much help recently in that quest for public understanding. I think we should try harder to help”; see *ibid.*, 17.

during the mid to late 1960s, including Michael Bliss who was a graduate student at the University of Toronto in the late 1960s. These young scholars brought the concerns of their generation into the academy, which had a great impact upon the both Canadian university system and the intellectual climate that it sustained. In an effort to uncover the stories of those not represented by postwar national history, this new generation of Canadian historians sought to examine unexplored areas of Canadian history such as race, class, and gender rather than re-examining the Canadian 'master narrative' as articulated by historians such as Donald Creighton, Arthur Lower, and William Morton. As demonstrated by the responses to Bliss' address, a certain portion of Canadian historians believed that Bliss' suggestion to re-examine Canadian history through a national framework could not be separated from the philosophical and political mentality of the historians who brought national history into vogue during the 1950s and 1960s.

National history can be broadly defined as the history of a specific nation, and more commonly, the history of a specific nation-state. National historians accept the notion that membership within a certain nation or nation-state is important to the individuals within that nation (although the importance would naturally vary with the individual) and, using the idea of the 'nation' as a framework through which to view human experience, attempt to explore the variety and similarities that exist within that specific nation. National history often attempts to draw conclusions about the values held by the nation as a whole. As with all forms of history, the moral emphasis of national history changes over time, as contemporary events and intellectual trends cause historians to reexamine their understanding of the past. Thus, while all national history deals with the nation and its members, approaches to national history change over time.

Originating in the nationalistic, patriotic atmosphere of World War II, national history in the postwar years tended to emphasize democracy and the peaceful resolution of differences within a political context. Much of the national history written in the postwar era, therefore, examined the national political history of Canada. In addition, many of these new national histories relied upon the constitutional and economic histories of the early twentieth century for their source material. This heritage, coupled with the emphasis on the political life of the nation, meant that white males from affluent and educated backgrounds comprised the majority of the key figures featured within postwar national histories. While future generations of Canadian historians would decry the neglect of the lower classes and other groups such as women and visible minorities, this emphasis on highly educated white males active in the political life of Canada is not surprising, given the historical and intellectual context of postwar national history. Like the social historians writing two generations later who came of age amidst peace marches and the sexual revolution, national historians who addressed the political history of the nation were a product of a specific time and place, and their choice of topic and subject reflected that historical context.

Regardless of a historian's particular ideological or ethical perspective, all postwar national historians examined the uniqueness of the Canadian experience in North America and attempted to draw general conclusions about the nature of Canada and its people. Arthur Lower emphasized the land as the unifying element of Canadian national feeling, while Donald Creighton looked to the founding fathers, in particular Sir John A Macdonald, as inspiration for contemporary Canada. W.L. Morton sought alternative interpretive lenses for the Canadian experience, looking towards the monarchy and the

northern character of Canada as touchstones for all Canadians. Furthermore, these historians wrote with the intent to communicate their history to the reading public, as well as an academic audience. Therefore, postwar national history contained both accurate, excellent scholarship and clear, readable prose intended to communicate the historian's specific vision of Canada to academics and armchair historians alike. These three elements – scholarship, general audience, and moral vision – formed the backbone of Canadian national history in the postwar era.

Since the late 1970s, other Canadian historians, in general those who had spent more than a decade teaching, researching, and publishing in the field, have periodically returned to the idea of revisiting a national understanding of Canadian history, seeing in that process an opportunity to provide historical context for some of the challenges of contemporary Canadian society. In his 1979 Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association, 'History and Nationality in Canada,' Desmond Morton asked whether it would be wrong, "while there is still time, to seek again for a synthesis of Canada as a whole."<sup>8</sup> Like Bliss, Morton opined that "[I]t is time not only to seek out fresh interpretations of the Canadian and wider human experience, but also to try, with new vigour, to communicate the civilizing awareness of history to the Canadian community .... The time has come for this generation of historians in Canada to speak with public voices, for we have much to tell."<sup>9</sup> The following year J.M.S. Careless, the historian who had popularized the "limited identities" approach to Canadian history in 1969, offered his evaluation of Canadian historiography. Roughly outlining the

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<sup>8</sup> Morton went on to emphasize the importance of the CHA and the centre of historical inquiry in Canada, both professional and non-professional, and proposed a series of structural changes to better help members of the CHA reach the Canadian public. Desmond Morton, "History and Nationality in Canada: Variations on an Old Theme," *Historical Papers Communications historiques* (1979): 8-10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

developments of the 1970s, Careless praised the variety of work that had been carried out in a number of rapidly expanding fields of history.<sup>10</sup> However, Careless also expressed his concern that the increased specialization had begun to separate Canadian historians from each other and from the wider Canadian audience, “[i]n brief, limited identities remain crucial subjects for the historian’s regard – but they should not limit his own perception.”<sup>11</sup> Comparing Canadian history to a dense forest, Careless stated “[n]ow the task is to cut the sight-lines through, to make the perceptual links, so that once again we may discern the still vast Canadian forest-nation as an entity, or identity, in itself.”<sup>12</sup> Morton and Careless, as well as Bliss, regarded the synthesis of new historical material and the communication of that material to the general public as one of the essential tasks of Canadian historians.

Although these calls to communicate some form of national history to the public may seem innocuous, by the mid-1980s national history and social history had polarized into the historical twain that never met. In his discussion of Canadian history from the 1970s to the present, published in the second edition of his award-winning work, *The*

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<sup>10</sup> Careless stated that within the field of class history much of the work remained in ‘the form of proliferating doctoral theses,’ thus indicating that class history was predominantly the domain of young historians. Careless also discussed the explosion in regional histories, with a variety of provincial studies, new journals such as *BC Studies*, regional conferences such as the Western Studies Conference, and a variety of books and articles. Careless criticized the “frequent over-simple dichotomy presented or suggested by regional historians between a ‘metropolitan’ central Canada and their own closely regarded region to east or west,” stating that often this resulted from some remembered grievance rather than from reflection on the complex facts of historical experience. Careless also discussed the emerging theme of multicultural history, which also engendered a number of significant studies, including John Porter’s *Vertical Mosaic*, as well as a journal, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, and a number of government initiatives; see J.M.S. Careless, “Limited Identities – ten years later,” *Manitoba History* 1 (1) (1980): 4-7.

<sup>11</sup> Careless called to mind W.L. Morton as an example of a scholar who had carried out this integration, describing Morton’s *Manitoba* – published in 1957 – as a book that was “as vital as ever at the close of the 1970s, remaining “a superb achievement in regional history ... Morton never forgot the region’s broader settings, its multiple interconnections, the play of historic forces inward and out.” See *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

*Writing of Canadian History*, historian Carl Berger concluded that while most historians welcomed their release

from the burden of constantly performing as some kind of national sage .... [o]thers who stood closer to the centre of a tradition that stretched back from Creighton to George M. Wrong were apt to regret the excesses of revisionism and the fact that a substantial proportion of contemporary history was more likely to raise painful questions of guilt and grievance rather than provide positive perspectives on the major currents of national life.<sup>13</sup>

As examples of this type of historian, Berger cited Careless' "Limited Identities –ten years later" and Desmond Morton's 1979 Presidential Address to the CHA. By citing Careless and Morton as evidence of this statement, Berger contributed to reinforcing a dichotomy in which a historian who advocated a national approach to Canadian history was inherently opposed to historiographical developments since the 1970s, namely social history. Within this dichotomy, one could not be an advocate for national history and social history at the same time.<sup>14</sup>

The source of this disparity lies in the history of English-Canadian national history: as early as the mid-1980s, national history, which had once been the cornerstone of history in Canada, had become a subject of derision and divisiveness. In order to

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<sup>13</sup> Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: UTP, 1986), 320.

<sup>14</sup> The experience of Jonathan Vance, editor of the now-defunct journal *National History*, also reflects this dichotomy. The opening editorial of the journal *National History* by Jonathan Vance, then of Wilfrid Laurier University and now of the University of Western Ontario, also hints at the negative connection between Donald Creighton, the founder of the Laurentian school of thought, and the ongoing debates surrounding national history in Canada. Vance asserted that the journal did not intend to focus on political history, but that it would adopt a multi-disciplinary approach: "Despite this attempt at inclusivity, the founding of *National History* was not greeted with enthusiasm in all quarters. Some people criticized the journal as an organ of the recrudescing right, and concluded that its intentions were to force debate back into the straitjackets of a decades-old Laurentianism. ... With respect to criticism of the journal's supposed political leanings or intentions, we were surprised that people could come to such strong opinions months before the first issue was published. While we respect their views, we hope that the majority of readers will get to know the journal before they dismiss it as a vehicle for right-wing political thought." See Jonathan Vance, "Editorial," *National History* 1 (1) (Winter 1997): 3. Indeed, the history of the journal *National History: A Canadian Journal of Enquiry and Opinion* would make for an interesting case study of attitudes towards national history in Canada in the late 1990s. Established in 1997, the journal survived for four issues, the last of which was published in 2000.

examine the rise and fall of national history in Canada, I have chosen to examine the work of three national historians, Donald Creighton, Arthur Lower, and W.L. Morton. Donald Creighton rose to prominence with his biography of Sir John A. Macdonald. Arthur Lower gained national attention with his postwar history of Canada, *Colony to Nation*. W.L. Morton began his career as a historian of the Canadian prairies, later turning his attention towards national issues in works such as *The Kingdom of Canada* and his published lectures, *The Canadian Identity*. While Lower, Creighton, and Morton are not the only intellectuals who made contributions to the public discussion of Canadian national history and identity,<sup>15</sup> they did produce a sustained corpus of work over an extended period of time that enables an extended analysis of their work.

This thesis attempts to place the rise and fall of national history in Canada within an appropriate historical context and to reflect on the changing status of national history in Canada. As such, this thesis is a small contribution to the intellectual history of Canada, specifically the history of the English-Canadian historical profession. Carl Berger's *The Writing of Canadian History Since 1900* and, most recently, Donald Wright's *The Professionalization of History in English Canada*, are the major works in this field of research and are frequently used throughout this thesis. Others have examined specific periods of postwar Canadian history,<sup>16</sup> but only Berger and Wright have examined the history of the Canadian historical profession, and of those two, only Wright has published new research in this area in the past two decades.

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<sup>15</sup> Two dominant personalities within this discussion are historian and commentator Frank Underhill and philosopher George Grant. While both Underhill and Grant wrote prolifically on a variety of topics, including Canadian national history and national identity, the majority of their work was either in short articles, lectures or essays.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: UTP, 1996); Philip Buckner, ed., *Canada and the End of Empire* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).



Carl Berger's text is the standard work on the writing of English-Canadian history.<sup>17</sup> Winner of the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction, Berger's work examines the careers of influential individuals within the Canadian historical profession, including Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton, and William Morton, and provides brief sketches of the historical and academic context in which these individuals lived and worked. Through his examination of the life and work of these scholars, as well as others such as Frank Underhill and Harold Innis, Berger traces the focus of Canadian history from constitutional matters, to economic issues, to national identity, to the rise of social history. First published in 1976, Berger released an updated edition in 1986 that studied the developments of Canadian historiography since the 1960s. In this last chapter, Berger moved away from a biographical approach to the study of Canadian historiography, concentrating less on the careers of individual figures and focusing on general trends that emerged within the profession. Berger's work is, without a doubt, the starting point for any scholar of the Canadian historical profession.

While Berger's work examines the scholarship that historians have produced, in recent years University of New Brunswick historian Donald Wright has examined the variety of structures supporting that scholarship, and has joined Berger as a preeminent scholar of the Canadian historical profession. Wright's book, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* examines the evolving organizational structures of the historical profession, tracing its development from a loose association of amateur historians to the university-centered profession of the present day.<sup>18</sup> Wright concludes that, while historians have become more professionalized and regulated within the

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<sup>17</sup> Berger, *The Writing*.

<sup>18</sup> Donald Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

university system, they have also ceased to write for a larger Canadian audience, and often the work produced by professional historians is read by a limited university audience. Currently working on a biography of historian Donald Creighton, Wright continues to explore the interactions of the Canadian historical profession and Canadian society.

While sources such as Berger and Wright provided the broader historical context, this thesis is also dependent upon hundreds of reviews and articles about the work and life of Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton, and William Morton. These sources include articles written by Lower, Creighton, and Morton, articles written about the historians, Canadian Historical Association Presidential Addresses, key articles that illuminate trends within Canadian historiography and, most importantly, reviews of books written by the three historians. In this thesis reviews of the work of Lower, Creighton, and Morton perform two functions. First, the book reviews reflect the reputations of the historians as viewed by their peers at a specific point in time. Secondly, a close reading of the book reviews reveals the standards by which Canadian historians evaluated, and either accepted or rejected, a work of history. Although this reconstruction of personal reputations and the development of the collective standards of the Canadian historical community will, admittedly, fall short of the historical reality,<sup>19</sup> this thesis aims to bring together some of these divergent sources that illuminate the Canadian historical

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<sup>19</sup> This thesis demonstrated the limited scope of basing history on printed sources. In order to get a 'true' picture of the rise and fall of national history, one would need access to countless interviews, personal memoirs, minutes of meetings, emails, private discussions between colleagues that have occurred over the past sixty years within the Canadian historical profession. However, given the time and scope of a graduate thesis, this is what was within my capability and must therefore serve as a guidepost or as preliminary thoughts upon a subject that is both very vast and of great importance to the community that it examines.

profession in the latter half of the twentieth century and perhaps indicate areas that would benefit from further study.

Chapter one of this thesis discusses Canadian history prior to the Second World War, providing the historical context for the rise of Canadian national history. Chapter two explores the rise of national history, in particular Arthur Lower's *Colony to Nation*, Donald Creighton's biographies of Sir John A. Macdonald, and the early work of W.L. Morton. The second chapter identifies two essential elements of national history, namely excellent scholarship and writing for the public in clear, effective prose, and demonstrates that in the decade after 1945 the Canadian historical profession approved of and encouraged the writing of Canadian history to bolster Canadian nationalism. Chapter three chronicles the growth of national history in the decade preceding the 1967 Canadian Centennial and the emergence of social history. It further outlines areas in which the interpretations put forth by Lower, Creighton, and Morton contradicted contemporary trends in Canadian culture and society. Chapter four discusses the decline of national history in the aftermath of the Canadian Centennial, paying particular attention to the influence of changes within Canadian universities and the continued growth of social history. Chapter four also reveals that, while Lower and Morton stepped away from writing national history in their later careers, Donald Creighton's continued crusade against many aspects of mainstream Canadian society and academia damaged his personal and professional reputation as well as the reputation of national history itself. Chapter five examines *festschriften*, collections of essays assembled in honour of a particular scholar, collected essays of a historian's work, and obituaries in order to explore the reputation of national historians during the rise of social history in Canadian

historiography. Chapter five illuminates a generational divide within the Canadian historical community in which lack of a personal connection with a national historian translated into decreasing sympathy for both the aims and practitioners of national history. Finally, in its conclusion this thesis briefly examines the reputations of Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton and W.L. Morton after the ascendance of social history, concluding that of the three, only W.L. Morton retained a positive reputation after his death.

## Chapter 1: The Origins of National History in English Canada

*Canadian historiography has come of age; it means that sufficient specialized investigation has been done to provide a basis for something like genuine synthesis; it means that—thanks to the hard spadework done since 1918—Canadian historians are now in a position to make a significant contribution to Canadian culture in the broadest sense and perhaps to exercise a positive influence upon the thinking of their countrymen at large on current national problems.*

*Colonel C. P. Stacey, Canadian military historian, June 1947.<sup>1</sup>*

C. P. Stacey's declaration of the 'coming of age' of Canadian historiography outlines the manner in which Canadian historians turned to an examination of their nation-state as a method of reorienting themselves, as well as the Canadian public, in a changing postwar world. The ascent of national history in postwar Canada signalled the acceptance of a new interpretive framework among Canadian historians, one which looked at Canada as a nation in and of itself, rather than as a colony of Britain or a pale imitation of the United States, and coincided with an increase in national sentiment that was specifically Canadian in nature. While this approach originated prior to the Second World War, the accomplishments of Canadians at home and abroad during the war sparked a desire to chronicle the achievements of Canada as a distinct nation, and to do so in a manner accessible to the reading public. The work of three of the most respected Canadian historians of the postwar period illustrates the rise of this new approach to the writing of Canada's past. Although Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton, and W. L. Morton addressed different issues within Canadian national history throughout their careers, all attempted to give Canadians a sense of their place within the world and within the nation itself. Coupled with a growing body of historical research and publications, these

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<sup>1</sup> C. P. Stacey. Review of *Colony to Nation*, by A.R.M. Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 28 (June 1947): 194.

authors' forays into national history sought to increase the Canadian public's awareness of their collective history as well as to instil in Canadians a sense of their place in the world.

Although there have been no sustained studies of the development of the Canadian historical profession during the years of 1945 to 1957, reviews of the works of Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton, and W. L. Morton written during this period demonstrate that national histories greatly enhanced Canadian historiography and were welcomed by the historical community.<sup>2</sup> This thesis does not comprise a detailed examination of the historical profession during the period in question, yet it is possible to draw the preliminary conclusion that the general tone of Canadian historians was one of eager optimism during the decade following World War II. Buoyed by Canada's achievements during the Second World War and motivated by wartime discussions relating to the purpose of the historical profession, Lower and Creighton, and to a much lesser extent Morton, attempted to communicate to the general public a distinctive history focused on the Canadian nation. In addition, these histories provided new interpretations of Canada's past by synthesizing research conducted during the interwar years with new archival research into untouched areas of Canadian history. The excitement with which the Canadian historical community welcomed the new research and interpretations offered by Lower, Creighton, and Morton indicates that, while the Canadian historical profession continued to require thorough research from its members, the synthesis of

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<sup>2</sup> Neither Berger nor Wright devotes much time to discussion of the historical profession in the years of 1946-1957. Berger mentions these years in passing during his discussions of Donald Creighton and W. L. Morton, and Wright's treatment of the historical profession generally concludes at the end of the Second World War. As pointed out in *Cultures of Citizenship*, this tendency to leave the decade after the end of the second World War relatively unstudied has only begun to change in the last decade of the twentieth century. See Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, introduction to *Cultures of Citizenship*, ed. Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 3-26. See note 3 for bibliographical information for Berger's and Wright's works.

historical material into a national framework as well as a lucid and pleasant writing style aimed at a wide audience was increasingly preferred by the academic Canadian historical profession.

### **The Roots of National History**

The writing of English-Canadian history, as well as the qualifications necessary to write history in Canada, changed greatly during the first half of the twentieth century as Canadian historians balanced inherited historiographical traditions with imported standards of scholarship.<sup>3</sup> In his groundbreaking examination of English-Canadian historiography, Carl Berger cites George Wrong and Adam Shortt as the founders of the discipline of Canadian history. Very different in their historical method, Shortt perceived history to be a discipline of scientific inquiry and took a heavily empirical approach to the writing of history, while Wrong deliberately cultivated a privileged, informal social atmosphere with his students akin to what he had experienced at Oxford, and promoted the notion of history as a conveyor of moral good.<sup>4</sup> While Wrong's approach held sway during the early twentieth century, Shortt's scientific approach began to dominate the profession in the 1930s. The writing of Canada's constitutional history, particularly the peaceful transition from colonial status to responsible government, preoccupied historians during the Victorian era through to the end of the 1920s and provided a national focus for Canadian historians that emphasized their unique contribution to Western civilization.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1930s, historians began to concentrate on understanding the socio-economic

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<sup>3</sup> Carl Berger's *The Writing of Canadian History* is the classic work on the subject. Donald Wright traces the development of the Canadian historical profession in his work *The Professionalization of History in English Canada*. The following paragraphs rely heavily upon these two works.

<sup>4</sup> Berger, *Writing*, 30-31, as well as the whole of Chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-53. See also Wright, *Professionalization*, 45-51.

background of these constitutional changes and replaced moral judgment with stringent scientific methodology.<sup>6</sup>

Concurrent with these changes in the focus of historical inquiry, the writing of ‘professional’ history gradually became the domain of a close community of university professors rather than loosely affiliated groups of enthusiastic amateurs.<sup>7</sup> While students initially had to travel outside of Canada to obtain their PhD in history, universities across Canada began to develop graduate degrees in history, and these degrees became the prerequisites for employment in universities. Furthermore, informal hiring practices, such as personal recommendations from a supervisor, ensured that university positions would be granted to individuals already within the university system.<sup>8</sup> Beginning in the 1920s, practitioners of Canadian history strengthened their informal relationships as they interacted during summer research trips at the Public Archives in Ottawa.<sup>9</sup> The areas of research themselves became increasingly narrow and specialized, and both professors and their protégés were encouraged to publish as many of their findings as possible.<sup>10</sup> These developments increasingly favoured university-trained individuals, rather than unaffiliated ‘amateur’ historians, and resulted in the exclusion of the amateurs, many of whom were women, from professional circles.<sup>11</sup> What remained was a close-knit

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<sup>6</sup> Berger, *Writing*, 137-159.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, *Professionalization*, 27. See also Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>9</sup> The experience of Canadian historian Alfred Burt, who began his academic career at the University of Alberta in 1913 and transferred to the University of Minnesota in 1930, is related in *Ibid.*, 52-53. See “University of Alberta Centenary,” University of Alberta, [http://www.ualbertacentennial.ca/people/displaybio.php?bio\\_id=690](http://www.ualbertacentennial.ca/people/displaybio.php?bio_id=690) (accessed January 2, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 3, “The Post-1918 Generation” in *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Although women’s historical societies had generally remained separate from those of their male counterparts, relations between the two groups were amicable at the beginning of the twentieth century, and history written by women was perceived as a valuable asset to Canadian history. Many women were unable to meet the changing standards for professional historians (or were prevented from doing so), such as graduate degrees, and thus women became increasingly excluded from the Canadian historical



professional community, linked by both formal and informal relationships and devoted to the continuing expansion of Canadian historiography.

The early careers of Arthur Lower and Donald Creighton illustrate the process by which many Canadians came to the growing profession of history, earning their final degrees from institutions in the United States and Britain. Although most Canadian universities did not offer doctoral programs in history during the interwar years, students were encouraged to seek their doctoral degree from other universities.<sup>12</sup> The influence of other universities – Oxford, in particular – was felt at the undergraduate level as professors imported approaches and styles of teaching from their alma mater.<sup>13</sup> Born in Barrie, Ontario in 1889 to immigrants from England, Arthur Lower's approach to Canadian history was deeply influenced by the strong work ethic imparted by his mother's Methodism and his intense love for the Canadian North.<sup>14</sup> The first in his family to receive a university education, Lower earned his MA from the University of Toronto and went on to complete his PhD at Harvard, concentrating on the timber staples trade with an attention to social and cultural detail not usually found in the economic histories of the 1930s.<sup>15</sup> Like many other educated men of the time, Lower shared his British and Methodist roots with his younger colleague, Donald Creighton. Born in Toronto in 1902, Creighton inherited a strong tradition of social concern and a deep love of literature from his father, an ordained Methodist minister and editor of the journals *The*

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profession. For a detailed account of this see Chapter 5, "The importance of being sexist: the masculinization of history" in *Ibid.*, 97-120.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-57.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-38. At the University of Toronto, George Wrong took particular pains to model the teaching style of the history department on that of the Oxford tutorials and hired a significant number of Oxford graduates.

<sup>14</sup> Berger, *Writing*, 112-116.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-117.

*Christian Guardian* and, after church union in 1925, the *New Outlook*.<sup>16</sup> Completing his undergraduate degree at Victoria College at the University of Toronto, Creighton received his M.A. from Oxford and, finding the costs of researching in Europe too expensive, turned from the history of the French Revolution to Lord Dalhousie, Governor-in-chief of Canada, whose papers had just been deposited in the Public Archives in Ottawa.<sup>17</sup> In the late 1930s Lower and Creighton began to publish journal articles, building up their academic credentials, and laying the foundation for their later works.<sup>18</sup>

While the early publications of Arthur Lower and Donald Creighton generally fit within the category of economic history popularized by figures such as Harold Innis and Shortt, the works of both Lower and Creighton contained definite challenges to the scientific interpretations of the 1930s. Lower's first monograph, a joint publication with Harold Innis, examined the effect of trade on settlement and the forest in British North America, while his second monograph traced the depletion of the Canadian pine forests by the demand for wood generated by the rapid growth of American cities.<sup>19</sup> Published in 1936 and 1938 respectively, most of the works' reviews were descriptive in nature, rather than analytical or critical, although a few notes of praise demonstrated that

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 208-210.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>18</sup> Creighton addressed mainly the economic backgrounds of political change, while Lower took an active interest in the place of Canada in world affairs as well as the individuals who contributed to the development of the Canadian nation. Donald Creighton, "The Economic Background of the Rebellions of Eighteen Thirty Seven," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 3(3) (August 1937): 322-334; Donald Creighton, "The Victorians and the Empire," *Canadian Historical Review* 19 (June 1938): 138-53; Arthur Lower, "Canada and the New World Order," *Canadian Forum* 29(219): 44-46; Arthur Lower, "A Half-Forgotten Builder of Canada," *Queen's Quarterly* 46 (Summer 1939): 191-197; Arthur Lower, "Sir John Macdonald in Caricature," *Canadian Historical Association, 1939-1940*: 56-62.

<sup>19</sup> A.R.M. Lower and Harold Innis. *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Canada*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1936. A.R.M. Lower. *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1938. All books reviewed in W. L. Morton, "Arthur Lower and the Timber Trade," review of *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, by Arthur Lower, *Queen's Quarterly* 80 (Winter 1973): 616.

Lower's colleagues regarded him as a competent historian.<sup>20</sup> Lower's preoccupation with the human factors of the timber trade was noticed by Donald Creighton, who praised Lower for his careful research, his clear and detailed writing, and his "natural and unforced reality" which resulted in an appreciation for "the importance of lumbering as a way of life in North America as well as a factor in Canadian-American relations."<sup>21</sup> This careful attention to human detail hints at Lower's dissatisfaction with economic history and represents his preliminary attempts to expand the genre of economic history.<sup>22</sup>

While Lower's first two publications met with quiet approval from the Canadian historical community, Creighton's *Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence*, whose colourful prose clearly deviated from established modes of scientific historical scholarship, was widely reviewed and very well received.<sup>23</sup> Creighton's work traced the role of the St. Lawrence River watershed in the development of British North America, arguing that this historic waterway was a natural east-west corridor that counteracted the north-south trade routes established by trade with the United States. Although not

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<sup>20</sup> For example, Lower was praised for his use of diverse sources as well as his "suggestion of opportunities for further inquiry." See Richard Wood, Review of *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 20 (June 1939): 218-19. See also D. C. H., Review of *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, by Arthur Lower, *Dalhousie Review* 16(3) (October 1936): 399-400. See also R. McQueen, Review of *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 18 (March 1937): 74-76, and Griffith Taylor, Review of *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 2(4) (November 1936): 577-583.

<sup>21</sup> Donald Creighton, Review of *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 5(2) (May 1939): 245.

<sup>22</sup> Lower expressed this dissatisfaction clearly in a 1933 letter to Harold Innis, stating that "economic investigations really take me away from what should be my more proper concerns, and indeed from subjects in which I have a more instinctive interest." Quoted in Berger, *Writing*, 117.

<sup>23</sup> Donald Creighton. *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence*. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937). On the occasion of its reprint, twenty years after its first publication, *Commercial Empire* was hailed as "[p]erhaps the only book on Canada which can be described as 'seminal'." The final paragraph of the review read, "Its concepts have influenced all who have thought seriously on Canadian affairs since 1937 (whether or not they have read it). Mr. Creighton's argument may seem obvious now; if so it is only because he convinced us so completely in the first place that it seemed as if we had always known these truths. Obvious or not, this is a first rate piece of literature, a delight to read, and still the author's finest piece of writing." Unsigned review of *The Empire of the St. Lawrence*, by Donald Creighton, *Tamarack Review* 4 (Summer 1957): 93.

without criticism,<sup>24</sup> including Lower's regret that Creighton overlooked the influence of racial and cultural distinctions that divided English merchants and French agriculturalists,<sup>25</sup> historians lauded Creighton for breaking the traditional mould of "uninteresting" Canadian histories.<sup>26</sup> C. P. Stacey remarked that "[t]his sort of thing is uncommon among historians of any type to-day; in an economic historian it is little short of marvellous. One can only hope that this book will have as many readers as it deserves."<sup>27</sup> Walter Sage, head of the department of history at the University of British Columbia, attributed *Commercial Empire*'s excellence to "the originality of its conception and its treatment,"<sup>28</sup> while Creighton's familiarity with a wide range of sources was praised for drawing on "other social sciences" such as geography, sociology, and economics to inform his "interpretation of political change."<sup>29</sup> Creighton's engaging style was a significant departure from the "stodgy" style formerly used in the writing of

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<sup>24</sup> Reviewing the work of a man sixteen years his junior, D. C. Harvey criticized Creighton's dramatic writing style, his geographic determinism, and his personification of the St. Lawrence River. Nevertheless, Harvey stated that Creighton had done an excellent job when addressing human subjects and that *Commercial Empire* should be regarded as the template for those who are trying to integrate different types of history, such as political, ecclesiastical, and regional. See D. C. Harvey, Review of *Empire of the St. Lawrence*, by Donald Creighton, *Dalhousie Review* 18 (April 1938): 120-121. Furthermore, both Herbert Heaton and C. P. Stacey wished to hear more about the farmers, rather than the merchant class highlighted by Creighton; see Herbert Heaton, Review of *Empire of the St. Lawrence*, by Donald Creighton, *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 4(4) (November 1938): 570 and C. P. Stacey, "Commerce and Politics in Old Canada," Review of *Empire of the St. Lawrence*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Forum* 18(208): 57-58. Reviewers also expressed doubt that the disintegration of power for the mercantile class constituted a 'Final Collapse', and speculated that the remnants of the 'Empire of the St. Lawrence' evolved into the Dominion of Canada rather than disappearing; see Unsigned review of *Empire of the St. Lawrence*, by Donald Creighton, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 7 (April 1938): 380. Also A. R. M. Lower, Review of *Empire of the St. Lawrence*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 19 (June 1939): 207-210.

<sup>25</sup> Lower, "Review of *Empire*, 209. Creighton's tendency to overlook the tension between Canadians of English and French descent would continue to draw criticism throughout his academic career. In fact, while Creighton downplayed this tension, Lower would spend much of his career attempting to improve relations between French and English Canadians.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 207-208.

<sup>27</sup> Stacey, "Commerce," 58.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Sage, Review of *Empire of the St. Lawrence*, by Donald Creighton, *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 3 (April 1939): 135-143. In addition Herbert Heaton commended Creighton for writing a history that addressed issues of economics and class without falling into a strictly Marxist interpretation of history (see Heaton, "Review of *Empire*," 565-566).

<sup>29</sup> Unsigned review of *Empire*, 379.

Canadian history and paved the way for other historians, including Arthur Lower, to use literary devices and rhetorical flourishes to engage the reading public. Although Creighton's new literary approach to the writing of economic history established a precedent for historians to write histories accessible to the general public and was clearly a welcome change from the style commonly practiced by his peers, *Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* remained comparable to other histories written in the 1930s in that it dealt with pre-Confederation Canada and was primarily economic in focus.

Lower and Creighton's early works were an integral part of the expansion of Canadian historiography. Well aware of the deficiencies of their discipline, Canadian historians had expressed dissatisfaction with the limitations of constitutional history since the late 1920s. George Wrong's Presidential Address to the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in 1927 encouraged his professional cohort to address the vast changes happening within society, such as the advent of the automobile and the radio as well as a loss of reverence "for rank and authority."<sup>30</sup> Far from a lament, Wrong's tone was one of excitement at the challenge of such a momentous task and was full of hope for the future of the writing of Canada's past. D. C. Harvey addressed the Association three years later, calling for the expansion of Canadian history beyond the topics of politics and the development of specific regions within Canada (such as southern Ontario) and into the realm of the economic, the social, and the international.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Harvey, who had himself written a history of the French Regime in Prince

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<sup>30</sup> George Wrong, "The Historian's Problem," *Canadian Historical Association* (27-28 May 1927): 6.

<sup>31</sup> D. C. Harvey, "Canadian Historians and Present Tendencies on Historical Writing," *Canadian Historical Association* (23 May 1930): 22.

Edward Island,<sup>32</sup> attempted to persuade Canadian historians to write provincial histories as well as national histories of Canada that are not “limited by sectional outlook of an intimate knowledge of parts of Canada only.”<sup>33</sup>

These calls for change appear to have had an effect. By 1944, George Brown and Donald Creighton, then editors of the *Canadian Historical Review*, were pleased to announce that Canadian historians were branching out from political and constitutional history to engage with such topics as economics, education, ecclesiology, and art.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the results of a survey conducted by Brown and Creighton demonstrated that many Canadian intellectuals favoured the expansion of Canadian history into areas of biography, local history, social history, military history, and the role of Canada in world history.<sup>35</sup> Like Wrong seventeen years earlier, Brown and Creighton concluded their article “with a certain sense of exhilaration...conscious that much has been done, still more conscious that far more remains to be accomplished.”<sup>36</sup> At the end of the Second World War, historians of Canada were looking to the potential of their craft and excited about its prospects.

### **The Emergence of National History**

The origins of professional national history in English Canada lay in the intellectual ferment that accompanied the Second World War. By 1939, the discipline of history was well established within the Canadian university system, claimed a well-

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<sup>32</sup> Daniel Cobb Harvey, *The French Regime in Prince Edward Island*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926).

<sup>33</sup> Harvey, “Canadian Historians,” 24.

<sup>34</sup> Donald Creighton and George Brown, “Canadian History in Retrospect and Prospect,” *Canadian Historical Review* 25 (December 1944): 360.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 363-367.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

respected journal – the *Canadian Historical Review* – for its own, and boasted many active members within its community. Yet after the outbreak of the Second World War, some historians began to wonder whether the emphasis on research that dominated the 1930s had moved the discipline too far out of the reach of the general public. A series of discussions at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association demonstrates that during the war years Canadian historians began seriously to reflect on their purpose as historians, concluding that they had neglected to articulate the “enduring values that western civilization has created.”<sup>37</sup> Historians chided their cohort for not being more vocal in examining the causes of the growing conflict in Europe and called for a deeper consideration of philosophy within the discipline of history, thus enabling historians to make a moral judgment on the past as well as describe how the past came about.<sup>38</sup> In addition, World War II brought about a particular set of challenges to historians and their counterparts in the humanities and social sciences as universities attempted to close the Arts faculties on the grounds that they were not “useful” to the war effort.<sup>39</sup> Coupled with the significant introspection within the profession, this external attack provided the impetus for the strengthening of a close-knit historical community to renew their efforts in reconnecting with the Canadian public.<sup>40</sup> Faced with the challenges of fascism and Nazism, Canadian historians felt compelled to reinterpret the history of their nation,

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<sup>37</sup> Arthur Lower, “Social Scientists in the Postwar World,” *Canadian Historical Review* 22(1) (March 1941): 1-13. While this article by Arthur Lower was instrumental in initiating these discussions, both Donald Creighton and W. L. Morton engaged with this topic and made contributions to the discussion. For a detailed discussion of these discussions, see Wright, *Professionalization*, 148-159.

<sup>38</sup> Many historians explicitly stated that Christianity was the foundation of these moral judgments, and that the attacks of Nazism and Fascism were attacks on the Christian way of life. General comments from a variety of Canadian historians on the issue of engagement with the public can be found in Wright, *Professionalization*, 153-159.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-165.

<sup>40</sup> By 1944 the Canadian historical profession was a close, male-dominated academic community in which “everyone knows everyone else.” Creighton and Brown, “Retrospect and Prospect,” 370.

illustrating the moral imperative of democracy in order to educate the Canadian public.

Key to the success of this civic venture was the communication of these new interpretations to the general public.

Canadian historians' enthusiasm to communicate with the general public did not lessen with the cessation of hostilities in Europe and Asia; rather, Canadian historians felt an increased responsibility to give historical context to the unique circumstances facing Canada in the postwar years. Many historians identify the end of the Second World War as a watershed moment in Canadian national life in which Canada began to cast off her identity as a colony of the British nation and act as an independent nation.<sup>41</sup> The war had changed the international balance of power irrevocably, weakening Great Britain and placing the United States in a position of dominance. No longer able to depend upon the guidance and support of Great Britain, and finding themselves neighbours to a powerful nuclear nation, historians believed that Canadians needed to reorient themselves in the postwar world. Creighton made an early attempt at this with an article, "Canada in the English-Speaking World," read before the American Historical Association in December 1944. He described Canada's unique, yet unwieldy, position as a medium power, sometimes charged with mediating between the United States and Great Britain while never quite achieving "a sense of sufficiency in herself."<sup>42</sup> In the years immediately following the end of World War II, Canadian historians took it upon themselves to endow Canadians with a sense of their history.

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<sup>41</sup> For further reading on the role of Canada in World War II, see J. L. Granatstein's *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975). Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English. *Canada: 1900-1945*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). See also Desmond Morton. *1945: When Canada Won the War*. Booklet No. 54 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1995).

<sup>42</sup> This address was subsequently published in the June 1945 edition of the *Canadian Historical Review*. Donald Creighton, "Canada in the English Speaking World," *Canadian Historical Review* 26 (June 1945): 126.



## **Chapter Two: Writing for the Public**

In the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, the international balance of power shifted from Great Britain to the United States. Crippled by wartime losses, Great Britain could not fill the role of a strong economic partner and cultural leader for the Commonwealth nations. Cut adrift from their traditional allegiances and enjoying their newfound status as an important 'middle power', Canadians found themselves neighbours to one of the dominant superpowers of the postwar world. During the war years, Canadian historians had begun to re-evaluate their relationship with Canadians whose lives remained outside of the academy, realizing the importance of bringing their knowledge to bear upon Canadian public life. Canadian historians strongly emphasized the ability to communicate to the public as they sought to influence Canadians' understanding of their nation and to form an image of Canada as a nation with a small, but important, role to play on the continental and international stage. New interpretations of Canadian history emerged that sought to understand Canada as a nation, rather than as an economic or constitutional offshoot of Great Britain or the United States. Whether through general survey, biography, or detailed examination of a particular region, the work of Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton and William Morton exemplified the different ways in which Canadian historians expanded Canadian historiography while simultaneously communicating those findings to the Canadian public in an enjoyable, accessible manner.

## Canada-Centred History

The publication of Lower's *Colony to Nation* following the end of World War II signalled a definite change in Canadian historiography and the refinement of a method of historical interpretation that focused on Canada as a nation, rather than as a colony or a neighbour of a greater nation. Turning away from his studies in economic history, Arthur Lower's 1946 one-volume history of Canada was received with accolades by the English-Canadian historical community.<sup>1</sup> Written for the express purpose of giving Canadians "some of that self-knowledge so necessary if they are to take their rightful place in the world, and still more, if they are to be a happy people, at peace with themselves,"<sup>2</sup> Lower was given the "chief laurels" for his work which shone amidst the flood of books published after the end of the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> In fact, *Colony to Nation* received the Governor General's Award for academic non-fiction in 1947.<sup>4</sup> Lower himself regarded his work as the high point of his career, later writing that "*Colony to Nation* has descended into strata of Canadian life that I never imagined would be penetrated by formal historical writing" and that none of his other books were ever to attain.<sup>5</sup>

Not content with the limited scientific approach to history popular with economic historians in the 1930s and frustrated with his inability to contribute fully to the war effort because of his age, Arthur Lower transferred his energies to writing and began to

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<sup>1</sup> Along with Donald Creighton's *Dominion of the North* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1944), first published in 1944, *Colony to Nation* (Toronto: Longmans, Green & Company, 1946) was one of the first single-volume histories of Canada written. The product of over seven years of research and coordination, *Canada and Its Provinces* (23 Volumes, Toronto: Glasgow, Brook and Co., 1913-1917), edited by Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, was the first academic multi-volume history of Canada that brought together the work of ninety historians into twenty-three volumes. The final volume was published in 1917. See Wright, *Professionalization*, 42-43.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Lower, *Colony to Nation*. Fifth Edition (Toronto: McClelland And Stewart, 1977), x.

<sup>3</sup> Brady, Review of *Colony*, 308.

<sup>4</sup> W.L. Morton, Review of *Colony to Nation*, by Arthur Lower, *The Beaver* 278 (June 1947), 48.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Lower, *My First Seventy-Five Years* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), 296.

allow his scholarship to be influenced by nationalist sentiments.<sup>6</sup> The palpable nationalism of Lower's *Colony to Nation* resulted from years of studying and thinking about the nature of the Canadian nation and its history, as well as from the changes wrought upon Canada and its international position by the events of the Second World War. In his autobiography, Lower gave a detailed description of the genesis of his nationalistic approach:

*Colony to Nation* came with particular ease to me, for not only was it the distillation of my teaching but also, under the emotional surge of war, it represented the pitch of my concern for my country, calling out such imaginative and literary powers as I possessed. Canadian history had been rather stodgy, simply because those who wrote it had not been completely and unreservedly Canadians. I did not want to write the history of Canada at all unless I could make my subject appeal to others with something of the same intensity as that with which it appealed to me.

As a result when I finished I was on the heights; I had had a genuine emotional experience and had known the act of creation.<sup>7</sup>

*Colony to Nation* addressed many issues central to Lower's conception of Canada, including the development of the frontier, the tension between the demands of the metropolis and the requirements of the wilderness areas, as well as differences between French Canada and English Canada.<sup>8</sup> While acknowledging the difficulties of writing a history of a nation with two divergent cultural traditions, Lower nevertheless sought to transcend this deep divide by focusing on the land itself as the "soul of Canada".<sup>9</sup>

The academic community welcomed Lower's nationalism, receiving his nationalistic interpretations as a timely improvement upon previous interpretive structures. Political scientist and University of Toronto professor Alexander Brady

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<sup>6</sup> For a full discussion of this transition, see Berger, *Writing*, 116-118. See also Lower, *Seventy Five Years*, 239-245, for his frustration at his inability to contribute manually to the war effort, as well as his efforts to convince Americans to join the war.

<sup>7</sup> Lower, *Seventy-Five Years*, 265.

<sup>8</sup> For a full discussion of the dominant themes in Lower's writing see Berger, *Writing*, 116-136.

<sup>9</sup> See also Wright, *Professionalization*, 152, ft.21, 22.

remarked that “*Colony to Nation* certainly reflects throughout the spirit of an ardent and eloquent nationalist, more so perhaps than any previous history in Canada.”<sup>10</sup> UBC’s Walter Sage also commented on Lower’s explicit nationalism, stating that the primary consideration of Canadian development in lieu of other continental and imperial influences contained “a certain maturity which was lacking in Canadian historical writing at the beginning of the present century.”<sup>11</sup> University of Toronto historian and political commentator Frank Underhill stated that unlike many economic historians in the first half of the twentieth century, Lower had done an exemplary job of portraying the people of Canada, making “their aspirations and strivings, their loves and hates” significant to the modern reader.<sup>12</sup> Declaring *Colony to Nation* to be the antithesis of dull, an “absorbing and highly irreverent” read, an unaccredited reviewer from *Macleans* stated that what separated Lower’s work from other Canadian histories, “the thing that raises it above its predecessors, is its mature patriotism. Here is a Canadian who knows his country thoroughly, looks at her with realism and detachment and loves her just the same.”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the Canadian public responded favourably to Lower’s enthusiastic nationalism, as attested by the many letters of thanks from Canadian citizens found in Lower’s personal papers.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, proceeds from *Colony to Nation* were such that Lower was able to describe the book in his 1967 autobiography as a “not-unimportant source of income,”<sup>15</sup> thus indicating the popular nature of the work.

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<sup>10</sup> Brady, Review of *Colony*, 308.

<sup>11</sup> Walter Sage, Review of *Colony to Nation*, by Arthur Lower, *BC Northwest Quarterly* 11 (April 1947), 154.

<sup>12</sup> Frank Underhill, “A Canadian Philosopher-Historian,” *Canadian Forum* 27(318) (July 1947), 83-84.

<sup>13</sup> “Canada—An Act of Faith,” *Macleans* 60 (15 March 1947), 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ryan Edwardson, “Narrating a Canadian Identity: Arthur R.M. Lower’s *Colony to Nation* and the Nationalization of History,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 26 (Fall 2002), 60.

<sup>15</sup> Lower, *Seventy-Five Years*, 294.

On the whole, Lower's evident bias towards his country was praised by reviewers as an insight into the mind of a unique thinker examining a most important subject; furthermore, this bias was seen as an essential part of the education of the Canadian public.<sup>16</sup> Lower's strong statements functioned as a conveyor of opinion, clearly supported by solid research, and rather than objecting to such a technique, reviewers saw it as a way to understand a specific point of view, evaluate the judgments made, and subsequently agree or disagree with them as the reader so chose.<sup>17</sup> And readers, such as military historian C. P. Stacey who commented that Lower was generally more ready to instruct than inform, did take issue with Lower's interpretations.<sup>18</sup> Stacey, in fact, stated that "so opinionated a volume" should not be given to an immature reader and suggested that the ideal reader of *Colony to Nation* studied the volume alongside other interpretations of Canadian history.<sup>19</sup> This engagement of the reader was very important for Lower's nationalistic aims. D.C. Harvey, who held the position of provincial archivist of Nova Scotia from 1931 to 1956,<sup>20</sup> pointed out that this synthesis and presentation of history "[forced] the reader to take sides on our earlier struggles and to feel a personal responsibility for moulding the future in light of what his ancestors did or left undone in the past."<sup>21</sup> According to Harvey, engendering feelings of "personal responsibility" motivated the reader to continue to learn about and engage with the history of their country. While his colleagues did not all agree with Lower's

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<sup>16</sup> Brady, Review of *Colony*, 308.

<sup>17</sup> D.C. Harvey, Review of *Colony to Nation*, by Arthur Lower, *Dalhousie Review* 27(1) (April 1947), 123.

<sup>18</sup> Stacey, Review of *Colony*, 194.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Landry, "Books on Nova Scotia," Blupete's Library, <http://www.blupete.com/Library/History/NovaScotia/H.htm>. (accessed February 11, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> Harvey, Review of *Colony*, 124.

interpretation of history, his unconventional style was recognized as beneficial by the Canadian historical community and remained a hallmark of Lower's scholarship.

But nowhere is Lower's postwar zeal to communicate with the public more explicitly shown than in his articles published in popular journals and magazines. Lower and his colleagues all recognized the importance of publishing academic journal articles as a complement to a résumé of monographs.<sup>22</sup> However, Lower aggressively promoted his views to the Canadian public, publishing at least fifteen articles in popular journals.<sup>23</sup> Lower's contributions to popular journals accounted for about half of his journal articles published between 1939 and 1957, and were devoted primarily to informing Canadians about their place in the new postwar world. He covered topics ranging from a proposal for ten new provinces, what Canada would lose by being annexed by the United States, the origins of civil liberties, and the state of education in Canada.<sup>24</sup> But the real significance of these popular articles was Lower's attempt, as a historian, to educate Canada's reading public and to make a concerted effort to influence Canadians' collective understanding of themselves in the postwar world. Lower's participation in monthly popular journals would be imitated a decade later as Canadian historians looked

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<sup>22</sup> Lower, Creighton and Morton each successfully submitted a number of articles to academic journals in the period up to 1957. Unlike Lower, Creighton and Morton published almost exclusively in academic journals. None of Morton's articles appeared in popular journals, only one of Creighton's articles appeared in a popular journal (and that was in a historical journal, the *Beaver*), and fifteen out of Lower's thirty two articles appeared in popular journals. (Numbers compiled as a result of searching the Canadian Periodical Index).

<sup>23</sup> Broadly defined, scholarly journals refer to quarterly publications that originate at a university and are intended for an academic audience. For example, the *Dalhousie Review* or *Queen's Quarterly*. Popular journals include publications that occur on either a monthly or a weekly basis and are intended for a wider general audience. Popular journals include *Macleans*, *Canadian Forum*, and *The Beaver*.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Lower, "What this Country Needs is 10 New Provinces," *Macleans* 61 (15 October 1948), 7 and 77-79; Arthur Lower, "If We Joined the U.S.A.," *Macleans* 61 (15 June 1948), 7-8 and 71; Arthur Lower, "Whence Cometh our Freedom?" *Food for Thought* 11(4) (January 1951), 5-12; Arthur Lower, "Uses and abuses of our universities," *Saturday Night* 68 (25 April 1953), 7-8.

towards Canada's centennial year, and even more in the social and political upheaval of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Not as explicitly engaged with contemporary events as Arthur Lower during the 1930s and early years of World War II, Donald Creighton's particular sense of nationalism developed during the writing of his most valued contribution to Canadian historiography and Canadian national history, the Macdonald biography.<sup>25</sup> Unlike many of his colleagues, Creighton did not participate in political discussions during the 1930s;<sup>26</sup> however, his work on the life of Canada's first prime minister, as well as external challenges to Canada's sovereignty by its involvement in the Cold War as a middle power, provided the impetus for Creighton to use his scholarship as a commentary on contemporary times. Handpicked by the Rockefeller Foundation on the recommendation of Frank Underhill to write a history of Canada that would communicate

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<sup>25</sup> Donald Creighton, Creighton's second monograph, *Dominion of the North*, appears to be somewhat of a transitory piece between his economic and national histories. Commissioned by the American publishing firm Houghton Mifflin (Unsigned Review of *Dominion of the North* by Donald Creighton. "New Canadian History," *Saturday Night* 59 (6 May 1944), 31) and published in 1944, *Dominion of the North* traced the development of Canada, specifically highlighting the dominance of the St. Lawrence system. *Dominion of the North* was hailed as a "history of Canada by a Canadian for Canadians, Americans and Englishmen to read and ponder well," (Albert Colby, Review of *Dominion of the North*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 25, (December 1944), 434). Reviewer D. C. Masters described this 'general interpretive history' as a "brilliantly and admirably balanced volume" in which 'the purple' has been toned down and replaced by "an urbane, yet vigorous style which gains impressiveness because of its greater moderation," (D.C. Masters, "Books of the Month," Review of *Dominion of the North*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Forum* 24 (June 1944), 65). Perhaps because of its wartime publication, *Dominion of the North* did not appear to receive as much attention as Lower's *Colony to Nation*, published two years after *Dominion* and one year after the cessation of hostilities. Similarly, secondary sources such as Berger's *Writing of Canadian History* and Wright's *Professionalization of History in English Canada* generally skim over *Dominion of the North* and focus on the Macdonald biography. Another contemporary clue to the comparative lack of attention by reviewers may be that the first edition of *Dominion* ended at the declaration of war in 1939, whereas *Colony to Nation* briefly described the efforts of Canadians during the Second World War, thereby ending the narrative with Canada's success in the war. Yet, as with *Commercial Empire*, *Dominion of the North* retained its reputation for over a decade after its first publication. In 1957, the *Saturday Night* reviewer commented "[t]he book remains what it was before—the best single-volume history of Canada obtainable anywhere," ("Canada's Story," Unsigned review of *Dominion of the North*, by Donald Creighton, *Saturday Night* 72 (9 November 1957), 41).

<sup>26</sup> Berger, *Writing*, 215, 225.

the importance of democracy to the general public,<sup>27</sup> Donald Creighton considered the life of Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, to be an appropriate and timely subject. Having fallen out of favour during the economic-focused history of the 1930s, Creighton's return to biography, the study of the individual within a particular period of history, attempted to reorient the study of history towards "living men and women" and away from "inanimate forces and human automatons" and was an implicit challenge to the collective ideology of Communism.<sup>28</sup> The reconstructing of the life of a single individual as a key factor within the history of a nation by extension reinforced the importance of the individual within society. During his writing of the biography, Creighton came to the conclusion that, faced with both the threat of Communism and the increasing dominance of the United States, Macdonald's life could be used as a 'tract for the times' that could give guidance in foreign policy decisions with the goal of protecting Canada from the "dangers of continentalism."<sup>29</sup> Creighton's nationalism became heavily influenced by his study of Macdonald, as he developed an intense antipathy for continentalist approaches to both political life and Canadian history.<sup>30</sup> Creighton's focus on counteracting the forces of continentalism would put him into direct conflict with

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<sup>27</sup> Wright, *Professionalization*, 165-170.

<sup>28</sup> Donald Creighton, *Founders' Day Address, University of New Brunswick, Feb 19, 1945*, (n.p, n.d), 16. Quoted in Berger, *Writing*, 220. On the resurgence of biography Carl Berger writes, "Fascism and then Communism were threats to the democratic belief in the importance of the individual, and these challenges may have contributed to a renewed concern with the single person in history. Perhaps the intensification of cultural nationalism in the late forties and early fifties may also have affected biography, for it was the perfect instrument for recapturing those traditions and values that the Massey Commission said were as necessary for the defence of the west as armaments." (Berger, *Writing*, 220).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>30</sup> Since the publication of *Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence* reviewers had criticized Creighton as neglectful of exploring the life of French Canada with the same thoroughness and depth that he devoted to English Canada. While these critiques did not initially hinder reviewers from praising his work, Creighton's portrayal of French Canada would progressively become a substantial stumbling block to wholehearted admiration of his work within the academy. See George Ferguson, Review of *John A. Macdonald, the Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *The Beaver* 286 (Winter 1955-56), 56-7.



Arthur Lower, who perceived the separation of Canada from Great Britain as the primary rallying point of Canadian history.<sup>31</sup>

The overwhelmingly positive reception of the Macdonald biography demonstrates a definitive turn away from impersonal economic history by the Canadian historical community. The appearance of Creighton's two-volume biography of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was hailed by reviewers as "another milestone in the writing of Canada's history."<sup>32</sup> Like *Colony to Nation*, *The Young Politician* and *The Old Chieftain* both won the Governor General's Literary Award for Nonfiction.<sup>33</sup> Published in 1952 and 1955, the biography not only inspired the London *Spectator* to identify Creighton as "one of the half-dozen best historians now writing in the English-speaking world,"<sup>34</sup> it solidified Creighton as a pre-eminent Canadian historian with an audience that extended beyond the academy out into the general public. Indeed, the Macdonald biography inspired such a degree of nationalism that Creighton was hailed as a "great Canadian humanist"<sup>35</sup> for his efforts in portraying the life of Canada's first Prime Minister. Furthermore, the Creighton biography inspired a number of Canadian historians to write similar biographies of other important individuals (predominantly

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<sup>31</sup> During the early 1950s Donald Creighton began to raise objections to what he referred to as the "Liberal version" of history. Creighton wrote the Macdonald biography, in part, to counteract that history, thereby identifying himself with a distinctly conservative interpretation of Canadian history. See Berger, *Writing*, 226-228.

<sup>32</sup> J. S. Moir, Review of *John A. Macdonald, the Young Politician*, by Donald Creighton, *Ontario Historical Society* 44(4) (October 1952), 200.

<sup>33</sup> "Cumulative List of Winners Of the Governor General's Literary Awards," Canada Council, [http://www.canadacouncil.ca/NR/rdonlyres/63776A91-212D-430B-ADF4-93DD5B11FB0A/0/GGLA\\_Winners\\_Cumulative.pdf](http://www.canadacouncil.ca/NR/rdonlyres/63776A91-212D-430B-ADF4-93DD5B11FB0A/0/GGLA_Winners_Cumulative.pdf) (accessed January 24, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Unsigned review of *John A Macdonald, the Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Business* 29 (January 1956): 48, 50.

<sup>35</sup> Lewis H. Thomas, Review of *Macdonald, the Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *Saskatchewan History* 9 (Autumn 1956), 117.

male), including J. M. S. Careless' study of George Brown,<sup>36</sup> several biographies of Mackenzie King, and the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, formally launched in 1966.<sup>37</sup> By the mid-1950s, Canadian historians had embraced national history via examination of the individual.

Reviews demonstrate that Creighton wrote at a time of resurgence of national pride; his portrait of Canada's first Prime Minister touched a chord with the Canadian public. This tendency in Creighton's writing was specifically noted by J. H. Aitchison, political scientist at Dalhousie University: "Two features of his biography of Macdonald suggest to the reviewer that his success is in part due to something more [than Creighton's skill as a writer]—to a slow ripening of Canadian nationalism to a point where it was ready for such a work, to the dim awareness of a want that was fully recognized only when Professor Creighton filled it."<sup>38</sup> Aitchison also pointed to the feeling of nationalism that was (or depending on the reader, may have been) evoked by Creighton's description of the first Dominion Day as well as Creighton's portrayal of Macdonald as a nation builder, to which he remarks, "[i]t is perhaps natural but it may also be significant that the reading public's prevailing interest coincides" with

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<sup>36</sup> A graduate of the University of Toronto and Harvard, J.M.S. Careless began teaching at the University of Toronto as a lecturer in 1945. His 1963 biography of George Brown, *Brown of the Globe* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963) garnered the Governor General's Award for Non Fiction in the same year. Margaret E. McCallum, "Careless, James Maurice Stockford," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001398>) (accessed February 11, 2007.)

<sup>37</sup> For a more complete list of biographies, see Berger, *Writing*, 221. See also John English, "National Politics and Government" in *Canadian History, A Reader's Guide: Confederation to the Present*, ed. Doug Owram (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 3-50.

<sup>38</sup> This impression of rising national interest coinciding with interest in Macdonald is further reinforced when a reviewer from the *Canadian Tax Journal* likens the story of the CPR to the 1956 Pipeline Debates, commenting that "one could say in this book that Creighton has given us a priceless gift, a mirror for our times," (J. H. P, Review of *Macdonald, The Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Tax Journal* 4 (May/June 1956), 208). J. H. Aitchison, "Sir John A. Macdonald: Nation Builder," Review of *Macdonald, The Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 22(4) (November 1956), 550.

Creighton's interest in Macdonald as a nation builder.<sup>39</sup> Aitchison ended by stating that "[t]o have stimulated a continuing interest in Macdonald and perhaps a greater interest in Canadian political biography is a more fruitful accomplishment than to have written a 'definitive' biography."<sup>40</sup> Aitchison placed a very high value on Creighton's influence with the general public, thus indicating an essential function of national history: to be read by the people within the nation, rather than simply the historian's peers.

In fact, engagement with the reading public was essential to the success and influence of national history. Central to the "continuing interest" in Creighton's Macdonald biography was the accessibility of his literary approach. The ease of Creighton's prose was praised in both popular and scholarly reviews and reinforced the widespread popularity of Creighton as a writer of history for all Canadians. The reviewer for the journal *Canadian Business* remarked that the facts of the young politician's life were "knitted together with such surpassing literary skill that the book reads as smoothly as a first class novel, and with the excitement of a 'who-dun-it'."<sup>41</sup> This made Creighton not only accessible to the general public, but enjoyable as well. E. A. Corbett, first director for the Canadian Association for Adult Education and foundational figure in the development of Canadian adult education,<sup>42</sup> roundly praised Creighton for his efforts in light of his contribution to the promulgation of Canadian history:

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<sup>39</sup> Aitchison, "Sir John A. Macdonald," 550.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 553.

<sup>41</sup> "Colourful Politics," *Canadian Business* 26 (May 1953), 68.

<sup>42</sup> Given Corbett's commitment to adult education, as well as the fact that when he organized more than 350 traveling libraries while Director of the Khaki University, his praise can be taken as a strong indication that Creighton's Macdonald biography was well received by adult educators, if not by a wide segment of the Canadian population. Biographical information on Corbett taken from the University of Alberta's Alumni Association Paper, Summer 1991 edition, available online at University of Alberta, <http://www.ualberta.ca/ALUMNI/history/people/a-g/91sumcorbett.htm> (accessed February 11, 2007). See also James A. Draper, "Corbett, Edward Annand," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*,

If professors of history must write books and of course they must, most of them should read this one and try again. Here you have the rarest thing in academic writing, profound scholarship coupled with superb journalism. This makes it not only possible but altogether likely that any man who can read without moving his lips will follow this story far into the night and be loath to turn out the light. Professor Creighton is one of a very small company of historical writers in the English-speaking world today who can keep the chalk and blackboard out of his writings and allow the romance which is in all human history to speak its own language.<sup>43</sup>

This is high praise from Corbett who, as an adult educator, was particularly interested in the notion of accessible history. Furthermore, the description given by Corbett indicates that Creighton's work could be read by anyone who had even an elementary reading level.

Creighton's academic cohort, reviewing the Macdonald biography in scholarly journals, also identified communication with the public as an essential element of historical writing in postwar Canada. W. L. Morton commended Creighton for his mastery of the art of biography, where "[i]ts best effects are achieved by indirection, by implication rather than by explicit statement."<sup>44</sup> C. P. Stacey remarked that "[i]f more Canadian historians wrote like this, it is possible that more Canadian citizens might take to reading the history of their country."<sup>45</sup> Stacey carried on his praise three year later in his review of *The Old Chieftain*, stating that Creighton "has made the Canadian public more aware of Canadian history. He has enriched our historical literature with a splendidly distinguished book, which will instruct the specialist and delight the common

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<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001917> (accessed June 21, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> E. A. Corbett, Review of *John A. Macdonald, the Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *Food for Thought* 16(5) (February 1956), 230.

<sup>44</sup> W. L. Morton, Review of *John A. Macdonald, the Young Politician*, by Donald Creighton, *International Journal* 8 (1952-1953), 124-126.

<sup>45</sup> C. P. Stacey, Review of *Macdonald, the Young Politician*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 34 (March 1953), 54.

reader for many years to come.”<sup>46</sup> The emphasis on the importance of this book to the ‘common reader’ indicates the importance within the Canadian historical profession placed on communicating the nation’s past to the average Canadian citizen.

### **A Western View of the Nation**

While well-established Canadian historians such as Creighton and Lower were seamlessly able to return to teaching and publishing during the postwar years, a new cohort of Canadian historians began to make their mark within the Canadian historical profession following the war, bringing new perspectives to an already burgeoning field. Among these was William Lewis Morton, a third generation Manitoban who, after completing degrees at the University of Manitoba and Oxford University, courtesy of a Rhodes Scholarship, gained a full-time position at the University of Manitoba in 1942, where he remained for almost twenty-five years.<sup>47</sup> Six years younger than Donald Creighton and almost twenty years the junior of Arthur Lower, W. L. Morton’s first monograph did not appear until he was forty-two. Like the western Canadian historian A. S. Morton (no relation), William Morton possessed a deep sense of “western separateness” that was a product of his love for his home province and his awareness of the importance of imperial and international events.<sup>48</sup> As early as 1946, Morton actively promoted a broad understanding of Canadian nationality that looked beyond central Ontario and acknowledged the importance of the West and of French Canada, as well as their diverse historical experiences. His 1946 article “Clio in Canada” was an explicit,

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<sup>46</sup> C. P. Stacey, Review of *John A MacDonald, The Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 37 (March 1956), 78.

<sup>47</sup> Berger, *Writing*, 238-239.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 240-241.

but respectful, criticism of national history written from the perspective of those around the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes.<sup>49</sup> Morton stated clearly that ‘national’ history from an Ontario-centric perspective (or perhaps more accurately, a Toronto-centric perspective) placed the West in a subservient position to central Canada and did not enable Western Canadians to understand their history “in accord with their own experience.”<sup>50</sup>

Over the next decade, Morton attempted to redress this imbalance by expanding the historiography of the Canadian West and published a series of monographs on specifically western topics: the Progressive Party of Canada, the University of Manitoba, and the province of Manitoba.<sup>51</sup> His first publication, *The Progressive Party in Canada*, won the Governor-General’s Award for Academic Non-Fiction<sup>52</sup> in 1950 and was regarded as a skilful and readable work that went beyond mere description and attempted to understand the political thought that motivated the actions of those in the Progressive Party.<sup>53</sup> *One University: The History of the University of Manitoba* also garnered good reviews, with reviewers specifically noting the fairness and impartiality of Morton’s analysis.<sup>54</sup> Although composed more of summary than critical evaluation, the reviews of Morton’s first two titles demonstrated that early in his career his work was well-respected

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<sup>49</sup> W. L. Morton, “Clio in Canada: The Interpretation of Canadian History,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 15 (April 1946), 227-234.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 232. In 1955 Morton again returned to this theme, arguing that the tradition of western grievance in Canada is an outcome of historical forces and circumstances, reiterating that a nation is comprised of sub-societies and the relationship between these sub-societies must be explored in order to understand the nature of the nation; see W. L. Morton, “The Bias of Prairie Politics,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 49 (Series 3) (June 1955), 58, 66.

<sup>51</sup> W.L. Morton. *The Progressive Party in Canada*. Toronto: UTP, 1950. W.L. Morton. *One University: The History of the University of Manitoba*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1957. W.L. Morton. *Manitoba: A History*. Toronto: UTP, 1957.

<sup>52</sup> Unsigned review of *Manitoba: A History*, by W.L. Morton, *Monetary Times*, 126 (February 1958), 76.

<sup>53</sup> K. W. McNaught, Review of *Progressive Party in Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Forum* 30 (August 1950), 115.

<sup>54</sup> William Cartwright remarked of *One University*, “The author shows acumen and courage unusual among historians of colleges and universities. Praise is given where it seems due, but neither persons nor parties are immune to penetrating criticism,” (Review of *One University*, by W.L. Morton, *Saskatchewan History* 10 (Autumn 1957), 117-118).

in the historical community.<sup>55</sup> But it was Morton's third monograph, *Manitoba: A History*, which told the story of the "keystone province" with such proficient scholarship and accessible style, that sealed Morton's reputation as a leading historian in Canada.<sup>56</sup> While not national history *per se*, *Manitoba* illustrated the fine art of writing non-national history of national importance and was declared to be the antithesis of parochial and antiquarian, fully engaged with both national and international issues and events, and thus a provincial history of national significance.<sup>57</sup> *Manitoba* was a stimulating and engaging provincial history, raising questions "on every page" for both regional and national historians and inspiring the expansion of Canadian history into new, untouched fields.<sup>58</sup>

The many positive responses to Morton, including discussion of the possible areas of further study suggested by his work, demonstrate the eagerness of the Canadian historical profession to engage with new research and delve into new areas of Canadian history. Fully cognizant of the difficulties of clearly relating the history of a province within a national context, reviewers wholeheartedly praised *Manitoba* as a much-needed contribution to Canadian historiography and upheld it as a template for future provincial

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<sup>55</sup> For example, "Professor Morton in *The Progressive Party of Canada* has made a first-rate contribution to the history of Canada," in Alex Cameron, Review of *The Progressive Party of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Saskatchewan History* 3(3) (Autumn 1950), 115-117. This is echoed by Eugene Forsey (Review of *The Progressive Party of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 17(2) (May 1951), 257-259) and Donald Creighton, "The book as a whole is a solid achievement, judicious in tone, and unpretentious in treatment;" see Review of *The Progressive Party in Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Historical Review* 32 (March 1951), 70-72. See also McNaught, Review of *The Progressive Party*, 115-6 and Unsigned review of *The Progressive Party of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 20 (April 1951), 280-281.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, W. J. F., Review of *Manitoba: A History*, by W.L. Morton, *Alberta Historical Review* 6 (Spring 1958), 31.

<sup>57</sup> Lewis H. Thomas, Review of *Manitoba: A History*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Forum* 37 (September 1957), 142-143. See also L. G. Thomas, Review of *Manitoba: A History*, by W.L. Morton, *Saskatchewan History* 11(1) (Winter 1958), 38-39.

<sup>58</sup> John T. Saywell, Review of *Manitoba: A History*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Historical Review* 38 (December 1957), 327.

histories.<sup>59</sup> P. B. Waite, a professor at Dalhousie University, and a former doctoral student of Donald Creighton, called it “certainly the best provincial history published for many years,”<sup>60</sup> while John Saywell, a constitutional historian who was then teaching at the University of Toronto, hailed it as the “coming of age” of provincial history in Canada.<sup>61</sup> In addition to inspiring calls for work in the field of provincial history, Morton’s work illuminated the need for research into other areas of Canadian history. Saywell, impressed with Morton’s portrayal of Winnipeg, called upon Canadian historians to follow Morton’s example and produce urban histories of cities such as Toronto and Montreal.<sup>62</sup> Not only did *Manitoba: A History* enhance the historiography of the Canadian West, the excellence of Morton’s contribution set the standard for many branches of Canadian history and firmly established Morton’s reputation as a leading Canadian historian.

### **Standards of the Profession**

For most members of the Canadian historical community in the postwar years, strong research was the essential foundation that sanctioned the new frameworks of interpretation offered by Creighton, Lower, and Morton. While all three historians were routinely praised for their well-supported arguments,<sup>63</sup> as well as their use of diverse

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<sup>59</sup> See, for example, George Stanley, Review of *Manitoba: A History*, by W.L. Morton, *Beaver* 228 (Spring 1958), 56: “There is no other provincial history of the same stature. And in this work Mr. Morton has established a standard for histories of this kind which will be a challenge to those scholars not too timorous to enter the provincial field.”

<sup>60</sup> P. B. Waite, Review of *Manitoba: A History*, by W.L. Morton, *Dalhousie Review* 37 (4) (Winter 1958), 432.

<sup>61</sup> Saywell, Review of *Manitoba*, 326-327.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 326-327.

<sup>63</sup> See review of Creighton’s *Dominion of the North* (“Canada-Past and Future,” Unsigned review of *Dominion of the North*, by Donald Creighton, *Queen’s Quarterly* 51(2) (Summer 1944), 209-210), and reviews of Morton’s *Progressive Party* (Cameron, Review of *The Progressive Party*, 117). See also



sources of information,<sup>64</sup> Donald Creighton's biography of Sir John A. Macdonald drew special comment regarding the careful detail with which Creighton documented his work. B. K. Sandwell, editor of *Saturday Night* from 1931 until 1951, noted that "Professor Creighton's work, moreover, is documented to the last comma,"<sup>65</sup> while J. S. Moir, a former graduate student of Creighton, commended his mentor for his "scrupulous adherence" to documentary material.<sup>66</sup> Pointing out Creighton's full use of the Public Archives, his review of Canadian newspapers, and his research in the British Public Record Office as well as the Royal Records at Windsor, military historian C. P. Stacey commended Creighton's use of sources in his biography of Macdonald, comparing him favourably against the "slovenly and incomplete research and halting and slipshod composition" that he perceived emanating from the pens of some of his colleagues.<sup>67</sup> Use of existing secondary sources was also favourably noted, as reviewers commended both Lower and Creighton for their familiarity with and use of the work produced by Canadian scholars following World War I.<sup>68</sup> The culmination of over twenty-five years of collective research by the Canadian historical community, coupled with the extensive

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Unsigned review of *The Progressive Party*, 280-281. The reviewer from *Saturday Night* commented that "[P]rofessor Morton has a true historian's mind, and obviously enjoyed every hour of the laborious research involved in the task." See Unsigned review of *The Progressive Party in Canada* by W.L. Morton. "Third-Party History," *Saturday Night* 65(5) (6 June 1950), 5; as well as reviews of Lower's *Colony to Nation* (W.M. Whitelaw, Review of *Colony to Nation*, by Arthur Lower, *International Journal* 2 (Spring 1947), 167). "Not only has Mr. Lower examined a host of printed sources, newspapers, and official publications, but he has explored manuscript material of both an archival and a private nature. (Wood, Review of *The North American Assault*, 218-219.)

<sup>64</sup> Morton's *Manitoba* was particularly noted for the inclusion of economic, social, and cultural developments in the overall narrative and political history. See Stanley, Review of *Manitoba*, 55 as well as Saywell, Review of *Manitoba*, 326-327. Creighton was also commended for integrating a wide variety of historical sources; see Unsigned review of *Empire*, 379.

<sup>65</sup> B.K. Sandwell. "Convincing, Intensely Human," Review of *John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician* by Donald Creighton, *Saturday Night* 68 (29 November 1953), 22.

<sup>66</sup> Moir, Review of *John A. Macdonald*, 200. B. K. Sandwell remarked that "Mr. Creighton does not in this volume greatly change the accepted picture of 'the young politician' but he vastly enriches it, makes it solid, convincing and intensely human." ("Convincing," 22.)

<sup>67</sup> Stacey, Review of *Macdonald*, 54.

<sup>68</sup> Whitelaw, Review of *Colony*, 167. See also Colby, Review of *Dominion*, 432.

research carried out by Lower, Creighton, and Morton, seemed to indicate a ‘coming of age’ as Canadian historians began to synthesize known historical research into coherent interpretations of the development of their nation.<sup>69</sup> Certainly, the nation-focused histories published after the Second World War were highly valued for the breadth and depth of the research they added to Canadian historiography.

Despite the high praise they received for their efforts to present Canadian history in an engaging manner, on occasion the intense literary style of both Creighton and Lower challenged boundaries of scholarship. While Creighton’s work unquestionably met the standards of historical scholarship delineated and monitored by the academic historical community, his peers did not refrain from challenging his rather harsh interpretation of Macdonald’s political rivals. Reviewer B. K. Sandwell commented that “[t]he biographer’s enthusiasm for his subject perhaps at times makes him less than just to Macdonald’s opponents.”<sup>70</sup> Simon Paynter of the *Canadian Forum* concurred with Sandwell and pointed specifically to Creighton’s treatment of George Brown, stating that “this reviewer, at least, cannot feel that Mr. Creighton has given a satisfactory account of Brown’s part on the coalition government .... and it is disappointing to receive so little new light from historical authority.”<sup>71</sup> In the *Canadian Forum*, Queen’s University historian Frederick W. Gibson wrote, “[w]rongheaded, parochial and doctrinaire the

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<sup>69</sup> An explicit statement of this phenomenon comes from C. P. Stacey and was quoted at the beginning of the chapter. Stacey commented that the printing of *Colony to Nation* in Canada, as well as the ‘gratifying degree of notice’ by the Canadian press, indicated that “Canadian historiography has come of age; it means that sufficient specialized investigation has been done to provide a basis for something like genuine synthesis; it means that—thanks to the hard spadework done since 1918—Canadian historians are now in a position to make a significant contribution to Canadian culture in the broadest sense and perhaps to exercise a positive influence upon the thinking of their countrymen at large on current national problems,” in Stacey, Review of *Colony*, 194.

<sup>70</sup> Sandwell, “Convincing,” 22.

<sup>71</sup> Simon Paynter, “Turning New Leaves,” Review of *John A Macdonald: The Young Politician* by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Forum* 384 (January 1953), 234.

Liberals often were, but villains they were not, at least not on the basis of the evidence adduced, and Professor Creighton, in creating the impression that they were, is over-playing a hand already crowded with high cards.”<sup>72</sup> Although his colleagues did not always agree with his interpretation, they nevertheless conceded that, despite Creighton’s vitriolic commentary, “his appraisal [of Brown] has much support in the known facts.”<sup>73</sup> Clearly, what was being critiqued was neither Creighton’s straying from the “known facts” nor his failure to fulfill accepted standards of scholarship, but his interpretation of those facts in light of the broader historical theme of Confederation and of Macdonald’s life and experience.

While Creighton was chastised for his broad characterizations and rather acerbic descriptions of Macdonald’s opponents, the historical community increasingly questioned Arthur Lower’s use of sweeping generalizations. Described by Rhodes scholar and editor of the *Montreal Star* George V. Ferguson as “an attempt not to write a condensed story of Canada but to describe the thinking and outlook of Canadians, how they came by it, and what now may be expected of it,”<sup>74</sup> *Canada: Nation and Neighbour* was adapted from a series of Lower’s essays on foreign policy. Although Lower felt that his examination of the various internal influences on external policy “did not clearly hit the mark,”<sup>75</sup> his overall tone and extensive use of generalizations enhanced his reputation as a ‘provocative’ historian.<sup>76</sup> The reviewer from the *University of Toronto Quarterly*

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<sup>72</sup> Frederick W. Gibson, “The Old Chieftain,” Review of *John A MacDonald, The Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Forum* 35(422) (March 1956), 274.

<sup>73</sup> Alexander Brady, “Letters in Canada: Social Studies,” Review of *John A MacDonald, The Old Chieftain*, by Donald Creighton, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 22 (April 1953), 294.

<sup>74</sup> G. V. Ferguson, Review of *Canada: Nation and Neighbour*, by Arthur Lower, *International Journal* 8 (Winter 1952-1953), 64.

<sup>75</sup> Lower, *Seventy-Five Years*, 358-359.

<sup>76</sup> R.A. Farquharson of *Saturday Night* summarized Lower’s status by saying, “*Colony to Nation* established Arthur R. M. Lower as Canada’s most provocative historian and his reputation will not suffer in

commented that some of Lower's generalizations were likely to provoke Canadians who disagreed with his position, "but this fact detracts little from [the book's] merits. We are confident that it will stir readers to think and often to protest."<sup>77</sup> Similarly, one reviewer concluded that, "No vital book leaves its reader undisturbed or satisfied. He must be a rare reader indeed who can consider what is here offered him without disturbance aplenty."<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, the 'sweeping generalizations' put forth by Lower offered the reader an opportunity to react (evaluate and agree or disagree) to the work and thereby form his or her own opinion, which Ferguson regarded as "a vital part of the educational process."<sup>79</sup> While his peers did not hesitate to question his use of generalizations,<sup>80</sup> they nevertheless continued to maintain that Lower was an important Canadian intellectual figure, thus demonstrating that while Canadian historians disliked deviations from the scholarly norms of their profession, they would occasionally make exceptions on the strength of a historian's reputation coupled with innovative and challenging arguments.<sup>81</sup>

As Lower's use of generalizations continued unabated in his next publication, *This Most Famous Stream*, his peers began to question his methodology more seriously, while retaining admiration for his ability to challenge and stimulate his readers. Lower continued to use sweeping generalizations in his study of the development of modern liberalism to communicate the importance of the history of liberal democracy, especially

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*Canada: Nation and Neighbor.*" ("Lower's Mirror: Another Look," Review of *Colony to Nation*, by Arthur Lower, *Saturday Night* 67 (23 August 1952), 26.)

<sup>77</sup> Unsigned review of *Canada: Nation and Neighbour*, by Arthur Lower, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 22 (April 1953), 298.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>79</sup> Ferguson, Review of *Canada*, 64.

<sup>80</sup> Unsigned review of *Canada*, 297-298. See also Ferguson, Review of *Canada*, 64-65; also Farquharson, "Lower's Mirror," 26.

<sup>81</sup> "When he makes a point it is clear. We might cavil at the evidence he has brought to prove it, *but we are sure that, if need be, the point could be substantiated, if perhaps with some reservations* [italics added]." See K. M. H., Review of *This Most Famous Stream*, by Arthur Lower, *Dalhousie Review* 35 (Spring 1955-Winter 1956), 90.

in contrast to the totalitarian states of the Cold War, to the Canadian public. As a work of history, academic reviewers, like their counterparts in the popular press, expressed an admiration for Lower's ability to think through issues in an engaging manner,<sup>82</sup> yet were somewhat taken aback by his use of broad historical sketches as foundation for his arguments. One reviewer, 'K. M. H', stated that "[i]ndeed, some of his generalizations might be written off as 'slap-dash' if it were not clear that he is deliberately avoiding detailed proving of his case in order to drive home his main point." 'K. M. H' nevertheless expressed confidence that, if pressed, Lower could be called upon to provide detailed examples if necessary.<sup>83</sup> United College historian H. S. Crowe pointed out that, because of his lack of specificity, Lower put forth an ahistorical definition of liberalism as a force which can "virtually transcend history." However, having made his point, Crowe put semantics aside and praised the chapters on the historical background of liberalism as "by far the best part of what this reviewer believes to be by far the most challenging book Professor Lower has produced."<sup>84</sup> Once again, reviewers approached the issue of generalization with a modicum of concern; however, on the whole, Lower's reputation was sufficient to put to rest any doubts that his peers might have of his scholarship, and they certainly remained impressed with his intellect. Yet there were hints of unease with the scholarly liberties taken by Lower in his examination of the historical basis for liberalism.

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<sup>82</sup> "Another 'Famous Stream'," Review of *This Most Famous Stream*, by Arthur Lower, *Financial Post* 48 (23 October 1954), 9; Malcolm Taylor, "Books Reviewed: *This Most Famous Stream*," Review of *This Most Famous Stream*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Forum* 409 (February 1955), 259-260; Arnold Edinborough, "Modern Life as an Act of Faith," Review of *This Most Famous Stream*, by Arthur Lower, *Saturday Night* 70 (6 November 1954), 18-19.

<sup>83</sup> K. M. H. Review of *This Most Famous*, 90.

<sup>84</sup> H. S. Crowe, "The Liberal Tradition," Review of *This Most Famous Stream*, by Arthur Lower, *Queen's Quarterly* 62 (Spring 1955), 118.

While critics appreciated, and sometimes took issue with, the flamboyant and evocative prose of Creighton and Lower, Morton very quickly developed a reputation as a pleasantly descriptive, yet objective historian. Donald Creighton expressed his admiration of Morton's restrained style in *The Progressive Party*, saying that "Mr. Morton shows himself at once comprehensive, dispassionate, and acute in his analysis. His style, as befits the subject, is sober; his position is one of realistic and slightly disillusioned detachment."<sup>85</sup> Morton's balanced approach was also noted in reviews of *One University*, his history of the University of Manitoba, which was described as "not a 'company history' .... The author shows acumen and courage unusual among historians of colleges and universities. Praise is given where it seems due, but neither persons nor parties are immune to penetrating criticism."<sup>86</sup> P. B. Waite also expressed his admiration for Morton's methods: "The gradual development of the province down to the present day retains considerable colour; but the glory gradually departs and the poetry dies...and Professor Morton is too good a historian to conceal the truth."<sup>87</sup> While W. L. Morton's scholarship emphasized working within the scholarly community to make sure that the importance of the Western Canadian experience was recognized in academic circles, his monographs nevertheless were regarded as "exceptionally readable"<sup>88</sup> and therefore accessible to the general public. Although regarded as an excellent and accessible writer, it is clear that Morton's scholarly reputation was much more staid than that of either Lower or Creighton.

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<sup>85</sup> Creighton, Review of *Progressive Party*, 71.

<sup>86</sup> Cartwright, Review of *One University*, 118.

<sup>87</sup> Waite, Review of *Manitoba*, 432. See also W. J. F., Review of *Manitoba*, 31.

<sup>88</sup> Cameron, Review of *Progressive Party*, 117. See also Unsigned review of *Progressive Party*, 280-281.

## **Towards the Centennial**

In decade following the end of World War II, Donald Creighton, Arthur Lower, and William Morton, with the approval and encouragement of the Canadian historical profession, took a leading role in chronicling the history of the Canadian nation and communicating that history in a manner accessible to the general reading public. For Creighton, Lower and Morton, the postwar years solidified their reputations as historians of national significance. Lower became known as the “master of the provocative paragraph,”<sup>89</sup> Creighton as a ‘literary’ historian with strongly stated (and supported) opinions, and Morton as the fair, balanced proponent of the Canadian West. Their monographs adhered to the highest standards of scholarship, thus filling in some of the gaps in Canadian historiography that had been identified during the interwar years. These fresh interpretations of Canadian history provided a method of reorienting both the Canadian public and the academy after the destabilizing changes brought about by the Second World War. National histories functioned as a way of preparing Canadians for the future by reminding them about their past. Members of the Canadian historical profession accepted and encouraged these interpretations, supported by sufficient factual data, as a means of educating the public as to Canada’s new place in the world. In fact, regardless of a historian’s particular interpretation of Canadian national history, the ability to communicate to the public was regarded as key to the professional success of a historian.

By 1957, the eyes of the Canadian historical community focused firmly on the history of the nation. Fully participating in the cultural renewal following World War

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<sup>89</sup> Farquharson, “Lower’s Mirror,” 26.

II,<sup>90</sup> historians appear to have spearheaded a renewed interest in Canadian culture and nationalism through their publications and the various reflections in the academic and popular journals. In his 1957 Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association, Donald Creighton reflected on the development of Canadian historical studies from the 1930s to his present time. He celebrated the end of “rigid doctrinaire obsessions,” particularly Marxism and the Frontier Theory, which Creighton ridiculed as imported theories that could not be legitimately applied to Canada.<sup>91</sup> In accepting these foreign ideas, Creighton argued, Canadian historians allowed themselves to be dominated by external groups who did not act in the best interest of Canada. However, the spread of Communism and the overwhelming dominance of the “American leadership of the free world” dampened enthusiasm for these doctrines among Canadian intellectuals and historians. Creighton remarked, “A definite epoch in the history of Canadian history has come to an end. A new generation of professional historians has arisen, is arising; and although the character of their work has not yet definitely declared itself, it can be predicted with some confidence that they will have less deference for imported theories of historical change and more respect for the manifold facts of Canadian experience.”<sup>92</sup>

The 1957 announcement of the Canadian Centenary Series, a project designed to examine the history of Canada from the arrival of the Vikings to the Centennial year of 1967, as well as the naming of Donald Creighton and W. L. Morton as joint editors of the

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<sup>90</sup> For example, the Massey Commission Report, 1951. Paul Litt. *The Muses, The Masses, and The Massey Commission*. Toronto: UTP, 1992. Jeffrey Cormier. *The Canadianization Movement: Emergence, Survival, and Success*. Toronto: UTP, 2004. Maria Tippet. *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts Before the Massey Commission*. Toronto: UTP, 1990.

<sup>91</sup> Donald Creighton, “Presidential Address,” *Report of the Annual Meeting of the CHA* (12-15 June 1957), 6-10.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



project,<sup>93</sup> confirmed that during the next decade the character of Canadian history would be distinctly national.

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<sup>93</sup> Berger, *Writing*, 234, 282.

### **Chapter 3: Canadian National History in a Decade of Uncertainty**

At the beginning of 1957, Canadians had several reasons to be optimistic and excited about their future. After weathering both the Second World War and the economic slump of the immediate postwar years, Canadians entered into a period of remarkable growth, increasing urbanization, advances in technology, and economic stability that contributed to a higher standard of living comparable to their neighbours to the south.<sup>1</sup> Even the national political scene changed: on June 11, Progressive Conservative leader John Diefenbaker overthrew the Liberal government, leading the Progressive Conservatives to power after twenty-two years of Liberal rule and bringing with him a sense of excitement and renewal.<sup>2</sup> Canadian historians, too, optimistically anticipated the coming Centennial and continued to seek new approaches to Canadian historical interpretation, including a significant re-evaluation of French Canada's status within Confederation. In the decade prior to Canada's Centennial, citizens and scholars alike elevated the importance of national history, especially national history as interpreted by Arthur Lower, W. L. Morton, and Donald Creighton as they attempted to place the forthcoming celebrations within an appropriate historical context. However, social and political changes occurring in Canadian society, as well as interpretive shifts within the Canadian historical profession, were already undermining the historical Canada that Lower, Morton, and Creighton attempted to articulate.

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<sup>1</sup> For a cohesive "snapshot" of Canada in 1957, see J. L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967, Years of Uncertainty and Innovation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 1-14. See also J. L. Granatstein, et al., *Twentieth Century Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1983), 349-399.

<sup>2</sup> For a classic summary of the 1957 campaign, see Chapter 4, "The 1957 Election and the Ecstasies of Office" in Peter C. Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

## Anticipating the Centennial

Donald Creighton indicated in his 1957 Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association (CHA) that the character of Canadian history would remain focused distinctly on the nation throughout the early 1960s and up to the 1967 Centennial celebrations. Other trends in the writing of Canadian history carried forward from the 1940s and 50s, including the historical profession's continued high standards of scholarship by which they measured the works of their peers and the esteem given to the ability to adeptly communicate the Dominion's history to the general public. By the mid 1960s, however, social changes began to have a profound effect on the Canadian historical profession. In his history of the 'baby boom' generation, historian Doug Owram noted that it was not until between early 1964 and the end of 1966 that "the fifties became the sixties" and "[t]he political sensibilities of folk merged with the mass market of rock.... and the distrust of adult values and styles moved from the fringes of youth culture to its identifying characteristic."<sup>3</sup> Thus by 1967, external means of identification, such as fashion and hairstyles, acquired a political significance and young Canadians deliberately adopted these as a political and social statement, increasingly speaking out against such issues as consumerism and the war in Vietnam.<sup>4</sup> The urgency of the rapid

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<sup>3</sup> Owram, *Right Time*, 190.

<sup>4</sup> Thus by 1967, many Canadian youth were more concerned with the war in Vietnam than the celebration of the nation's Centennial. A retrospective film entitled *The Summer of 1967* released by the National Film Board of Canada interviewed the subjects of two 1967 NFB films which documented the 'hippie' movement in Toronto, *Christopher's Movie Matinee* and *Flowers on a One-Way Street*, inviting them to reflect on their experiences during that 'Golden Summer'. Much of the conversation of the young people centered on Vietnam; however, neither the footage from the original movies nor the retrospective itself mentioned the Canadian Centennial or Expo 67. This demonstrates that, for some Canadian teenagers at least, American foreign policy and military involvement was more important than the celebration of their country's Centennial (Albert Kish and Donald Winkler, *The Summer of 1967*, VHS, (National Film Board of Canada, 1994).

social and political changes occurring in Canadian society, most importantly the challenges to Canadian unity sparked by Quebec's Quiet Revolution and the increasing uncertainty regarding Canada's national identity, imbued national histories with added significance as the monographs of Lower, Creighton, and Morton provided historical context for contemporary events.

The 1960 election of Jean Lesage and his Liberals in Quebec ushered in the 'Quiet Revolution,' a series of political and social changes in Quebec that challenged the traditional authority of the English elite and the Catholic Church (especially in its educational role) and began to establish *Quebecois* as "maître chez nous."<sup>5</sup> As the Lesage government demanded increasing control over any federal programs or federal assistance, English Canadians felt bewildered and angry and an atmosphere of distrust between English and French Canadians emerged in the early 1960s. Members of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, established by Lester B. Pearson in April 1963, met with Canadians from a wide variety of backgrounds and concluded in their preliminary report that Canada was at a major crisis point in its history. That crisis centred on Quebec and the fact that "the state of affairs established in 1867, and never since seriously challenged, [was] now for the first time being rejected by the French Canadians of Quebec."<sup>6</sup> The 16 July 1964 meeting of the "Bi-Bi Commission" in Quebec City was dominated by Quebecers expressing separatist sentiments, and in October of the same year Queen Elizabeth II was met with empty streets during her

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<sup>5</sup> Granatstein, *Canada*, 260-270. For other sources on the Quiet Revolution, see Dale Thomson. *Jean Lesage and the Quiet Revolution*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1984. Ramsay Cook. *Canada and the French Canadian Question*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1966. Ramsay Cook. *Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> *Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* (Ottawa, 1965), 13 as cited in Granatstein, *Canada*, 253.

Royal Visit to the provincial capital.<sup>7</sup> Three years later, the separatist movement received international support. During his visit to Expo 67, French President Charles De Gaulle concluded his speech to a large crowd, which included hundreds of separatists, with the exclamation, “Vive le Québec libre!!!” that prompted deafening cheers from the spectators. This incident destroyed much of the goodwill built up by the Centennial celebrations and Expo '67 and marked a downturn in French-English relations in Canada.<sup>8</sup> By 1967, French Canadians had established themselves as masters of their own house and demonstrated their determination to be recognized as distinct within Canada.

Social and political revolution, however, was not exclusively the preserve of French Canadians in the 1960s. While much attention has been paid to the process of social and political change that occurred in Quebec, English Canada concurrently began to experience a series of social changes whereby it gradually shed its distinctively British character and took on a new, though oftentimes indistinct, national civic identity. As Donald Creighton wrote in 1966, “[i]t is not enough to examine the wants of Quebec or of French Canada in isolation: it is necessary to review the whole range of recent developments which either directly or indirectly alter the form or upset the balance of the Canadian constitution. If a ‘quiet revolution’ has been going on in Quebec, another revolution, quieter still but just as significant, has been going on in Canada as a whole.”<sup>9</sup> Termed the ‘Other Quiet Revolution’ by historian José Igartua,<sup>10</sup> this phenomenon has

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<sup>7</sup> Granatstein, *Canada*, 253, 265.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 270-275.

<sup>9</sup> Donald Creighton, “Confederation: The Use and Abuse of History,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 1(1) (May 1966), 3.

<sup>10</sup> See José E. Igartua, “‘Ready, Aye, Ready’ No More?: Canada, Britain, and the Suez Crisis in the Canadian Press” in *Canada and the End of Empire*, ed. Phillip Buckner (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 47-65.

only recently come under the scrutiny of Canadian historians.<sup>11</sup> Phillip Buckner, historian of Imperial Britain and its connection to Canada, cites the years 1956 to 1967 as the period in which “most Canadians were compelled – some very reluctantly – to come to grips with the lingering death of the empire.”<sup>12</sup> Beginning with the Suez Crisis of 1956, in which Canadian foreign policy directly contradicted the actions of the British government, much to the chagrin of many Canadians,<sup>13</sup> Canadians and their government began to pursue a national course of action that increasingly placed the emphasis of national identity on Canada as a nation, rather than as a member of the British Commonwealth.<sup>14</sup>

The Suez Crisis, as well as the appointment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the adoption of the new Canadian flag in 1965, marked the process of shedding of British symbols and seeking to take up a new Canadian identity. This process, however, did not go uncontested, as demonstrated by the opposition to actions of the Canadian government during the Suez Crisis, the continual criticism of the “Bi-Bi Commission,” and the Parliamentary filibuster led by

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<sup>11</sup> Jose Igartua’s study, *The OTHER Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945 – 1971*, is the first full-length monograph examining the loss of British identity in English Canada. In fact, his introduction begins, “This is a first foray into very large territory. It charts the story of how, in a very short time, English Canada shed its definition of itself as British and adopted a new stance as a civic nation, that is, without ethnic particularities, and erected this as the Canadian model....And it was even quieter than Quebec’s Revolution: it was so quiet, in fact, that historians have not bothered to investigate it as a historical phenomenon,” see Jose Iguarta, *The OTHER Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-1971* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 1. The results of the May 2001 symposium on ‘Canada and the End of Empire’ held at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, part of the School of Advanced Studies of the University of London, edited by Phillip Buckner and endowed with the same title as the symposium, also attempted to address this issue. Buckner’s introductory comments are very helpful in indicating the lack of interest of Canadian historians in exploring Canada’s relationship with Britain during the postwar era (1-14).

<sup>12</sup> Phillip Buckner, introduction to *Canada and the End of Empire*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Igartua, *The OTHER*, 115-129.

<sup>14</sup> This included the renaming of national holidays, for example “Dominion Day” became referred to as “Canada Day”, and Victoria Day was moved from the specific date of May 25<sup>th</sup> to the Monday before that date in order to ensure that Canadians had a long weekend every May. Public civic celebrations attached to Victoria Day eventually faded as well. See Igartua, *The OTHER*, 89-114.

Conservative leader and former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker during the flag debate.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the federal government also made considerable efforts to foster a new sense of Canadian identity. For example, in his study of the role of religion in the Expo 67 celebrations, historian Gary Miedema documents the extent of the federal government's efforts to encourage Canadian unity and a "pan-Canadian nationalism" by deliberately including a wide variety of religious groups in the Centennial celebrations rather than simply the established Christian bodies, especially Catholic and Anglican.<sup>16</sup> The result of these new emphases was that the British Canadian nationalism of the immediate postwar era was, by 1967, replaced with a civic nationalism founded on egalitarian values rather than ethnic or religious ties, a nationalism that emphasized unity via recognition of Canada's pluralism and diversity.<sup>17</sup> However, the celebration of diversity did not automatically ensure unity within Canadian society, and the difficulties springing from tensions between ethnic groups, particularly French and English Canadians, challenged Canadian national unity throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

These changes in the Canadian social climate came to bear on the writing of nation's history. As they had throughout the postwar years, reviewers expressed their appreciation for national history that portrayed Canada as a separate and independent entity from the two larger nations of Great Britain and the United States, and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 171-192. C. P. Champion also discusses the role of ethnicity in the flag debate, arguing that the new flag was neither wholeheartedly accepted by the Canadian people nor the 'neutral' flag, but an extension of British heritage, thus continuing to alienate non-British groups in Canada. "A Very British Coup: Canadianism, Quebec, and Ethnicity in the Flag Debate, 1964-65," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40(3) (Fall 2006), 68-99.

<sup>16</sup> Gary Miedema, "For Canada's Sake: The Centennial Celebrations of 1967, State Legitimation and the Restructuring of Canadian Public Life," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31(1) (Spring 1999), 141.

<sup>17</sup> Gary Miedema, *For Canada's Sake: Public Religion, Centennial Celebrations, and the Re-Making of Canada in the 1960s* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), xvii - xviii.

communicated that position clearly to the general public. In his review of Donald Creighton's *Story of Canada*, L. G. Thomas wrote, "Creighton has moved a long way from the old preoccupation with the struggle for Canadian autonomy within the British system that long engrossed Canadian historians. *The Story of Canada* embodies the reassessment of Canadian history that still continues and to which his earlier works so brilliantly contributed."<sup>18</sup> Historian of British Columbia and future head of the UBC Department of History, Margaret Ormsby described how Creighton's work reflected the changing sense of Canadian nationalism while offering new and varied interpretations of Canadian history: "In the post-war years Canadian nationalism had become something positive, something separate and individual, and in the writing of Canadian history the emphasis no longer needed to be on frustration and compromise."<sup>19</sup> G. E. Wilson, professor of history at Dalhousie University and former President of the CHA, also commented on Creighton's sense of nationalism: "[in the latter half of the book, Creighton] becomes an enthusiastic Canadian, joyous and proud to see his country growing to nationhood in the twentieth century."<sup>20</sup> Arthur Lower joined the nationalist discussions with his 1958 publication *Canadians in the Making*, a groundbreaking attempt to chronicle the social history of Canada. Despite criticisms of his perception of postwar Canadian society,<sup>21</sup> Lower's colleagues regarded *Canadians* as a valuable

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<sup>18</sup> L. G. Thomas, Review of *The Story of Canada*, by Donald Creighton, *Saskatchewan History* 14(1) (Winter 1961), 33-34. G. E. Wilson described *Story of Canada* as a "vigorous and informed and enthusiastic survey of Canada's story" full of "comment and interpretation." See G. E. Wilson, Review of *The Story of Canada*, by Donald Creighton, *Dalhousie Review* 41(2) (Summer 1961), 281.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Ormsby, "Historians' View Points," *Canadian Literature* 3 (Winter 1960), 65.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, "Review of *The Story*," 281.

<sup>21</sup> In his autobiography, Lower recalled the difficulties of shaping the last two chapters of *Canadians in the Making*, those which deal with contemporary Canada: "[t]he idea was simple, namely, that we have jettisoned our old inherited culture and have not yet attained a new one for ourselves, leaving the ship meanwhile to labour in the trough. Easily said, but try to document the statement over a considerable time-period and put the result into a story," in Lower, *Seventy-Five Years*, 362.



contribution to Canadian history and appreciated his attempts to find common ground between French and English Canadians as well as the vivacity, if not occasional exaggeration, of Lower's prose.<sup>22</sup> Alfred Bailey, historian and Dean of Arts at the University of New Brunswick, wrote of *Canadians in the Making*, "few can no longer doubt that a new nationality is now emerging. Though Professor Lower seems to be one of the sceptics ... his own book is surely evidence of that fact."<sup>23</sup> In the early 1960s members of the Canadian historical profession commended an actively positive nationalism in the writing of national history.

Essential also was the communication of this positive, though not uncritical,<sup>24</sup> view of Canadian history to both the general public and to a younger audience.<sup>25</sup> As they had with his previous monographs, reviewers highlighted the controversial nature of Lower's work.<sup>26</sup> While the complexity of the material and the forcefulness with which Lower communicated his interpretations ensured an interested and engaged audience for his work, reviewers upheld the craftsmanship of Creighton's *Story of Canada* as an example of well executed national history. L. G. Thomas stated, "[t]he general reader

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<sup>22</sup> See Alfred G. Bailey, "Sitting Judgment on the Past," Review of *Canadians in the Making*, by Arthur Lower, *Queen's Quarterly* 66 (Summer 1959), 314-317. H. Blair Neatby, Review of *Canadians in the Making*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 40 (June 1959), 160. Thomas, Review of *The Story*, 34.

<sup>23</sup> Bailey, "Sitting," 319. Biographical information on Alfred G. Bailey found at The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, "Bailey, Alfred Goldsworthy," McMaster University Libraries, <http://library.mcmaster.ca/archives/findaids/fonds/b/bailey.htm> (accessed on July 31, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Lower's criticisms of contemporary Canadian history are discussed below. Ormsby noted that Creighton did not present his readers with a clear case of Canada's "advance to nationhood," but rather he pointed out where its leaders had been short-sighted or where Canada's international position had fallen to one of a middle power. See Ormsby, "Historians'," 67.

<sup>25</sup> Inclined to regard American-style general histories as "historical pabulum," University of Alberta historian L. G. Thomas expressed his approval of Creighton's *Story of Canada*, noting that "the general reader could scarcely hope for a more attractive introduction to Canadian history." Thomas, Review of *Story*, 33. S. R. Mealing described the book as a pared down *Dominion of Canada*, one of many single-volume histories of Canada that offers nothing new to seasoned historians but may be appropriate for a younger audience. See S. R. Mealing, Review of *The Story of Canada*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 41 (March 1960), 68-9.

<sup>26</sup> See Bailey, "Sitting," 314, 318-19; Neatby, Review of *Canadians*, 160; Thomas, Review of *Story*, 34.

could scarcely hope for a more attractive introduction to Canadian history than *The Story of Canada*.<sup>27</sup> Margaret Ormsby drew definite lines between the encyclopaedic *Canada: A Political and Social History* – York historian Edgar McNinnis’ university textbook – and Creighton’s literary *Story of Canada*, clearly showing her preference for Creighton’s style while admiring the scholarship of both historians.<sup>28</sup> Creighton was described as an artist writing with a “sense of mission” and the desire to “win back readers for the professional historian.” Ormsby remarked that this gives his book a “glowing pulsating quality previously lacking in general histories of Canada” and contrasted Creighton’s vivid vignettes and lively characterization with McNinnis’ comparatively dehumanized study of official policy.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Canadian historians prized and emphasised the need for readable national histories well into the early 1960s.

By 1964, the publication date of Morton’s *The Critical Years* and Creighton’s *Road to Confederation*, historians advocated reflection on the past in order to understand and respond to the challenges of the present. Indicative of his increasing involvement in the Canadian historical profession as the co-editor of the Canadian Centenary Series, his move from Manitoba to Ontario and subsequent promotions within university administration, and his growing concern for national politics, W. L. Morton turned his attention away from regional history and devoted much of the 1960s to the discussion of national history.<sup>30</sup> *The Critical Years*, Morton’s contribution to the Canadian Centenary Series, was described as a carefully researched, “fresh and independent appraisal of how

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas, Review of *Story*, 33. G. E. Wilson recommended the book to anyone who had allowed their history to become “rusty.” Wilson, Review of *Story*, 281.

<sup>28</sup> This preference was also shared by L. G. Thomas, who preferred the interpretations of Creighton to the “eminently safe” history of McNinnis. Thomas, Review of *Story*, 33-34.

<sup>29</sup> Ormsby, “Historians,” 65-67.

<sup>30</sup> Berger, *The Writing*, 250-51.

the diverse fragments of British North America came together.”<sup>31</sup> In a review published three years before Canada’s Centennial, author and naval officer C. H. Little remarked that “[m]ost important of all perhaps, *The Critical Years* is the realization that many of our modern difficulties have long roots and that a careful reading of the past will be of great help in solving them.”<sup>32</sup> Donald Creighton’s well-received *Road to Confederation*, an examination of the circumstances leading to Confederation, appears to have struck a responsive chord with reviewers who welcomed a positive treatment of their country’s birth in anticipation of the Centennial celebrations. As reviewer Margaret Ormsby put it,

even in this troubled year when many Canadians mark the centenary of Charlottetown and the Quebec Conferences with a feeling of foreboding, *The Road to Confederation* conveys persuasively the impression that what was done a century ago was done with care and thought and justice, and the further impression that the plan for a centralized government and for a federal union within the British connection, was not only a reasonable and a practicable one, but also was one that is bound to prove durable.<sup>33</sup>

Here, Ormsby was clearly concerned with attacks on the federal construction of Canada and looked to Creighton’s work as a means to clarify the past for the purposes of assisting present concerns. With an eye to the upcoming Centennial celebrations, Queen’s University historian Roger Graham touted Creighton’s *Road to Confederation* as a corrective for George Grant’s pessimistic view of Canada as expressed in his 1965

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<sup>31</sup> Brady continues, “It is well-organized, clearly and unpretentiously written, and judicious.” See Alexander Brady, Review of *The Critical Years*, by W.L. Morton, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 35 (July 1966), 458. In his review of *The Critical Years*, Jean-Pierre Wallot regrets the absence of a general introduction, placing the period under discussion into its historical context, but commended Morton in his brilliant discussion of British thought in regards to the confederation of Canada while J. A. S. Evans took an interest in Morton’s discussion of the beginning of provincial rights as seen in the British North America Act. See Jean-Pierre Wallot, Review of *The Critical Years*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 32(2) (May 1966), 243-44. See also J. A. S. Evans, “The Birth of Canada,” Review of *The Critical Years*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Literature* 25 (Summer 1965), 67.

<sup>32</sup> C. H. Little, Review of *The Critical Years*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Author and Bookman* 40(4) (Summer 1965), 13.

<sup>33</sup> Margaret Ormsby, “New Books for the Fall,” Review of *The Road to Confederation*, by Donald Creighton, *Saturday Night* 79 (November 1964), 25.

publication *Lament for a Nation*.<sup>34</sup> Graham acknowledged that while Canada may have simply devolved into a satellite of the United States, as postulated by Grant, he expressed the hope that “perhaps one can retain some slight hope that the wisdom and courage, the common sense, moderation and foresight of the men who forged Confederation may still provide direction for the present day” and directed readers to reflect on the past and enjoy Creighton’s “beautifully written book.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, the writing of national history prior to Canada’s Centennial was not only a way to explore new understandings of Canadian identity; it was used as a defence against social movements and ideas that challenged the legitimacy of the Canadian state.

Unsurprisingly, the rapid changes in perceptions of national identity came under discussion by members of the Canadian historical profession, many of whom struggled with the implications of these changes for the interpretation of Canadian history while upholding the importance of writing history that could be read by the general public. In his 1961 Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association, W. K. Ferguson stated that “[h]istorical research can, in fact, fulfill its social function to the fullest extent only when it is translated into literature,” expanding on this theme throughout his address.<sup>36</sup> While Ferguson’s remarks were made in the relatively calm atmosphere of the early 1960s, academic journals also became venues for these discussions of the role of

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<sup>34</sup> This is especially interesting as Creighton’s next book, *Canada’s First Century*, would be described by W. L. Morton as *Lament for a Nation* in full orchestration. See Berger, *The Writing*, 235.

<sup>35</sup> Roger Graham, Review of *The Road to Confederation*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 46 (September 1965), 253.

<sup>36</sup> W. K. Ferguson, “Some Problems of Historiography,” *Canadian Historical Association Annual Address* (1961), 2. The warm reception of this address, “which aroused so much enthusiasm when it was delivered, and which we all awaited so impatiently to study in more detail in print” was subsequently the starting point for Richard Preston in his Presidential Address the following year. See Richard A. Preston, “Breakers Ahead and a Glance Behind,” *Canadian Historical Association Annual Address* (1962), 1.

the historian, particularly in the mid-1960s.<sup>37</sup> The editorial of the *Journal of Canadian Studies*' inaugural issue reflected the growing discontent with national events as it lambasted Canadian federal politicians for their corrupt behaviour, asserting the hope that, "in the course of the *Journal*'s life the country will achieve greater self-understanding and a more tolerable national consensus, and that the *Journal* may contribute something to these ends."<sup>38</sup> L. F. S. Upton's 1967 article "In Search of Canadian History" called upon historians to define an English-Canadian identity, chastised historians for not doing so earlier, and commended French-Canadian historians for their enthusiasm about their history.<sup>39</sup> Three issues later, *Queen's Quarterly* carried a response by Michael Bliss, who accused Professor Upton of desiring propaganda rather than history, stating

[t]he disagreement between Professor Upton and myself is rooted in a profound difference of opinion about the role of historians and the function of nationalism in society. As a historian I will not don the homespun of the nationalist or the surplice of the moral prophet. My duty as an historian is to make an honest attempt to find out something about what happened in the past, to try to tell it as it was, and to repudiate other historians who say "no matter" about how it did happen. I must also resist and protect the presumption of integral nationalists – English Canadian, French Canadian, or plain Canadian – who tell me that I have "sadly failed" in my duty to my society because I have not enlisted in their ideological army.<sup>40</sup>

Ten years the junior of Upton, a professor at the University of British Columbia, this response by Bliss, who had only been recently appointed to the Department of History at

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<sup>37</sup> For example, Ramsay Cook discussed Canada's 'crisis of nationhood' and provided some historical background to the social and philosophical divide between English and French Canadians, and recommended that Canadians build a multinational society. Ramsay Cook, "The Canadian Dilemma," *International Journal* 20 (Winter 1964-65), 1-19. The theological and philosophical differences were also addressed by Hugh MacLennan, "Two Solitudes Revisited," *Maclean's* (14 December 1964), 26-7, 54-7, 77.

<sup>38</sup> Denis Smith, "Editorial," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1(1) (May 1966), 2.

<sup>39</sup> L. F. S. Upton, "In Search of Canadian History," *Queen's Quarterly* 74 (Winter 1967), 674, 680.

<sup>40</sup> J. M. Bliss, "Searching for Canadian History," *Queen's Quarterly* 75 (3) (1968) 506.

the University of Toronto, indicates the unease with which a new generation of historians anticipated their role as keepers of a national historical trust.<sup>41</sup>

By 1967, the relationship between nationalism and the writing of history was increasingly under examination by the Canadian historical profession as historians struggled with drawing appropriate boundaries between communicating the history of the nation and deliberately promoting specific positive aspects of the nation's history. Richard Saunders' Presidential Address to the CHA during the Centennial year captured the tension felt by Canadian historians in 1967. The belief that history should be regarded as a science, the growth of relativism, and "especially in the post-war generation, a mounting fear of nationalism" increasingly challenged the legitimacy of the idea of the historian's duty to the nation. Acknowledging these difficulties, Saunders nevertheless encouraged his colleagues to contribute to the self-knowledge of Canadians, thereby helping them to find their place in the world.<sup>42</sup> It was a fitting speech for the Centennial, but his optimistic approach would not survive the decade.

### **Expanding the Repertoire**

Just as historians in the 1920s looked for new interpretive frameworks beyond constitutional history, historians in the second half of the twentieth century, bolstered by changes in Canadian society, looked to expand the collective understanding of Canadian history by examining social history in conjunction with political and economic history.

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<sup>41</sup> Information on Michael Bliss found at Office of the Vice President and Provost, "Professor Michael Bliss," University of Toronto, [http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/Awards/uprofessors/emeritus/Professor\\_Michael\\_Bliss.htm](http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/Awards/uprofessors/emeritus/Professor_Michael_Bliss.htm) (accessed August 9, 2007). Information on L. F. S. Upton found on August 9, 2007 at Wayne [See 189.] Murdoch, "Leslie Upton fonds," University of British Columbia Archives, [http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/u\\_arch/upton.html#bio](http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/u_arch/upton.html#bio) (accessed August 9, 2007).

<sup>42</sup> Richard Saunders, "The Historian and the Nation," *Canadian Historical Association* (1967), 5, 9.

The growth of social history occurred in two stages. The first stage, which occurred throughout the early and mid 1960s, emphasised the historical impact of individuals on the development of society. The majority of this new research elaborated upon historical themes and individuals familiar to the Canadian historical profession and represented an adaptation of earlier research rather than a break from established historical interpretations. In the second stage, after the Centennial, practitioners of social history attempted to “recover the life experiences of ordinary people and reduce the prominence of unrepresentative individuals and elites and past politics,” thus shifting the focus of scholarship away from influential individuals in order to understand previously unstudied groups, especially those identified by class, race, ethnicity, and gender.<sup>43</sup> In addition to these changes from within the profession, the external stress of thousands of ‘baby boomers’ entering the Canadian university system spurred the growth of social history and the increasing specialization of the Canadian historical profession. In the decade preceding the Centennial, historians were excited about new ways to examine Canadian history and, for the most part, praised innovators in the field.

The ‘baby boom’ generation affected Canadian society in the mid sixties, particularly the universities, as the demographic phenomenon that had tested the capacity of primary and secondary schools in the fifties began to descend upon Canadian universities and their infrastructure.<sup>44</sup> This influx did not go unnoticed within the Canadian historical profession; Richard Preston devoted his 1962 Presidential Address to the CHA to discussing the various problems that this large cohort of students would pose

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<sup>43</sup> Berger, *The Writing*, 297, 298. The impact of this development will be further explored in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>44</sup> Historian Doug Owrarn argues that baby boomers, as a historical and cultural phenomenon, were born “sometime between the late war and about 1955 or 1956,” therefore the first of the baby-boomers entered university in the mid-1960s. See Owrarn, *Right Time*, xiv, 175.

for history departments across the country.<sup>45</sup> University attendance swelled from 68,000 students in 1955 to 261,000 students in the 1967-68 school year, an increase of almost four hundred percent in just over a decade. University faculty members also increased exponentially, including Americans educated at American institutions, some of whom emigrated to Canada in order to avoid the draft and became active as “anti-American Americans.”<sup>46</sup> With the influx of new students and professors, universities lost their “small and clubby” atmosphere and became administratively driven “multiversities,” a trend enhanced by a student population increasingly disdainful of the traditions of privilege inherited from their “Oxbridge” educated professors.<sup>47</sup> In a short period of time the close-knit Canadian university system, as experienced by Creighton, Lower, and Morton in their undergraduate years, had disappeared to be replaced by bureaucratic educational institutions increasingly out of touch with the needs of scholars and their students.

As Canadian history departments expanded numerically, so too did the variety of topics under examination. A new generation of historians born during the interwar years, including Maurice Careless, Blair Neatby, Peter Waite, and Ramsay Cook, used political biography to examine the influence of the individuals upon their historical circumstances. In the words of intellectual historian Carl Berger, this new generation “assimilated, perpetuated, and modified the prevailing modes of history.” They continued to accept the framework of the nation-state as essential to the discipline of history while exploring

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<sup>45</sup> Preston, “Breakers Ahead.”

<sup>46</sup> J. L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?: Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), 197, 199-201. Simon Fraser University, in particular, was noted for its radical American professors. Whereas before the ‘baby boomers’ entered university there were approximately 160 professors of history actively teaching in Canadian universities, that number had increased to nearly a thousand by 1976. See Berger, *The Writing*, 262 as well as H. Blair Neatby, “The Gospel of Research: The Transformation of English Canadian Universities,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* (1982), 275-284.

<sup>47</sup> Owram, *Right Time*, 182-183.



other modes of interpretation, including region, race, and religion.<sup>48</sup> While critical of the patriotism of older scholars, especially in the years following Canada's Centennial, the interwar generation of historians began to rethink traditional 'meta-narrative' approaches to national history; however, they were not "intensely engaged *social* critics," as would be the 'baby boomer' generation.<sup>49</sup>

Although pleased with the new research produced by the burgeoning ranks of historians in Canadian universities, members of the Canadian historical profession began to worry that this new history was becoming increasingly inaccessible to the general public. In his analysis of the historical profession in the late 1950s and early 1960s, intellectual historian Donald Wright states that

[i]t was not so much that this new generation deliberately ignored the general reader, but the continued growth of the profession meant its continued specialization. Fields like Canadian history were divided into sub-fields: political history, intellectual history, regional history, and economic history. Advancement through the ranks depended on learned monographs and scholarly articles in academic journals.<sup>50</sup>

The necessity to bolster one's career with scholarly publications meant that historians gradually spent more time communicating within their own professional circles than they did communicating with the public. Many historians noted such tendencies and voiced concern about the lack of communication with the public due to specialization. In his Presidential Addresses to the CHA in 1958, Kaye Lamb, archivist at the Public Archives of Canada, felt compelled to warn his colleagues that "[h]istorians, in a word, are writing more and more for an extremely narrow audience. ... Canadian history is full of interesting people and significant problems; I think it is of real importance that this

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<sup>48</sup> Berger, *The Writing*, 260.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>50</sup> Wright, *Professionalization*, 169-170.

should be made apparent to many others besides historians.”<sup>51</sup> Three years later, W. K. Ferguson emphasized that historical research “fulfil[s] its social function only when it is translated into literature” and that specialized research should be placed within its historical context.<sup>52</sup> In his 1967 Centennial lecture to the CHA, Richard Saunders stated that “[w]hether the historian wants it so or not he is cast in the role of guide and mentor to the nation,” and cited Creighton, Morton and Lower as examples of historians who had carried out this task well.<sup>53</sup> Throughout the 1960s, historians valued national history as a means of communicating to the public and expressed concern that this continue to be a priority for Canadian historians.

As one of the first Canadian historians who attempted to write a comprehensive social history of Canada, Arthur Lower’s 1958 *Canadians in the Making* was a pioneering effort in understanding the growth of Canada beyond its political, economic, and constitutional history. The experiment illustrated Lower’s skill as a historian as well as the dearth of scholarly discussion on the social history of Canada. Lower’s peers understood the difficulty of writing a social history of Canada in the 1950s, described most vividly by Blair Neatby, who compared the writing of social history to creating “a forest out of trunks and branches.”<sup>54</sup> Reviewer Alfred Bailey remarked that, “[i]t is a measure of Professor Lower’s ability as an historian that with so little already done upon which to build, he has accomplished as much as he has in the work under review” and attributed some of the shortcomings of *Canadians in the Making* to the lack of detailed

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<sup>51</sup> W. Kaye Lamb, “Presidential Address,” *Canadian Historical Association* (1958), 11.

<sup>52</sup> W. K. Ferguson, “Presidential Address,” *Canadian Historical Association* (1961), 2, 9.

<sup>53</sup> Richard Saunders, “The Historian and the Nation,” *Canadian Historical Association* (1967), 1, 4-5.

<sup>54</sup> H. Blair Neatby, Review of *Canadians in the Making*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 40 (June 1959), 159.

studies of “many aspects and areas of Canadian social life.”<sup>55</sup> According to Bailey, the limitations of Lower’s work included an overemphasis on central Canada to the detriment of the Maritimes, the organization of a social history according to well-established modes of political periodisation, and a questionable description of French suffering at the hands of the English.<sup>56</sup> In addition to suffering from a lack of resources from which to draw upon, Lower’s *Canadians in the Making* exhibited several weak points that writers of national history would continue to try to overcome: how to adequately integrate the Maritimes and the West into a narrative traditionally dominated by Ontario and Quebec; how to write a history that centered around something other than political chronology; and how to adequately address the historical (and contemporary) tensions between French and English Canada.

By the early 1960s, Canadian historians appeared to expect national histories to include some examination of the areas that Lower’s work explored. Reviews of Morton’s *The Kingdom of Canada*, a general historical survey described as textbook material and published five years after Lower’s *Canadians in the Making*,<sup>57</sup> demonstrate that Canadian historians continued to seek new interpretations that touched on the social history of the nation. As they did with Lower’s *Canadians in the Making*, reviewers criticized *The Kingdom of Canada* for excluding the contributions of the Maritimes and the West,<sup>58</sup> although one reviewer acknowledged that this was, in part, due to lack of sources on

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<sup>55</sup> Bailey, “Sitting,” 313.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 313-25.

<sup>57</sup> G. A. Rawlyk, Review of *The Kingdom of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Dalhousie Review* 44(1) (Spring 1964), 126. See also Robin Winks, Review of *The Kingdom of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *International Journal* 19 (Spring 1964), 250-251 and C. P. Stacey, “Mixture of Solids,” Review of *The Kingdom of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Forum* 45(514) (November 1963), 188-189.

<sup>58</sup> W. Kaye Lamb, Review of *The Kingdom of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Beaver* 295 (Spring 1964), 55. Also George Woodcock, “Titular Confusions,” Review of *The Kingdom of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Literature* 18 (Autumn 1963), 63. Also Margaret Ormsby, Review of *The Critical Years*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Historical Review* 47 (December 1966), 364-366.

these regions.<sup>59</sup> The anonymous reviewer for the *University of Toronto Quarterly* succinctly stated that “[s]ocial history is here the poor relation of political history.”<sup>60</sup> George Rawlyk, who described *The Kingdom of Canada* as “probably the most thorough and the most evenly balanced general history of Canada now available,” modified his comments by stating that, while Morton very competently addressed the political and economic history of Canada, only “[a] few crumbs have been thrown in the general direction of the social and intellectual development of Canada, but these crumbs are of little real consequence.” Rawlyk expressed his hope that other aspects of Canadian history, aside from the political and the economic, will be examined by Canadian historians “one of these days.”<sup>61</sup> These reviews strongly suggest that general surveys of Canadian history devoted almost exclusively to the political development of the country were becoming perceived as outdated.

While Creighton’s *Road to Confederation* was not social history *per se*, the praise given to Creighton’s attention to detail demonstrates that historians continued to laud examinations of Canada that illuminated the influence of individuals on history and imaginatively recreated that society. *The Road to Confederation* shows Creighton at the height of his academic and literary skill, a practiced historian enlarging the picture of Canada’s early years. Reviews of this book are filled with praise for Creighton’s prose and his detailed scholarship. Roger Graham of the University of Saskatchewan described *Road to Confederation* as “narrative history at its best” in which Creighton’s “ability to

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<sup>59</sup> G de T. Glazebrook, Review of *The Kingdom of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Historical Review* 45 (June 1964), 133. Colonel Stacey also had minor criticisms of Morton’s discussion of military matters: Stacey, “Mixture,” 188-189.

<sup>60</sup> Unsigned review of *The Kingdom of Canada*, by W.L. Morton, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 33 (July 1964), 455.

<sup>61</sup> Rawlyk, Review of *Kingdom*, 125. For examples of other reviewers who criticized Morton’s lack of attention to social history, see Glazebrook, Review of *Kingdom*, 133-134. Also, Stacey, “Mixture of Solids,” 188-189.

draw his readers back into the past, to make them feel almost like actual observers of the people who came alive on his pages.”<sup>62</sup> Others lauded Creighton for his effective use of primary and secondary sources.<sup>63</sup> Military historian C.P. Stacey commented that Creighton “made intelligent use of other people’s work, as every sensible historian does and must do, but what is more to the point he himself has dug deeply and widely in original sources—more notably and rewardingly, in the papers of British statesmen of the period.”<sup>64</sup> Although focused on the political formation of the nation, Creighton addressed issues other than politics. Reviewer Alexander Brady wrote that Creighton was “no narrow political historian,” and possessed “an alert eye for social detail and everyday things, whether it is the clothes of women at a ball, the food consumed at a public banquet, the architecture of colonial towns, or the current enthusiasms of the populace.”<sup>65</sup> Similarly, S.R. Mealing characterized Creighton as a political historian with a talent for description that enabled him to present a “rich and varied” picture of the historical period he studied.<sup>66</sup> The vast majority of reviewers considered *Road to Confederation* excellent scholarship that combined with Creighton’s own inimitable style to produce a first-class work of national history – a history in which detailed accounts of the social context of Confederation played a key role. Reviews of *Road to Confederation*, as well as reviews of works by Lower and Morton, show that the Canadian historical profession of the early 1960s considered national history and social history to be compatible.

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<sup>62</sup> Graham, Review of *Road*, 251.

<sup>63</sup> Ormsby, “New Books,” 25.

<sup>64</sup> C. P. Stacey, Review of *The Road to Confederation*, by Donald Creighton, *Beaver* 295 (Spring 1965), 55.

<sup>65</sup> Alexander Brady, “Letters in Canada: 1964, Social Studies – National and International,” Review of *The Road to Confederation*, by Donald Creighton, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 43 (July 1965), 434.

<sup>66</sup> S. R. Mealing, Review of *The Road to Confederation*, by Donald Creighton, *Queen’s Quarterly* 72 (Winter 1962), 702.

New interpretations of Canadian history were not always well received, as demonstrated by the reaction to the northern focus of Morton's 1961 *The Canadian Identity*. Written as three lectures given at the University of Wisconsin, *Identity* combined these essays with Morton's 1960 Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association, in which Morton elaborated on the notion of Canada as a northern nation. In these published speeches, Morton contended that the significance of the Canadian historical experience arose out of four permanent factors created by that history, namely "a northern character, a historical dependence, a monarchical government, and a committed national destiny, committed, that is, to special relations with other states."<sup>67</sup> While Morton's focus on the importance of the monarchy was also hotly contested,<sup>68</sup> many believed that the explicit description of Canada as a northern country was inaccurate and exaggerated. According to C. P. Stacey, many who heard Morton's ideas presented in his 1960 presidential address took exception to his arguments: "A good many of Mr. Morton's C. H. A. audience, I think, had the feeling that he had taken off into the blue and flown so high that he never found his way back to the little home landing strip. This impression is not lessened now when one surveys the address in cold print."<sup>69</sup> More than one reviewer felt that Morton overemphasized the northerness of Canadian identity, while Stacey remarked that Morton overplayed his hand

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<sup>67</sup> W. L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity*. Second Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 89.

<sup>68</sup> This will be discussed in detail later on in the chapter.

<sup>69</sup> C. P. Stacey, Review of *The Canadian Identity*, by W.L. Morton, *Canadian Forum*, Volume 42, July 1962, 90. Others offered more concrete criticisms, such as Frank Underhill, who stated that Morton's interpretations "grossly exaggerate[ed] the differences and minimize[ed] the similarities between Canadians and the Americans." Unsigned review of *The Canadian Identity*, by W.L. Morton, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 31 (July 1962), 509-510. Morton's efforts were not entirely frowned upon. For example, some reviewers did acknowledge Morton was fundamentally accurate in his judgments regarding the differences between Canada and the United States, if a little over zealous in his communication of his findings to his audience. See Unsigned review of *Canadian Identity*, 509-510.

in discussion of the influence of climate on national character.<sup>70</sup> These sentiments extended to those working outside the discipline of history. Disappointed by the lack of discussion of the arts in Canada, the anonymous reviewer from *Canadian Literature* dismissed *Canadian Identity* out of hand, especially Morton's contention that Canadian arts and literature contained a distinctive northern character that resulted in a national character which incorporated the heroic and the violent, the moral, and the satiric. The reviewer concluded that "such statements were intended to be provocative rather than informative. They add nothing to our understanding of the Canadian arts at large, nor do they bear close examination when looked at in the light of world literature."<sup>71</sup> Academics appeared to regard *Canadian Identity* as having missed the mark and, having come from the pen of so distinguished a historian as Morton, as somewhat of an embarrassment.

Yet Morton's conception of Canada as a northern nation would prove to be ahead of its time. By 1964, Robin Winks, a professor of history at Yale University, set Morton apart from other historians by identifying him as the leading proponent of the "northernism" school of thought, in which environment and institutions interact to give Canada "a set of distinctive characteristics, an identity of its own."<sup>72</sup> In less than five years, the notion of "northernism" as a defining characteristic of Canadian national identity ceased to be regarded as a fanciful myth and began to be considered a serious explanation for the distinctive nature of Canada.<sup>73</sup> While the history of the north in Canada never received the attention given to areas such as labour history and remained a

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<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Unsigned review of *Canadian Identity*, 509-510 and Stacey, Review of *Canadian Identity*, 90.

<sup>71</sup> Unsigned review of *Canadian Identity*, *Canadian Literature* 11 (Winter 1962), 64.

<sup>72</sup> Winks, Review of *Kingdom*, 250-1.

<sup>73</sup> Even Canadian literature was touched by themes of northernness, as Margaret Atwood's *Survival*, published eleven years after *The Canadian Identity* and received with wide acclaim, would highlight similar themes of remoteness and climate. See Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972).

relatively unexplored area of Canadian history for many decades,<sup>74</sup> Morton is credited as the intellectual father of northern history in Canada.<sup>75</sup> The sea change in the reception of the idea of Canada as a ‘northern’ nation illustrates the rate at which change within the Canadian historical profession occurred during the 1960s.

### **Choosing the Battleground**

In the decade leading to Canada’s Centennial, the works of Donald Creighton, Arthur Lower, and W. L. Morton garnered generally positive reviews, even if some aspects of their work were considered limited. However, monographs represent only a portion of a historian’s professional output. From 1957 to 1967, Creighton, Lower, and Morton contributed articles to both scholarly and popular journals.<sup>76</sup> An examination of these articles reveals that all three historians articulated specific concerns that illustrate certain aspects of their understanding of Canada’s past and their concerns for Canada’s present. Set against the historical backdrop of social and political change in Canada during the early 1960s, the impact of their contemporary concerns upon historical scholarship became increasingly evident. Paradoxically, the ideas that most concerned these historians during this period – Lower’s quest for a moral foundation of society, Morton’s recollection of Canada’s British connection, and Creighton’s refusal to grant historical legitimacy to Quebec’s constitutional demands – were those for which they came under the most serious criticism by their colleagues.

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<sup>74</sup> Owram, *Canadian History*, 86, 341.

<sup>75</sup> For example, see *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, eds. Kerry Abel and Ken Coates (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), 7-8.

<sup>76</sup> For an explanation of the difference between scholarly and popular journals, please see Chapter 2, footnote 23.



As Canada neared its Centennial, Donald Creighton became increasingly preoccupied with the debate surrounding the place of Quebec in Confederation.<sup>77</sup> Contrary to Arthur Lower, who endorsed the idea that Confederation was a compact between “two races,” Donald Creighton strongly objected to the notion that the Fathers of Confederation had conceived of their country as the product of a cultural union between two equal nations.<sup>78</sup> Creighton published two articles prior to 1960 that addressed the place of French Canadians within Canada,<sup>79</sup> while publishing three articles in 1966 that systematically examined the historical basis of the notion of a bicultural compact. The first of these later articles, published in the first issue of the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, was written directly in response to Quebec premier Jean Lesage’s challenge to Canadians: “What exactly do you want Quebec not to want?”<sup>80</sup> Creighton picked up the gauntlet, responding with an article outlining the original intentions of the Fathers of Confederation, and asked that calls for constitutional change be measured against these intentions.<sup>81</sup> Creighton reframed much of the JCS article’s content for the magazine

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<sup>77</sup> For more on the differing schools of interpretation of French Canadian history, see Mason Wade, *The French Canadians, 1760-1967*. Revised edition, volume 2 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), 1113-1116. Ramsay Cook also has a good chapter on the influence and thought of Michel Brunet. See Cook, *Canada and the French Canadian Question*, 119-142.

<sup>78</sup> Arthur R. M. Lower, “Extend French Canadians’ right to be French across Canada,” *Maclean’s* 77 (8 February 1964), 26, 36.

<sup>79</sup> D.G. Creighton, “The United States and Confederation,” *Canadian Historical Review* 39 (September 1958), 209-222, and Donald Creighton, “The Church: How Much Political Power Does it Wield,” *Maclean’s* 72 (9 May 1959), 69. The first article examines the beginning impulses of the various parties, including French Canadians, towards Confederation, while the second article acknowledges the changes happening within Quebec, mainly through the waning political influence of the clergy.

<sup>80</sup> The implications here, of course, being Lesage’s assumption that English Canadians wished to withhold certain privileges from French Canadians.

<sup>81</sup> “Thus the theory of natural decentralization and the theory of Confederation as a bicultural agreement, both of which have such a plausible appearance, become doubtful and suspect in the hard light of history. This realization ought to strengthen our resolve to understand and respect our past. History must be defended against attempts to abuse it in the cause of change; we should constantly be on our guard against theories which either dismiss the past or give it a drastically new interpretation. Such theories are likely to abound in an age of doubt and uncertainty about the future; and most of them, whether consciously or unconsciously, have been developed to serve the radical programmes of the moment. From this path to historical propaganda is short and easy; and as George Orwell has shown in his terrible satire, *Nineteen*

*Saturday Night*, publishing his thoughts under the inflammatory title of “The Myth of Biculturalism or the Great French Canadian Sales Campaign.” Reflecting on the appointment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Creighton stated that “[t]he acceptance of these values [bilingualism and biculturalism] as basic implied a completely new way of looking at Canada and Canadian Confederation. It grotesquely exaggerated the importance of language and culture; it absurdly minimized the importance of everything else.”<sup>82</sup> In 1966, Creighton also presented a paper to the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba entitled “John A. Macdonald, Confederation and the Canadian West” which argued that the entry of the western provinces into Confederation demonstrated a lack of commitment to bilingualism and biculturalism. Furthermore, Creighton argued against the notion that the Fathers of Confederation embraced these ideas of bilingualism and biculturalism as inherently good: “The west did not get its institutions in accordance with the provisions of some long-range plan; on the contrary, the process was characterized throughout by accident and improvisation.”<sup>83</sup> These articles demonstrate the extent to which, in the mid-1960s, Donald Creighton actively challenged new interpretations of Quebec’s place within Confederation.

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*Eighty-Four*, the systematic obliteration and recreation of the past may become the most potent instrument in the armoury of a collectivist dictatorship. A nation that repudiates or distorts its past runs the grave danger of forfeiting its future.” See Donald Creighton, “Confederation: The Use and Abuse,” 3-11. This is the first article in the first issue of the newly issued *Journal of Canadian Studies*.

<sup>82</sup> Creighton also drew a distinct line between advocates for French Canada as a whole and advocates of the province of Quebec as the only expression of French-Canadian culture, and increasingly separatist in nature. Donald Creighton, “The Myth of Biculturalism or the Great French-Canadian Sales Campaign,” *Saturday Night* 71(9) (September 1966), 35.

<sup>83</sup> Donald Creighton, “John A. Macdonald, Confederation and the Canadian West,” *Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba* 3(23) (1966-76), 12.

Dissatisfaction with Creighton's approach to French Canada appeared first in reviews of his work as early as 1939,<sup>84</sup> and emerged again in reviews of 1964's *Road to Confederation*.<sup>85</sup> Margaret Ormsby's review of *Road to Confederation* gives a sense of the changing social and political atmosphere of 1964 Canada. Her comments highlight two aspects of Creighton's interpretations that stood in direct contradiction to "proponents of certain theories about the nature of our union," namely those who sought the increase of power for the provinces and those who sought a historical foundation for official bilingualism and biculturalism. Creighton maintained that the linguistic concession to French Canadians in Ottawa was never intended to go farther into English Canada than the nation's capital and that the jurisdiction of provincial governments was to be "quasi-municipal" rather than co-equal with federal powers.<sup>86</sup> Of these positions Ormsby wrote,

Such contentions will undoubtedly call forth a *riposte*. And it is well that they should, for what is expressed here is the traditional view held in English-speaking Canada concerning the aim and the purpose of the meetings held a century ago. Yet, to support another interpretation—which might bolster claims for guarantees of racial equality and of provincial rights—it will be necessary to disprove Professor Creighton. And that will be a difficult matter. For he is a scrupulously careful historian who is not likely to permit a document to remain unearthed.<sup>87</sup>

Aside from the accuracy of her predictions – Creighton's understanding of the relationship between Canada's two founding European nations at Confederation would increasingly go 'against the grain' of what seemed to be politically expedient for Canadian unity, especially in the face of the rise of Quebec separatism – Ormsby's comments reveal tension between the desire to challenge Creighton's traditional

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<sup>84</sup> Lower, Review of *Empire*, 209.

<sup>85</sup> C. P. Stacey, Review of *The Road to Confederation*, by Donald Creighton, *Beaver* 295 (Spring 1965), 55, and Mealing, Review of *Road*, 702.

<sup>86</sup> Ormsby, "New Books," 25-26.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

interpretations of Canadian history and an acknowledgement of the thoroughness of Creighton's research.

Margaret Ormsby's review, coupled with Creighton's articles written from 1958 to 1966, provides insight into Creighton's approach to contemporary issues, his unshakeable conviction that any changes to the status quo must at least acknowledge the past regardless of whether or not it was palatable to current sensibilities.<sup>88</sup> Creighton particularly objected to scholars who claimed to 'rediscover' the real meaning of Confederation, especially when, in his opinion, they had not provided historical evidence to support their position. Creighton fundamentally objected to this 'abuse of history' and the subsequent misleading of the Canadian public. Creighton's conviction was grounded in over twenty years of study and research into the life of Macdonald and the circumstances leading to Confederation, thus making him a formidable expert on the subject and, by the admission of his peers and colleagues, a leader in the field. Furthermore, Creighton believed that the original intent of the Fathers of Confederation, untrammelled by the interference of the courts, had plenty of relevance for contemporary Canadians if only they would have the patience and the curiosity to attempt to understand the history of their country.<sup>89</sup> When the external circumstances of Canadian society changed, it is not surprising that such a public figure as Creighton would attempt to guide the nation that he felt was coming apart at the historical seams.

Like Creighton, W. L. Morton became increasingly concerned with the lack of interest in the Canadian public and the historical profession in what he perceived to be a

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<sup>88</sup> Creighton, "Use and Abuse," 3.

<sup>89</sup> This tone is evident throughout Creighton's *Journal of Canadian Studies* article (Ibid.) and at the end of his address to the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba (Donald Creighton, "John A. Macdonald, Confederation and the Canadian West," *Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba* 3(23) (1966-76), 13.

critical element in the development of Canada and its national identity, namely the British monarchy. While Canadian historians eventually lauded Morton as the founder of the “northernist” school in Canadian history, Morton’s emphasis on the importance of the monarchy never met with the same success.<sup>90</sup> Morton articulated his position on the subject of the monarchy at a time when Canadians and the Canadian nation were in the final stages of cutting cultural ties with Great Britain: the newly developing Canadian nationalism involved not only a search for what was uniquely Canadian but also a separation from external sources of national pride, namely Canada’s connection to the British Empire. Therefore, Morton’s emphasis on the importance of the monarchy seemed awkward and out of step with contemporary realities. C.P. Stacey, the only reviewer to extensively address Morton’s ideas on the influence of the monarchy as articulated in *Canadian Identity*, was unable to accept the importance of the role of monarchical institutions as a major factor in Canadian history, feeling that Morton’s “mystical emphasis” on allegiance seems “rather far removed from historical or current reality.”<sup>91</sup>

Morton’s discussion of the influence of the monarchy in subsequent publications reveals both his awareness of his peers’ negative reception of his ideas and the central role of monarchical institutions in his conception of Canada.<sup>92</sup> Morton began his 1963

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<sup>90</sup> Carl Berger has a general discussion of the reception of the monarchy in his chapter on W. L. Morton. Berger, *The Writing*, 253-4.

<sup>91</sup> Stacey summed up the work as “an interesting little volume” and a “valiant effort” whose lack of success is because the author has worked too hard, rather than not hard enough, to find an explanation for the fact of Canada. Stacey, Review of *Canadian Identity*, 90.

<sup>92</sup> Morton’s chief regret was that Canada was not given the “acknowledged status of kingdom under a viceroy would no doubt have given a touch of style and dignity that would have made Canadians more conscious of their new stature and identity in the world.” He concluded, “Monarchy, then, was an indispensable part of the confederation of 1867, and its explicit recognition as such at that time might have spared Canada many later doubts and uncertainties.” See W. L. Morton, “The Meaning of Monarchy in Confederation,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 1(4) (June 1963, Section 2), 282.

address to the Royal Society of Canada, entitled “The Meaning of the Monarchy in Canada” by stating that “the ‘principle of monarchy’ had no necessary connection with hereditary succession, or with royalist sentiment” and clarifying that his only intent was to demonstrate the necessity of this principle at the time of Confederation. Morton explicitly stated that “[s]uch a purpose is a sufficient one before this audience, and no other is present.”<sup>93</sup> The deliberate nature of that statement suggests that Morton was very aware of his colleagues’ responses and was going out of his way to clarify his intention so as not to be misinterpreted a second time. Indeed, in his review of Morton’s next monograph, entitled *The Kingdom of Canada*, C. P. Stacey declared himself relieved that the importance of the monarchy was not “unduly stressed.”<sup>94</sup>

Morton’s persistence in discussing the importance of the monarchy was part of his growing involvement in promoting conservatism within Canada.<sup>95</sup> By 1966, Morton appears to have resigned himself to the opinion of his colleagues regarding the question of the monarchy, reluctantly contrasting “warm and living” American democracy with the dying convention of the monarchy, the substance of the Canadian ideal, weakened by Liberal intervention on behalf of provincial rights. His regret for this state of affairs is palpable in his conclusion: “But the monarchy in Canada was an idea and an ideal, at bottom a lawyer’s abstraction of the Crown, a convention and a legal fiction.”<sup>96</sup>

Morton’s frustration with Canadian attitudes towards identity is very clearly communicated in his piercing review of *Nationalism in Canada*, a collection of essays

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>94</sup> Stacey, “Mixture of Solids,” 188.

<sup>95</sup> In September of 1964, Morton delivered a speech entitled “The Conservative Principle in Confederation” to the National Conference on Canadian Goals, sponsored by the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, which was later published as W. L. Morton, “The Conservative Principle in Confederation,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 71(4), Winter 1965, 528-46. For a full discussion of Morton and his involvement with ‘small-c’ conservatism, see Carl Berger’s chapter on W. L. Morton in Berger, *The Writing*, 250-258.

<sup>96</sup> W. L. Morton, “Confederation: 1870-1896,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1(1) (May 1966), 22.

edited by Peter Russell. Morton wrote, “The Canadian, by some queer quirk of fate, by experiencing everything, conquest and victory, the frontier and tradition, has been thrust into the forefront of humanity. Yet a generation of glib-libism<sup>97</sup> has made him a monster. He now possesses the supreme and ironic power. He can destroy anything, he can create nothing. He has sterilized sterility.”<sup>98</sup> However, Morton’s concluding remarks in the 1967 review demonstrate his exasperation with the Canadian intellectual elite and their, in his opinion, consistent lack of attention to the past:

One question remains. Is not this volume at bottom anti-American, anti-imperialist, anti-power politics and anti-high capitalist? It probably is, and its general endorsation [sic] of a sober nationalism may therefore be not a matter of conviction but of tactics. It may amount to no more than the belief that it is possible to do in Canada what it is impossible to do in the United States. Or, if it is conviction, is not one back to the True North, reformed and socialized? I cannot myself quarrel with such a goal, but one might have arrived at it immediately by assuming that there is something to conserve as well as to reform, to prune as well as rebuild.<sup>99</sup>

As Canada passed into its second century, W. L. Morton continued in his efforts to articulate this conservative point of view. These efforts, as well as his involvement as the master of Champlain College and the Vanier Professor of History at the newly-formed Trent University, ensured that Morton would remain an important figure within a historical cohort that increasingly focused on the importance of the Canadian perspective in post-secondary education.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Morton described a ‘glib lib’ as “a socialist in liberal’s raiment. He preaches regimentation in the name of freedom, bureaucracy in the name of democracy, and technology in the name of humanity. He is a public thinker so involved in sterile contradictions – not in fertile dialectic – that his thought has no basis in principle, and his conviction no foundation in human experience.” W. L. Morton, “Uncertain Nationalism,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 2(1), 28.

<sup>98</sup> Morton, “Uncertain Nationalism,” 35.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>100</sup> Dictionary of Manitoba Biography, “Morton, William Lewis,” Manitoba Publication Index, University of Manitoba Press, [http://www.mbwriter.mb.ca/mapindex/m\\_profiles/hist\\_morton.html](http://www.mbwriter.mb.ca/mapindex/m_profiles/hist_morton.html) (accessed July 3, 2007).

Despite his retirement in 1959 at the age of seventy, Arthur Lower remained actively involved in the discussion surrounding the development of nationalism and national character in Canada, communicating his vision of Canada to the general public through many articles in popular and scholarly publications.<sup>101</sup> As the Centennial neared, the message Lower delivered consistently was a growing discomfort with the rapid social changes occurring in Canadian society, particularly the increasing obsession with material goods and the subsequent emphasis on the ‘self’ – two values far removed from his idea of Canadian life. Of the many articles Lower produced from 1958 to 1967, the majority of these addressed in some way Lower’s concern regarding the dissolution of common values within Canadian society.<sup>102</sup> On a number of occasions, such as a 1958 article written specifically as an accompanying piece to *Canadians in the Making*, Lower chided Canadians for their preoccupation with materialism and the technological innovations of the American material culture, using exaggeration, mockery, and hyperbole to make his point.<sup>103</sup> Lower also worried that the overbearing concern for “Equality” that he saw blossoming within Canadian society would result in mediocrity, conformity, common taste, and mass-produced goods, thereby rendering original

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<sup>101</sup> Damian Claude Belanger, “Biographies of Prominent Quebec and Canadian Historical Figures – A. R. M. Lower,” Quebec History Marianopolis College, <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/QuebecHistory/bios/armlower.htm> (accessed July 3, 2007). Lower served as President of the Royal Society of Canada from 1961 to 1962. “Past Presidents and Former Officers,” Royal Society of Canada, [http://www.rsc.ca/index.php?page=past\\_presidents&lang\\_id=1&page\\_id=75](http://www.rsc.ca/index.php?page=past_presidents&lang_id=1&page_id=75) (accessed July 3, 2007).

<sup>102</sup> Of these thirteen articles examined for this chapter, eight were published in popular journals and five were published in scholarly journals.

<sup>103</sup> “CAR’s devotees increase with the years. And no wonder. A patient, obedient god who takes you where you want to go, faster than any magic carpet. A comfortable, well-upholstered god. A god whose priests well know how to gain new worshippers by appeals to the vulgar but universal quality of ostentation. And above all, the god of power, who multiplies man’s ego manifold. Yet a ruthless god, sometimes, too, who could turn on his idolater and rend him.” Lower argued that “the effects on men of CAR worship, that is of this new mechanical society, are not yet fully discernable. That society is without question one of the most remarkable in history: it is perhaps also, all its aspects considered, the most lunatic.”<sup>103</sup> See A. R. M. Lower, “The Gods Canadians Worship,” *Macleans* (25 October 1958), 66.



contributions (to art or society or academia or culture) as a threat to the status quo because of their unique (and therefore unequal) nature.<sup>104</sup> When called upon to give advice to Canadian businessmen, Lower asked them, in no uncertain terms, to attempt to control the dynamics of “power and a thirst for acquisition” and to “cogit[ate] on the difference between simple right and wrong.”<sup>105</sup> Lower traced this fundamental loss of basic values to the weakening of “the authority of the universal church everywhere” thus “opening the way to that elevation of the individual upon which our world rests.”<sup>106</sup> In his publication marking the nation’s Centennial, Lower concluded his remarks by stating, “Once accepted beliefs have yielded, everything else changes too. Here is the heart of the modern revolution....We have little left of those bulwarks the older countries can look to – inherited tradition, accepted values and attitudes which help modify man’s natural instincts. Having parted company from them, we are left faced with the necessity of working out our own.”<sup>107</sup> Lower was charged by his colleagues with wishing Canadians to return to the past. While he certainly looked upon the past wistfully,<sup>108</sup> he continually exhorted his fellow citizens to examine their present circumstances and to look at how present decisions might affect the future of the country.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 71. Lower was also concerned that preoccupation with equality would denigrate effective social and political leadership. He commented on Lester B. Pearson’s leadership speech at the Liberal convention of 1958: “There was no lift in it, little reflection of that fine sense of conviction and mission that came over the air from Oslo on his acceptance of the Peace Prize. Let us hope he can recover this.” Arthur Lower, “Pearson and the Mantle of Power,” *Canadian Commentator* 2(2) (February 1958), 3.

<sup>105</sup> A. R. M. Lower, “Social Responsibilities of the Businessman,” *Business Quarterly* 27(4) (Winter 1962), 16.

<sup>106</sup> Arthur Lower, “Centennial Ends: Centennial Begins,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 74 (Summer 1967), 242.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 245, 247.

<sup>108</sup> Lower looked back with interest on the seventeenth century, and rather liking the idea of being without modern conveniences. “The compensations for lack of conveniences, soap, ice cream, cars, were many – an opportunity for open air life, the ample continent before one, its unsolved mysteries to draw you on, the dangers and excitements of Indian fighting and a sure entrance to heaven if you were killed. That’s a pretty good list and there’s many a man today cooped up in a garage or behind a counter who would willingly exchange his semi-imprisonment for the chance his forbears had to be – men!!” See A. R. M. Lower, “The Future of Man,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 68 (Winter 1962), 541.

While immediate responses to Lower's articles are difficult to locate, reviews of *Canadians in the Making*, which marked a distinct shift in Lower's scholarly reputation, offer some insight into the response of Lower's colleagues to his concerns about the moral disintegration of Canada. Lower's penchant for forcefully expressing his, albeit learned, opinions as a historian progressively became imposing, rather than impressive, as he made his judgments unsupported by sufficient evidence. Alfred Bailey stated that "[i]t is his strength as a publicist and moralist that he so frequently goes beyond a statement of what actually happened, but some will regard it as his chief weakness as an historian."<sup>109</sup> It was not only the fact of judgments made without support that caused reviewers to be somewhat tentative in their praise of Lower, but the nature of the judgments themselves that drew significant attention. L. G. Thomas, for example, described *Canadians* as having a "certain evening quality," while Lower's "scathing description of the contemporary Canadian social scene may make his reader wonder whether he does not, in his heart of hearts, look back nostalgically at the values associated with the conception of society he most vigorously deplores."<sup>110</sup> Blair Neatby also commented on Lower's acerbic "personal reactions to modern Canadian society" in the last two chapters of the book, stating that Lower's personal preference for "simple rural society" and evident dislike for the destructive aspects of modern progress do not make for good social history, but rather a "vivid interpretation of Canadian society in different eras which is personal, impressionistic, and revealing."<sup>111</sup> Neatby summarized

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<sup>109</sup> Bailey, "Sitting Judgment," 314. Reviewer L. G. Thomas noted that readers may be surprised that Lower's pronouncements occasionally seem to rest on very shaky factual foundations, yet acknowledges the pioneering nature of the study, as well as Lower's exciting, if not irritating and infuriating, narrative style. Thomas, Review of *Canadians*, 34.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas, Review of *Canadians*, 34.

<sup>111</sup> Neatby, Review of *Canadians*, 160.

Lower's book thusly: "[i]nstead of describing and analyzing the changes he becomes what the dust-cover describes as 'an angry old man of letters' and fulminates against modern deities."<sup>112</sup> Lower's younger colleagues charged him, in effect, with abandoning his objective position as a historian. While this was true, it is also revealing that his younger colleagues clearly did not sympathize with Lower's point of view.

### **Into the New Canadian Century**

It is appropriate that, during Canada's Centennial year, the only major publication by either Lower, Creighton, or Morton was Lower's autobiography, *My First Seventy Five Years*, as it marked the beginning of the period of retrospection on the careers of these three historians. Despite his proclivity for exaggeration and his sometimes-abrasive presentation, reviews of *My First Seventy Five Years* demonstrated that Arthur Lower's work was generally looked upon with approval and affection by his colleagues. UBC history professor Charles Humphries affectionately recalled Lower's tendency towards hyperbole, commenting that "[h]e is still teaching, still using the Lower method: overstate and thus agitate and stimulate the student, forcing him to formulate but never, never regurgitate."<sup>113</sup> J. M. S. Careless noted the "resonant Loweresque remarks,"<sup>114</sup> while the *University of Toronto Quarterly* reviewer characterized Lower as "lively, literate, full of

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>113</sup> Humphries concluded, "Arthur Lower has written an autobiography that is full of life and the reader speedily acknowledges that the author has had a life that is full. And it all comes down to this: he is still educating, in the best sense of the word, because he finds all around him an education." See Charles Humphries, "The Provoker," Review of *My First Seventy Five Years*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Literature* 37(Summer 1968), 97-98.

<sup>114</sup> J. M. S. Careless, Review of *My First Seventy Five Years*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 49 (September 1968), 278.

opinions, some wise, some outrageous.”<sup>115</sup> Reviews of *My First Seventy Five Years* also indicated the importance of Lower’s contribution to the intellectual history of Canada, specifically the intellectual heritage of English-Canadian history.<sup>116</sup> Upon reading Lower’s memoirs, Carl Berger was struck by the manner in which they showed “often directly, even inadvertently, the integral relationship between his own experience and his conception of the Canadian past. In a very real sense *Colony to Nation* was his autobiography.”<sup>117</sup> Berger also referred to the phenomenon of historians writing out of their own experiences: “There are many interesting glimpses here not only of the mind of a nationalist historian, but also of the atmosphere in which he matured. An egotistical book, perhaps; but in places it is extraordinarily frank, and, read as a social document, very revealing.”<sup>118</sup> J. M. S. Careless also noted the importance of this work to Canadian historiography and intellectual history, “[f]or it supplies a direct account of the intellectual development of a major Canadian historian, the kind of account that does not often occur.”<sup>119</sup>

Lower’s transition to autobiography, a self examination of one’s life, and its subsequent analysis and evaluation by his peers marked a transition for the older generation of Canadian historians in which they would be regarded not only as writers of history but as objects of historical inquiry. As the Centennial neared, reviews demonstrate that younger historians received the work of older historians with an

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<sup>115</sup> Unsigned review of *My First Seventy Five Years*, by Arthur Lower, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 35 (July 1968), 532.

<sup>116</sup> John Clarke of *Maclean’s* refers to Lower as one of the “historians who have made Canada’s story interesting to us.” See John Clarke, “Young Lower: the historian as creator,” Review of *My First Seventy Five Years*, by Arthur Lower, *Maclean’s* 81 (January 1968), 58.

<sup>117</sup> Carl Berger reminded readers that in *Colony to Nation* Lower “described the writing of Canadian history as ‘an act of faith, the substance of things hoped for.’” See Carl Berger, Review of *My First Seventy Five Years*, by Arthur Lower, *International Journal* 23(3) (Summer 1968), 492.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 493.

<sup>119</sup> Careless, Review of *Seventy-Five*, 278.

appreciation for the groundbreaking work accomplished throughout the careers of Lower, Creighton and Morton, as well as a sense of apprehension, as all three elder historians began to champion positions that seemed incompatible with, or unresponsive to, the realities of contemporary Canadian society. In a telling remark, H. Pearson Gundy, editor of *Queen's Quarterly*, commented upon Lower's tendency to make generalized statements without fully providing evidence to support his argument, stating that "[a]s a scholar, Arthur Lower has an analytical mind which likes to sort out large masses of facts into meaningful patterns and has never been greatly perturbed when some stubborn facts refuse to fit the pattern."<sup>120</sup> More and more, Canadian historians in succeeding decades would seek out the significance of the stubborn facts rather than look for the narrative patterns in history.

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<sup>120</sup> H. Pearson Gundy, "The Editor's Shelf," *Queen's Quarterly* 75 (Spring 1968), 191-192.

## **Chapter 4: National History in Decline**

In the years following the Canadian Centennial, Canadian society, and in particular the Canadian university system, underwent a series of changes that challenged the cheerful, optimistic view of Canada so actively promoted throughout the 1967 celebrations. The FLQ Crisis of October 1970 left Canadians in shock at the kidnapping of British diplomat James Cross and the kidnapping and murder of Quebec cabinet minister Pierre Laporte. Prime Minister Trudeau's hard-line stance against the terrorists and his invocation of the War Measures Act underlined the severity of the situation. The instability of the economy and the rise in unemployment also contributed to the increasing uncertainty within Canada and North America, as did the continued conflict in Vietnam. The growth of separatist sentiment in Quebec and the 1976 election of Rene Levesque pushed English and French Canadian relations to the forefront of Canadian politics. Against this turbulent social and political backdrop, W. L. Morton, Donald Creighton, and Arthur Lower continued to work and publish. For each of these academics, contemporary events served as a lens through which they viewed the significance of the past. Similarly, students and colleagues of Lower, Morton and Creighton evaluated their contributions in comparison to contemporary events, albeit from a very different generational perspective.<sup>1</sup> The degree to which the individual ideas of Lower, Morton, and Creighton were accepted depended to a large extent upon whether those ideas were compatible with the new trends emerging in Canadian society and scholarship.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter will deal with monographs published from 1968 to 1980, while the next chapter will discuss the response of Canadian historians to festschrifts and collected essays of Lower, Morton and Creighton, as well as the commemoration they received in their respective obituaries.

### The 'Age of Aquarius' and the Academy

By 1968, 'the revolution' was in full swing. Students protested for various causes on university campuses across Canada, the increasing availability of birth control, as well as changing social standards, gave license to baby-boomers to experiment sexually, and, united by their music, young people across North America shared a powerful sense of being involved in a wide-ranging youth revolution.<sup>2</sup> The women's liberation movement highlighted the inequality of the sexes as women across Canada began to work together to create better opportunities for women. In 1968, Rochdale College opened in downtown Toronto, an "idealistic experiment in alternative living and education" which gave free classes to baby-boomers who wanted to experience communal living. However, by the early 1970s, it became apparent that the revolution had turned upon itself, and the dream of international and interpersonal peace seemed increasingly out of reach. By 1972, Rochdale College was in the final stages of collapse.<sup>3</sup> After a destructive protest at St. George Williams University resulted in millions of dollars worth of damage to the university and several lost research projects, the radical university youth began to lose the sympathy of the general public.<sup>4</sup> Campus protests slowed, almost disappearing by the mid-seventies, and political activists turned their attention to the 'New Left' and the short-lived Waffle Movement within the NDP in an attempt to pursue a leftist agenda on a national scale.

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<sup>2</sup> Doug Oram's study of the baby-boomer generation, *Born at the Right Time*, gives an excellent survey of the issues and trends that dominated the late fifties, sixties, and early seventies. Chapters 9-11 discuss youth activism, the sexual revolution, and the end of the sixties. See Oram, *Right Time*, 210.

<sup>3</sup> Oram, *Right Time*, 185-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 286-9.

Apart from the political activities of the students, the influx of baby boomers had a considerable impact on the Canadian university system, causing the creation of new postsecondary educational institutions and expanding already existing universities and faculties. From 1963 to 1968 the increase in university enrolment equalled that of the previous fifty years, and new universities such as Trent, Brock, York, Lethbridge, and Simon Fraser had little difficulty in filling their classrooms. Established universities expanded rapidly: the University of Alberta, for example, expanded by over 12,000 students in seven years, and branch campuses such as Regina blossomed into full-fledged universities.<sup>5</sup> This increase in students required an increase in professors, and the number of university professors in Canada tripled between 1961 and 1971. Unable to staff their faculties from within the Canadian university system, university administrators looked to American graduate schools to fill their staffing needs. Indeed, in some of the newer universities, such as Simon Fraser University's Political Science, Sociology, and Anthropology Department, the majority of professors had either been educated outside of Canada or did not hold Canadian citizenship.<sup>6</sup> The expanding Canadian university system thus bore little resemblance to the close-knit community of scholars that had formed the early experience of Morton, Lower, and Creighton.

### **The New Canadians**

By the late 1960s, the lack of Canadian content in the classroom and a dearth of Canadian professors became a cause for alarm for some Canadian scholars. In 1968, Robin Mathews and James Steele, members of Carleton University's English faculty,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 181-82, 244-45. See also J. L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home: Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), 197-206.



brought attention to the lack of Canadian professors – and the over-abundance of American professors – within Canadian universities, arguing that Canadian candidates for new teaching positions be given preference over American ones to ensure that Canadian students were taught the historical and cultural inheritance of their country.<sup>7</sup> This Canadianization proposal met with considerable opposition, as some Canadian academics, such as Ramsay Cook and Blair Neatby, felt that giving precedence to national concerns would compromise academic integrity.<sup>8</sup> Yet Mathews and Steele continued to voice their concerns, publishing a book and speaking at universities across the country, and gaining many supporters, including many students.<sup>9</sup> These Canadianization proposals were given additional legitimacy when Professor Tom Symons, founding president of Trent University and author of *To Know Ourselves*, published his 1975 Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies. In his report, Symons stated that disdain towards Canada or a feeling that being Canadian was “second-rate” or “small potatoes” was prevalent among senior administrators and scholars in the early 1970s.<sup>10</sup> Symons found that “substantial grounds” existed for complaints of American domination of faculties, and that the negative attitude of

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<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of the Canadianization Movement, as well as a response from Mathews and Steele, see Jeffrey Cormier, “The Canadianization Movement in Context,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 30 (3) (2005), 351-370. See also James Steele and Robin Mathews, “Canadianization Revisited: A Comment on Cormier’s ‘Canadianization Movement in Context,’” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 31 (4) (2006), 491-508.

<sup>8</sup> Granatstein, *Yankee*, 192-97. Controversy surrounding these disagreements continues to the present day, as Steele and Mathews contest historian Blair Neatby’s recent characterization of themselves (in a 2002 history of Carleton University) as anti-American and wishing to lower the standards of Canadian universities. See Steele and Mathews, “Canadianization Revisited,” 504.

<sup>9</sup> Robin Mathews and James Steele, *The Struggle for Canadian Universities* (Toronto: New Press, 1969); Steele and Mathews, “Canadianization Revisited,” 505.

<sup>10</sup> Tom Symons, *The Symons Report* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 13. *The Symons Report* is an abridged version of the 1975 AUCC report *To Know Ourselves*. The abridged version was intended to make the findings of the Commission more accessible to the general public, and carried endorsements from such public figures as Conservative leader Robert Stanfield, professor James Steele, author Margaret Laurence, writer Robert Fulford, and NDP leader David Lewis.

Canadian faculty members towards Canadian Studies was as much of an inhibiting factor as was the domination of Americans in the universities.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the findings of Symons and the activism of Mathews and Steele, many historians became wary in their approach to the “Canadianization” trend, some openly challenging notions such as American control of Canadian culture. In a 1970 *Saturday Night* article, University of Toronto historian Ramsay Cook posited that there was no historical cause to be concerned with either American investment in Canada or its cultural implications, expressing his frustration with what he considered the derivative nature of Canadian “nationalist socialists” who called upon American sources to support their argument and who adapted American symbols in their fight for Canadian independence.<sup>12</sup> Historian Desmond Morton shared Cook’s objections, stating that he suspected that “nationalism is once again being exploited to sell books, buy votes and improve careers.”<sup>13</sup> Morton charged the Canadianist movement with being Toronto-centric, elitist, and called for a more reasoned approach to the idea of Canadian independence. In contrast to the Canadian historical community, members of the Canadian media and intelligentsia, such as Robert Fulford and Margaret Atwood, expressed a growing concern and fascination with the idea of Canadian identity.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Symons, *Symons Report*, 25-6. While the Symons Report found that history lead the humanities and social sciences in Canadian-oriented courses, the high percentage of students enrolled in Canadian history courses indicated that “student interest is well ahead of course structure.” Furthermore, the report suggested several areas in which the study of Canadian history needed to expand, including social history, intellectual history, ‘the history of native peoples’, women’s history, ‘the role of religion in social development’ and the history of technology and medicine. While some historians may have disagreed with the specific types of changes outlined by Symons, the majority of Canadian historians likely would have agreed that the scope of Canadian history should be expanded beyond its current repertoire. See *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>12</sup> Ramsay Cook, “Nationalist intellectual behind every tree,” *Saturday Night* 85 (April 1970), 20-1.

<sup>13</sup> Desmond Morton, “Canadian nationalism: Maybe we should just give it a rest and think it over,” *Canadian Commentator* 15 (September 1971), 6-8.

<sup>14</sup> In a *Saturday Night* editorial, Robert Fulford confessed that he had shed the notion that one needed to ‘graduate’ from Canada and was coming to realize how completely Canadian he was in his outlook. See Robert Fulford, “On becoming a Canadian,” *Saturday Night* 85 (October 1970), 11-12. Poet and novelist

*Maclean's Magazine* devoted articles and whole issues to the idea of nationalism.<sup>15</sup> These few examples indicate that, for the most part, Canadian historians did not throw their support behind the Canadianization movement: for many prominent historians professional considerations outweighed nationalistic concern. Indeed, the philosophical underpinnings of 'new social history', namely an interest in the particular and the assumption that society was fundamentally divided along lines such as class, race, and gender, precluded the possibility of such national cohesion.

### **The Growth of Social History**

The growth of social history in Canada was part of a worldwide change in approaches to the writing of history, as historians moved away from focusing on more traditional themes of politics and economy towards the examination of discrete aspects of the human experience. Intellectual historian Carl Berger traced the shift that occurred in the writing of Canadian history after the mid-1960s to the "profound changes in the country's educational and intellectual life," among which were included the rapid expansion of the Canadian university system and the social, cultural, and political changes that occurred throughout North America. By the late sixties and early seventies,

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Margaret Atwood used Fulford's 'conversion' to launch her own discussion of the Canadian psyche, relating her own experiences in the United States and her own awakening to her Canadian roots. See Margaret Atwood, "Nationalism, limbo and the Canadian Club," *Saturday Night* (86) (January 1971), 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> Courtney Tower, "The Heartening Surge of Nationalism," *Maclean's* (83) (February 1970), 1-5. The tag line for the article reads, "No one knows exactly when it began. Nor can anyone guarantee it will last. But there is no doubt that it's all around now, from the lyrics of pop music to the caucus rooms of Ottawa. And more and more it is forcing people to choose sides. Either you're *for* Canada or you just don't care. Editorially, *Maclean's* cares intensely. We present this report, frankly, with an ulterior motive. *Maclean's* wants to fan the flames of what we take to be "The Heartening Surge of a New Nationalism." The article itself cited sources as diverse as university professors, students, Canadian publishers, businessmen, and musicians. Following the FLQ crisis in October of 1970, some academics strongly felt that traditional ideas of nationalism needed to be reexamined in light of present circumstances. See Abraham Rotstein and Gad Horowitz, "Quebec and Canadian nationalism," *Canadian Forum* 50 (January 1971), 356-7.

the first of the baby-boomers entered into post-graduate work. Influenced by Marxist interpretations and other novel methodological approaches such as quantitative research, the baby-boomers increasingly turned towards the history of the dispossessed – blacks, immigrants, workers, women, and native peoples – to come to a clearer understanding of the undercurrents of Canadian history.<sup>16</sup> While this new generation of scholars brought a sense of personal conviction and involvement to their work that had not been present in the scholarship of the previous generation, the activism of the baby-boomers provided an additional impetus to a growing desire to understand Canadian history outside of the national political framework.

After 1967, Canadian historians began to move away from viewing Canadian nationalism as a single force within Canadian history and showed an interest in exploring multiple facets of Canadian society and culture. J. M. S. Careless directly addressed the issue of nationalism and history in two articles, his seminal “‘Limited Identities’ in Canada” and “Nationalism, Pluralism and Canadian History.”<sup>17</sup> Careless expressed the wish to move past a ‘colony to nation’ understanding of Canadian history, which, though valid, “may tell us less about the Canada that is now than the Canada that should have been – but has not come to pass.”<sup>18</sup> Careless suggested focusing on the study of regionalism, as well as urbanization and ethnicity, as essential components to understanding the development of Canada.<sup>19</sup> Careless’ desire to move beyond national history towards a more social, cultural, and regional understanding of Canada also

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<sup>16</sup> Berger, *The Writing*, 262-265.

<sup>17</sup> J. M. S. Careless, “‘Limited Identities’ in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 50 (March 1969): 1-10; J. M. S. Careless, “Nationalism, Pluralism and Canadian History,” *Culture* 30 (1969): 19-26.

<sup>18</sup> Careless, “‘Limited Identities,’” 1-10.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-10.

pervaded the second article.<sup>20</sup> Once again he linked the ‘colony to nation’ approach – a direct reference to the work of Arthur Lower – with national history, stating that national history could lead to “oversimplified moral judgments, to emotional prejudice about our own good intentions and others” bad, to belief in overriding “national purposes” whether decreed by “infallible Providence or infallible statistics.”<sup>21</sup> The crux of Careless’ argument in both articles was that national history was insufficient to explain and address Canada in the late 1960s and therefore national history had ceased to be the most effective way to understand contemporary Canada.<sup>22</sup>

Two collections of essays in the fields of ‘new social history,’ class history and women’s history, demonstrate the strong link between the social and political changes of the 1970s and the increased interest in social history by the new generation of Canadian historians. In the introduction to the 1976 *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, editors Gregory Kealey and Peter Warrian stated that “this book is an attempt to bring back ordinary working people from their long exile on the margins of Canadian history” and credited the political debates of the 1960s and the re-emergence of Marxism as the inspiration for working class history.<sup>23</sup> Kealey and Warrian made it clear that new social history was not intended to fill the gaps left by older historiographical traditions, but to create a “new distinctive synthesis of Canadian history.” Furthermore, the editors identified themselves as part of a generational cohort: “The contributors received their post-graduate education in the late sixties and early seventies and were part of the

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<sup>20</sup> Careless also identified generational history as significant theme to be explored, citing Montreal separatists and Vancouver campus radicals as belonging to a specific generational pattern. Careless, “Canadian History,” 24.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 20-1. Careless, “‘Limited Identities,’” 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, eds. Gregory Kealey and Peter Warrian (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 7.

political climate that led to the emergence of the new social history. Thus they are members of the first generation of Canadian historians to be trained in this approach.”<sup>24</sup>

Kealey and Warrian’s collection promoted a distinctly activist approach to history, reminding historians that they are writing about real people in order to “help working class people achieve their aim and ours – the ability to make their own lives and history.”<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice, editors of *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History* identified women’s history as part of the women’s movement and part of the new direction of historical writing, both as a “challenge and a response to the contemporary scholarship increasingly aware of its own past biases.”<sup>26</sup> Trofimenkoff and Prentice stated that not only did historians interested in women’s history have to deal with neglect from their colleagues – even those colleagues interested in new social history – but women’s historians were faced with the problem of finding adequate sources, as well as avoiding hagiographies of prominent women as a replacement for good historical methodology.<sup>27</sup> Like *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, *The Neglected Majority* was intended to encourage other historians, acting “as a spark” to enlarge the collective understanding of women’s history.<sup>28</sup> Like working class history, women’s history grew out of an activist approach, and came to form a distinctly generational understanding of the purpose of history.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>26</sup> Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice, *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

With the growth of social history and the increasingly evident generational gap within the Canadian historical profession, it is not surprising that Creighton, Morton, and Lower began to lose their status as leading practitioners of Canadian history. As we have seen previously, Canadian historians on the whole retained respect for Creighton, Morton, and Lower even while criticizing aspects of their work. In the early 1970s, the Canadian historical community continued in this tradition of respect, yet their criticism often reflected their desire to see more social history. However, as the decade wore on, many in the Canadian historical profession, and in particular its younger members, became less tolerant of national history and its grand narrative style, and impatience with the offerings of ageing historians replaced respect for experienced practitioners of the craft of history.

### **Morton and Lower: A Diversified Focus**

In the years following the Canadian Centennial, W. L. Morton moved away from publishing major monographs and turned towards administration and teaching. In 1966, Morton joined the history department at the newly-formed Trent University, immersing himself in the life of the university and the lives of the students as Master of Champlain College, and in 1977 became Trent University's third Chancellor.<sup>29</sup> Morton avidly supported Trent University's *Journal of Canadian Studies*; at the time of his death in 1980, both Trent and the University of Manitoba honoured Morton's contributions by

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<sup>29</sup> During this period Morton was active in his teaching duties. Morton remained Master of Champlain College until 1969, after which he was granted the title of Vanier Professor of History. In 1975 Morton returned to the University of Manitoba as Distinguished Visiting Professor. See Carl Berger, "William Lewis Morton, 1908-1980," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada* 19 (Series 4) (1981), 143-45; A. B. McKillop, "Obituary: William Lewis Morton, 1908 – 1980," *Historical Papers of the Canadian Historical Association* (1981), 223-226.

the establishment of a lecture series in his name.<sup>30</sup> During the latter part of his career, Morton's interest turned to the individual lives of Canadians, as he published the letters of Canada's first Governor General, the diaries of Monica Storr, an English missionary to the Peace River, and a biography of Canadian geologist and explorer, Henry Youle Hind.<sup>31</sup> Morton continued to publish articles on topics that interested him, such as the role of the North in Canadian historiography and the role of the West in Confederation<sup>32</sup> and to address contemporary issues, such as George Grant's pessimistic understanding of conservatism in Canada, the possibility of Quebec's succession from Canada, and the development of a "mosaic" Canadian national identity with its origins in Western Canada.<sup>33</sup> Morton's measured approach to Canadian history, as well as his perspective as a historian of the Canadian West, allowed him a uniquely compassionate understanding of contemporary Canadian issues that was often perceived to be missing from the commentaries of Lower and Creighton. Although Morton did not publish any major

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<sup>30</sup> John Wadland, "W. L. Morton, 1908-1980," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 15(4) (Winter 1980-81), 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> W. L. Morton, *Monck Letters and Journal, 1863-1868: Canada from Government House at Confederation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970). W. L. Morton, with the assistance of Vera Fast, *God's Galloping Girl: The Peace River Diaries of Monica Storrs, 1929-1931* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1979). W. L. Morton, *Henry Youle Hind, 1823-1908* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). Morton was working on a biography of Lord Strathcona at the time of his death in 1980.

<sup>32</sup> As noted previously, W. L. Morton is regarded as the founder of northern historiography. Several historians, including Kerry Abel, Ken Coates, Bill Waiser, Shelagh Grant, and Bruce Hodgins acknowledged Morton's groundbreaking contribution in a recent collection of essays. Abel and Coates, eds, *Northern Visions*. W. L. Morton, "The 'North' in Canadian Historiography," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 8 (Series 4) (1970), 31-40. Articles on the role of the West include W. L. Morton, "A Century of Plain and Parkland," *Alberta Historical Review* 17(2) (Spring 1969), 1-10; W. L. Morton, "A Centennial of Northern Development," *The Polar Record* 15(95) (1970), 145-150; W. L. Morton, "The Historiography of the Great West," *Canadian Historical Association Papers* (1970), 46-59; W. L. Morton, "Manitoba's Historic Role," *Papers of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba* (Series 3) (Number 19) (1962), 50-57.

<sup>33</sup> W. L. Morton, "The possibility of a philosophy of conservatism," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5(1) (1970), 3-14; W. L. Morton, "Quebec in Revolt," *Canadian Forum* 56 (February 1977), 13. W. L. Morton "The Nature of Canadian Nationality," *Current History* (April 1972), 185-88, 212-13; W. L. Morton, "The Historical Phenomenon of Minorities: The Canadian Experience," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 13(3) (1981), 1-43. This article, published after Morton's death, was preceded by an epitaph from University of Calgary historian, Anthony Rasporich, who paid tribute to Morton's contributions to the early study of ethnicity in Canada.



monographs during the last decade of his life, he retained the respect of his colleagues, young and old, and continued to generate original and valuable approaches to the study of Canadian history.<sup>34</sup>

Like Morton, Arthur Lower's publishing record had slowed by the late 1960s as he continued to enjoy his retirement years. Nevertheless, Lower produced two monographs, as well as a number of deliberately provocative articles published in both scholarly and popular journals. Lower ventured forth on a number of topics including the notion that university education could be 'value-free'<sup>35</sup> and Canadians' lack of appreciation for the rural way of life.<sup>36</sup> In the last decade of his life, Lower retained an active interest in both the Canadian historical profession as well as in Canadian politics.<sup>37</sup> Lower, who was ninety-eight years old at the time of his death in January of 1988, had the benefit of over twenty years of retirement to reflect on the importance of the historical

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<sup>34</sup> The high regard of his colleagues is made evident in reviews of his collected essays and the festschrift published in his honour, as well as the many obituaries that followed his death. These will be addressed in the following chapter.

<sup>35</sup> "In these disturbing days my brethren need stirring up...[This is] an effort to do just that." Arthur Lower, "The Uncomfortable Lectern," *Canadian Commentator* 13(2) (February 1969), 14-15, 15. Lower wrote, "I accuse the university and the learned world of having been accomplices in the death of values. That world has become a hothouse of relativism....When the academic dug himself behind that fortification, his lectern, he has (with distinguished exceptions), almost as an ideal, stood for precisely nothing." Arthur Lower, "Once Again: The Uncomfortable Lectern," *Canadian Commentator* 13(7-8) (July 1969), 15-16.

<sup>36</sup> Arthur Lower, "The Metropolitan and the Provincial," *Queen's Quarterly* 76 (Winter 1969), 577-90. See also Arthur Lower, "Townsmen and Countrymen: Two Ways of Life," *Dalhousie Review* 50 (Winter 1970-71), 480-7.

<sup>37</sup> Lower debated notions of Canadian identity within Canadian literature, addressed the issue of French Canadian separatism, challenged the growing influence of provincial premiers, and reminisced about his career, his youth, and his friend, Harold Innis. A. R. M. Lower, "The Dorian Gray Phenomenon: Explained?" *Dalhousie Review* 58 (Autumn 1978), 541-548; Arthur Lower, "The Problem of Quebec," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 12(2) (Spring 1977), 93-97; Arthur R.M. Lower, "The Limits of Liberty," *Dalhousie Review* 57(2) (Summer 1977), 254-64; Arthur Lower, "The Prime Minister and the Premiers," *Queen's Quarterly* 87 (Winter 1980), 560-5; A.R.M. Lower, "Notes and Comments: Nationalism and the Canadian Historian," *Canadian Historical Review* 66(4) (December 1985), 541-49; Arthur Lower, "Harold Innis As I Remember Him," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20(4) (Winter 1985-86), 3-11; Arthur R.M. Lower, "Déjà vu: A distinguished Canadian historian, now ninety-six years old, recalls the moment in 1910 when he saw Halley's comet," *Saturday Night* 101 (January 1986), 34-7.

profession.<sup>38</sup> While Lower upheld the value of certain aspects of national history, such as communicating to the audience in a jargon-free, enjoyable manner, he also maintained that we “have not yet seen to the bottom, as it were, of Canadian history” and that ‘scientific history’ could be communicated in an artistic and inspiring manner.<sup>39</sup> Thus, throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, Arthur Lower was preoccupied with the state of Canadian society and identity as well as ensuring that Canadian historians wrote both accurate and engaging history.

One of Lower’s more notable retirement projects was *Great Britain’s Woodyard*. Published in 1973, majority of the research for *Great Britain’s Woodyard* was culled from Lower’s doctoral dissertation,<sup>40</sup> the remainder of which formed the basis for the economic histories *Settlement and the Forest Frontier* (1936) and *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest* (1938).<sup>41</sup> While *Woodyard* cannot be considered national history, reviews of the monograph demonstrate the Canadian historical profession’s appreciation for good scholarship as well as the growing desire to see a more diverse approach to history. Graeme Wynn, then a PhD student at the University of Toronto, described this trilogy as “the most complete and informative account of the commercial exploitation of the Canadian forest during the nineteenth century.”<sup>42</sup> W. L. Morton, identifying himself as a junior colleague and a friend, acknowledged Lower’s unique qualities as a historian, namely Lower’s sense of the ever-

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<sup>38</sup> Arthur R.M. Lower, “That humble fellow, the historian. Some reflections on writing history,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 7 (February 1972), 45-50; Arthur R.M. Lower, “History as Pageant,” *Dalhousie Review* 54(1) (Spring 1974), 5-15; Arthur R. M. Lower, “Shaping the Past,” *Dalhousie Review* 55(1) (Spring 1975), 103-13.

<sup>39</sup> A. R. M. Lower, “Notes and Comments: Nationalism and the Canadian Historian,” *Canadian Historical Review* 66(4) (December 1985), 541-49.

<sup>40</sup> Graeme Wynn, Review of *Great Britain’s Woodyard*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Geographer* 17 (Winter 1973), 414-417.

<sup>41</sup> Berger, *The Writing*, 116.

<sup>42</sup> Wynn, Review of *Woodyard*, 415.

present nature of history and his “finger-tip sensitivity to his subject; like a carpenter feeling for the grain of the wood, he senses every fibre of whatever he writes about, terrain, folk, politics.”<sup>43</sup> In the midst of praise for Lower’s work, Canadian historians indicated that material compiled in the 1930s still needed to be interpreted according to standards of the 1970s. Although Joseph Malone of the University of Pittsburgh identified three major contributions of *Britain’s Great Woodyard* to Canadian history,<sup>44</sup> he gently chided Lower for failing to fully articulate the role of French Canadians in the timber trade.<sup>45</sup> Graeme Wynn’s review demonstrated the increasing importance of regional interpretations when he indicated his disapproval of the role of the Maritimes being, at times, conflated with the experience of Upper and Lower Canada rather than being evaluated in its own particular context.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Wynn was particularly disappointed with the lack of use of secondary sources published after 1940, as well as “few new insights” into the lumber trade, resulting in a study that would have been more at home in the 1930s than the 1970s.<sup>47</sup> Though commended for the thoroughness of his original research, Lower’s failure to update his work labeled him as out-of-date.

### **Donald Creighton and the Downfall of National History**

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<sup>43</sup> Morton concluded by stating that, “*Great Britain’s Woodyard* is the crown of a career of scholarship and writing, a remarkable thing after a career so long and so fruitful. Above all, as his students will recognize, the book is Lower *teaching*, teaching a message learned, it may be, from the wind whispering in the needles of the white pine over a gliding canoe. To this reviewer, it seems a classic of its kind,” Morton, “Lower and the Timber Trade,” 616-19.

<sup>44</sup> Namely, the documenting the history of trade between Britain and North America after the departure of the United States, identifying the mentality that led British North Americans to harvest their country’s natural resources, and acknowledging the role of timber in keeping British North America within the imperial sphere of Great Britain. Malone also strongly criticized Lower’s editor for failing to provide a proper structure for the book. See Joseph Malone, Review of *Great Britain’s Woodyard*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 56(1) (March 1975), 68-9.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 68-9.

<sup>46</sup> Wynn, Review of *Woodyard*, 414-417.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 416.

While the reviews of *Great Britain's Woodyard* give a sense of the Canadian historical profession's response to national history in the early 1970s, it was the work of Donald Creighton that would bring competing notions of 'proper' history for a contemporary audience to the forefront of the Canadian historical community. Although Creighton retired as an active member of the Department of History at the University of Toronto in the late 1960s, he continued to express his concerns regarding Canadian society and politics primarily in popular journals. In 1968 Creighton favoured attempting to create a bilingual and unified Canada, in keeping with the recommendations of the "Bi-Bi Report;" however, by 1977 he had lost patience with separatists, referring to their tactics as "politics of blackmail."<sup>48</sup> Creighton also made no secret of his disdain for the notion that internationalism would pave the way for world peace, as well as his wariness of the imperial ambitions of the United States.<sup>49</sup> During the burgeoning economic crisis in the early 1970s, Creighton strenuously decried the environmental and social cost of rapid economic growth, and encouraged Canadians to curb their consumption, reminding his readers that those who formed public opinion, namely those who were 35 and younger, had never experienced the privations of war or economic depression.<sup>50</sup> This

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<sup>48</sup> Donald Creighton interviewed by Allan Anderson in "Out of the turmoil comes a new awareness of ourselves," *University of Toronto GRADUATE* 1(4) (June 1968), 38-46. See also Donald Creighton, "No more concessions: If Quebec does go, let it not be with impunity," *Macleans* 90 (27 June 1977), 24-27. In this article, Creighton proposed that if it chose to leave Canada, Quebec should retain none of the boundaries granted to it since Confederation, the St. Lawrence Seaway be guaranteed for Canadian use, Canada should jettison its bilingualism program, and that Quebec should not be granted economic association.

<sup>49</sup> Donald Creighton, "Watching the Sun Quietly Set on Canada," *Macleans* 84 (November 1971), 29-31, 83+.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, "Oil-drilling, pipelines, huge hydroelectric projects in the far north threatened to disrupt its natural drainage systems, damage its vegetation and wild life, and seriously injure the native culture of its Indians and Eskimos." Donald Creighton, "Is Canada more than we can hope for?" *Macleans* 86 (September 1973), 60. Creighton also faced off against Jack Biddell, a business analyst and president of the Clarkson Company, over the question "Can we heal our economic ills?" *Macleans* 88 (April 1975), 26-28. Creighton once again expressed his deep concern for the environment and his prediction that there

qualification indicates that Creighton was very aware of his audience, attempting to provide further context for his opinions while reminding young Canadians that they still had things to learn from an older, more experienced generation. Creighton's final historical monographs – *Canada's First Century* and in particular *The Forked Road* – outlined his views on French Canada and the United States and subsequently drew heavy criticism from some of Creighton's colleagues. These two works sparked debate on the merit of national history as an interpretive framework for Canadian history and illuminated the deep generational divide within the Canadian historical profession.

The publication of *Canada's First Century* in 1970 marks a turning point in Donald Creighton's academic career. Reviews of *Canada's First Century* demonstrate that Creighton's status as Canada's leading historian was coming into question. The man who had received the accolades of his colleagues for his biography of Canada's first prime minister and his chronicle of the circumstances surrounding Confederation could, in 1970, no longer write history that a significant portion of academics considered relevant to the country as a whole. Donald Creighton was demoted from a "Canadian" historian to "the historian of Anglo Scots Protestant Canada and the leading exponent of British North Americanism."<sup>51</sup> Over the years, Creighton's colleagues had politely criticized him for his treatment of French Canadians;<sup>52</sup> however, in the political atmosphere of 1970, this was an omission that could no longer be ignored. Both Creighton's treatment of French Canadians as a group as well as his interpretation of the

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were lean years ahead for the Canadian economy. Creighton also outlined his disappointment that many non-renewable resources had been given to American multinational companies.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Gordon, "B.N.A. Artful Political Compromise," Review of *Canada's First Century* by Donald Creighton, *Atlantic Advocate* 60 (May 1970), 61, 63.

<sup>52</sup> See discussion of *Empire of the St. Lawrence* in Chapter One of this thesis as well as footnote 30 in Chapter Two.

British North America Act came under fire by reviewers. *Macleans* editor Philip Sykes stated that “Creighton virtually ignores English Canada’s often prejudiced and exploitative dealings with French Canadians”<sup>53</sup> while George Stanley roundly criticized Creighton for his misunderstanding of French Canadians, stating, “[W]ere he able to accept the French Canadians as equal partners in the Canadian federation he would be a great Canadian patriot.”<sup>54</sup> Michael Gordon of the *Atlantic Advocate* stated that *Canada’s First Century* was “likely to cause considerable controversy among Canadian historians and constitutional experts” because of Creighton’s assertion that reading “bargains that never were achieved or by espying entrenched inchoate rights which have never existed” into the BNA Act would only result in the “the confederative dream disappearing in a welter of confusion, irresolution and futility.”<sup>55</sup> Examining Creighton’s work from a continental perspective, Dale Thomson, Director of the Centre for Canadian Studies at Johns Hopkins University,<sup>56</sup> stated that he had “no quarrel” with Creighton’s interpretation of the BNA Act, yet Thomson criticized Creighton’s rigid commitment to what Thomson viewed as an outdated interpretation of Confederation.<sup>57</sup> While reviewers

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<sup>53</sup> Philip Sykes, “Five new approaches to the decline of Canadian sovereignty,” Review of *Canada’s First Century* by Donald Creighton, *Macleans* 83 (May 1970), 93, 95.

<sup>54</sup> George Stanley, “Pessimistic Nationalism,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 77(3) (1970), 440-446.

<sup>55</sup> Gordon, “B.N.A. Artful Political Compromise,” 61, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Thomson was also the President of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, and later became the Vice-Principal of Planning at McGill University as well as a lecturer in Political Science. See Dale C. Thomson. “Canadian Studies in the United States: A New Frontier?” *PS*, Vol.5, No.1, (Winter 1972), pp 16-18. Found at <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0030-8269%28197224%295%3A1%3C16%3ACSITUS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G&size=LARGE&origin=JSTOR-enlargePage> (accessed 30 December 2007). See also “In Memoriam, Dale Thomson,” McGill Reporter, Thursday May 6, 1999, <http://reporter-archive.mcgill.ca/Rep/r3116/memoriam.html> (accessed 30 December 2007).

<sup>57</sup> Thomson offers the most constructive criticism of all the reviewers, and is worth quoting at length: “I do question whether even a political genius like Sir John could have contained the changing forces of Canadian society within such a framework, or that he even would have tried. Certainly Creighton’s views of French Canada seem strangely dissonant with Macdonald’s admonition to ‘Lower Canadian Britishers’ to ‘make friends with the French’ and ‘respect their nationality’. Whatever their past sins, it seems to me that the attempt of the Liberals currently in power to re-fashion the constitution in a manner to reflect current realities is not something that would have been anathema to Canada’s first prime minister,” in Dale

did not question the legitimacy of Creighton's interpretations of primary sources like the BNA Act, they certainly questioned the appropriateness of his interpretations for a contemporary audience faced with complicated and sensitive political issues.

Indeed, it was Creighton's 'hardline' stance on the position of French Canada within Confederation, as well as his emphatic pronouncements on the state of Canadian nationalism that separated Creighton and his understanding of history from that of his younger colleagues. Charged with losing his objectivity,<sup>58</sup> reviewers expressed their disapproval not only of Creighton's interpretations, but also of his nationalistic, political, and literary approach to the writing of Canadian history. Speculating that *Canada's First Century* might be Creighton's last work, scholar and baby-boomer Ken Dewar wrote that the major significance of *Canada's First Century* was that "it represents the last defiant gasp of a dying Canadian historiographical tradition, that of conservative and liberal nationalist history. This tradition, long dominant in the writing and teaching of history in Canada, is in the process of being succeeded by a new tradition, that of internationalist professional history."<sup>59</sup> Graduate student and future York University historian William

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Thomson, "Canada Through Blue-and Pink-Coloured Glasses," Review of *Canada's First Century* by Donald Creighton, *International Journal* 26(1) (Winter 1970-71), 178-185.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Gordon of the *Atlantic Advocate* stated that, "In this book Donald Creighton has been more assertive and gives the appearance of less objectivity, than in any of his previous works," in Gordon, "B.N.A. Artful Political Compromise," 61, 63. Alan Heisey of *Executive* wrote that, "while his remarks [at press conferences in Toronto] were depressingly consistent with conventional neurotic nationalism they portended to me a book in which the author has lost the professional historian's perspectives." See Alan Heisey, "Yesterday's view of our tomorrow," Review of *Canada's First Century*, by Donald Creighton, *Executive* 12 (May 1970), 52. Ken Dewar stated that "...this is not simply the history of Canada throughout its first (and last?) one hundred years. It is rather Donald Creighton's refined and condensed historical and moral judgment of it." See Ken Dewar, "Nationalism, Professionalism, and Canadian History," *Canadian Dimension* 7 (December 1970) 71-74.

<sup>59</sup> Dewar continues, "Creighton's methodology, moreover, was traditional, the critical examination of standard archival sources of parliamentary documents, political papers and newspapers, presented in a masterful combination of narrative and analysis. Again, it is significant that Creighton begins and ends his book in the city of Ottawa, virtually right inside the Parliament buildings. His analysis of social and economic problems is secondary to the political and constitutional, this despite the socio-economic focus of his first, perhaps best, book." See Dewar, "Nationalism," 71-74.

Westfall's comments also demonstrated the distance between Creighton's literary approach to history and "the dominant trend of modern historical scholarship."<sup>60</sup> He stated that

[w]hile his contemporaries have laboured (fruitlessly) to extract from their work all remnants of bias and judgment, Donald Creighton has remained fixed in his belief that in order to be meaningful, history must be secured upon some general conception about the nature of man, and the historian must be prepared to use this vision as a criterion for distinguishing between good and evil. History is not like sociology, a social science; but, like literature, an art.<sup>61</sup>

Here Westfall clearly aligns Creighton with nineteenth- and early-twentieth century historians, rather than his immediate contemporaries and certainly not with those students who were completing or had recently completed their postgraduate studies in the early 1970s. These comments demonstrate that, by 1970, the younger generation of Canadian historians increasingly looked for historical interpretations that focused on the social and cultural, rather than the political, and favoured the use of social scientific methods over the use of traditional archival research and literary devices.<sup>62</sup>

In contrast to the baby-boomers, some Canadian historians born just after the First World War appeared to be more tolerant of Creighton's position, recognizing the significance of his work outside the academy while still acknowledging its controversial nature.<sup>63</sup> Roger Graham noted that *Canada's First Century* was "a personal book,

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<sup>60</sup> William Westfall, "Creighton's tragic vision," Review of *Canada's First Century*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Forum* 50 (September 1970), 200-202.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>62</sup> Dale Thomson finished his review with a call for a more scientific approach to the writing of history, stating that it is "more than time that Canadians attempt to apply the tools of modern scientific analysis to the study of their history." More specifically, Thomson called for the use of quantitative method in order to help "reduce the unproven assertions and sweeping generalizations that too often mar *Canada's First Century* and [Kenneth McNaught's] *The Pelican History of Canada*." See Thomson, "Coloured Glasses," 178-185.

<sup>63</sup> This was not the case for all older historians. W. L. Morton was reported to have described *Canada's First Century* as the "full historical orchestration" of George Grant's *Lament for a Nation*. See Dewar, "Nationalism," 71.



positive and unequivocal in the consistent presentation of its main theme. As such it will elicit some very personal and unequivocal responses. But one of the marks of Donald Creighton's pre-eminence is that so many people do read and respond to his work. That should be the case for *Canada's First Century*, for it goes to the heart of the Canadian question."<sup>64</sup> Peter Waite argued that *Canada's First Century* was a clear-headed and concise book that is "condensed and readable at one and the same time,"<sup>65</sup> while George Stanley, Director of Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University and designer of the new Canadian flag, put aside his frustration with Creighton's pessimistic British-centred nationalism to state, "Donald Creighton...is, without doubt, Canada's outstanding historical author. His style is a source of constant pleasure, even when his point of view irritates his reader. There is no one else in this country who can match him for vivid narrative, felicitous turn of phrase, colour, vigour, passionate commitment. Creighton's style is not flamboyance in action; it is poetry in prose form. A book from his pen is therefore a noteworthy occasion in Canadian historiography."<sup>66</sup> The reaction of the Canadian media was, no doubt, augmented by the reaction of many of Creighton's peers.<sup>67</sup> Roger Graham's review of *Canada's First Century* noted the "remarkably visceral" reactions to Creighton's book:

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<sup>64</sup> Roger Graham, Review of *Canada's First Century*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 52(1) (March 1971), 95-9.

<sup>65</sup> P. B. Waite, Review of *Canada's First Century*, by Donald Creighton, *Dalhousie Review* 50 (Summer 1970), 279-281.

<sup>66</sup> George Stanley, "Pessimistic Nationalism," Review of *Canada's First Century*, by Donald Creighton, *Queen's Quarterly* 77(3) (1970), 440-446.

<sup>67</sup> Several of these reviews give a strong indication of the media frenzy that followed the publication of *Canada's First Century*. Alan Heisey for *Executive* wrote, "Donald Creighton's latest history was launched recently in Toronto with a flurry of speeches and press conferences." See Heisey, "Yesterday's view," 52. Philip Sykes of *Macleans* wrote, "Nationalism, in fact, is so urgent among us that Creighton on his speaking tour is being questioned like a political leader" and told his readers that the release of *Canada's First Century* garnered more media attention than the first edition release of *Lament for a Nation*. See Philip Sykes, "Five new approaches to the decline of Canadian sovereignty," *Macleans* 83 (May 1970), 93, 95. However, reviewer P. B. Waite took the time to draw attention to the role of the media in the

Its author actually had the audacity to dispute a number of entrenched dogmas and to propose in their place some decidedly unfashionable beliefs. In some quarters this heretical defiance has been greeted with mingled indignation, ridicule, and wonderment that a scholar of his stature could fall into such egregious error. His very eminence and the size of his audience doubtless make the crime seem even worse to those who either read the record of the past in a fundamentally different way or seek in it substantiation of a fundamentally opposed assessment of the present. Dogmas die hard and on basic issues, touching the very core of our national existence, feelings may easily out-run reason. But of course there is no pure reason, no absolute and final truth about history, only at last a personal, individual judgment.<sup>68</sup>

Ending his comments with his tongue firmly planted in his cheek, Roger Graham summarizes the problem created by Creighton: a respected Canadian historian espousing unpopular views of current politics while providing historical evidence for his position.

Sixty-eight years old and no longer an active member in the History Faculty at the University of Toronto when *Canada's First Century* was published,<sup>69</sup> Creighton's age as well as his method of interpretation came to form a central part of the criticism leveled at *Canada's First Century*. *Executive*, the journal "for Canada's Decision Makers," summarized their position on Creighton with the heading "Yesterday's view of our tomorrow."<sup>70</sup> Reviewed next to a book called *Whoopee Youpi*,<sup>71</sup> which features Youpi the dog as an occasional prop to "four young ladies, romping through what could very well be one summer's day, in various degrees of nakedness" with a picture of one of these topless young ladies kindly provided by the editorial board of *Executive*,

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popularization of *Canada's First Century*. Waite made the observation that the ease with which *Canada's First Century* rose to the bestseller list in Canada was due not only to Creighton's abilities as a historian, but to the actions of the Canadian media, who appeared to concentrate their efforts on the "hard hitting and controversial" last chapter rather than take the time to understand the book as a whole. Waite attributed this lopsided attention to the 'lamentable' state of book reviewing in Canada, in which "[t]he Canadian Press itself, which supplies many of the Canadian newspapers with whatever they know or seem to know about books, is frankly awful. Canadian television is worse." The result of this incompetent and imbalanced practice is that "a good book became a popular book", although for reasons of sensationalism rather than good scholarship. See Waite, Review of *Canada*, 279-281.

<sup>68</sup> Graham, Review of *Canada*, 95-9.

<sup>69</sup> Dewar, "Nationalism," 71-74.

<sup>70</sup> Heisey, "Yesterday's view," 52.

<sup>71</sup> See Figure 1.

Creighton's work seems stodgy by contrast. Comparisons between Creighton and his junior colleagues also served to illustrate Creighton's advancing years. Admiring of Creighton's literary style, but unimpressed by his 'pessimistic nationalism', George Stanley praised Ramsay Cook, Creighton's former student and then-colleague at the University of Toronto, describing Cook as "the young professor who brought the History Department of Canada's largest university out of the nineteenth century into the political realities of the twentieth."<sup>72</sup> This is clearly an implicit criticism of Creighton, who spent his entire career at the University of Toronto, and was a leading member of the 'old guard' whom Stanley characterized as belonging to the nineteenth century. Whether in comparison to joyously half-naked young women or to Ramsay Cook, Donald Creighton appears to be past his prime and out of touch with the times.

While Youpi and his friends provided a particularly striking example of Canada's obsession with youth, more serious academic historians nevertheless pointed to Creighton's age as being a defining factor in their rejection of his ideas. Reviewer Dale C. Thomson paid tribute to Creighton's literary skills, but suggested that Creighton's characterizations tended towards fiction.<sup>73</sup> Thomson compared *Canada's First Century* to Grant's *Lament*, and suggested, "[p]erhaps the pessimism [Creighton] displays is the inevitable price of loyalty to men and ideas associated with a fast-receding past."<sup>74</sup> In 'Yesterday's view of our tomorrow,' reviewer Alan Heisey, spent the majority of his word count denouncing Creighton's view of the increasing Americanization of Canada, yet commended Creighton for his "marvelously readable history."<sup>75</sup> However, he ended

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<sup>72</sup> Stanley, "Pessimistic," 440-446.

<sup>73</sup> Dale Thomson, "Coloured Glasses," 178-185.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>75</sup> Heisey, "Yesterday's view," 52.

his review thusly, “I think Creighton’s concepts of nationhood and independence are more relevant to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century than to the 20<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>76</sup> Macleans reviewer Philip Sykes acknowledged Creighton’s scholarly contribution, but rejected his approach to French Canadian nationalism, stating that “[i]t is for younger nationalists to find some ground that they may share with the different but surely not incompatible nationalism alive in Quebec.”<sup>77</sup> Finally, although Ken Dewar appreciated Creighton’s “artistic fusion of analysis with a highly developed literary form” and his “present-mindedness,”<sup>78</sup> Dewar concluded that present-minded historical analysis was properly conducted by the present generation. Dewar summarized by stating that: “The past, in fact, is dead. It exists only in the present and has meaning for the future. Creighton’s attempt to define the nation in the present through its story in the past continues to influence Canadian historians. His present, however, is now our past.”<sup>79</sup> The controversy engendered by *Canada’s First Century* demonstrated that while Creighton was still, for the most part, considered technically proficient, it was his interpretations of the past that came increasingly under fire, thus indicating the preoccupation of English Canadian historians with the contemporary challenges of Canadian unity and their understanding that a solution to those problems would originate with the younger Canadian generation.

If the bell began to toll for national history with the publication of *Canada’s First Century*, the appearance of Donald Creighton’s contribution to the Canadian Centenary Series hammered the final nail into its coffin. Completed in 1976 while

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 52

<sup>77</sup> Sykes, “Five new approaches,” 93, 95.

<sup>78</sup> Dewar, “Nationalism,” 71-74.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 74.

Creighton was suffering from cancer,<sup>80</sup> *The Forked Road, CANADA 1939-1957* attempted to analyze the effects of twenty-two years of Liberal rule under Mackenzie King upon Canada, its culture, its politics, and its economy. Described as a “historical lament for a nation,”<sup>81</sup> *Forked Road* encompassed Donald Creighton’s anger and frustration with contemporary Canadian politics. Unlike his previous works, Creighton failed to provide sufficient evidence to support his interpretations, and as a result, reviewers lambasted *Forked Road*. *Forked Road* contained no bibliography, used neither newly available archival material (such as the papers of Brooke Claxton, former Minister of National Defense) nor oral interviews, and contained a very sparse use of up-to-date articles and secondary sources.<sup>82</sup> Not surprisingly, F. H. Soward, a former professor of history at the University of British Columbia and Creighton’s contemporary, concluded that “[i]n short this vigorous and acerbic volume sheds more heat than light upon a fateful period in the history of Canada. Regrettably it will not enhance Creighton’s reputation as our leading historian.”<sup>83</sup>

Many reviewers acknowledged the discrepancy between *Forked Road* and Creighton’s previous works, and the majority of them expressed surprise and disappointment at this development.<sup>84</sup> Carleton University political scientist Reginald

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<sup>80</sup> In addition to coping with the ravages of cancer, in the early and mid-1970s Donald Creighton also became extremely discouraged at the negative reception of his ideas. In May of 1970, Creighton wrote to his friend Eugene Forsey, “I begin to feel that I will be remembered, if I am remembered at all, as a pessimist, a bigot, and a violent Tory partisan.” See Donald Wright, “Reflections on Donald Creighton and the Appeal of Biography,” *Journal of Historical Biography* 1 (Spring 2007), 15-26.

<sup>81</sup> George A. Rawlyk, “Bare and Brutal,” Review of *The Forked Road*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Forum* (February 1977), 51.

<sup>82</sup> F. H. Soward, Review of *The Forked Road*, by Donald Creighton, *International Journal* 32 (Summer 1977), 672-680.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 680.

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Levitt, Review of *The Forked Road*, by Donald Creighton, *Histoire Sociale – Social History* 11 (May 1978), 244-246. See also J. L. Granatstein, Review of *The Forked Road*, by Donald Creighton, *Queen’s Quarterly* 84 (Autumn 1977), 490-1 and Rawlyk, “Brutal,” 51; Richard Preston, “Canadian politics

Whitaker summarized this feeling in his statement: “It is with profound regret that one must conclude that [the publication of *The Forked Road*,] is a disappointment. Worse, given the expectations, it is a major disappointment.”<sup>85</sup> Creighton’s inaccuracies and omissions mentioned by reviewers included neglecting the role of French Canada,<sup>86</sup> making claims against the scholarship of his deceased rival, Frank Underhill, without providing evidence for this claim,<sup>87</sup> and “erroneous statement of possibilities and events.”<sup>88</sup> Duke University historian Richard Preston described Creighton’s work as “writing slanted to a degree that rivals that of the work of the recent crop of radical historians”<sup>89</sup> while Jack Granatstein, a prolific historian located at York University, expressed his disappointment in Creighton’s lack of solid scholarship: “The story, however bleak it is, might even be correct, but this volume marshals no research to support the argument.”<sup>90</sup> Granatstein concluded his review by stating, “the result is a book of lightly documented impressions and memories, not history.”<sup>91</sup> Despite Creighton’s substantial literary talent, reviewers felt that *Forked Road* demonstrated that no one can write good history without “the requisite digging into the sources” and his failure to do so substantially cheapened the value and significance of the Centenary series as a whole.

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and foreign policy in the era of St. Laurent, Diefenbaker and Pearson,” Review of *The Forked Road*, by Donald Creighton, *American Review of Canadian Studies* 7 (Spring 1977), 108-115.

<sup>85</sup> Reginald Whitaker, Review of *The Forked Road*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 59 (March 1978), 105-7.

<sup>86</sup> Levitt, Review of *Forked Road*, 246.

<sup>87</sup> Creighton asserted that Underhill had misquoted Meighen. However, he did not provide any evidence to support this claim. See Preston, “Canadian politics,” 108-115.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 114. See also Granatstein, Review of *Forked Road*, 490-1.

<sup>89</sup> Preston, “Canadian politics,” 115.

<sup>90</sup> Granatstein, Review of *Forked Road*, 35-36.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

*Forked Road* not only reduced the value of the Canadian Centenary Series, Creighton's substitution of personal impressions for solid research undermined the genre of national history as a legitimate approach to the history of Canada. Lacking the necessary evidence to support his broad generalizations, such as the assertion that in the 1930s Canadians still "cherished a lingering sense of the fitness of social hierarchy," George Rawlyk concluded that Creighton's observations regarding life in Canada during the mid-twentieth century highlighted his middle-class Torontonion upbringing, rather than demonstrated a cohesive understanding of Canadian society and culture as a whole.<sup>92</sup> Michael Cross, professor at Dalhousie University and early baby-boomer, decried *Forked Road* as a regression into political history after the promising social histories of Cook and Zaslow. Cross stated that Creighton's forays into social history "give no adequate sense of social development and they barely interrupt the political narrative that is Creighton's real concern."<sup>93</sup> Cross criticized Creighton's "flip one-liners most academics might fire off over a beer" as the foundation of his work, chided his tendency to resort to unpleasant physical descriptions of those he disliked, and charged him with having neither the "inclination nor the information to create scholarly analyses."<sup>94</sup> Identifying Creighton's work as a folk tale rather than history, Cross concluded by stating,

[T]he school of political history that this book represents is nearly gone—a conservative school, a single-mindedly Wasp school, an elitist school. It is probably good to have that school epitomized in a book by its leading figure, Donald Creighton. *The Forked Road* makes clear, as no criticism could, why history in this country must move on to new things, be studied in new ways.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Rawlyk, "Brutal," 51.

<sup>93</sup> Michael S. Cross, "Once Upon a Time," *Books in Canada* 6 (January 1977), 16-18.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>95</sup> Cross clearly identifies the type of understanding of Canadian history that he expected Creighton's research to support. "By any objective standard, [Creighton's] new book...is flawed in almost every

Reginald Whitaker agreed with Cross' approach, stating that even if *Forked Road* was meant to be a "magisterial interpretive essay on the direction of the country's destiny," the lack of an alternative "fork," as well as other contradictions inherent in the work, demonstrates that without a structured foundation Creighton's interpretation deteriorated into a conspiracy theory.<sup>96</sup> Whitaker concluded, "partisan, personalized history cannot make sense of this complex question. Creighton's failure is the failure of an entire approach to history."<sup>97</sup>

### **Balancing Criticism and Commemoration**

By the end of the 1970s, the reputations of Arthur Lower and particularly of Donald Creighton had fallen to such an extent that their colleagues clearly no longer regarded them as leaders in the field of Canadian history. Lower continued to be provocative, but the subjects he chose to address did not carry the same importance for younger scholars. By the publication of his last historical monograph, *The Forked Road*, Creighton's personal views on political issues such as biculturalism and appropriate Canadian constitutional arrangements, particularly in regards to French Canada, differed completely from those of his younger colleagues and only increased his alienation. W. L. Morton, for the most part, concentrated his efforts in his final decade of life on university administration, and so it is more difficult to determine his reputation on the strength of responses to his monographs alone. While it is clear that by the end of the 1970s the

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conceivable way, in research, choice of subject matter, analysis. Yet it will find an appreciative audience. It speaks to enough English Canadian prejudices – Francophobia, anti-Americanism, fear of government—to sound a resonance in many readers." See *Ibid.*, 16, 18.

<sup>96</sup> Whitaker, Review of *Forked Road*, 105-107. Denis Smith also shares Whitaker's criticism of the use of "forked road" as a metaphor. See Denis Smith, "Creighton's view of the great Liberal failure," Review of *The Forked Road*, by Donald Creighton, *Saturday Night* 91 (November 1976), 55-56.

<sup>97</sup> Whitaker, "Forked Road," 107.



Canadian historical community had, for the most part, rejected national history as a useful methodological tool, Canadian historians continued to acknowledge the contributions made by Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton and W. L. Morton. In order to understand fully the legacy of these scholars, it is necessary to examine those works intended to honour and commemorate their scholarship and their lives: festschrifts, collected essays, and obituaries.

## Chapter 5: Reputation and Commemoration

By the late 1970s, the Canadian historical profession had reoriented itself away from a national understanding of Canadian history towards an examination of Canada's 'limited identities' of race, class, and gender. Yet during this shift in Canadian historiography, the need to recognize the achievements of national historians W.L. Morton, Arthur Lower, and Donald Creighton arose following their retirement, and ultimately, their death. As a result, a number of publications specifically designed to evaluate the body of these historians' work appeared throughout the 1970s. These publications included *festschriften*, collections of essays by a historian's colleagues assembled in honour of the scholar; collected essays, selections of the scholar's own work; and obituaries, which generally included both personal reminiscences and reflections on the lasting contributions of that historian. While many of Arthur Lower's colleagues recognized and commended his nationalistic fervor, even as they rejected his elitist evaluation of contemporary Canadian society and culture, Donald Creighton's approach to contemporary political issues isolated him from many within the Canadian historical profession – both young and old – and tarnished his academic reputation. Only the work of W.L. Morton continued to be regarded as relevant to the challenges of life in contemporary Canadian society and politics. Reviews of the *festschriften* and the collections of essays, as well as the obituaries, demonstrate that the Canadian historical community – especially those members belonging to the generations who had frequent personal contact with Creighton, Morton, and Lower – wished to acknowledge the contributions of national historians to Canadian history. However, the reviews also

strongly reflect the general desire, especially among younger historians, to move away from national interpretive frameworks and continue in the more important work of uncovering Canada's social history.

### **Canadian History in the 1970s**

As discussed in previous chapters, the growth of interest in social history coincided with the entry of the 'baby boom' generation of Canadian historians into Canadian graduate schools and into the profession itself. Social history was fundamentally an attempt to explore the lives of ordinary people, rather than the elites of society, and to do so by examining the underlying economic and authority structures of a given society. As intellectual historian Carl Berger reports, social historians "possessed a keen appreciation of the importance of class and class conflict, and of the subtle ways in which membership in an economic, ethnic, or sexual group shaped consciousness and behaviour." Unlike their predecessors, this new generation of historians were "more aware, too, of patterns of hegemony maintained by such institutions as the public school, more sensitive to the persistence of ethnic feeling, and more sympathetic to groups that have been the victims of history."<sup>1</sup> As Berger points out, a general pattern could be seen in the emerging branches of social history that helped to establish a "self-conscious identity" among its practitioners: first, the repudiation of "old history" and arguments establishing the legitimacy and social utility of the new methodological approach; secondly, the formation of networks and conferences relating to the branch of social history (ie. class history, women's history); and finally, the appearance of publications

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<sup>1</sup> Berger writes, "Social history in general represented a more intense involvement with anonymous social processes and structures that underpinned whole ways of life," in Berger, *The Writing*, 301.

designed to facilitate research in these areas, such as newsletters and specialized journals, including *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (1968), *The Urban History Review* (1972), *Atlantis: A Woman's Studies Journal* (1975), and *Labour* (1976).<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Desmond Morton's comment in 1975 that the emotional demand for labour history was not being met by the production of manuscripts hints at the extent to which Canadian historians desired to move away from political history towards social history.<sup>3</sup>

While newcomers to the historical profession provided an internal impetus towards social history, external pressures also strongly encouraged the Canadian historical profession to shift its collective attention away from national and political concerns. In her seventy-fifth anniversary assessment of the *Canadian Historical Review*, historian Marlene Shore described the 1970s as a time of uncertainty for the *CHR* in which attempts were made to find a balance between accommodating the developing interests of Canadian historians and continuing in its role as a national journal.<sup>4</sup> The necessity of moving beyond national and political history was reinforced not only by Canadian historians, but also by major funding agencies. In its application to the Canada Council for funding in 1971, the *Canadian Historical Review* was told that it was too political and national in focus, and as a result, the *CHR* made attempts to produce more quantitative and social history.<sup>5</sup> The *CHR* also faced competition from the new, more specialized historical journals such as *Atlantis*, *Labour* and *Histoire Sociale – Social History*, as many historians working in these developing fields chose to publish

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 298.

<sup>3</sup> Marlene Shore, "'Remember the Future': The *Canadian Historical Review* and the Discipline of History, 1920-95," *Canadian Historical Review* 76 (3) (1995): 443.

<sup>4</sup> See, in particular, the comments of editors David Bercuson and Robert Bothwell in 1977 as cited in Ibid., 440.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 439.

with the specialized journals, rather than submit their articles to the *CHR*.<sup>6</sup> In the midst of this specialization, the national historical journal struggled to retain its readership and searched to redefine its purpose.

As the representative body of professional historians in Canada, the Canadian Historical Association also reflected the changes of the late 1960s and 1970s. As the universities expanded in the 1960s in order to accommodate the incoming baby boomers, history departments burgeoned, and the cozy informal atmosphere that characterized meetings of the CHA in the postwar years was insufficient to accommodate the rapid growth of the profession.<sup>7</sup> By 1967, all officers of the CHA were elected rather than appointed.<sup>8</sup> Responding to criticism of the practice of inviting individual, and often well-established, historians to deliver papers, in 1971 the CHA programme committee issued an open invitation to all historians to submit papers for presentation. While these papers were still subject to peer review, this enabled younger, less established historians to present their research in a public, professional setting. The CHA also moved to accommodate the new methodological approaches to Canadian history at their annual meeting. The creation of three sub-groups in 1972 – Western History Committee, Military History Committee, and the Canadian Committee on Labour History – was followed in subsequent years by the creation of groups such as the Canadian Committee on Women's History.<sup>9</sup> The requirements of social history extended beyond research methodology and impacted the Canadian historical profession in a number of practical

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 449.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 3 and 4 of this thesis.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 28, 29.

ways as the younger generation of Canadian historians continued to change the landscape of Canadian history.

### **“Essays in Honour of...”**

By the mid-1970s, a number of *festschriften* for various scholars began to appear, as Canadian historians sought to recognize the contributions of their ageing colleagues.<sup>10</sup> Composed primarily of essays relating to each scholar’s area of interest, *festschriften* usually contained at least one biographical essay and one analysis of the scholar’s work in addition to the remaining historical essays. However, reviews of the *festschriften* for Morton, Creighton, and Lower demonstrate that while Canadian historians were generous in their praise of these men and their careers, the historical community eagerly anticipated, and expected, the rapid development of Canadian social history. The generational rifts within the Canadian historical community that appeared in the 1960s played a defining role in the reception of the *festschriften* of Creighton, Lower, and Morton. University of Toronto historian Carl Berger remarked on the professional and generational challenges of the format, stating that “[s]ince two consecutive generations of historians seldom have identical or even similar interests, there is sometimes a disharmony between the body of writing of the historian being honoured and the essays

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<sup>10</sup> The average age of these honoured scholars at time of publication was 70. In addition to the *festschriften* for Creighton, Lower and Morton, these additional scholars were honoured by their colleagues: Frederick Soward – Harvey L. Dyck and H. Peter Krosby, eds., *Empire and Nations: Essays in Honour of Frederick H. Soward* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969); Frank Underhill – Norman Penlington, ed., *On Canada: Essays in Honour of Frank H. Underhill* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), C.P. Stacey – Michael Cross and Robert Bothwell, eds., *Policy by other means: essays in honour of C.P. Stacey* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1972); Lewis Gwynne Thomas – Lewis H. Thomas, ed., *Essays on Western History: In Honour of Lewis Gwynne Thomas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976); Margaret Ormsby – John Norris and Margaret Prang, eds., *Personality and History in British Columbia: Essays in Honour of Margaret Ormsby* (Vancouver: BC Studies, 1977); George Woodcock -- William H. New, *A Political Art: Essays and Images in Honour of George Woodcock* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1978); and Lewis H. Thomas -- John E. Foster, ed., *The Developing West: Essays on Canadian History in Honour of Lewis H. Thomas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983).

of his intellectual offspring.”<sup>11</sup> Susan Mann Trofimenkoff’s evaluation of Arthur

Lower’s *festschrift* also reflected this generational divide:

[*festschriften*] also, I think, belong to a certain time and a certain generation. Can one imagine a book in praise of today’s specialized historical professionals, archival acrobats, or computer cat? Once Lower’s near-contemporaries have been duly honoured, such books will disappear. And their disappearance will indicate as much a change in society as did sports, cars, and sexually knowledgeable young women.<sup>12</sup>

While reviewers struggled to find an appropriate method of evaluating *festschriften*,<sup>13</sup>

Mann Trofimenkoff’s comments indicate the definite generational gap in the historical

profession. Her comments also hint at a certain eagerness to progress beyond the

generational perspective articulated by this elder statesman of Canadian history. While

the Canadian historical community never questioned whether Creighton, Lower, and

Morton deserved a *festschrift*, Mann Trofimenkoff’s desire to focus on the future of

Canadian historiography, rather than its past, formed a consistent theme in the reviews of

all the *festschriften* under examination.

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<sup>11</sup> Carl Berger “Lower: His Own Man,” Review of *His Own Man*, Heick and Graham, eds, *Canadian Forum* 55 (May 1975), 40.

<sup>12</sup> At this time, Trofimenkoff was a historian at the University of Ottawa. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, Review of *His Own Man*, eds, W.H. Heick and Roger Graham, *Canadian Historical Review* 57 (June 1976), 188.

<sup>13</sup> While the *festschriften* provided an appropriate venue for honouring a scholar, often with an essay or two devoted to the contributions of the scholar in question, several of the reviews indicate that the dual purpose of scholarly contribution and personal commemoration posited several difficulties for the Canadian historical community. Addressing the more personal aspects of the *festschrift*, H.V. Nelles, a newly-minted professor of history at York University, stated that “[l]ike a gift, a *festschrift* should not be too carefully examined by strangers. Unlike many books it is essentially private. Its value can only be known to its recipient; only incidentally is it a contribution to the profession.” See H.V. Nelles, Review of *Character and Circumstance*, ed. John Moir, *Canadian Historical Review* 52 (September 1971), 306. Attempting to evaluate the *festschrift* as a piece of scholarly work, University of Saskatchewan political scientist Norman Ward expressed his frustration with the format: “Is a weak essay in honour of a scholar demeaning to the person celebrated or merely a reflection of its author?.... How can a dozen essays, based on a dozen varied sets of expertise, be fairly assessed as if the volume were a unified whole? Is even the scholar celebrated, indeed, competent to review the opus which he inspired? Anyway, should an honest reviewer ignore the essays and examine whether the subject deserved them?” See Norman Ward, “Worthy Prairie Men,” Review of *The West and the Nation*, eds. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, *Canadian Forum* 56 (March 1977), 34.

*Character and Circumstance*, the *estschrift* for Creighton, was published in 1970, the same year as his widely-reviewed *Canada's First Century*. Reviews of *Character and Circumstance* were, for the most part, complimentary towards both Donald Creighton and the contributors, although reviewers did question both Creighton's political views as well as the predominance of political themes within the collection. Even while expressing his doubts about *Canada's First Century*, George Rawlyk of Queen's University acknowledged Creighton's extensive contribution to Canadian history and described the *estschrift* as "required reading for all serious students of Canadian history."<sup>14</sup> Although disappointed that few of the essays reflected Creighton's Laurentian thesis, York University professor P.D Stevens described *Character and Circumstance* as a "fitting tribute" and hoped that Professor Creighton would "continue to grace the literature of Canadian history with more of his work in the years of his retirement."<sup>15</sup> Political scientist Donald Smiley, however, expressed his surprise that none of the essays reflected Creighton's more recent polemical positions, particularly his "pessimistic nationalism" or his dim view of bilingualism and biculturalism, and noted that the "tone of these essays is thus a good deal blander than that of a latter-day Creighton."<sup>16</sup> H.V. Nelles, a former student of Creighton and Stevens' colleague at York University, used the thematic composition of the *estschrift* – dominated by political history – to criticize the state of Canadian history in general, remarking that "[t]he emphasis of the collection, as well as what it excluded – economic and social history for

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<sup>14</sup> George Rawlyk, Review of *Character and Circumstance*, ed. John Moir, *Dalhousie Review* 51 (May 1975), 278.

<sup>15</sup> P.D. Stevens, Review of *Character and Circumstance*, ed. John Moir, *Canadian Forum* 50 (November – December 1970), 305.

<sup>16</sup> Donald Smiley, Review of *Character and Circumstance*, ed. John Moir, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 4 (June 1971), 292.



example – perhaps accurately reflects the current state of the discipline. In substance, *Character and Circumstance* might be an exceptionally good volume of the *Canadian Historical Review*.<sup>17</sup> Nelles reiterated his disappointment in the lack of social history within the final paragraphs of the review, stating that “[w]hat really unites these essays is a common rejection of social theory and ideology as points of departure in the writing of history.”<sup>18</sup> Although Creighton’s influence within the Canadian historical profession remained unchallenged, the reviews by Donald Smiley and H.V. Nelles indicate that, firstly, Creighton’s political views negatively impacted his reception by other Canadian historians and, secondly, Creighton’s focus on political history and his lack of attention to social history (indeed, the general political tone of the collection itself) contrasted greatly with the mainstream trends in Canadian historical writing.

However, at the beginning of the 1970s, Canadian historians retained a measure of respect for the accomplishments achieved by national historians, and some, namely J.M.S. Careless in his analysis of Creighton’s place in Canadian history, attempted to outline a method of integrating the two historical approaches. Author of the influential 1968 article “Limited Identities in Canada,” Careless’ evaluation of Creighton’s place in Canadian historiography illuminated his concerns about social history in the early 1970s, as well as his desire to respond to the growing criticism of Creighton’s methodology, in particular, the vibrant style that heightened the appeal of his award-winning

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<sup>17</sup> Nelles, Review of *Character*, 307.

<sup>18</sup> Given his consistent criticism of the essays contained within the *festschrift*, Nelles’ concludes with a somewhat backhanded compliment: “Invariably homages to great men raise great expectations yet only rarely do they measure up. *Character and Circumstance* is no exception. As a collection of essays it lacks coherence and consistent quality. But it is not just a collection of essays; it is a handsome tribute to Canada’s most eminent historian,” in *ibid*, 309.

biographies.<sup>19</sup> Rather than attempting to force Creighton's work under the umbrella of social history, Careless sought to articulate how Creighton's effective and vibrant methodology could still be used, even in the quantitative atmosphere of the 'new social history.' Using the example of collective biography, Careless demonstrated that examining individual personalities may illuminate quantitative data on social classes and help to understand the mindset of those classes rather than presenting that same quantitative data in the form of, in Creighton's words, "an abstract and inhuman method of presentation."<sup>20</sup> Demonstrating that throughout his career Creighton consistently addressed not only political, but social, economic, and cultural issues within Canadian history,<sup>21</sup> Careless concluded by stating that "[w]hether these aspects we have observed in Creighton's biographical approach to Canadian history would make him significantly a social historian is of little consequence here. What is of consequence is the skill of that approach and the force of its example – which may render his influence on history in Canada even greater than now is realized."<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprising given the complexity of reviewing a *festschrift*, none of the reviewers of *Character and Circumstance* chose to engage extensively in Careless' proposal to combine the methods of 'new social history' with the approach of a historian that many regarded as "anxious

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<sup>19</sup> Careless states that Creighton's style is regarded as a "dirty trick" by those who "seem to hold that to present a carefully constructed narrative, marked by evocative description, immediacy and feeling, is highly suspect, if not actually to be deplored, as smacking too much of the popularist and subjective," in J.M.S Careless, "Donald Creighton and Canadian History: Some Reflections," in Review of *Character and Circumstance*, ed, John S. Moir (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>21</sup> Careless wrote, "What category of history indeed, would best describe his work – political, economic, social, cultural or what? It is an easy judgment, typical of half-baked opinions by quarter-learned critics, to deem it merely political narrative, as if there were something inherently second-rate in studying the course of past political events and personages in Canada. ... but the obvious point is to note that his treatment of political subjects has in no way been limited to a concern for politics only," in Ibid., 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 21.

and disoriented”;<sup>23</sup> however, a handful of reviews do indicate that Careless’ suggestion met with tacit approval.<sup>24</sup> This suggests that, in the early 1970s not all historians perceived social history and national history as incompatible.

In contrast to the varied responses to Donald Creighton’s later work, Canadian historians generally evaluated the career of Arthur Lower with a considerable amount of appreciation and goodwill. Lower’s *festschrift*, *His Own Man*, was published in 1974 and his collection of essays, *History and Myth*, was published a year later. Unlike the collections of essays honouring Creighton and Morton, which contained only a semi-biographical or anecdotal introduction and an analytical essay of their work, Arthur Lower’s *festschrift* contained four biographical pieces, including a reflection upon Lower’s teaching style by UBC historian Margaret Prang, and co-editor W.H. Heick’s analysis of Lower’s thought. While the inclusion of two additional biographical pieces on Lower is likely more reflective of individual editorial decisions than an overwhelming interest in the life of Arthur Lower within the Canadian historical community at large, these four pieces give vital information about Lower’s longstanding popularity. Prang and Graham’s discussion of Lower’s effectiveness as a teacher who encouraged students to think broadly about their history, their nation, and the world around them reflected

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<sup>23</sup> George Rawlyk of Queen’s University wrote, “*Canada’s First Century* is a historical Jeremiad and an excellent example of how relevant the historian can, in fact, be in periods of acute anxiety and disorientation,” in Rawlyk, Review of *Character*, 277.

<sup>24</sup> H.V. Nelles wrote that “J.M.S. Careless reminds us in an important essay on the technique and continuing relevance of Creighton’s prose style,” in Nelles, Review of *Character*, 309. Alfred Bailey remarks that Careless “gives the reader some insight into why Professor Creighton’s works so uniformly exemplify the virtues of historical writing.” See Alfred Bailey, Review of *Character and Circumstance*, ed. John Moir, *International Journal* 26 (Winter 1970-71): 278. P.D. Stevens wrote, “But who can argue with Maurice Careless’ conclusion in his essay, ‘Donald Creighton and Canadian History’, that ‘Canadian history would yet have been immeasurably poorer had he somehow damped down his artistry and withheld his engagement in order to produce more primly withdrawn, soberly pedestrian volumes,’” in Stevens, Review of *Character*, 304. Finally, Donald Smiley acknowledged that “Careless argues cogently for the relevance of ‘the study of individual personality and of collective biography as integral parts of social history,’” in Smiley, Review of *Character*, 292.

Lower's popularity with his students.<sup>25</sup> Gibson's praise of the genuine nature of Lower's nationalism and Heick's favorable discussion of the two dialectics that form the centre of Lower's thought, "the first between the French and English ways of life; and the second between the developing Canadian nation and the restrictions (real or imagined) placed upon that growth by the mother country," showed that Lower's attitude towards the origins and development of the Canadian state remained generally acceptable into the 1970s.<sup>26</sup> Although these biographical sketches did contain a certain measure of criticism – indeed, Margaret Prang noted Lower's guarded support of women in the university while W.H. Heick postulated whether "[t]he theme of nation-building has a teleological cast which may tell us more about Lower's dream for Canada than about what Canada has actually come to be"<sup>27</sup> – Lower's contributions to Canadian historiography as well as his attractive personality certainly appear to have outweighed serious criticism of his work.

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<sup>25</sup> The foreword by editor Roger Graham, a former student of Lower and then Douglas Professor of Canadian History at Queen's University, recalled with pleasure Lower's semantic technique of "unlearning" in which Lower attempted to "dissipate the mists of colonialism," convince students of the importance of their personal liberties, and challenge and provoke students to think beyond their formed prejudices. (Roger Graham. W.H. Heick and Roger Graham, eds., *His Own Man* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), viii-ix. Margaret Prang also addressed Lower's teaching style, comparing his methods with those favoured in 1974 and contrasting Lower's wide-ranging knowledge and ability to teach on several topics with the narrow specialization of the 1970s, stating that "[i]t is far from obvious that either the teachers or the taught are better educated under the arrangements generally prevailing now." Prang also remembered comments of United College graduates of the thirties and forties: "The comments are always of two kinds: 'He really believed in the importance of what he was lecturing about, and so did we,' and 'that man did more than anyone else to show me how to think about my society and the world around me.' If Canadians today are intellectually more sophisticated and better informed than they were when he began his teaching career, Arthur Lower may take some credit for the change." See Margaret Prang, "The Professor and 'Relevance'." In *His Own Man*, edited by W.H. Heick and Roger Graham (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 14, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Frederick Gibson, "Arthur Lower: Always the Same and Always His Own Man." In *Ibid.*, 10. See also W.H. Heick, "The Character and Spirit of an Age: A Study of the Thought of Arthur R. M. Lower." In *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Prang, "The Professor," 14. Heick continued, "He may well have been unconsciously sifting out all of the evidence of insignificant material to validate his position while ignoring facts more relevant to a truer understanding of Canada's history." See Heick, "Character and Spirit," 33.)

While the reviewers of *His Own Man* generally shared the contributors' opinion of Arthur Lower, they were less impressed with the general content of the *festschrift*, especially its lack of focus on social history: of the nine essays within the *festschrift*, only a few of these were considered worth noting. The University of Toronto's Carl Berger praised Syd Wise of Carleton University for his "fresh and important" analysis of organized sport in Ontario and Quebec in the late nineteenth century, calling it "one of the few reasons why anyone interested in general Canadian history would read this otherwise disappointing *mélange*."<sup>28</sup> Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, of the University of Ottawa, also commended Wise for his essay and its focus on social class. Mann Trofimenkoff stated that the omissions of influence of religion, economics, and the family "undoubtedly reveal gaps in Canadian historical writing itself" and complimented Lower by continuing, "that one should want them filled in this particular *festschrift* suggests the depth and breadth of Arthur Lower's own historical writing."<sup>29</sup> UBC historian Allan Smith also used his review of *His Own Man* to criticize the tenor of social history in Canada, demonstrating that by the mid 1970s, notions of what was considered social history had changed dramatically since the publication of Lower's *Canadians in the Making*. For example, the lack of an ideological framework in W.L. Morton's essay on civil liberties prompted Smith to qualify his praise of the essay by stating that "[i]t would be wrong to suggest that what Morton has done here is social history, but it nonetheless manages to convey a clear notion that what happens in society forms some

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<sup>28</sup> Carl Berger, "Lower: His Own Man," Review of *His Own Man*, eds, W.H. Heick and Roger Graham, *Canadian Forum* 55 (May 1975): 41.

<sup>29</sup> Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, Review of *His Own Man*, eds, W.H. Heick and Roger Graham, *Canadian Historical Review* 57 (June 1976): 189.

part of a whole whose processes are intelligible.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Smith wrote that “Lower’s social history is now, indeed, hardly recognizable as such” and concluded his review by stating,

[i]n their common reluctance to view society as a phenomenon whose elements can be distinguished analytically and then seen and understood in relation to one another, Lower and most of the contributors come, regrettably, together. It is unfortunate that a pioneer in Canadian social history could not have been honoured by a collection showing how the work he helped to begin has advanced, rather than one whose total effect is to suggest that there has been no forward movement at all.<sup>31</sup>

While appreciative of Lower’s personality and of his pioneering efforts in the field of social history, reviewers of *History and Myth* collectively expressed the generational desire to move forward into more social history and away from the study of the political.

Like Creighton and Lower, W.L. Morton’s colleagues and students also honoured him with a *festschrift*, entitled *The West and the Nation* and published in 1976. The *festschrift* for Morton contained both a personal tribute to Morton by the editors as well as Carl Berger’s analysis of Morton that formed one of the chapters of *The Writing of Canadian History*.<sup>32</sup> W.D. Smith and W. Stewart Martin, who co-wrote the collection’s preface, said of Morton that

Reserve and modesty have also characterized Morton’s personality. In his long academic career he has received many honours, but he wears them lightly. He neither depreciates nor boasts of them. Students and colleagues always find him easily approachable, perhaps because he is so obviously blessed with the gift of patience..... W.L. Morton is a man who had traveled with ease among the great and the ordinary. He is a man who disdains sham and hypocrisy; a man who had

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<sup>30</sup> Allan Smith, Review of *His Own Man*, eds, W.H. Heick and Roger Graham, *Histoire Sociale – Social History* 9(17) (May 1976): 223.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> The remainder of the fourteen essays dealt with a wide variety of subjects, including the Winnipeg General Strike and the Canadian monarchy and featured contributions from leading historians such as Robert Craig Brown, Ramsay Cook and Morris Zaslow.

dedicated himself not only to scholarly activities of the highest caliber, but also to the broader worthwhile objectives of society.<sup>33</sup>

This glowing description of Morton was not contradicted by the reviewers. P.B. Waite listed several scholars who had been given *Festschriften* (including F.H. Underhill, D.G. Creighton, A.R.M. Lower, F.H. Soward, J.J. Talman, and C.P. Stacey) and stated that “[o]f all the historians to whom the *Festschriften* have been given, W.L. Morton has always been one of the most approachable and one of the most likeable.”<sup>34</sup> John Herd Thompson, who had three years previously completed his PhD at Queen’s University and in 1978 was teaching at McGill University, described Morton as “Canada’s most outstanding Conservative historian” and stated that “[p]erhaps the most significant tribute is the fact that all but five of the fourteen essays cite one or more of Morton’s books or articles!”<sup>35</sup> Both personally and professionally, W.L. Morton was highly regarded by his colleagues in Canadian history.

Reviews of *The West and the Nation* also reveal that Morton had supplanted Donald Creighton as the leading Canadian conservative historian in the eyes of their peers. Indeed, several reviewers drew deliberate comparisons between the two historians. A telling clue is University of Saskatchewan political scientist Norman Ward’s description of Morton’s similarities and differences with Creighton: their shared aversion to the liberal interpretation of history and “solicitude for traditional institutions” was contrasted with Morton’s acceptance of bilingualism.<sup>36</sup> Readers of the *Canadian Forum*, especially those within the Canadian academic community, could not have been unaware

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<sup>33</sup> W.D. Smith and W. Stewart Martin, “In Recognition” in *The West and the Nation*, ed. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976): 5, 7.

<sup>34</sup> P.B. Waite, Review of *The West and the Nation*, eds. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, *Dalhousie Review* 56 (Autumn 1976): 583.

<sup>35</sup> John Herd Thompson, Review of *The West and the Nation*, eds. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, *Canadian Historical Review* 59 (June 1978): 250.

<sup>36</sup> Ward, “Worthy Prairie Men,” 34.

of Creighton's opposition to bilingualism, and so Ward's point – that Morton was much more receptive to the efforts of French Canadian nationalists – would have indicated that Morton was much closer to mainstream thought regarding the 'French Canadian issue' than was Creighton. Furthermore, reviewers considered Donald Creighton's choice to submit an essay censuring Frank Underhill for becoming "the great spiritual leader of twentieth century Canadian Liberalism" as his contribution to *The West and the Nation* as an added strike against Creighton's reputation that had suffered a downfall since the early 1970s.<sup>37</sup> Although Norman Ward admired Creighton's essay, as did Dalhousie's P.B. Waite, Ward stated that an article critical of a deceased colleague was not an appropriate way in which to honour W.L. Morton.<sup>38</sup> Other reviewers, including Foster Griezic and M. James Penton, questioned the inclusion of Creighton's analysis of Frank Underhill, what John Herd Thomson described as "D.G. Creighton's continuation of his vendetta against the late F.H. Underhill."<sup>39</sup> Taken together, these comments reveal that Morton continued to enjoy the personal and professional respect of his colleagues, both young and old, while Creighton's reputation continued to decline.

Reviews of *The West and the Nation* highlight two specific areas of social history, class analysis and regionalism, which Canadian historians considered essential to understanding Canada's past. M. James Penton, teaching at the decade-old University of Lethbridge, strongly disliked the inclusion of Jacques Monet's essay on the monarchy,

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<sup>37</sup> Donald Creighton, "The Ogdensburg Agreement and F.H. Underhill," in *The West and the Nation*, ed. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976): 320.

<sup>38</sup> Ward, "Worthy," 34. See also Waite, Review of *West and Nation*, 583.

<sup>39</sup> Thompson, Review of *West and Nation*, 250. See also F.J.K. Griezec, Review of *The West and the Nation*, eds. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, *Histoire Sociale - Social History* 10(20) (November 1977): 456; M. James Penton, Review of *The West and the Nation*, eds. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, *International Journal* 32 (Summer 1977): 684.



calling it “strikingly platitudinous and out of touch with the reality of the 1970s.”<sup>40</sup>

Sharing Penton’s preference for ‘relevant’ history, Carleton University historian Foster Griezec expressed his disappointment that none of the essays had attempted a Marxist interpretation of the relationship between the Prairies and central Canada, and evaluated the essays based on their attention to class and attitude towards labour.<sup>41</sup> Penton’s review also hinted at the growing regional stratification of Canadian academia, specifically the dissatisfaction of Western Canadians with Central Canada, or more accurately, with southern Ontario. Penton strongly objected to the high percentage of Eastern scholars in a collection honouring a Western Canadian historian.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, Penton appeared to require Western residence to be an essential qualification of a Western scholar. Only three of the fifteen contributors in *The West and the Nation* resided in western Canada, and although some of the remaining twelve had been born in or had lived in the West, “all are at present members of Ontario university faculties.” He concluded his remarks by opining that “[t]hus, this Festschrift gives the appearance of something thrown together in haste with the support of a rather narrow group of scholars centred – as are most things in Canada – around Toronto.”<sup>43</sup> Penton and Greizic’s reviews show that Canadian historians continued to expect their colleagues to account for the influences of class within the historical period they addressed and, in addition, demonstrated that the university expansion of the late sixties and early seventies was perhaps beginning to foster a certain sense of regional identity within the profession. Morton, who had begun

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<sup>40</sup> Penton, Review of *West and Nation*, 684.

<sup>41</sup> This is made evident when he compares the actions of conscription activist Francis Marion Beynon to the motivations of organized farmers and Organized Labour. See Griezec, Review of *West and Nation*, 455, 457.

<sup>42</sup> Penton, Review of *West and Nation*, 684.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

his career as a historian of the West, therefore, benefited from the increasing focus on region within the Canadian historical community. His status as a Westerner ensured that his ideas would endure longer than those of the central Canadian historians Lower and Creighton.

### **Evaluating a Career**

The collected essays of Donald Creighton, Arthur Lower, and W.L. Morton that appeared in the 1970s and 1980s attempted to outline each individual's academic development through a selection of essays and articles produced throughout his career. While the *festschriften* enabled reviewers to comment on the state of Canadian history in general, these collections of essays, in essence, gave the Canadian historical community an opportunity to reflect upon and evaluate the careers of Creighton, Lower, and Morton, providing a focal point for any praise or criticism that their colleagues might feel compelled to bestow. Unlike the *festschriften*, colleagues and students did not assemble these collections of essays as tokens of appreciation. Unencumbered by any social conventions that may have prevented reviewers from openly criticizing the scholar whom the *festschrift* was intended to honour, reviewers of the collected essays tended to be more willing to voice criticisms of these scholars than those historians who reviewed the *festschriften*. Set within the context of the changes taking place within Canadian society and within the Canadian historical profession, reviews of the collected essays provide a snapshot of the professional reputation of Creighton, Lower, and Morton and demonstrate that, like the historical profession itself, current events and political and social trends influenced the development of their reputations throughout the 1970s.

As shown in the reviews of *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, the collection of Creighton's essays published in 1972, the evolution of Creighton's professional reputation in the 1970s was intimately tied to his personal political positions.<sup>44</sup> The importance of contemporary political issues to Creighton's work is evident from his introduction to *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, which fully detailed his frustration with the "Liberal" version of Canadian history, as well as his disappointment in the critical reception of his thoughts on the contemporary changes within Canadian national politics, namely the elevated place of French Canada within Confederation and the increase in provincial rights.<sup>45</sup> Reception of these strong opinions was mixed, as some reviewers retained their admiration for Creighton's "command of Canadian history" and his desire for Canadian independence, yet disagreed with his warnings regarding provincial rights and French Canadian nationalism.<sup>46</sup> John Muggeridge, son of journalist

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<sup>44</sup> A second collection of Donald Creighton's essays, *The Passionate Observer*, was published posthumously. Many of the reviews of *The Passionate Observer* had the tenor of an obituary, in particular, P.B. Waite's review, which ended with a picture of Creighton as an old man, dying of cancer and listening to a symphony by Strauss; P.B. Waite, Review of *The Passionate Observer*, by Donald Creighton, *Dalhousie Review* 60(3): 539-41. See also Donald Swainson, "Battle Hymns of the Dominion," Review of *The Passionate Observer*, by Donald Creighton, *Books in Canada* 10 (January 1981): 18. On the whole, the reviews were favourable, although many reviewers expressed dissatisfaction with Creighton's choice to include an essay critical of Frank Underhill. See, for example, Michiel Horn, Review of *The Passionate Observer*, by Donald Creighton, *Quill and Quire* 47(1) (January 1981): 28. See also Robert Page, Review of *The Passionate Observer*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 63(1) (March 1982): 101-2.

<sup>45</sup> In regards to his position on French Canada, Creighton wrote, "I began to realize that the alleged 'dialogue' on French Canada and the constitution was not a dialogue at all, but an uninterrupted monologue, indeed a chant in plainsong by a chorus of many voices, and that discordant notes were not wanted and would not be excused or condoned. Criticism of French-Canadian nationalism was just as illegitimate in 1966 as criticism of American foreign policy had been twelve years before. Both were offenses against an established Canadian consensus and equally deserved censure. A few kind friends gravely informed me that I was behaving like a 'bad Canadian' and endangering my reputation ..." in Donald Creighton, *Towards the Discovery of Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), 13-14.

<sup>46</sup> "On the Verge," *Canadian Literature* 57 (Summer 1973): 125. Ian Robertson of Scarborough College characterized Creighton as a historian without a political home, without significant influence in the Conservative party and unwilling to make an alliance with the 'Americanizing Liberals'. While Creighton's early work in economic history touched upon struggles between social classes, his inattention to class analysis and attention to the elite barred him from influencing Canadian socialists. Robertson wrote, "[g]iven this tendency to personalize, and ultimately trivialize, manifestations of class forces, pressures, and needs, it is likely that at least this style of Tory dissent will remain isolated from Canadian

Malcolm Muggeridge, reviewed *Towards the Discovery of Canada* for the popular journal *Saturday Night*, and took issue with Creighton's opposition to the "Liberal heresies" of increased provincial rights, the "Bi-Bi commission" and the idea of Confederation as a cultural pact between French and English Canadians, stating that "Creighton's attempt to see Canadian history in light of unhyphenated nationalism inevitably fails. Canada has never succeeded in becoming his type of nation. We are too divided in outlook, our objectives are too dissimilar."<sup>47</sup> The accompanying illustration to Muggeridge's review is of a window with a maple-leaf shaped hole in the centre, and underneath the window sitting among the shards of glass is a large rock. Tied to the large rock is *Towards the Discovery of Canada*. While the choice to run this particular illustration alongside Muggeridge's review was likely an editorial decision, rather than Muggeridge's own choice, the message was clear: in promoting his ideas about Canada, Creighton was perhaps causing more harm than good.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to demonstrating that the political views of both the Canadian historical community in particular and Canadian society in general differed vastly from those of Donald Creighton, reviews of *Towards the Discovery of Canada* show that the discrepancy in those views, as well as Creighton's negative reaction to the almost-universal rejection of his political views, contributed to his reputation as a historian past his prime with no relevance for either present or future historiography. Ian Ross

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socialism. And it is certain that the socialism movement that is satisfied with such an approach to history will give the ruling class, resident or non-resident as the case may be, few sleepless nights." See Ian Ross Robertson, Review of *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, by Donald Creighton, *Canadian Historical Review* 54(4) (December 1973): 442.

<sup>47</sup> John Muggeridge, "Donald Creighton's War Against Liberal Heresies," Review of *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, by Donald Creighton, *Saturday Night* 87 (June 1972): 35. Phillip Buckner also noted with concern the increasingly polemical nature of Creighton's essays as he attempted to warn Canadians of the "twin dangers of continentalism and French Canadian nationalism." See Phillip Buckner, Review of *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, by Donald Creighton, *Dalhousie Review* 53(3): 556.

<sup>48</sup> See Figure 2.

Robertson described the “greatest value” of the collection as “a document in the intellectual history of Canada” and proposed that “Professor Creighton’s own description of the acute sense of isolation he experiences after the death of the like-minded Harold Innis, lead one to suspect that an articulate British-Canadian tradition, distinct in content from Canadian liberalism, has been for many years confined to a small enclave within the intelligentsia.”<sup>49</sup> Phillip Buckner, who spent the entirety of his career at the University of New Brunswick, examined the intellectual development of Creighton, concluding that after 1957, Creighton began “to take a really critical view of Canada’s relationship with the United States and ‘the Liberal interpretation of Canadian history.’” It was during these years that “[p]essimism and a streak of bitterness” began to dominate his work.<sup>50</sup> As a result of this pessimism, Buckner asked whether Creighton had not “become as dogmatic and as obsessed with present concerns as any Whig historian he has criticized in the past?” While Buckner’s criticism was tempered by the understanding that Creighton, the master of narrative history, did not appear to advantage in a collection of essays,<sup>51</sup> he concluded that: “What this collection of essays reveals is that Creighton has become both dogmatic and bitter. But then no one is ever more bitter than the unheeded prophet of despair.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Robertson, *Review of Towards*, 441. Interestingly, Scarborough College, which opened in 1964, was a branch of the University of Toronto initially conceived of as a “TV college” with at least half of the lectures to be delivered by television in order to save money on faculty. Martin Friedland. “Satellite Campus: Failed TV experiment at Scarborough ushers in computer age,” *University of Toronto Bulletin*, (55<sup>th</sup> year, no. 16) Monday April 8, 2002, p. 1-15, p 9. Found online at [http://www.news.utoronto.ca/bulletin/PDF\\_issues/04-08-02.pdf](http://www.news.utoronto.ca/bulletin/PDF_issues/04-08-02.pdf) (accessed January 15, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> Buckner, *Review of Towards*, 554, 556.

<sup>51</sup> Buckner wrote that “[i]n the more confined space of the essay his interpretations appear too sweeping, his judgments on men and events too one-sided and even partisan, his comments on fellow historians too over-simplified. His weaknesses are more apparent than his strengths.” See *Ibid.*, 557.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 557.

The ideological distance between Creighton and his younger colleagues is best demonstrated in their differing perceptions of Creighton's 1969 Address to the Canadian Historical Association. In *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, Creighton related how his work on *Canada's First Century* convinced him that Canada's "continued existence seemed threatened by American continentalism on one hand and French-Canadian provincialism on the other" and thus Creighton "could not help feeling deeply concerned and anxious."<sup>53</sup> He described his motivations for the 1969 Address:

Inevitably, the writing of the book forced me to take a long view of Canadian history; and in June 1969, when I spoke at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, I tried to give a brief survey of the nation's troubled journey through time, as I conceived it. The title of my paper, "The Decline and Fall of the Empire of the St. Lawrence," was chosen deliberately. It seemed to me that the penultimate crisis in Canada's career was now at hand. External pressure and internal division were the forces which together could destroy that great nineteenth-century creation, the nation state; and in Canada these twin forces had taken on the form of American continentalism and French-Canadian nationalism.<sup>54</sup>

Clearly, Creighton was deeply concerned with the state of Canadian sovereignty and considered it his duty to engage his fellow historians in a discussion of the matter. By contrast, in his review of *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, Ken Dewar recalled the same meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, where the "scores of academics" who came to see Creighton were jarred by how 'out of place' both his paper and his style seemed amidst the crowd of young professionals. Dewar wrote of the experience, "in sharp contrast was the cool detachment, born of commitment to technique rather than value, displayed in the presentation of other papers at the meetings. Many, it seemed, saw Creighton as a relic from the past, and this address as his valedictory performance."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Creighton, *Towards the Discovery*, 15.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>55</sup> Ken Dewar, "Nationalism," 72.

Separated not only by methodology, but by political perspective, Dewar's comments demonstrate the presence of an ever-increasing ideological and methodological rift between Donald Creighton and the younger members of the Canadian historical profession.

In contrast to the reception of the ideas conveyed in Creighton's collected essays, the Canadian historical profession was considerably more generous in its evaluation of 86-year old Arthur Lower's contributions to Canadian history, adapting his ideas to contemporary circumstances and overlooking the more outdated aspects of his writing. Reviews of *History and Myth: Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism*, published in 1975, demonstrate that, while Lower's colleagues favoured his scholarly publications as indicative of his lasting contribution to Canadian history over his popular writings on immediate contemporary issues, Lower's passion for Canada, if not his understanding of the nation's history, still prompted the admiration of his colleagues. When evaluating *History and Myth* as a work of historical importance, reviewers almost universally expressed a preference for Lower's professional pieces. P.B. Waite of Dalhousie University described *History and Myth* as "[a] whole book of talk" that takes "a good deal of tolerance to read" as the majority of the essays were "tracts for the times" with nothing to elevate them as pieces of lasting historical value.<sup>56</sup> Waite wrote that "Lower would be pleased to know that what survives best are his professional articles."<sup>57</sup> Ramsay Cook also felt that the collection contained too many popular pieces, stating that he would have exchanged some of the contributions to popular journals such as *Maclean's* and *The Canadian Banker* for a selection of Lower's articles from the *Canadian*

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<sup>56</sup> P.B. Waite, Review of *History and Myth*, by Arthur Lower, *Dalhousie Review* 55(4) (Winter 75-76): 771.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

*Historical Review*.<sup>58</sup> Richard Preston also noted this heavy emphasis on non-scholarly articles, stating that the collection tells the reader more about Lower's "philosophical and political opinions" than it does his contributions to Canadian history.<sup>59</sup> Ian Ross Robertson stated that some of these essays, especially those such as 'The Case Against Immigration,' written in 1930, "may appear excessively dated to the reader in the late 1970s."<sup>60</sup> Robertson stated that the value of the collection was not to be found in Lower's writings *per se*, but in charting Lower's intellectual development and the growth of his nationalism. Like *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, the value of *History and Myth* was in its outlining the intellectual development of Lower, rather than actually illuminating the major contributions of Lower's career as a historian of Canada.

Nevertheless, Lower's ongoing attempts to engender a distinctive Canadian nationalism by educating Canadians about their history met with the general approval of the Canadian historical community. Ian Ross Robertson expressed his admiration for Lower's "passionate sense of commitment as an intellectual and the breadth of his knowledge and concern."<sup>61</sup> Alexander Brady, professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, commended Lower for his "good sense, wide interests, acute discernment, ready candour, and distinguished style" as well as his talent for illuminating the historical

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<sup>58</sup> Ramsay Cook, Review of *History and Myth*, by Arthur Lower, *Queen's Quarterly* 83 (Summer 1976): 321. P.B. Waite also wondered why a certain out-of-print scholarly article, 'Geographical determinants in Canadian history' was not published in the collection, given its scarcity. See Waite, Review of *History*, 771.

<sup>59</sup> Preston continued, stating that "[t]he book reveals the full force of Lower's philosophical opinions as they poured forth in a lifetime of furious effort directed towards shaping the growth of Canada as a nation, and secondarily towards defending the cause of individual freedom." See Richard A. Preston, Review of *History and Myth*, by Arthur Lower, *International Journal* 31 (Summer 1976): 548.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 548. See also Ian Ross Robertson, Review of *History and Myth*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Historical Review* 59 (March 1978): 67.

<sup>61</sup> Robertson, Review of *History*, 68.



context of current events.<sup>62</sup> Richard Preston also took a great deal of delight in Lower's style: "Lower as polemicist, Lower as gad-fly, Lower as down-to-earth philosopher are all equally superb."<sup>63</sup> Lower's passion for his country and his ability to communicate to his fellow Canadians also met with approval from his colleagues. After expressing his exasperation with Lower's "book of talk," P. B. Waite conceded that "[w]hen one has finished admitting the fatuousness of some of this volume, there remains still something admirable about Lower's preoccupations, and it wells up through the surface triteness of so many of these papers; his sympathy for the underdog; his dislike of authority; and above all, his transcendent love for his country."<sup>64</sup> Ramsay Cook identified Lower's Puritanism as the source of his "*civisme*, his conviction that in Canada a historian has more to do than merely write dull, or even bright, books. He has a responsibility to help his fellow citizens in their search for the standards and ideals of Canadianism."<sup>65</sup>

It appears, then, that Arthur Lower's knowledge of and passion for his country enabled his colleagues to overlook some of his more unorthodox views. Two reviews in particular illustrate this point. Ian Robertson's stated that "[i]nvariably, there are also aspects of Lower's work which provide examples of weaknesses in the older style of scholarship in this country." However this criticism was immediately tempered by the concluding sentence: "But few have worked more fruitfully, imaginatively, and humanely with the materials and concepts readily at hand."<sup>66</sup> Robertson's caveat first of all acknowledges the limitations of the historical context in which Lower worked and,

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<sup>62</sup> Alexander Brady, Review of *History and Myth*, by Arthur Lower, *Canadian Banker* 82(5) (September-October 1975): 51.

<sup>63</sup> Preston, Review of *History*, 549.

<sup>64</sup> Waite, Review of *History*, 771.

<sup>65</sup> Cook finished his review with a reference to Lower's notion of his job as his vocation: "But no one should take it [the collection of essays] as the final word. There are still more books to come. People with jobs retire, those with vocations toil on." See Cook, Review of *History*, 320.

<sup>66</sup> Robertson, Review of *History*, 68.

secondly, indicates the willingness of Canadian historians to overlook the “older style” of Lower’s work in favour of focusing on his unique ideas. Praise for Lower’s ideas also came from sources outside the Canadian historical community. John Ayre, a literary journalist who published a biography of Northrop Frye in 1989, described Arthur Lower as an “intellectual father” for the nationalist movement of the 1970s.<sup>67</sup> Ayre was captivated by Lower’s nationalistic focus on culture and personal liberties, rather than on “wealth, public works, railways, and a wide-open Arctic.” He wrote, “[s]ometimes his exalted views lead him off on crotchety Victorian asides: he disapproves of a divorce-ridden “pagan” society, pop culture, even the scanty bathing suits of California beach girls. But stripped of their occasional Brahminic rhetoric, his arguments should pose no problems for most modern nationalists.”<sup>68</sup> Perhaps unaware that Lower’s “Brahminic rhetoric” was an essential aspect of his nationalism,<sup>69</sup> Ayre concluded that: “his essays could strike a reviewer almost sixty years his junior as innovative and exciting is obviously Lower’s victory. After all this time, he may have actually found a generation that will listen.”<sup>70</sup> In a marked contrast to their evaluation of Donald Creighton, Canadian historians appeared ready to forgive the rhetorical excesses of Arthur Lower, focusing instead on the aspects of his writing that complemented contemporary developments in Canadian society.

Reviews of Morton’s collection of essays, *Contexts of Canada’s Past*, demonstrate that, unlike Donald Creighton and Arthur Lower, by the end of his career

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<sup>67</sup> John Ayre, “Arthur Lower’s vision of the Canadian future,” Review of *History and Myth*, by Arthur Lower, *Saturday Night* 90 (October 1975): 74.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ramsay Cook notes that an often overlooked aspect of Lower’s nationalism was “his persistent demand for excellence” and that Lower would use methods both foul and fair to induce Canadians to rise to meet higher standards than those of “the mere getting and spending which so offended his puritan sensibilities.” See Cook, Review of *History*, 320-1.

<sup>70</sup> Ayre, “Lower’s vision,” 74.

Morton's colleagues considered him to be a historian with contemporary relevance, neither a polemicist nor a despairing prophet. In his introduction to Morton's collection of essays, editor A.B. McKillop, then a cultural and intellectual historian at the University of Manitoba, described Morton as "one of the major historical minds of the twentieth century in Canada."<sup>71</sup> Several other reviewers shared McKillop's evaluation of Morton. Norman Hillmer of the Department of National Defense characterized Morton as "arguably our greatest historian."<sup>72</sup> In his review of *Contexts of Canada's Past*, University of Toronto professor Robert Craig Brown wrote that "[b]y any standard of judgment, W.L. Morton must be ranked among the tiny number of historians of Canada who have deeply influenced the way we think and write about our past."<sup>73</sup> Allan Smith of the University of British Columbia commented that "[t]his mixture of sound scholarship, intelligent polemics, and deeply felt personal reminiscences gives its readers an altogether welcome opportunity to take a comprehensive look at the thought of one of the country's most accomplished historians."<sup>74</sup> A final indication of Morton's esteem is that his 1960 Presidential Address (published as the final chapter of *The Canadian Identity*) actually garnered better reviews in the early 1980's than it did twenty years earlier.<sup>75</sup> While the praise of both contributors and reviewers for Morton's *The Canadian Identity* reveal that the initial negative opinion of the Canadian historical community had,

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<sup>71</sup> A.B. McKillop, ed., *Contexts of Canada's Past* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1980), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Norman Hillmer, Review of *Contexts of Canada's Past*, ed. A.B. McKillop, *Canadian Historical Review* 62(4) (December 1981): 556.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Brown, "The Relevance of Canadian History," Review of *Contexts of Canada's Past*, ed. A.B. McKillop, *Acadiensis* 11(1) (1981):137.

<sup>74</sup> Allan Smith, Review of *Contexts of Canada's Past*, ed. A.B. McKillop, *Manitoba History* 2 (1981): 31.

<sup>75</sup> Brown, "Relevance," 138. See also Barry Gough, Review of *Contexts of Canada's Past*, ed. A.B. McKillop, *American Review of Canadian Studies* 12 (Fall 1982): 122. For earlier reviews of *The Canadian Identity*, see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

by the late 1970s, reversed to the point where *The Canadian Identity* was regarded as a classic.<sup>76</sup>

Morton's peers considered his origins as a regional historian one of the keys to his prolonged popularity. Morton articulated his vision of regional history:

Indeed, the only satisfactory approach to Canadian history seems to be one that balances the regional and the central, the river, the prairies, and the mountains, the metropolis and the hinterland. Such a balance can be struck only with the multiplication and improvement of regional history, but regional history of itself can only augment the evils of national history if it is not written to serve a larger context, the context of nation and the world.<sup>77</sup>

It is, however, Morton's emphasis on examining the regional within the context of the national that gave his work a universal character. Barry Gough, a historian at Wilfrid Laurier University, highlighted Morton as a historian of Canada, rather than simply a Western Canadian historian.<sup>78</sup> Although a historian of his home province, Manitoba, Morton "never allowed himself to be caught in the garrison mentality of region or province."<sup>79</sup> Gough, in fact, deplored the attempted appropriation of Morton's work by disaffected Western scholars and argued that Morton should be remembered for his attempts to search for meaning within the whole of the Canadian experience. Allan Smith stated that

one sees demonstrated yet again how important a role an appreciation for the local and regional has played in Morton's work, it most assuredly does *not* signify – thanks to an equally consistent emphasis on the interrelatedness, mutual dependency, and shared experience of these communities – that we are prevented from getting a clear impression of what, in Morton's view, gives vitality and a peculiar kind of strength to the nation as a whole.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> W.D. Smith and W. Stewart Martin commented that *The Canadian Identity* "ranks as one of the most perceptive and provocative studies of Canada." See W.D. Smith and W. Stewart Martin, "In Recognition," in *The West and the Nation*, eds. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976): 7.

<sup>77</sup> Quote from W.L. Morton, 1973. Found in McKillop, *Contexts*, page preceding introduction, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Gough, Review of *Contexts*, 122-23.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>80</sup> Smith, Review of *Contexts*, 31.

To his colleagues, Morton's track record of examining the peripheral regions of the Canadian experience lent legitimacy to his search for the universal qualities of Canadian history and identity.

Furthermore, Morton's desire to account for all aspects of Canadian history and life resonated with the efforts of the younger generation of Canadian historians who attempted to uncover the role of those forgotten by traditional national history. Brian McKillop, editor of Morton's collected essays, stated that

Morton's own approach to historical writing shows him to combine [the analytical and critical temper of Frank Underhill and the search for synthesis and coherence of Donald Creighton]. No Canadian historian more than Morton himself has been as sensitive to the parts within the Canadian whole, the sources of division and hostility, and the multitudinous particularities of Canadian life, while at the same time searching for the factors which make that whole greater than the sum of its constituent elements, thereby giving Canadian life its significance.<sup>81</sup>

University of Alberta historian Doug Owram observed that "[c]onservatism, nationalism, and regionalism are not separable into neat little categories but form a complex interplay of forces which Morton sees as the determining factors in Canadian history."<sup>82</sup> Owram further commented that Morton's two suggestions regarding the dilemma of history and geography are first, that one cannot understand Canada without understanding its regionalism and, second, that if Canada is to survive as a nation, regionalism must avoid parochialism.

Of course, Morton has not provided us with some mythical magic solution to the perennial Canadian search for unity and identity. Yet it is a testament to the man that, first of all, he has done so much to identify the problem and second that, in spite of all the difficulties, he has not turned inwards in despair nor bitterly given up the possibility that there is indeed a solution.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> McKillop, *Contexts*, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Doug Owram, Review of *Contexts of Canada's Past*, ed. A.B. McKillop, *Queen's Quarterly* 88 (Spring 1981): 162.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

The last portion of Owrām's comments is, almost certainly, a reference to the despair of Donald Creighton, and implicit here is Owrām's criticism of those historians who had "turned inwards in despair." Published two years after the death of Donald Creighton, and one year after Morton's death, Owrām's review once again raises the question of who was the superior 'conservative historian,' Morton or Creighton, and like the reviewers of the *festschriften*, Owrām clearly favoured Morton. By addressing the issue of Canadian nationalism from an outsider's perspective – that is a non-Ontarian perspective – Morton's approach complemented new studies of Canadian history that focused on various 'outsider' groups such as blue-collar workers, women, and Aboriginal peoples. Furthermore, it was his articulation of the complexity of Canada and of Canadian nationalism, rather than the accusedly simplistic understandings of Canada put forth by Creighton and Lower, that ensured Morton's reputation survived the challenges of the 'new social history.'

### **"And in the End..."**

As the 1970s drew to a close, so too did the lives of some of the older generation of Canadian historians. Donald Creighton succumbed to cancer on December 19, 1979. He was seventy-seven years old. W.L. Morton passed away in Medicine Hat on December 7, 1980 of a heart attack, less than a week short of his seventy-second birthday. Arthur Lower lived until January 7, 1988, and passed away at the age of 98, outliving most of his peers and many of his younger colleagues. The passing of these historians was noted in a variety of sources, including popular and professional journals as well as other media. Like the *festschriften*, obituaries commemorate the life and work

of their subject. However, unlike the scholarly *festschrift*, obituaries encourage a more personal reflection upon the life and career of the scholar in question. The obituaries of Creighton, Morton, and Lower reveal prevalent aspects of their reputations within the Canadian historical community at the time of their death.

Of the three historians under discussion, Donald Creighton received the most obituaries and tributes upon his death, including obituaries in the *Canadian Historical Review* and the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada*, as well as an entire symposium in the September 1980 edition of the *Canadian Forum* devoted to a discussion of Creighton's impact upon the Canadian historical profession.<sup>84</sup> The tone of these obituaries ranged from the critical to the commemorative. Many of the obituaries focused on Creighton's more recent public engagement with contemporary politics, including his distaste with the changes within French Canada, and his dislike for the increasing Americanization of Canadian culture. Journalist Peter C. Newman emphasized the more controversial aspects of Creighton's career, namely his dislike of the Americanization of Canada and his interpretation of the place of French and English Canada within Confederation, describing Creighton as "an ardent demonologist" and a "wise reincarnation of Don Quixote" who "had trouble remaining neutral about anything

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<sup>84</sup> Donald Creighton was named as one of the "ablest and most prominent practitioners" of history who had passed away in the previous year. See Unknown, "Notes and Comments: Historians in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 61(3) (September 1980): 421. Other obituaries include: Peter C. Newman, "The man of history," *Maclean's* 93 (January 7, 1980), 18; J.B. Conacher, "Notes and Comments: Creighton Anecdotes," *Canadian Historical Review* 61(4) (December 1980): 559; H.V. Nelles, "Creighton's Seminar," *Canadian Forum* 60 (September 1980): 5-6; Ian MacPherson, "Creighton's Empire," 60 (September 1980): 7-8; R.C. Brown, "The Historian as Biographer," 60 (September 1980): 9-10; Fernand Ouellet, "D.-G. Creighton et les Racines de la Nation," 60 (September 1980): 11-12; Robert Page, "Donald Creighton: The Later Years," 60 (September 1980): 13. Robert Fulford, "When Creighton led us to the heartland of our history," *Saturday Night* 95 (March 1980), 16. Unknown author, "Donald Creighton," *Quill and Quire* 46(2) (1979): 101; P.B. Waite, "Donald Grant Creighton, 1902-1979," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada (Series 4)* 18 (1980): 73-77; Ramsay Cook, "Donald Grant Creighton, 1902-1979," *Historical Papers of the Canadian Historical Association* (1980): 257-261.

important.”<sup>85</sup> Trent University’s Robert Page, whose contribution to the *Canadian Forum* Creighton Symposium addressed Donald Creighton in his later years, evaluated Creighton’s contribution to the debates surrounding the Americanization of Canada and the question of French Canada within Confederation, stating that Creighton “lacked the substance and sophistication of George Grant, Mel Watkins, Abe Rotstein, or W.L. Morton” and that his idiom “did not fit easily into the political economy of the 1970s.” Although Creighton’s vision of Canada included native rights and environmental protection, his “hard line on Quebec was not part of the mainstream of Canadian nationalism.” Page concluded that “[h]e was a lonely figure crying in the wilderness. To many of his critics he was an anachronism, a throwback to the nationalism of Canada First. Yet there was something splendid in the clarity of his independence and the vigour of his language.”<sup>86</sup>

Three of Creighton’s former students, P.B. Waite (born in 1922), Ramsay Cook (born in 1931), and H.V. Nelles (born in 1942), included personal reminiscences in their tributes to Donald Creighton that seem to attempt to challenge negative aspects of Creighton’s reputation. These three historians belonged to separate generations: Waite served with the Royal Navy in World War II and returned to the academy after completing a tour of duty with the Royal Canadian Navy;<sup>87</sup> Ramsay Cook (eight years old at the beginning of the Second World War) belonged to the interwar generation of historians;<sup>88</sup> and H.V. Nelles, only three years old at the end of World War II, was one of

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<sup>85</sup> Newman, “The man,” 18.

<sup>86</sup> Page, “Later Years,” 13.

<sup>87</sup> “Historian profile: Peter Waite,” Manitoba Historical Society, [http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/waite\\_pb.shtml](http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/waite_pb.shtml). (accessed April 15, 2008).

<sup>88</sup> D.R. Owsram, “George Ramsay Cook” The Canadian Encyclopedia Online, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001896>. (accessed April 15, 2008).



the early baby-boomers, completing his PhD from the University of Toronto in 1970.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the differences in their ages, Waite, Cook, and Nelles recollected that a central element of Creighton's teaching style was his fairness. Waite wrote that Creighton

might have been expected to be a brilliant but exigent master who drove his penchants hard and suborned his students to his point of view. But Creighton was a professional; he respected evidence; you could tell him anything if you could prove it from the documents. He was also a meticulous and fair-minded thesis supervisor. What he would not tolerate was shoddy workmanship, in argument, research or writing.<sup>90</sup>

This scholarly openness also formed a central part of Cook's comments:

Twenty-five years ago I became a student of Donald Creighton's more, I must confess, by accident than by design. Few more important things have happened to me. And that is not difficult to explain. Neither then nor in subsequent years, did Donald Creighton ever suggest, or even hint, that unanimity of views was what he sought. Respect he desired, friendship he encouraged. But not imitation. His demand was devotion, not to his person or his viewpoint, but devotion to the writing and teaching of Canadian history.<sup>91</sup>

Although Nelles never developed a personal relationship with Creighton, as did Peter

Waite or Ramsay Cook, he was impressed with Creighton's willingness to accept

different interpretations of history if those interpretations were supported by sources.<sup>92</sup>

When Nelles submitted chapters of his thesis

which deviated from the authorized version [of Canadian history], he received them without a murmur, and set about improving my prose and clarifying my points to make my argument stronger. He had wrestled his understanding from his sources. He knew how difficult a task it was and he offered only encouragement to those who did the same.... He did not demand conformity from his students, nor did he select thesis topics for them. We were encouraged to follow our own instincts wherever they might lead. He simply demanded that we

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<sup>89</sup> "Inventory of the H.V. Nelles fonds," Clara Thomas Archives at York University, <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000464.htm>. (accessed April 15, 2008).

<sup>90</sup> Waite, "Creighton, 1902-1979," 76.

<sup>91</sup> Cook, "Creighton, 1902-1979," 258.

<sup>92</sup> Nelles, "Creighton's Seminar," 5-6. Clearly, neither the proponents of Americanism nor those of the "two nations" idea of Confederation had succeeded in convincing Creighton that they had fully supported their positions with historical evidence.

honestly confront the complexity of the past and make something of it as best we could.<sup>93</sup>

The evidence of Creighton's students contrasts vividly with the unbending reputation attributed to Creighton in the last years of his life. While some historians highlighted the more controversial aspects of Creighton's career, the more personal recollections of Creighton's former students reveal a conscious effort to correct caricatures of Creighton as an unbending ideologue and demonstrate that the events of his later years failed to reflect all aspects of his private and professional demeanor.

Upon his death in 1980, W.L. Morton was also extensively honoured by his colleagues. However, in contrast to Donald Creighton, Morton's obituaries were almost devoid of criticism or complaint, but focused on Morton's personal qualities.<sup>94</sup> W. Stewart Martin, like Morton a Fellow of St. John's College of the University of Manitoba, gave an extremely personal tribute in his eulogy for Morton during the Requiem Mass at St. John's College ten days after his death,<sup>95</sup> Morton's colleagues at Trent University paid tribute to his work with the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, as well as his tenure as the university's Chancellor, in the opening pages of the Winter 1980-81 edition of the journal. A few key phrases of editor Alan Wilson's obituary highlight Morton's style as a teacher and mentor:

W.L. Morton graciously responded to every request for advice from our editors from the *Journal's* inception: he never would have been so presumptuous as to try to force his views upon others.... During those early years Bill's experience,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>94</sup> A.W. Rasporich, "Tribute to a Canadian Historian. William Lewis Morton—Epitaph," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 13(3): iii – iv; Alan Wilson, "W.L. Morton, 1908-1980," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 15(4) (Winter 1980-81): 1-2; Margaret Laurence, "W.L. Morton: a personal tribute," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 15(4) (Winter 1980-81): 134; Carl Berger, "William Lewis Morton, 1908-1980," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada (Series 4)* 19 (1981): 143-45; A.B. McKillop, "William Lewis Morton, 1908-1980," *Historical Papers of the Canadian Historical Association* (1981): 223-26; W. Stewart Martin, "A Memorial to the Life of Dr. William Lewis Morton, 1908-1980," *Manitoba History* 2 (1981): 46-7.

<sup>95</sup> Martin, "A Memorial," 46-7.

maturity and wisdom often helped to carry others over periods of doubt or indecision.... A temperament that often directed him towards detachment – even skepticism about human behaviour – was balanced by a wry sense of humour, by compassion, and by his devotion to intellectual action and to broad and effective communication.<sup>96</sup>

In her tribute to Morton, Margaret Laurence, noted Canadian author and subsequent Chancellor of Trent University, acknowledged her personal and professional debt to Morton, describing him as a “great human being, a great historian, and a great and beloved Canadian.”<sup>97</sup>

In addition to his warm and approachable nature, Morton was remembered for his many contributions to Canadian history, many of which remained influential within the Canadian historical community. For example, historian A. W. Rasporich praised Morton for his abiding interest in ethnicity in Canada, especially in the Metis and French Canadians, stating that his article on the historical phenomenon of minorities in Canada “serves as a tribute to a great Canadian of regional, national and international understanding.”<sup>98</sup> Both A.B. McKillop and Carl Berger identified Morton as a successful public historian. In his address to the Royal Society of Canada, Berger remarked that in *The Canadian Identity*, Morton “became more explicitly an advocate of seeking an audience beyond the small guild of historians.... he took as his model his Canadian contemporaries like Lower and Creighton, whom he saw as intellectuals of influence as

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<sup>96</sup> Wilson, “1908-1980,” 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> Laurence wrote, “I did in fact read *Manitoba: A History* the summer that I began writing *The Diviners*. Morton’s history gave me not only a great many facts that I needed...but also a sense of the sweep of history, the overview which I think I share. What I share, most of all, with Morton is the sense of my *place*, the prairies, and of my *people* (meaning all prairie peoples), within the context of their many and varied histories, and the desire to make all these things come alive in the reader’s mind.” See Laurence, “Tribute,” 134.

<sup>98</sup> Rasporich, “Tribute,” iii. The article cited is W.L. Morton, “The Historical Phenomenon of Minorities: The Canadian Experience,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 13(3): 1-43.

well as scholars.”<sup>99</sup> McKillop wrote that although Morton “would readily state that he was the last of a dying breed – a Victorian and a “*genuine* Tory” – but he could be drawn to admit (always with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes) that he had more than once voted for Mackenzie King.”<sup>100</sup> An ideological conservative who had written extensively on the topic, even challenging George Grant’s popular but pessimistic conservatism,<sup>101</sup> Morton nevertheless continued to command the respect of his colleagues as a historian and as an individual. Whereas Creighton was regarded somewhat as an irascible relic of the past, W.L. Morton’s colleagues perceived him as a historian who was able to speak about Canadian history within the context of Canada’s future.

While Creighton and Morton were extensively honoured by their colleagues, obituaries for Arthur Lower are conspicuous in their absence. Both Creighton and Morton were given obituary notices in the Historical Papers of the Canadian Historical Association.<sup>102</sup> In 1990, the year after Lower’s death, the newly revised *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* appeared to have dropped its obituary section.<sup>103</sup> Unlike the passing of Creighton and Morton, and perhaps because he had been forgotten by those who remained active within the Canadian historical profession, Arthur Lower’s death was not noted in any Canadian historical journal. Furthermore, following Lower’s death there was no outpouring from his colleagues, many of whom had already passed away. *Macleans Magazine* carried an obituary for Arthur Lower written by journalist Mark Nichols. Nichols quoted York historian J.L. Granatstein as saying, “He took

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<sup>99</sup> Berger, “1908-1980,” 144.

<sup>100</sup> McKillop, “1908-1980,” 224.

<sup>101</sup> Morton, “The possibility of a philosophy,” 3-14.

<sup>102</sup> Obituaries are found in the obituary section of the *Historical Papers of the Canadian Historical Association*, Vol 15, no 1 (Creighton) and Vol 16, no 1 (Morton).

<sup>103</sup> There were no obituaries for Arthur Lower published in 1989, and in 1990 the *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* carries only the corrections for an obituary published in 1989.

Canadian history out of the anecdotal and into the serious, scientific study of the past....He was one of the giants.”<sup>104</sup> Nichols emphasized Lower’s “often ascerbic commentary,” the nationalistic leaning of his publications, and his continual engagement with current events.<sup>105</sup> George Woodcock’s tribute to Arthur Lower in the journal *Canadian Literature* appears to have been the only obituary in a professional journal. Woodcock described Lower’s writing as “less stimulating than Underhill’s, less grandly impressive than Creighton’s, yet he did play his part in creating some of our necessary myths, and particularly in his later works . . . he showed himself a man of strong opinions and an attractive, crusty personality.”<sup>106</sup> Woodcock disagreed with Granatstein’s comment that Lower took Canadian history out of the anecdotal into the scientific. Remembering the “deeply Canadian” character of Lower’s *Colony to Nation*, Woodcock remarked that Lower, like Creighton, “took us beyond science into myth, where history lives.”<sup>107</sup> Over twenty years after he had ceased to be an active member of the Canadian historical community, Arthur Lower was remembered as an ardent nationalist with a vibrant personality.

In their later years, Creighton, Morton, and Lower had each acquired a distinct reputation as a practitioner of Canadian national history. The controversy surrounding *Canada’s First Century* and *The Forked Road* dominated Creighton’s reputation, as he was perceived as a brilliant stylist whose interpretation of history was outmoded and irrelevant to address the challenges of contemporary Canada. Arthur Lower was noted for his strident nationalism: although certain aspects of his ideas about Canadian identity,

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<sup>104</sup> Mark Nichols, “A sense of nationhood,” *Macleans* 101 (3) (January 18, 1988): 44.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>106</sup> George Woodcock, “A.R.M. Lower (1889-1988),” *Canadian Literature* 117 (Summer 1988): 176.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

such as his emphasis on the necessity of elitism, were ignored in favour of other elements, such as his liberalism and emphasis on civil rights. While generally regarded with much more admiration than Creighton, it is clear that the Canadian historical community found many of his views to be passé. Of the three scholars under examination, only W.L. Morton continued to be regarded as a national historian whose ideas retained their legitimacy in contemporary Canadian culture and society. Morton's western perspective, his early forays into regional and northern history, as well as his sensitivity towards the ethnic diversity of Canada, enabled him to successfully transmit his ideas to a new generation of historians.

## Conclusion

Originating in the growth of Canadian nationalism surrounding the Second World War, national history flourished throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Postwar national historians, including Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton and, later, W.L. Morton, published history that pertained to the origins and growth of the Canadian nation, following rigorous academic standards of research and writing in a manner intended for both the Canadian public and Canadian academics. Encouraged by the social and economic growth of the postwar years, Lower, Creighton, and Morton enthusiastically conveyed their understanding of Canada to the Canadian public and eagerly anticipated the Canadian Centennial through the publication of personal memoirs (in Lower's case) and participation in the Canadian Centenary Series (Donald Creighton and W.L. Morton were named co-editors of the series). However, the social and political changes of the late-1960s, including the rise of French-Canadian nationalism and the impact of the 'baby-boomers' upon the Canadian university system, challenged the notion of a national consensus, and by the mid-1970s, the Canadian historical profession began to regard both national histories and national historians as outdated. Although the Canadian public maintained an interest in Canadian history and heritage, Canadian historians increasingly sought to articulate the experience of minorities in Canada and gave less attention to communicating their work to the general public.<sup>1</sup> While both Arthur Lower and W.L.

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<sup>1</sup> While Canadian historians continued to pursue more specialized subjects, untrained practitioners of history, especially journalists, responded to the upsurge of historical curiosity that occurred during the 1970s. Canadian historians tended towards condescension in their appraisal of historical 'amateurs'; but there is sufficient evidence to show that it was these 'amateurs' whose work was actually read by the Canadian public and who, on occasion, produced better history than the 'professionals'. Intellectual historian Carl Berger writes, "[t]he responses of most academic historians to the surge of popular history was uneasy and critical, as though the confines of a craft guild had been violated .... [Academic historians] have, in fact, for all the growth in numbers and publications, become more isolated from the society in

Morton maintained favourable reputations within the academy, based on Lower's innovative pioneering work in social history and Morton's extensive and exceptional work in regional history, Donald Creighton's strident and unbending approach to contemporary Canadian issues, especially his rejection of French-Canadian nationalism as a movement inconsistent with the principles expressed during the Confederation debates, seriously damaged his professional reputation and encouraged the labeling of national history as outdated, elitist, and repressive of minorities.

In the decades following the death of these three scholars, Canadian historians have continued to debate the role of national history in Canada. Concurrently, research into many different aspects of Canadian society produced a body of work so large that, by 1994, 'social history' had ceased to be a meaningful term of categorization.<sup>2</sup> By 1980, 'new social history' in Canada had increased to such an extent that J.M.S. Careless, whose 1969 CHA article calling for an increased exploration of Canada's 'limited identities' had publicly articulated Canadian historians' desire for change within the profession, referenced the sheer volume of research put forth by historians during the 1970s in his statement: "I feel a little like the farmer in the midst of a flood when he declared, 'Lord, I know I prayed for rain – but this is ridiculous.'"<sup>3</sup> Yet, although Canadian historians have retained a concern for the role of nationalism within Canadian history,<sup>4</sup> the writing of 'national history' *per se* no longer remains a high priority for

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which they lived and in general have failed to respond to the enormous popular interest in the past – either in satisfying it, or educating it." See Berger, *The Writing*, 265-269.

<sup>2</sup> See Owram, *Canadian History*, xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Careless, "Limited Identities – ten years later," 3.

<sup>4</sup> This can be seen in several areas, including Presidential Addresses to the Canadian Historical Association such as a discussion of the preoccupation with the various sources of Canadian national identity in Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "National Unity and the Politics of Political History," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, New Series 3 (1992): 3-11. See also Miedema, *For Canada's Sake*, 2005. For a discussion of continued interest in the impact of the national, often understood



Canadian historians. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed account of the development of national history within Canadian historiography from 1980 to the present, a brief examination of posthumous references to W.L. Morton and Arthur Lower, and, in particular to Donald Creighton, reveal that the Canadian historical profession has become deeply polarized regarding the topic of national history, sometimes to such an extent that it appears exceedingly difficult to arrive at a consensus regarding the appropriate place of national history within contemporary Canadian historiography.

The posthumous reputation of W.L. Morton has, on the whole, remained quite positive, as the historian and his work are still respected among the Canadian historical community. Still identified as a national historian, Morton's association with the Canadian Centenary Series tends to label him as one of the figureheads of 'old' political history.<sup>5</sup> As the reflections of John Herd Thompson on his interactions with Morton as the editor of the series demonstrate, Morton continued to promote a unified historical understanding of Canada until he passed away, rejecting the emphasis on discord that

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to represent the federal powers of Ottawa, on the rest of the country, see papers at the recent meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in June of 2008, including Krista M. Walters, "'A National Priority': Food, Health and Colonizing Bodies in Nutrition Canada's National Survey, 1965-1975," Gail Edwards, "Reading Canadian: Children and National Literature in the Interwar Period," and Elsbeth Heaman, "'The father is high tariff, the mother is free trade': Gender and the National Policy."

<sup>5</sup> Larry Glassford, an assistant professor in the faculty of Education at the University of Windsor and PhD in history from York University in 1985, described Creighton and Morton as "two senior Anglo-Canadian historians who were seen at one time as representing separate schools of thought, for the latter was a Laurentian centralist, and the former first gained prominence as a Progressive regionalist." Glassford described the Canadian Centenary Series as symbolic of the old political history tradition against which the 'new' historians of the 1970s were rebelling. See Larry A. Glassford, "The Evolution of 'New Political History' in English-Canadian Historiography: From Cliometrics to Clodiversity," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 (3) (Autumn 2002): 348.) In his examination of Morton's role as editor of the Canadian Centenary Series, Lyle Dick traced the development of the series, noting that the emphasis on Confederation and the central roles of Ontario and Quebec derived from both the increasing influence of the United States in Canada and the internal tensions that had begun to arise from Quebec. See Lyle Dick, "'A Growing Necessity for Canada': W.L. Morton's Centenary Series and the Forms of National History, 1955-80," *Canadian Historical Review* 82 (2) (June 2001): 251.

younger historians such as Thompson sought to explore and illuminate.<sup>6</sup> Despite Morton's desire to emphasize the unity of Canada, historians continue to study many of his ideas long after his death. Morton is still regarded as the father of northern history in Canada,<sup>7</sup> and continues to be looked upon as an exemplary model for regional historians.<sup>8</sup> In his essay on "Nation, Identity, Rights: Reflections on W.L. Morton's *Canadian Identity*," Ramsay Cook concluded that the notion of Canadian political nationality articulated by Morton, one based upon the concept of allegiance rather than the American notion of covenant, with some modifications, remained as essentially valid in the mid-1990s as it did in the early 1960s.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Gregory Kealey of Memorial University, reflecting on the Cook-Careless notion of 'limited identities,' stated that "[s]uch an approach, emphasizing region, ethnicity, and class, was not unprecedented. Indeed, W.L. Morton's 1946 'Clio in Canada' was a far sharper critique of centralist bias in Canadian historical writing, although it fell on arid soil."<sup>10</sup> From Kealey, a founding editor of the labour history journal *Labour/Le Travail*, this is high praise for Morton, and suggests that Kealey perceived Morton as separate from central Canadian historians such as Donald

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<sup>6</sup> In relating how he became involved with the Canadian Centenary Series, Thompson states that he was pulled into the project as Morton was nearing the end of his life and Creighton was on his deathbed. It was Morton's decision to appoint Thompson to finish the volume "[a]nd Morton repented that decision as soon as he read my outline," questioning Thompson's emphasis on discord and his idea that "there was not one but several Canadas, each determined to shape the nation in its own image and guide it in different directions." See John Herd Thompson, "Integrating Regional Patterns into a National Canadian History," *Acadiensis* 20 (1) (1990): 178.

<sup>7</sup> For example, see Abel and Coates, eds, *Northern Visions*, 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> R. Douglas Francis looked at how W.L. Morton employed concepts of regionalism within his discussions of the 'defining moment' of Prairie history, namely "the incorporation of the Prairie West into Confederation and into a Canadian national perspective in the period from 1870 to 1885." See R. Douglas Francis, "Regionalism, W.L. Morton and the Writing of Western Canadian History, 1870-1885," *American Review of Canadian Studies* (Winter 2001): 584.

<sup>9</sup> Ramsay Cook, "Nation, Identity, Rights: Reflections on W.L. Morton's *Canadian Identity*," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29 (2) (Summer 1994): 5-18.

<sup>10</sup> Gregory Kealey, "Class in English-Canadian Historical Writing: Neither Privatizing, Nor Sundering," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27 (2) (Summer 1992): 124.

Creighton. Through to the twenty-first century, Morton's research, ideas, and style have continued to engage the Canadian historical community.

Though Canadian historians have largely ceased to regard Arthur Lower's *corpus* of work as a source of contemporary inspiration, Lower is still remembered as a pioneer of Canadian history. In his 2001 article, "The Maple Leaf (Gardens) Forever: Sex, Canadian Historians and National History," Steven Maynard credited Arthur Lower as one of the first historians to draw attention to the historical importance of sex, particularly in *Canadians in the Making*, which was generally regarded as an early attempt to understand the social history of Canada.<sup>11</sup> While Maynard did not endorse all of Lower's opinions, especially Lower's attacks on "the worship of the god Equality" by Canadian educators, he praised Lower for being "more open to sex than national historians forty years later," namely J.L. Granatstein and Michael Bliss.<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that many historians choose to focus on the more palatable aspects of Lower's thought, evaluations of Lower's work are hardly uncritical. For example, the phrase 'colony to nation,' the title of Arthur Lower's 1946 history of Canada, has become an aphorism for the 'Whig' school of Canadian history, especially among historians of imperial Britain, and is frequently used as shorthand for a simplistic understanding of the development of Canadian identity.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, in his conclusion to the second edition of *The Writing of Canadian History*, Carl Berger noted many of the developing fields of Canadian history "that seemed to be novel owed not a little to those who had gone

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<sup>11</sup> For more on *Canadians in the Making*, see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>12</sup> Steven Maynard, "The Maple Leaf (Gardens) Forever: Sex, Canadian Historians, and National History," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36 (2) (Summer 2001): 91-95.

<sup>13</sup> Graham Carr, "Imperialism and Nationalism in Revisionist Historiography: A Critique of Some Recent Trends," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17 (2) (Summer 1982): 91. For further criticism of Arthur Lower in the context of imperial history, see Philip Buckner's 1993 Presidential Address to the CHA: Philip Buckner, "Whatever Happened to the British Empire?" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993): 22.

before,” citing Lower as a predecessor to urban history and Morton as the progenitor of regional and provincial history.<sup>14</sup> This endorsement from one of Canada’s leading intellectual and cultural historians demonstrates, firstly, that the posthumous reputations of Morton and Lower continued to remain positive and, secondly, that those positive reputations were not primarily as practitioners of national history.

Although they still acclaim the excellence of his narrative style,<sup>15</sup> today’s Canadian historians appear to identify Donald Creighton almost universally with a specific brand of national history that champions elites (usually white males) and deliberately represses the history of the disenfranchised. For example, in her 1994 Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association entitled “Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory,” Veronica Strong-Boag described Donald Creighton as typifying “our profession’s recurring temptation to blinkered vision” and, in contrast, praised Arthur Lower as a champion of multiple points of view.<sup>16</sup> This praise of Lower contrasted starkly with Strong-Boag’s assessment of Creighton: “[n]ot surprisingly, this was the same man who harshly condemned the cultural pluralism of modern Canada, and attempted to deny it historical legitimacy or contemporary political expression.”<sup>17</sup> It is clear that Strong-Boag regarded Creighton as a person whose political views were

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<sup>14</sup> Berger, *The Writing*, 319.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Donald Creighton’s reputation as a narrative historian was such that over a decade after his death, Kenneth Dewar chose to examine Creighton’s work as examples to illustrate his exploration of narrative history. See Kenneth C. Dewar, “Where to Begin and How: Narrative Openings in Donald Creighton’s Historiography,” *Canadian Historical Review* 72 (3) (1991): 348-369.

<sup>16</sup> Strong-Boag reminded her audience of Arthur Lower’s perspective that “[t]he whole business of writing history lies in clarifying ‘common memories’” and Donald Creighton’s pronouncement that the new historical interpretations of the 1960s resulted from the need to “supply historical authority for a program of radical change” rather than the search for the truth, stating that the differences between these two perspectives “continue to characterize the poles of opinions among historians.” See Veronica Strong-Boag, “Contested Space: the Politics of Canadian Memory,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 5 (1994): 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> Not surprisingly, Strong-Boag cites Creighton’s *Canada’s First Century*, one of his most controversial works, as the best place to see his ‘harsh condemnation’. See Strong-Boag, “Contested Space,” 7.

fundamentally opposed to contemporary Canadian social changes. University of New Brunswick historian Donald Wright, currently working on a biography of Donald Creighton, has found that Strong-Boag's negative opinion of Creighton is shared by many Canadian historians. A sample of the monikers attached to Donald Creighton include "notorious francophobe curmudgeon," anti-Semitic, anti-American, mean-spirited, volatile, and cadaverous.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the reactions of "polite incredulity" of Wright's colleagues when they learn of his most recent project speaks even more clearly of the disdain with which Donald Creighton continues to be regarded by members of the Canadian historical profession, as though even the exploration of his life transgresses boundaries of what is considered professionally appropriate.<sup>19</sup> Such responses reveal a definite limitation in the historical imagination of some Canadian historians, one that automatically discounts the validity of any point of view that is contrary to the accepted wisdom of contemporary culture.

The out-of-hand dismissal of Donald Creighton by contemporary Canadian historians, and to a much lesser extent the selective remembrance of Lower and Morton, bring to light the danger that, in remaining content with caricature, Canadian historians unwittingly encourage an inaccurate understanding of the past and a skewing of Canadian historiography. An article by Queen's University doctoral candidate Ryan Edwardson entitled "Narrating a Canadian Identity: Arthur R.M. Lower's *Colony to Nation* and the

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<sup>18</sup> Wright, "Reflections," 17-19.

<sup>19</sup> Wright notes, "About ten years ago I contemplated writing his biography for my dissertation but was advised not to go near him. As the third rail of Canadian intellectual and political life, he would kill any chance I had of a university career: touch him and you're dead. The profession, I was told, had no interest in a biography of Donald Creighton. Taking this advice, I moved on to another topic. Creighton appeared in my dissertation on the professionalization of history in English Canada, but he was not its subject." See *ibid.*, 19.

Nationalization of History”<sup>20</sup> illustrates how contemporary perspectives can fail to articulate the complexity of the past and occasionally distort it. Edwardson states that his purpose is to “explore[s] Lower’s nationalism, *Colony to Nation* as a text, and how, while popular, it existed as an exclusive nation-building narrative, which was not so much the history of the Canadian people as it was the history of Canadian hegemony.”<sup>21</sup> A major element of Edwardson’s analysis is his criticism of Lower for neglecting to include the experience of ethnic groups outside of the French-English dichotomy, such as natives, women, and those in the lower classes of society.<sup>22</sup> While Edwardson is, for the most part, accurate in his assessment of the biases of *Colony to Nation*, his analysis speaks more about the developments in Canadian historiography since the 1970s than it does about the personal and public context in which Lower’s *magnum opus* was written.

Edwardson’s article is a very effective close reading of Lower’s *Colony to Nation*; however, while it illuminates some of the gaps in Lower’s 1946 portrayal of Canadians and their national development, Edwardson’s analysis fails to provide a sufficient historical explanation for some very interesting and vital questions raised by the methodological approach of the article. For example, why was such a “hegemonic” and “elitist” history so enthusiastically welcomed by both the Canadian public and the academy, as so extensively described by Edwardson? As evidence of the academic and popular success of *Colony to Nation*, Edwardson cites over eight sources that praise Lower’s accomplishments. However, Edwardson’s suggestion that *Colony to Nation* suffered from a lack of sufficient research is supported only by a single review by military historian C.P. Stacy, and Edwardson’s summary of the review significantly

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<sup>20</sup> Edwardson, “Narrating a Canadian Identity,” 59-75.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 67, 69-72.

distorted Stacey's original comments.<sup>23</sup> Although criticizing Lower for ignoring the voices of the marginalized, Edwardson himself neither musters any firsthand evidence to demonstrate the dissatisfaction of ordinary Canadians with the exclusion of those such as women, lower classes, and ethnic minorities, nor attempts to describe or analyze the personal letters of thanks sent to Arthur Lower by grateful readers to understand the source of their pleasure in reading *Colony to Nation*. In his concluding paragraph Edwardson states that "[f]ew Canadians at the turn of the twenty-first century can find themselves in the narrative," yet given the extensive social and political changes which occurred during the last half of the twentieth century, this statement is neither profound nor illuminating. Instead of attempting to understand the socio-historical context of postwar Canada that gave rise to the popularity of *Colony to Nation*, Edwardson leaves his readers with the highly unsatisfactory statement that "*Colony to Nation* gave life to Canadian history and provided many Canadians with a sense of community and national identity" without providing any insight into Canadian national identity of 1946 or the larger community that supported that national self-understanding.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Edwardson quoted C.P. Stacey's review of *Colony to Nation* as being "'opinionated,' 'a pretty monumental piece of carelessness,' and overly negative about the British connection that Stacey saw as important to Canadian identity,'" see *ibid.*, 61. As chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrates, Arthur Lower was admired for his willingness to express a strong opinion, and Stacey's final comments as quoted by Edwardson, that the value of *Colony to Nation* is that it engages the reader and makes them think, support this conclusion. However, Edwardson's quotation of Stacey that *Colony to Nation* was a "pretty monumental piece of carelessness" challenges the accuracy of Lower's research and suggests that Lower frequently resorted to fiction when the facts failed to suit his purpose. However, within the context of the original review, one finds that Stacey is describing the "monumental carelessness" of the editor regarding such things as ill-constructed sentences, "sometimes careless" citations, typographical errors, and discrepancy in spelling. See Stacey, Review of *Colony*, 196. Distributing the blame for such mistakes between the author, his editor, and proofreaders, Stacey's review ends, "[s]uch slovenliness is an unnecessary and regrettable blemish on a useful and stimulating book which materially enriches the literature of Canadian history,"; see *ibid.* Thus Edwardson's selective – and misrepresentative – use of quotations falsely creates the impression that Lower's history, while engaging, is hardly accurate.

<sup>24</sup> Edwardson, "Narrating a Canadian Identity," 73.

While Edwardson's approach to history adeptly illustrates the contemporary concerns of Canadian historiography, the scholarship of University of New Brunswick historian Donald Wright more adequately fulfills the mission of the historian to understand the past, even while confronting the more unpalatable aspects of Canadian historiography. In his 1995 article in the *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, Wright examined the source of Creighton's well-known views on French Canada. While acknowledging Creighton's faults – he could be “intensely private, paranoid, hypersensitive and arrogant to the point of contempt” – Wright argued that remaining satisfied with a caricature of Creighton obscures the complexity of his thought and of the historical circumstances in which he found himself. Wright elaborated on this position:

[O]n the subjects of French Canada and Quebec nationalism, bilingualism and biculturalism, Creighton was a much more complicated figure than the one found in existing popular and academic literature. To dismiss [Creighton] as a francophobe, literally one who fears French people, is admittedly easier than wrestling with his complexity. Nonetheless, it is incumbent on us, as historians, to treat Creighton historically, to treat him as a particular individual living in a particular context. What follows, then, is an attempt to move beyond the caricature and exploitation in an effort to posit a new, more nuanced, understanding of Donald Creighton and the French fact, one that will analyze the entirety of his career and not simply its final two decades.<sup>25</sup>

Almost a decade later, Wright remains convinced of the value of this approach, as well as the usefulness of biography as a tool to understanding not only the effects of the individual within society, but also to gain a broader perspective on society itself.<sup>26</sup> Well aware of the pitfalls of the biographical approach, Wright's argument nevertheless demonstrates that a ‘close reading’ of the life and historical context of an individual, regardless of their personal convictions, brings the historian closer to an accurate

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<sup>25</sup> Donald A. Wright, “Donald Creighton and the French Fact, 1920s -1970s,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, New Series 6 (1995): 243-272.

<sup>26</sup> Wright, “Reflections,” 20-24.



understanding of the past than does blank dismissal of those personal convictions. While Edwardson effectively identified the ‘problem’ of national history, Wright’s scholarship goes much further towards understanding the sources of that ‘problem,’ and therefore towards understanding the historical experiences of Canadians.

Morton, Lower, and Creighton were, in their heyday, exceptional historians who succeeded in engaging the Canadian public, as well as their professional colleagues, in a quest to understand the historical experience of Canadians as Canadians. Rather than all subscribing to a monolithic view of the past, Morton, Lower and Creighton each brought his own particular interpretation to Canadian national history, allowing their readers to assess their arguments and agree or disagree with their conclusions. Highly acclaimed by both the Canadian public and the Canadian historical profession, Morton, Lower and Creighton opened up Canadian history to a broad range of readers through the expertise of their scholarship and the easy flow of their prose. Taken as a whole, postwar national history encompasses much more than the limited view of Canada expressed by Donald Creighton in *Forked Road*. While focussing on this later, limited perspective may be an accurate reflection of contemporary attitudes towards postwar national history, in ignoring or overlooking the broader aspects of Canadian national history we are losing a comprehensive understanding of the past and, in some cases, approaching the past ahistorically. And in many ways, the careers and scholarship of Morton, Lower, and Creighton, as well as the work of Edwardson and Wright, illustrate the ongoing struggle for historians to attempt to understand the past within its own context rather than through the lens of our own ideologies and predilections.

Figure 1

## EXECUTIVE BOOKS

## Yesterday's view of our tomorrow

*Canada's First Century* by Donald Creighton, published by Macmillan of Canada. Hardbound, 372 pages, \$9.95

Donald Creighton's latest history was launched recently in Toronto with a flurry of speeches and press conferences. They were characterized by gloomy pronouncements from the author of the certain decline of the country by the year 2000, if not before.

While his remarks were depressingly consistent with conventional neurotic nationalism they pertended to me a book in which the author had lost the professional historian's perspectives. A subtle and immediate response to these unprofessional outbursts occurred when a *Globe and Mail* headline writer bannered the story, "Canada has lost its future," historian Creighton announces.

I'm inclined to share the headline writer's view that a slight put down in order. Creighton becomes progressively more gloomy about the Canadian accomplishment until he tucks Canada completely into the ever-beckoning American empire.

Thus his book lends historical credentials to the popular thesis of much of our intellectual elite—that American involvement means proportionate "domination" and his dialectic borrows all the extreme phrasing of the nationalists on this great Canadian issue.

But otherwise his book is a marvellously readable history which emphasizes the long-standing issues which still preoccupy Canadians. Thus many of our preoccupations with the French-English relationship, and the Canadian-American, seem surprisingly *déjà vu* in the context of what we have lived through—even flourished through—before.

Creighton has his heroes and his villains, and it's entertaining in the extreme to hear the prejudices I used to hear at home about Mackenzie King reinforced with documentation, which has, I am sure, more than one reasonable interpretation. The author makes me pine for older and the easier interpretations of the constitutional

relationship than dualism requires today, and for the powerful internationalism which once was a central motivation in stronger national governments.

I think Creighton's concepts of nationhood and independence are more relevant to the late 19th century than to the 20th. But since our country's political leaders flagellate us collectively for failing today to fulfill a 19th century mould of nationhood, why be surprised when one of Ontario's best historical spokesmen merely endorses the mood?

Alan Halsey

### Whoopee, Youpi

*Youpi & the Girls*, by Marcel Veranese, published by General Publishing. Hardbound, illustrated, no pagination, \$12.50.

Youpi is a dog, but he's not really relevant. Rather he is just used as an occasional prop in this photographic essay of four young ladies, romping through what could well be one summer's day, in various degrees of nakedness.

It is an exhilarating and unpretentious book, delighting in the joy of youth and body. Not that young, mind you, and the bodies are the kind to make one stop and take notice. C.B.

*Youpi's friend*



### Life for Rosemary's Baby

*This Perfect Day*, by Ira Levin, published by Random House Canada. Hardbound, 309 pages, \$8.50.

Master story teller Levin (*A Kiss Before Dying*, *Rosemary's Baby*) has come up with another good tale here written, one suspects with the movie industry very much in mind.

The perfect day of the title is life experienced in a future, dehumanized society where a massive computer controls, through regular "treatments" every person on earth.

The treatments make the population tranquil, kind, helpful, sexually unresponsive, free of disease and totally submissive.

Levin is not an Orwell or a Huxley, but he does have a moral and his book is readable enough. It comes equipped with a surprise ending, as is the author's style, and though it lacks the undeniable strength of *Rosemary's Baby* it makes enjoyable enough reading for a rainy Sunday.

Or you could wait for the movie. S.E.C.

### Dirty book department

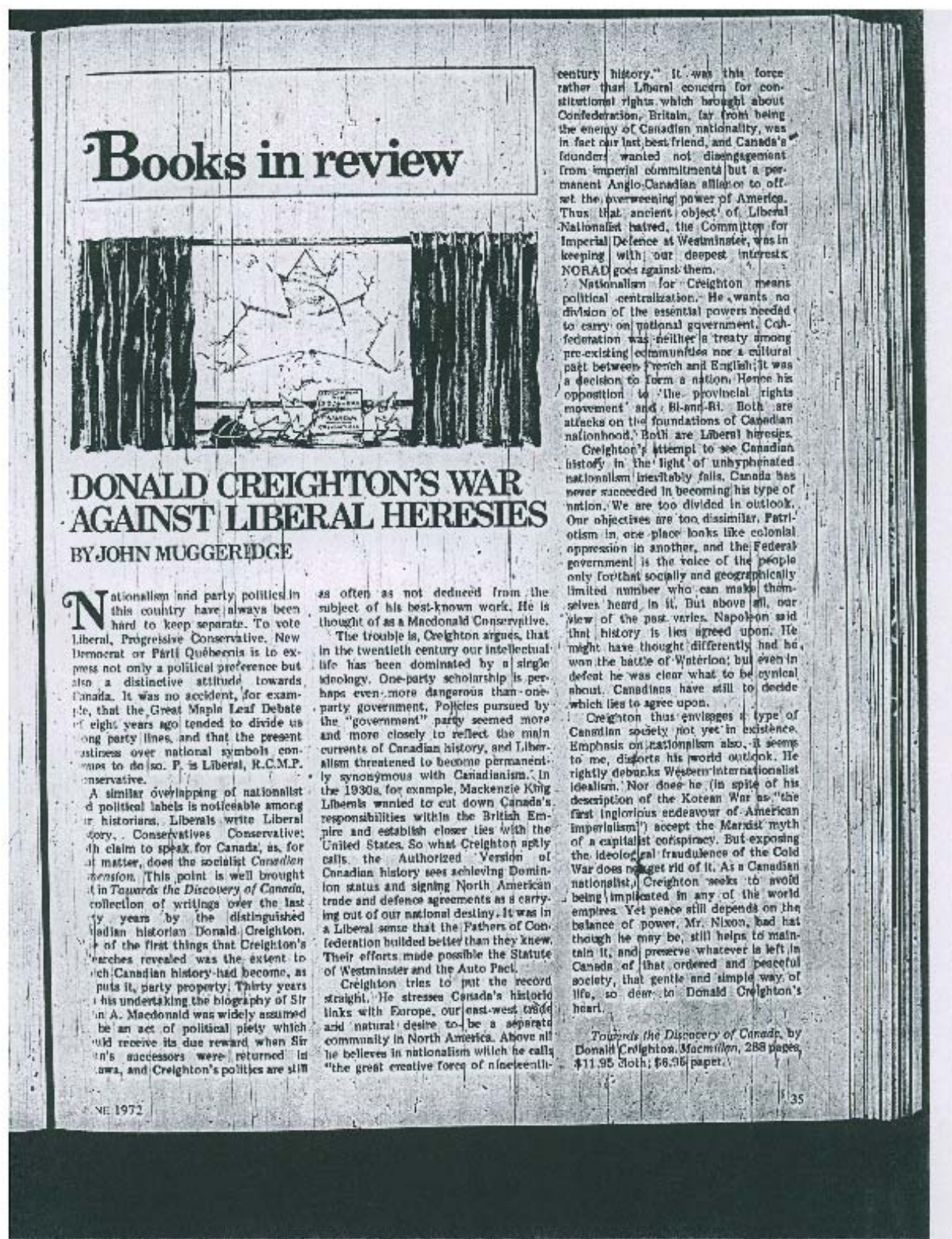
*The Broadbelters*, by Maxine Schnall, published by McClelland & Stewart. Hardbound, 216 pages, \$5.95.

Another dirty book from the house that last year brought us *The Midas Compulsion*. This one has its moments, from the opening sequence where the heroine is working in a drive-in brothel to the last page where she is dreamily contemplating winning the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In between, the story of how she got a ghost writer to catapult her to the top of the best seller list with a book on "Hollywood Personalities I Have Known and Their Unusual Sex Habits." J.S.



Figure 2



## Books in review

### DONALD CREIGHTON'S WAR AGAINST LIBERAL HERESIES

BY JOHN MUGGERIDGE

Nationalism and party politics in this country have always been hard to keep separate. To vote Liberal, Progressive Conservative, New Democrat or Parti Québécois is to express not only a political preference but also a distinctive attitude towards Canada. It was no accident, for example, that the Great Maple Leaf Debate of eight years ago tended to divide us along party lines, and that the present silliness over national symbols continues to do so. P. is Liberal, R.C.M.P. is conservative.

A similar overlapping of nationalist and political labels is noticeable among our historians. Liberals write Liberal history. Conservatives write Conservative history. The claim to speak for Canada, as for all matter, does the socialist *Canadian historian*. This point is well brought out in *Towards the Discovery of Canada*, a collection of writings over the last fifty years by the distinguished Canadian historian Donald Creighton. One of the first things that Creighton's sketches revealed was the extent to which Canadian history had become, as he puts it, party property. Thirty years after his undertaking the biography of Sir John A. Macdonald was widely assumed to be an act of political piety which would receive its due reward when Sir John's successors were returned in power, and Creighton's politics are still

as often as not deduced from the subject of his best-known work. He is thought of as a Macdonald Conservative.

The trouble is, Creighton argues, that in the twentieth century our intellectual life has been dominated by a single ideology. One-party scholarship is perhaps even more dangerous than one-party government. Policies pursued by the "government" party seemed more and more closely to reflect the main currents of Canadian history, and Liberalism threatened to become permanently synonymous with Canadianism. In the 1930s, for example, Mackenzie King Liberals wanted to cut down Canada's responsibilities within the British Empire and establish closer ties with the United States. So what Creighton aptly calls the Authorized Version of Canadian history sees achieving Dominion status and signing North American trade and defence agreements as a carrying out of our national destiny. It was in a Liberal sense that the Fathers of Confederation builded better than they knew. Their efforts made possible the Statute of Westminster and the Auto Pact.

Creighton tries to put the record straight. He stresses Canada's historic links with Europe, our east-west trade and natural desire to be a separate community in North America. Above all he believes in nationalism which he calls "the great creative force of nineteenth-

century history." It was this force rather than Liberal concern for constitutional rights which brought about Confederation. Britain, far from being the enemy of Canadian nationality, was in fact our last best friend, and Canada's founders wanted not disengagement from imperial commitments but a permanent Anglo-Canadian alliance to offset the overweening power of America. Thus that ancient object of Liberal Nationalist hatred, the Committee for Imperial Defence at Westminster, was in keeping with our deepest interests. NORAD goes against them.

Nationalism for Creighton means political centralization. He wants no division of the essential powers needed to carry on national government. Confederation was neither a treaty among pre-existing communities nor a cultural pact between French and English; it was a decision to form a nation. Hence his opposition to the provincial rights movement and R. and R. Both are attacks on the foundations of Canadian nationhood. Both are Liberal heresies.

Creighton's attempt to see Canadian history in the light of unhyphenated nationalism inevitably fails. Canada has never succeeded in becoming his type of nation. We are too divided in outlook. Our objectives are too dissimilar. Patriotism in one place looks like colonial oppression in another, and the Federal government is the voice of the people only for that socially and geographically limited number who can make themselves heard in it. But above all, our view of the past varies. Napoleon said that history is lies agreed upon. He might have thought differently had he won the battle of Waterloo; but even in defeat he was clear what to be cynical about. Canadians have still to decide which lies to agree upon.

Creighton thus envisages a type of Canadian society not yet in existence. Emphasis on nationalism also, it seems to me, distorts his world outlook. He rightly debunks Western internationalist idealism. Nor does he (in spite of his description of the Korean War as "the first inglorious endeavour of American imperialism") accept the Marxist myth of a capitalist conspiracy. But exposing the ideological fraudulence of the Cold War does not get rid of it. As a Canadian nationalist, Creighton seeks to avoid being implicated in any of the world empires. Yet peace still depends on the balance of power. Mr. Nixon, bad as though he may be, still helps to maintain it, and preserve whatever is left in Canada of that ordered and peaceful society, that gentle and simple way of life, so dear to Donald Creighton's heart.

*Towards the Discovery of Canada*, by Donald Creighton, Macmillan, 288 pages, \$11.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper.

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A brief note on the organization of bibliographical material: I have organized the primary sources into four sub-categories: author's works, obituaries, *festschriften*, and book reviews. While obituaries, *festschriften*, and book reviews are not normally considered primary sources as they comment on the work of another author, I used these materials to understand the perspectives of the reviewers, thus giving me an insight into trends within the Canadian historical profession.

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