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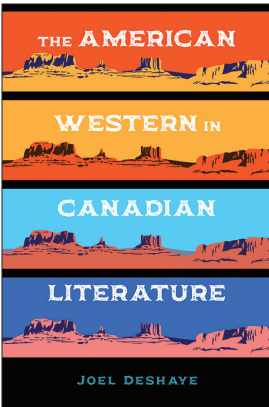
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THE AMERICAN WESTERN IN CANADIAN LITERATURE

by Joel Deshayé

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The Northwestern Cross

Christianity and Transnationalism in Early Canadian Westerns

In North America, the modern axis of colonialism—now mostly in its cultural-economic rather than settler phase—is vertical, or north–south, as the United States becomes arguably more and more successful as an arbiter of artistic culture and governmental affairs, at least in Canada if not also Mexico, and as a transnational corporate occupant of the entire continent and much of the world. Canada, too, has been recently vertically colonial, encouraging renewed military surveillance, economic exploration, and settlement in the North. From the very late fifteenth century to the late nineteenth, however, the primary axis of colonialism here was horizontal, east–west. The east–west railroad was completed relatively peacefully because the North-West Mounted Police were there in the later 1870s and 1880s to protect its development and because Indigenous peoples were therefore already exhausted after years of fighting. The Mountie is a crucial figure in the settling of the West—a figure equivalent to what I have elsewhere called the outlaw-lawman: often a vigilante but sometimes a sheriff akin to the modern “rogue cop” that Clint Eastwood popularized through the Dirty Harry films beginning in the 1970s.¹ This chapter will show that the Mountie and symbolic lawmen in Canadian Westerns were, at times, surprisingly different from the upstanding and dutiful ideal. And as this sort of lawman—a figment of the imagination as

¹ See the bibliography for my already noted essay on the outlaw-lawman in Eastwood’s transitional and rogue-cop films.

opposed to a historical figure—he brought the law not only to the West; Robert Thacker explains that “[o]nce the prairies were settled, of course, the Mounted Police moved into the north as the next frontier” (“Mountie” 165). Novelists such as Ralph Connor and H. A. Cody often imagined that the law the Mountie carried from west to north was fundamentally Christian, a moral code suitable to what their American contemporary James Oliver Curwood called “God’s country” (qtd. in Brégent-Heald, “James” 692). If we may imagine two maps of the same land and water, the later version superimposed over the earlier, the horizontal and vertical axes would form a cross.²

The image of the cross, on the one hand, has no necessary symbolism: it is simply a geographical coincidence that this chapter uses to stitch geography to genre and religion. On the other, the cross as a symbol of Christianity was and is a motivating factor in the colonial settlement of the West and North, one that cannot be ignored in the early Canadian Westerns, just as crossing over between genres was a technique that enabled Connor and perhaps especially Cody to transmit their religious messages. Building on the genre-nation connections from chapter 1, this chapter suggests that crossover genres—the Northern or Northwestern and the Western, but also adventures for boys and the Western—were strategically transitional, serving the nation-state and its nascent military-industrial complex by training young readers into adults who would be morally receptive to imperial actions such as westward expansion, settlement, and war.³

When the railroad reached the already settled West Coast in 1885, horizontal colonialism was symbolically complete, and so the symbolic expansion had to change direction; the industrial capitalism of the railway, its associated national project, and Christianity all worked on principles of expansion and growth (Wood 204). Creating the appeal of this

2 I do not mind the echo in this vertical-horizontal cross of Laurie Ricou’s *Vertical Man / Horizontal World* (1973). I briefly mentioned some of Ricou’s work in the first chapter of this book in one of the sections on regionalism.

3 I leave “the nation-state” deliberately vague here, but some might argue that Canada does not have a military-industrial complex, at least not one anywhere near the magnitude of the one in the United States. As I will show, however, Connor and Cody offered both real and fictional support to the United States and the internationally shared war effort, so if nothing else it refers to the United States.

“next frontier” in the United States and the Canadian East has been called “destination branding” (Brégent-Heald, “James” 692). The new direction was evident in the immediate emergence of a variant of the Western—e.g., John Mackie’s *Sinners Twain* (1895) and Jack London’s *Son of the Wolf* (1902) and *Call of the Wild* (1903)—called the Northern or Northwestern, whose earliest Canadian proponents, Ralph Connor and H. A. Cody, happened to be Christian ministers.⁴

Although I try to avoid re-inscribing a hierarchy by thinking of the Northern or Northwestern more as a variant and less as a sub-genre, Richard G. Baker correctly identifies the power dynamics when he writes that, “in replacing the Western’s amorphous and generic frontier with Canadian territory, the Northern implicitly redefines Canada as the American frontier. In this sense, the sub-genre itself positions Canada as a subordinate element inside an American self-narrative” (109). If the generic lineage of Western and Northwestern is implausible even in the slightest, notice that almost all the characters in Cody’s *The Long Patrol: A Tale of the Mounted Police* (1912) get classic Western names, like Buckskin Dan, Siwash Bill, Shifty Nick, and Old Meg—everyone a sobriquet. And the vernacular is pure Western. In Connor’s *Black Rock* (1898), one of the men exclaims about the minister, “Ain’t he a clinker! I’ll be gee-whizzly-goldusted if he ain’t a malleable-iron-double-back-action self-adjusting corn-cracker” (149). He might as well be riffing on a banjo. And in *The Long Patrol*, “If we kin, we must reach Hishu afore Windy Pete gits thar” (135), says Buckskin Dan. The elision of the cussing—for example, “them d— Yellow-legs” (54)—is one of the usual tactics of purifying the genre in the novels by Cody and Connor. Although they could be liberals in blending genres, they were usually religious conservatives in their messaging.

Connor is known today among diligent readers of Canadian literature and its history, but Cody is not, nor was he as popular in his and Connor’s day—but they worked together with later writers to establish the genre that provides the best literary evidence of the West’s turn to the North

4 Others included the American James B. Hendryx’s 1918 novel *Connie Morgan with the Mounted*; the Scottish-American Laurie York Erskine’s series that began in 1922 with *Renfrew of the Royal Mounted*; the American James Oliver Curwood’s 1926 novel about Mounties, *The Flaming Forest*; the British-Canadian Roderick Haig-Brown and his somewhat later 1954 novel *Mounted Police Patrol*.

that I theorized while thinking through the idea of North in the introduction and first chapter. In this chapter, I will eventually consider some of the subtleties of genre, such as crossover, in which they worked; but first I will show how various representations of the Northwest—focusing on its iconic Mountie and other symbols of law and order—concentrated on a brand of heroism that conveyed colonial attitudes about the West and North and the First Nations and Inuit who had preceded them in living there. Cody's *The Long Patrol* and Connor's *Corporal Cameron of the North West Mounted Police* (1912), with their physically imposing and morally assertive heroes—"Christians in action" (Gordon 15)—exemplify the "Muscular Christianity" (Rifkind 134; Coleman 128–9) associated with the new Boy Scout movement (est. 1910) that Cody promoted in his Westernesque *Rod of the Lone Patrol* (1916) and that Laurie York Erskine perpetuated in his later series of Mountie novels and their spinoffs. Candida Rifkind, in an essay on Erskine's Renfrew of the Mounted novels, quotes a *New York Times* reviewer of Erskine's *The River Trail* (1923):

Most of the novels that are concerned with the life and people of the wilder regions in the west and northwest of Canada represent the flow of population as being wholly between the east and the west of the Dominion. . . . But Mr. Erskine indicates a considerable movement north and south, not only across the boundary line but far south in the United States. (qtd. in Rifkind 131)

In fact, this "considerable movement" has a parallel in literature that was made prominent through earlier examples such as Connor and Cody. Through them, the imagined line from east to west gained a new dimension, a north–south line, which promised that the wilderness (however inhabited and understood it already was by Indigenous peoples) would remain open to adventure and prospecting—and open to taming.

The Nation in the Northern and Northwestern

In beginning this chapter with an emphasis on a transition from the West (and South) to the North, I also hope to explain some of the transnational dynamics of both the American and Canadian Westerns. Canada produced

or was the setting for hundreds of the variant known as the Northern or Northwestern, whether in magazines, novels, or films, from the 1910s to the 1940s. In truth, most of the films were American visions of Canada, usually the Northwest (and so Northwesterns are not necessarily Canadian, and Canadian Westerns do not necessarily include all Northwesterns, though I do call Northwesterns “Canadian Westerns” when they are written by Canadians or published in Canada). American authors of comic books and pulp fiction looked northward to Canada for heroes and tales, such as *Zane Grey’s King of the Royal Mounted* comic (1935–54). Although critics who were writing as early as 1911 were complaining of the historical inaccuracies in the Western (Altman, *Film/Genre* 38), Pierre Berton in *Hollywood’s Canada* (1975) echoed the grievance, partly because impressions of Canada could be distorted by those inaccuracies. He noted that, between 1907 and 1975, “American film companies . . . produced 575 motion pictures in which the plot has been set entirely or mainly in Canada” (16). When Berton examines the titles of these films (in an early example of distant reading), he discovers that “Canada was never Hollywood’s favourite word” (19). Instead, of the several hundred films, 79 include in their titles the words “North, Northwest, Northern, or Northwoods,” and fifty use the words “Wild, Wilderness, or Trail” (19). Although Berton argues that “everybody knew . . . that the setting was north of the border” (19), the occlusion of “Canada” might also suggest that, paratextually, American producers wanted to minimize the Canadianness of the films to appeal to the American desire for a general nordicity that could include the northern states or, more likely, be “the next stage of the frontier” (Walden 170). Novels by Americans that served a similar purpose include London’s *Call of the Wild*; they renewed the sense of the open frontier that Americans sought after that part of the American West was settled and mythologized in the wake of the Civil War, the transcontinental railroad, and Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show. These novels and films probably should not be described as a “Canadian influence” on American culture, because Americans were usually in charge of the productions. In many cases, Americans such as James Oliver Curwood—“history’s most prolific screen contributor” (Berton, *Hollywood* 26)—wrote both the films and the stories on which they were based. Remarkably, however, Curwood was for a decade employed by the government of Canada as a travel writer

in the Canadian West and North (Berton, *Hollywood* 27; Brégent-Heald, “James” 694–7); therefore, much of what he produced can be described as a Canadian influence, whether or not he wrote what the Canadians intended.

Assigning a single nationality to a text, writer, figure, or genre can be difficult, even when the Western seems to be so geographically specific. In *Visions of Order* (1982), Keith Walden names several writers of Northwesterns who had one or two nationalities and lived and/or wrote in other countries: Joseph Holliday, James B. Hendryx, Louis Charles Douthwaite, William Lacey Amy (a.k.a. Luke Allan), and Laurie York Erskine. Similarly, William H. Katerberg observes that Robert Service was an “Englishman-become-Canadian” (543) whose memorable poem “The Shooting of Dan McGrew” (1907) later became the American president Ronald Reagan’s favourite, a “classic ‘American’ story” set in Canada’s North that belies Canada’s relatively moderate gun culture but “suggests the influence of American myth on how Canadians imagine their own frontiers” (544); it also suggests that “Western myths do indeed cross borders, and in more than one direction” (557).⁵ Walden asks, “What national perspective did they [from the list above] write from? In many cases it is impossible to tell, although it may be significant that the figure of the Mounted Policeman appealed to authors with migrant backgrounds” (152). The promise of a new frontier was probably a more significant factor, and on this new frontier a modern cowboy was needed. What nationality was the Mountie? British? Canadian? Walden explains that the Mountie was, crucially, a figure of *order* whose appeal declined in Britain when the British dream of order through empire began to decline too, and a figure who was temporarily appealing to Americans because he was, in effect, a cowboy-detective: a hero familiar from a different and more urban genre who could sustain “the old individualist ethic” (169) of the cowboy while

5 Beyond the scope of this chapter, Luke Price, my prime example of uncertain nationality from the 1940s era of pulp fiction (in chapter 4), might have been an American writing under a pseudonym and publishing in Canada. From the contemporary set interpreted in other chapters of this book, Michael Ondaatje, Paulette Jiles, Thomas King, and Patrick deWitt are further examples. Their border crossings attest to an ever-increasing personal and cultural mobility associated with globalization, and globalization—despite all its estrangements—can minimize national differences even as it increases national subtleties.

managing with ease the modern, efficient, technocratic, orderly world.⁶ Although Berton argues that Hollywood's version of Canada in general is primitive (*Hollywood* 75), and Dawson argues that "Mountie literature was an expression of Canadian antimodernism" (43), from an American perspective the Mountie himself was relatively modern: an emissary of Eastern cities, the first protector of the railroads and telegraph lines of modernity. He was a compromise. During the Mountie's cinematic heyday in the first half of the twentieth century, he therefore offered hope, through his appropriation into the American imagination, that the United States could forestall the future implied in Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 warning about the closure of the American frontier and the total modernization and decline of American society (Walden 168–9). In that respect, the Mountie was an American figure who reassured viewers that an urban-rural/modern-traditional balance would be possible in the future. In fact, for five much later years (1995–2000), the Disney Company even gained ownership of the licensing rights to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Incredible, eh?

The Mountie's Americanization was not only the result of American anxieties, prognoses, and writings. In some cases, novels by Canadian writers served as source material, however loosely, for the films in Berton's catalogue. Connor's *The Sky Pilot* (1899) was adapted into what was described in the media as "an exceedingly good western," which meant partly that it had a lot of "thrilling punches" (qtd. in Berton, *Hollywood* 20). Connor's novels do stage several fight scenes, but they are often not so gratuitous as they are signs of the Muscular Christianity of his heroes—such as in the titular Mountie in his 1912 novel *Corporal Cameron*. "But in Hollywood's Canada, Mounties drew their guns on the slightest provocation" (Berton, *Hollywood* 122). In fact, such gunplay appears in a novel by a Canadian as early as 1912, before the trend of the Americanization of the Mountie; in Cody's *The Long Patrol*, the Mountie shoots first—and at *the back* of a retreating enemy (129–30)—a wild departure from the ideals of the never-shoot-first North-West Mounted Police. Quite possibly,

6 See also Ronald Sutherland's *The New Hero* (1977), which succinctly traces this "old individualist ethic" through different strains of Puritan thought in the United States and Canada, and which finds the origin of the later anti-heroism in the figure of "the loser" who is "crushed by a regimented system" (4), whether a government, an economy, or a family.

The Long Patrol is a Canadian Americanization in this detail: a writer in Canada dramatizing a Canadian figure through a lens trained on (or by) quick-shooting American cowboys and sheriffs. Much later, from the 1970s through to the 1990s (when in the latter part of the decade Disney owned the “brand”), this American influence turned from sensationalism to revisionism, helping to clean up the Mountie’s image and “sanitiz[e] narratives of the North American West” (Gittings, “Imagining Canada”). Ultimately, producers of American culture, not exclusively of the American Western, used Canada as it wished and influenced Canadian writers, while Canada had a small influence on the United States thanks to Canadian writers—but a much larger influence thanks to their geography, which was close and continuous with the relative South.

Cody and Connor

Cody was an Easterner—like some writers who popularized tales of the frontier, such as Owen Wister, who was from Philadelphia,⁷ and Theodore Roosevelt, who was from New York City—and, like these men, Cody gained insight into the West by travelling there. He lived and worked in Whitehorse as an Anglican minister from 1904 to New Year’s Eve 1909. He returned to New Brunswick and eventually published twenty-four novels in a career that was closely contemporary with Connor’s. Rodger J. Moran states that Connor’s and Cody’s books “were amongst the first to be mass-produced in North America due to their accessible prose, Christian themes and appeal to a broad audience” (“Hiram”). Although the reviews of Cody’s novels were mixed, they were generally positive initially (Jones 192; Scott 144). Cody’s first novel, *The Frontiersman* (1910), was in an edition of ten thousand copies (Jones 180) and “placed Cody’s name with some of the most popular writers of his day” (179)—a popularity in the thousands rather than Connor’s millions at that time (MacLaren 508), but an accomplishment. It was due partly to the fact that there were many promotional Christian newspapers and magazines when Cody began writing in the first decade of the twentieth century (Jones 118), and partly because

7 Wister was from Philadelphia, but his model in *The Virginian* (1902)—the twentieth-century origin of the cowboy—appears to have been Everett Johnson, a Virginian who later became an Albertan, as John Jennings argues throughout his 2015 book *The Cowboy Legend*.

he intentionally followed the success of writers such as Connor, Gilbert Parker, and London (Scott 142; Jones 112, 122, 177), with the latter's *Call of the Wild* in 1903 and *White Fang* in 1906 also set in the Northwest. In 1906, Cody entitled one of his poems "The Call of the Deep" (Jones 117); later he entitled another "The Call of the Parson" (Jones 144), titles that seem to allude to *Call of the Wild* and to a poem from 1907 by Service that borrows London's title verbatim. Service was a friend of Cody (Jones 104), and he and London served Cody as a mix of precedents and contemporaries.

Moran also states that "[w]hile HA Cody is not considered a pioneer of Canadian literature, his novels deftly capture the interests and spirit of the age in which he lived and wrote" ("Hiram"). Cody is certainly not yet "considered" as such, but he was more or less contemporary with Connor. Eli MacLaren describes Connor as a "pioneer" (507) for having been so successful as a Canadian writing about Canadians when the country was still under imperial copyright, as it would be until 1924. Connor preceded Cody in writing works set in the Northwest, as with *Black Rock* in 1898 and *The Doctor of Crow's Nest* (1906), but Cody was on his heels and was an equal "pioneer" of the Northwestern, insofar as the genre needs a Mountie. With *The Long Patrol* in 1912, Cody expanded his earlier interest in the Northwest to include what Thacker calls "the embodiment of the human force necessary to create Canada out of a vast wilderness" ("Canada's" 302)—a pioneering police force. Although Connor was "undoubtedly the most influential Canadian writer of Mountie narratives" (Dawson 42), his novel *Corporal Cameron of the North West Mounted Police* was published in 1912, the same year as Cody's *The Long Patrol*, and two years after Cody's *Frontiersman*. Cody was no latecomer. Along with Connor, London, and Service (who wrote about Mounties in a ballad published in 1911 called "Clancy of the Mounted"), Cody and his early success with the Mountie was contemporary with Curwood's *Philip Steele of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police* (1911) and the later *The Flaming Forest* of 1923, and Erskine's series of Renfrew of the Mounted novels, which were published between 1922 and 1941 and which spun off into American film, radio, and television (Rifkind 136–7). He was a pioneer, but, as I have

suggested, the Northwestern was an expression of a zeitgeist that inspired many.⁸

Connor needs less introduction, but he still might be “the most popular Canadian novelist that most Canadians have never heard about” (Dummitt 68)—and “a name which is virtually lost in the mists of time” (Watt 7). “Ralph Connor” was born Charles W. Gordon in 1860 in Canada West, now Ontario. He studied at the University of Toronto and at Edinburgh, became a Presbyterian minister in 1890, and in that decade worked for almost four years as a missionary in Banff, Alberta, before settling into a job in Winnipeg, which was then still “a frontier town notorious for its tavern brawls” (Wilson 14, 16). In 1897, he began writing fiction to raise money for the church. After the runaway success of *Black Rock* in 1898 and a series of quickly written and quickly published novels, he was producing something resembling pulp fiction except for its Christianity and hardback format. In other words, it was not seedy or as cheap as the stuff published in magazines, but it had some of the qualities that result from haste or urgency. His early novels are accurately described by Terrence Craig as “fast-paced, sentimental melodramas, with stereotyped characters dramatizing the conflict between good and evil in frontier settings presided over by exemplary churchmen” (“Ralph Connor”). (In this respect, he was like Cody.) Connor “always believed that the church should be militant in social issues and he never shied away from any consequent political involvement” (Wilson 22). Then Connor served in France during the First World War. He was “a padre in the field” (Webb 42) and had the rank of major, a dual role that gave him credibility when he travelled to the United States to drum up support for the war. Later he wrote the frankly propagandistic novels *The Major* in 1917 and *The Sky Pilot in No Man’s Land* in 1919, which Peter Webb includes among other “ideologically complacent, aesthetically dated, and perhaps morally troubling” (46) war fictions. Connor died in 1937, and his reputation persisted until the 1960s (MacGillivray 8).

Critics tend to agree that his best books were his first—*Black Rock* (1898), *The Sky Pilot* (1899), *The Man from Glengarry* (1901), and *Glengarry*

8 See also Desmond Pacey’s lists of Northwesterns and Canadian Westerns (660) (the latter of which I relayed in the introduction).

School Days (1902)—the first two of which were set in the West. People now have a divided view of where to place Connor. W. L. Morton calls him “a clerical Jack London” (qtd. in Gordon 13), and Connor’s own son, J. King Gordon, writes of his father that “[h]e never ceased to be a Westerner” (13); “[f]or half a century his work was built into [the West’s] history” (15). Although Connor lived in Manitoba and Alberta, Donald G. Stephens claims that he had the approach of “the visitor, the person from another background, schooled in the traditions of the nineteenth century and spurred on by his great faith in God” (3). (In this respect, too, he was like Cody.) Roy Daniells describes Connor as a man whose true landscape was the Ontario in which he was born and raised, and which featured in some of his novels (17, 18); he claims, too, however, that “Connor’s own emphasis is on western expansion as absorptive of all energies, a cure for all enmities” (25). As I wrote previously about regions functioning as nations, the West was therefore a feature of his “utopianism” and his participation in a “tradition of national ebullience” (MacGillivray 8).

His nationalism was strong enough that he not only earnestly repeated propaganda in some scenes of his war novels *The Major* and *The Sky Pilot in No Man’s Land* (Webb 32, 40); he also brought his message to politicians in person. Connor was to some extent influential (at least with the potential of having had influence) in the United States, having been invited to the White House in 1905 by the American president Theodore Roosevelt—himself a defining figure in the ideology of the West—and sent on a speaking tour of the country in 1917 by Canadian prime minister Robert Borden to encourage American involvement in the First World War (MacLaren 508). “His international fame as a novelist . . . stood him in good stead” (Wilson 35) as he sought contributions to ending the war swiftly and decisively, to the extent that “his success did something to hasten American entry into the war” (36).

Mountie Fiction and the Northwestern as Genre

Rifkind states that, as a perhaps surprising result of the work of authors such as Connor and Cody, “northern and western Canada . . . occupied a central place in American and British popular culture of the early twentieth century” (137). Some of the hundreds of American films set in Canada before the mid-twentieth century starred major Hollywood

players such as Errol Flynn and Alan Ladd (Hutchison xiii). “Between 1890 and 1940, authors produced well over one hundred and fifty Mountie novels” (Dawson 35) that were published in Toronto but also New York and London. This production was part of what Dominique Brégent-Heald calls “the Dominion’s experimental media strategy” (“James,” 693), specifically in the government’s hiring of Curwood to write of the North. Dawson explains that “[w]hile the popularity of Mountie movies peaked in the 1930s, the classic Mountie myth was by no means exhausted” (49). In 1925, the pulp magazine *North-West Stories* emerged and was so popular that *Complete Northwest Novel Magazine* and *Real Northwest* responded as competition in the 1930s (Hutchison xii). Illustrated Mounties followed trends from the 1930s and appeared with their pistols drawn on the covers of magazines such as the French-Canadian *Policier* and others during the Canadian pulp fiction boom of the 1940s (Driscoll, “Tales from the Vault!”). Genre specialists such as Ryerson Johnson and William Byron Mowery made names writing Mountie fiction (Hutchison xvii). The American movies eventually stole the show, playing the lead role in crystallizing the genre for audiences in the United States and probably also in Canada. MacLaren recounts that Americans effectively stole Connor’s first novel, 1898’s *Black Rock*, by taking advantage of its lack of copyright protection in the United States, thereby bringing the North into the South. On the one hand, you might say that the American culture appropriated the Canadian, or on the other that the Canadian culture promoted the Northwest to take advantage of American interest.

One might even argue that the heyday of the iconic Western of the 1940s and ’50s would not have been quite so heady if it were not for the earlier success of the Northwestern—a case of the spinoff promoting the original, or the sub-genre helping the genre to rise to its zenith. For Rifkind, “Mountie fiction” (127) is a sub-genre of the Northwestern, itself a sub-genre (a term I will call into question below), and I think this is true, but the generic lineage circles back to the top, as Rifkind acknowledges by calling Northwesterns “adventure stories of a frozen northern territory in which Mounties replace the heroic sheriffs of American Westerns” (124). Rifkind continues: “Northwesterns typically draw on similar values to Westerns when it comes to the conquest of indigenous territories and the civilizing mission of white settlers and soldiers in North America” (127).

Ronald Tranquilla sees differences in how the two genres “seem to embody divergent perceptions of national identity in the two countries, especially egalitarian and democratic vs. elitist and oligarchic values; the primacy of self-indulgence vs. the necessity of self-restraint; and individualism vs. collective behavior” (75), but some of the examples below are exceptions to Tranquilla’s rule and help to explain why the Northwestern would be so appealing to Americans. Thacker argues that “Americans were longing for another frontier and so adopted and adapted the Canadian mountie—first in fiction, then in film—as a way of obtaining one” (“Mountie,” 165). More than any factor in the Western’s popularity in the 1940s and ’50s was probably the widespread adoption of television in the latter decade—but genres tend to need occasional variants to remain popular, and there were many years between Wister’s *The Virginian* (1902) and the 1940s. The Northwestern is an example of the West turning North for new but related material.

The relatedness is close indeed, as a comparison of representations of the West and North reveals. One film critic commented on a Mountie movie by writing that “Saskatchewan might as well have been in Texas” (qtd. in Hutchison xiv). In Wister’s *The Virginian*, one of the classics of the American Western, the West is an “unfeared wilderness” (7). In Cody’s *The Long Patrol*, the North is “the vast wilderness” (33). In Connor’s *Corporal Cameron*, echoed later by Curwood (in an echo chamber of ideological statements then and now), it is “God’s own open country” (187). Implicitly or explicitly, here the North and West are open to colonization, open to being shaped by the dreams of the colonizers. Both regions are therefore understood, from the very beginning, as constructions or as places where the idea of West or North could be performed. Signalling the fact of his persona and its potential inauthenticity, Wister’s *Virginian* is introduced as “a false alarm” (5, 6) (some of his first actions being those of a prankster), and the town of Medicine Bow has many houses that “wore a false front to seem as if they were two stories high” (13). Connor’s *Cameron* has “his vision of himself as a wealthy rancher, ranging over square miles of his estate upon a ‘bucking broncho,’ [sic] garbed in the picturesque cowboy dress” (138). For Cody in *The Long Patrol*, “the vast wilderness was the stage, with rushing rivers, foaming rapids, wind-swept lakes, sweeping plains and towering mountains, the setting, and dare-devil white men and

roving Indians the chief actors” (195). On this “stage,” the players play for rewards that are not only spiritual. Near the end of *The Virginian*, Molly’s great-aunt says, “New Hampshire was full of fine young men in those days. But nowadays most of them have gone away to seek their fortunes in the West. Do they find them, I wonder?” (501). The Virginian replies, “Yes, ma’am. All the good ones do” (501). In *Corporal Cameron*, a character tells of the “big ranches further West” and says, “The railways are just building and people are beginning to go in. But ranching needs capital, too. It must be a great life! They practically live in the saddle. It’s a glorious country!” (102).⁹ Another then surmises that “a young man has better opportunities of making his fortune, so to speak, in the far West rather than in, say, Ontario” (102). Here, their language is of capitalism: capital, opportunity, fortune—all of which coincide with the putative openness of the frontier, North or West. It could also be described not only as “tourism promotion” but also “immigration propaganda” (Brégent-Heald, “James” 695).¹⁰

Why else would such a shift to the North be necessary? Recall that the Western and its icons of cowboy and “Indian” were established when the North American frontiers were already basically closed—Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show of the mid-1880s coinciding with the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the West Coast in 1885, the American precedent having reached the West by 1869 (Blaise 40). Although the CPR’s success led to what might be called a “boisterous era of western expansion” (Watt 8) when “all eyes were on the West” (13), a time that lasted until after the First World War, the earlier expansion in the United States was slowing. Richard Slotkin, paraphrasing Turner, explains that “an epoch . . . had ended in 1890 with the disappearance of the vast reserve of undeveloped land that had constituted the frontier” (*Gunfighter* 29). Slotkin brings together the major concerns of this turning point in American history:

Many of the elements of the “Frontier Thesis” put forward by Turner and Roosevelt already belonged to the complex of

9 Actually living life in the saddle would most likely produce more saddle sores than exhortations of “a great life.”

10 To my amusement, Curwood traded promotional articles for land in both cities of the West in which I have lived, Saskatoon and North Battleford (Brégent-Heald, “James” 697). He thus appeared to have bought his own shtick.

traditional ideas that had accumulated around the idea of the “Frontier” since colonial times, including the concept of pioneering as a defining national mission, a “Manifest Destiny,” and the vision of the westward settlements as a refuge from tyranny and corruption, a safety valve for metropolitan discontents, a land of golden opportunity for enterprising individualists, and an inexhaustible reservoir of natural wealth on which a future of limitless prosperity could be based. (*Gunfighter* 30)

Although the frontier was in reality still open to new developments in farming, logging, drilling for oil, and gold mining, its closure in the American imagination was a crisis (Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 30–1). Slotkin does not seem to consider it, but the remaining open frontier in the American and Canadian imaginations was in the Northwest, whether Alaska or the Yukon or the Canadian Badlands, and so the Northwestern helped to keep alive the myths of the West, including the imperialistic myth of continual territorial expansion and settlement—in other words, Manifest Destiny, the still problematic doctrine of justifiable colonization (and, less euphemistically, dispossession and destruction).

In Canada, the “destiny” of such an expansion relied partly on the Mountie, who is a key figure in Northwesterns as a variant of the Western. Referring to Connor’s works but with relevance to Cody, Robert A. Kelly claims, “[w]hereas the American sense of Manifest Destiny is that the United States is destined to cover the continent from Atlantic to Pacific with the benefits of democracy and capitalism, [Connor’s] sense of Manifest Destiny is connected with the place of Western Canada in the whole British Empire” (10–11). Much the same can be said about Cody and the Mountie fiction of *The Long Patrol*, and indeed Dick Harrison and Thacker identify the Mountie as “a metaphor of Canada’s imperial ties” (Thacker, “Canada’s” 299)—the main difference with American Westerns being simply the question of which empire.

The Outlaw-Lawman and Manifest Destiny

The Mountie is a figure whose code is upheld by “moral rather than physical force” (Hutchison xiv). Dawson explains that, “[f]rom the 1890s until

the 1950s, books and films—as well as TV programs and comic books—depicted Canada’s federal police force as a daring group of individuals who brought British justice and fair play to the less civilized peoples of the world: Native peoples, Eastern European immigrants, and French-Canadians” (53). One might add Americans, given that Americans tend to be represented by Cody and Connor in stereotypical ways too. As Connor implied when he told Roosevelt that Mounties made their arrests without drawing their guns (as I retell more fully later in this chapter), the Mountie code involved never shooting first, always respecting women, and dealing fairly with Indigenous peoples. Such restraint was supposed to be contrasted with the code of the American sheriff and federal marshal, who behaved a lot like the Lone Ranger, breaking the rules as if they were vigilantes, because the law was such a minor presence in the far-flung settlements and towns of the West that it was hardly in effect, and Indigenous protocols were not known or respected. Christine Bold explains in *The Frontier Club* (2013) that, in fact, the American laws themselves, from the late nineteenth century to at least the 1920s, were already encouraging different types of violence against Indigenous peoples and immigrants (169–70). In Canada, the laws have often been just as bad, but the idea persists that Canadian law and its representatives have been significantly more progressive.

Berton, however, offers a contradictory account from popular culture: “Movie Mounties always shot first and asked questions later” (qtd. in Dawson 49), and Dawson suggests that this “tendency . . . indicates Hollywood’s incorporation of the Mounties into the myth of the wild American West” (49). Not everyone agrees entirely; George Bowering, in his novel *Caprice* (1987), reflects on earlier representations of Mounties in a dialogue between two outlaws, one American and one French Canadian (the latter speaking rather unexpectedly for his imagined community of Canadians¹¹):

“Well, when they get them wanted posters up everywhere, then we’ll be famous, leastways in these parts, I mean in the

11 I am alluding, of course, to Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).

beginning. And once we get famous folks will start to think of us as heroes. I mean like Jesse James and all. Especially the kids, eh? Kids really look up to famous outlaws.”

“Not up here in this goddamned country,” said Spencer. “Up here they think the goddamned Mounties are heroes. Cops!”

“No, no. You don’t understand the way we are up here. I mean all that Mountie stuff. That’s just the government version. That’s just what some grown-ups and government people are trying to get across. I never heard of a kid yet that really thought the Mounties was heroes. No, everybody up here follows what’s going on down there, ‘cause that’s where the books and songs comes from.” (220–1)

Here, the morality of the outlaw or the Mountie is a perception determined by fame or infamy, and the perception is mainly determined by “where the books and songs comes from.” Indeed, the many cover images from pulp magazines collected in Don Hutchison’s *Scarlet Riders* (1998) glorify violence, almost always representing Mounties as intimidating, gun-firing heroes. “In many stories the Mountie did not follow the letter of the law but used his common sense and compassion to do the ‘right’ thing” (Dawson 34). Going back as far as Cody and Connor in 1912, the lawman is a Christian lawman, but there are some strange deviations from expected codes of conduct that show the strong resemblance of the figures of the lawman and outlaw even in these early Canadian Westerns.

Supporting Berton’s view of these deviations, my favourite example is in Cody’s *The Long Patrol* when the Mountie shoots first. A plot summary is probably in order. Set in “the North” (61), specifically “Northern Yukon Territory” (1–2) west of the Rockies (5), this is the story of Constable Norman Grey of the North-West Mounted Police and his final mission: to venture into unmapped territory to save a kidnapped child, Donnie, from the unfortunately named Siwash Bill and his gang, who are ransoming him for twenty thousand dollars (75). Among the novel’s many credibility-straining coincidences, the mission is the pretext for Grey’s reunion with his lost girlfriend Madeline, who was presumed dead six years earlier on a sunken steamer. She survived and has been living in the North when

Grey happens to find her, along with the boy. Ultimately, when Grey returns triumphant, having found not only the boy but also Madeline, they learn that her father's huge estate was destined for her, and they are immediately happily engaged.

Now, more to the point, Cody's *The Long Patrol* includes the premise that "there was the strict command instilled into every new recruit not to shoot first" (36). However, when Grey sees someone sneaking toward his camp in the middle of the night, along with "a sudden gleam from polished steel" (129), he does shoot first—and at someone's back.¹² "Quickly Grey brought the rifle to his shoulder and sent a leaden missive after the retreating form" (130). He interpreted the steel as "a gleaming knife" (130), not even as a gun that might require a proportionate response. Later, sneaking up on the "Indians" who kidnapped Donnie (after Donnie had been rescued from Siwash Bill), Grey

longed to pick off those two dusky braves. Two quick reports and the deed would be done. . . . But another voice soon silenced this blood-thirsty desire. "Cowards," it whispered, "would you shoot them down without giving them a chance? You call yourself a man. You a member of a famous Force." (196)

When the "dusky braves" do force Grey and Dan to turn and fight, Grey is the one to want to snipe at the Indigenous men and kill them, but Dan says, "Don't do it, pardner. . . . Ye don't know them Big Lakes. We mustn't shoot unless they come at us fust" (204–5). There is obviously a moral dilemma here, a tension between a desire and a code. According to Christopher Dummitt in a line that applies as well to Cody, "[b]eing a hero in a Connor novel meant overcoming not only external foes but also the demons within" (74). Cody's Grey is a lawman who is almost an outlaw.

The outlaw-lawman is a classic symmetrical figure present in Westerns throughout the genre's evolution. In one of the first classic Westerns on

12 Patrick McGee explains that, in the historical context of Wister's *The Virginian*, "most of the victims of the WSGA [Wyoming Stock Growers Association] were shot in the back" (23). Wister himself was sympathetic to the WSGA (McGee 23).

film, *Stagecoach* (Ford, 1939), John Wayne plays the Ringo Kid, an escaped prisoner who takes the law into his own hands by seeking revenge for the murder of his brother and father at the hands of the Plummer brothers. King Mabry in Louis L'Amour's *Heller with a Gun* (1955) is a known killer who functions as a policeman by protecting life and property, while killing many a bad guy along his wandering way. Michael Ondaatje's Billy the Kid from 1970 is symmetrical with the sheriff, Pat Garrett (Deshaye, *Metaphor* 140, 146–7). Clint Eastwood's classic outlaw in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (Leone, 1966) is so aligned with his primary foe, Angel Eyes (Lee Van Cleef), that they are even partners for a time, as he is with the chaotic Tuco (Eli Wallach). One “ugly” or unpleasant to realize fact is that the good and the bad are so easily inverted. Eastwood's outlaw-lawman transforms in *Coogan's Bluff* (1968) into the rogue cop in the Dirty Harry movies of the 1970s (Deshaye, “Do I Feel Lucky?” 20). Images of symmetry and twinning help to define the morality and immorality of the bloodthirsty brothers in Gil Adamson's *The Outlander* (2007) and Patrick deWitt's *The Sisters Brothers* (2012). The outlaw-lawman—the “cowboy” in “cowboys and Indians”—might be called the bedrock of the Western if he were not such a shifting figure, one whose symmetry means moral ambiguity, an adherence to an unstated code.

Even before he shoots at the back of a retreating man, Constable Grey in *The Long Patrol* is introduced as a classic outlaw-lawman, one whose effortless intimidation and clothing are less like classic images of the early Mountie, in his red tunic and pillbox hat (“Uniforms”), and more like the stereotypical cowboy:

the man . . . straightened himself up to his full height of six feet with a sudden jerk, while his dark piercing eyes flashed questioningly from beneath the broad brim of his Stetson hat. A deep silence now pervaded the room; the poker chips ceased their rattle; the rustling of the newspapers stopped; the man behind the bar stayed his hand in the act of pouring a glass of ginger beer, and even pipes were allowed to go out. (1)

Cody writes soon thereafter: "A belt filled with cartridges encircled his waist, and his revolver sheathed in its leathern holster hung at his hip" (2). Grey later wears a buckskin jacket made by Buckskin Dan (138, 139–40). Grey is immediately established as "the man for [a difficult job]" (2), which is to save the boy kidnapped for ransom (4). Grey accepts the job despite his being only two weeks from leaving the force (7–8) after five years as a policeman (12), exhibiting some of the recklessness of the outlaw-lawman. In fact, it might be said that the symmetry of the outlaw-lawman is an enabler of Manifest Destiny, of the colonist who purports to adhere to an ethics but whose moral compromises include the (now) obvious blind spot toward Indigenous rights and precedence.

Explaining Grey's orders, the major shows Grey a spot on the map: "Everything else was a complete blank, no name of town or village appearing. Here the Major made a small circle, and wrote over it the one word 'Hishu' " (6)—a place "up Hishu Creek" (7) known only to the Indigenous people of the area. When the gang of kidnappers speculates, mystified, about the unlikely appearance of Grey to save the boy "in the nick of time" (53) (a theme of the novel) at the rapids, Shifty Nick exclaims, "How did he happen to be there! How does he happen to be here? How does he happen to be everywhere? Don't you know he's one of them d—Yellow-legs [i.e., a Mountie]? . . . Don't ye know that them Mounted Devils are everywhere?" (54). The dramatic irony is that the Mounties were not "Devils" but guardian angels presiding over even the "complete blank" of unmapped and supposedly unclaimed territory. They claimed the land not only for country but also king. When Cody published the novel in 1910, the word "Royal" had been added six years before (1904) to the name "North-West Mounted Police," signifying the monarchy and by extension the British Empire (Butts) and through it the Canadian desire to assimilate the "Indians" and their lands and be distinct from other nations.

The Canadian analogue of Manifest Destiny was partly a defensive expansion to prevent a revolutionary country from gaining ground. It was, too, a defensive expansion against the Métis and Cree who were involved in the North-West Resistance of 1885 in what is now Saskatchewan. Several forts already existed in the West, and so the railway as symbol is to me more relevant as a defence against American Manifest Destiny as expressed by the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 (the year

of Canadian Confederation, thus a year in which the United States and Canada were evidently jockeying for position). By now it should also be obvious that, as I consider different threats to Canadian nationalism, I am more sympathetic to First Nations and Native American influence than to American influence (though I have had far more exposure to the latter). Although treaties with the First Nations were well under way by the 1870s, their consent to the treaties was not freely given (King, *Inconvenient* 87); one of the major problems with Manifest Destiny in both countries was that, as ideology and policy, it was not a platform for dealing fairly with the legitimate presence of Indigenous peoples in the supposedly open, empty North and West. According to Thomas King, the impression of emptiness was produced partly by “removals and relocations [which], as federal policies in both countries, allowed Whites to steal Aboriginal land and push Native people about the countryside” (*Inconvenient* 97), out of sight and partially out of mind.

The dealings were predisposed to unfairness partly by the biases of missionaries who went to the North and West, the same people—like Cody and Connor—who later told stories about the region that circulated widely in the relative East and encouraged an East-West rapprochement. I am wary of what Coleman has called the “scholarly dismissals” (129) of Muscular Christianity, as if not a single dimension of Christianity could ever be called “progressive”; I accept Christopher Dummitt’s argument that a contemporary analysis of Connor’s Northwesterns (and I would add Cody’s) might problematically “reduce a complex moral vision of the good to only one component [e.g., colonization], leaving the larger whole from which it emerged [i.e., the social gospel] unrecognizable” (79). I also admire many of the traits of Connor’s (and Cody’s) heroes, including “the democratic and egalitarian sensibility” (Dummitt 82) that they and their authors seem to have. I cannot, however, be other than critical of the genre’s position in that “whole,” partly because genre tends to be remarkably coherent and repetitive, and therefore ideologically powerful and potentially systemic. Dawson writes that, through authors such as Connor, “the Mounted Policeman . . . emerged as the personification of Christian social harmony and conservative gender, class, and ethnic ideals. He was a symbol of divinely ordained hierarchies, against which

ethnic minorities, subordinate classes, and feminists could struggle but never prevail” (42–3).

The imagined destinies and religious missions in these novels are troubling; they are associated with an imperialism that magnifies their problems and extends their reach. Connor was a missionary while at Banff, as was Cody during his years in the Yukon. Jamie S. Scott shows that, in *The Frontiersman*, Cody’s missionary in the Northwest is an “imperial hero” (142) akin to the Mountie. In *The Long Patrol*, Cody implies that the “vast unknown wilderness” (101)—and the Indigenous peoples therein—could be encompassed and drawn in by Christian love. Cody’s fictional adventures also usually have a Christian romantic subplot. In *The Long Patrol*, Grey’s loved one is presumed dead after her ship sinks during a voyage across the Atlantic. In a book published in October 1912 (Jones 193), this was probably a reference to the sinking of the *Titanic* in the previous April that has implications for the novel’s significance in relation to globalization. Although *The Long Patrol* is in retrospect not very progressive, Madeline’s survival of the *Titanic*-like shipwreck is a sign of hope that globalization, modernity, and civilization (all implicitly Christian) would not be set back by one symbolic loss. From the beginning, in fact, Grey is not convinced that she is dead. When he contemplates his very early retirement from the force, he thinks that he “could go home, but what was home without her? . . . How beautiful she was then in all her virgin purity! That was six years ago—and where was she now? Six years, and not a trace of her since!” (8). “He would find her, oh, yes. The world was large, he knew, but love would make it small” (12). In one of the incredible plot points of *The Long Patrol*, Grey finds her in the same unmapped territory in which he finds the kidnapped boy. She has gone to work in a log cabin known for sheltering at least one “fallen woman” (216, 249), so her “virgin purity” is at risk, partly because Siwash Bill intends to get her by whatever ominous “ways” (276) are necessary. Bill is a “white man” (217) but is married to Nadu, a Big Lake “Indian” (79), the miscegenation being one reason for his derogatory nickname. The missionary in the novel, Charles Nordis, remarks somewhat pointedly that his wife buried in the “Indian cemetery” (217) was not an “Indian.” Although he is racialized as different from the Indigenous people, his name, Nordis, suggests that he is at home in the North—home because Christianity as a force of globalization will

“make [the world] small” and safe for “virgin” and Christian “purity.” The change of scale from large to small here is classic globalization.

According to some theorists, globalization is characterized by the “scalar dynamic[s]” (Appadurai 32) that I partly explained in the first parts of this book. In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), Arjun Appadurai coins the term “scape,” a widely applicable suffix that I understand as a scalar landscape metaphor that helps us see human activities in terms of globalization—the plastic that I throw away that blows out of a landfill into the ocean and expands a gyre on the other side of the world, for example; or the money I contribute to a micro-lending program in my own city that indirectly benefits micro-lending abroad; or indeed the European idea of the colonized “Indian” that preceded North American colonization and later became a misconception of the North American “Indian” that circulated around the world and displaced Indigenous self-identifications. Appadurai states that “[t]he suffix *-scape* allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes” (46) of ethnicity, finance, technology, media, and ideology. For Cody and Connor and so many others, going West in Canada was a version of going West across the Atlantic from the United Kingdom and Europe. Before the railroad, travelling across the country would likely be more time-consuming and arduous than riding the waves; afterward, reaching the nascent towns and cities of the West was relatively easy. The future policeman’s voyage in *Corporal Cameron* from Scotland to the Canadian West was so uneventful that it warranted not a single scene, except a minor drama with a train (described below). Journeys beyond the towns and cities into nature are the dangers. The thrill is going back to a place-time when world travel was not yet, not *quite*, so easy.

Transnational Crossing in the Canadian Western

If the invocation of globalization—a word that came to vogue in the 1990s—seems inappropriately anachronistic to the Western and its late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century origins in Canada, we might look to Nataša Đurovičová’s distinctions between *transnational*, *international*, and *global* in her work on world cinema. *Global* implies a totality, and that is too big a claim for the sub-genre of the Northwestern, which has even greater geographical specificity than the Western. *International* connotes

diplomatic negotiations around mutual benefits related to the sovereignty of nation-states and governmentally organized trade across borders. It also implies “parity” between countries, according to Ďurovičová (x), and obviously parity does not always apply to the cultural exchanges of the United States and Canada today, though it still applied to the diplomatic era of the 1950s and ’60s, when Canadian diplomacy expanded the St. Lawrence Seaway and Canadian peacekeeping was popular. In comparison, *transnational* suggests “unevenness and mobility” (x)—a flow, and both Ďurovičová and Appadurai think of this flow in terms of differential scale and cultural-geographic “scale jumping” (Ďurovičová x)—from local to global, or just “below-global” in the case of Ďurovičová (x). Partly because of such scale jumping, the categories of *transnational* and *international* are not mutually exclusive, but I would argue that *transnational* is the most appropriate description of the Western. We can put the Western on a scale of local to just below global: first, we can see the regional sub-genre of the Northwestern as a synecdoche for the Western and the Western as a synecdoche for America and the Western world, as King does in his novel *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993); second, we can consider the Western’s typical settings—fur trading routes, open countries scouted for ranchland, boom towns associated with nearby ranches, mines, and oil fields—and the related subtext of capitalist growth in the West; third, we can inquire into the cultural production of the Western across borders and as an asset to both capitalism and national ideologies.

Across borders—this is one of the two most significant movements in the West (the other being the exploration of seemingly borderless lands), and it is the movement of transnationalism. Transnationalism is an aspect of globalization, and although globalization first gained momentum with imperial expansion in the late fifteenth century when the world was just beginning to seem borderless or at least technologically opened to global movements (Appadurai 28), this same borderlessness is a crucial feature of the Western. It is an aspect of the myth of the frontier and of the so-called open country or range. Borderlessness enables plots in Westerns that involve hunting, tracking, cattle driving, smuggling, and other activities in which resources are mobile and national boundaries are either not yet defined or under pressure from colonization, as we see in historical Westerns such as Guy Vanderhaeghe’s *The Englishman’s Boy* (1996) and

Fred Stenson's *The Trade* (2000); in the former, a gang of American wolfers chases Assiniboine horse thieves back into Canada, and in the latter, Canadian and American fur traders compete for resources while negotiating with First Nations and Native Americans for access to lands that are being steadily colonized. Appadurai's insights are surprisingly appropriate to the Western when we consider the scalar dynamics of globalization and the interactions between economies and nation-states when capitalism crosses borders and cannot be policed nationally. *Transnationalism* connotes the multinational corporate agency of a globalization that destabilizes the very concept of the border.

The best early example of this transnationalism in the Canadian Western and its contexts of production is Ralph Connor. When we include the facts that his popularity in the United States developed partly through the piracy of *Black Rock* and that the publishing industry was involved in his political activities, his border crossings become transnational. The pirating was enabled when the book's British publisher failed to secure American copyright by printing it in the United States and depositing two copies with the Library of Congress (MacLaren 516). Its resulting popularity in the late 1890s created a market for Connor's later editions and books and led to an invitation to the White House from President Roosevelt in 1905. Later, as I explained in more detail above, at the behest of Prime Minister Borden in 1917, Connor met President Wilson and went on a speaking tour of the United States to urge Americans to help in the First World War. Connor's access to American leaders demonstrates some of the potential influence that he had in international politics. His border crossings also probably contributed to an American fascination with Canada's North and Northwest, including a fascination with the figure of the Mountie—the North-West Mounted Policeman—and related lawmen and outlaws. In the United States, Connor's publisher, George Doran, organized a speaking tour, which Connor called a “campaign” (*Postscript* 296), that brought him to university clubs, political rallies, and other events where “some of American's most influential citizens” (Wilson 35) were present. Doran's role here is significant. Doran was born in Canada but had become an American citizen (Connor, *Postscript* 281). Connor described his own work as “internationalism” (*Postscript* 296), which is a term associated with intergovernmental activities, but his diplomatic role

depended on his Canadian-American publisher's impressive network of elite businessmen and their institutions. Hence the transnationalism.

In Connor's imagination, his own novels seem as transnationally significant to his encounter with Roosevelt as Doran's involvement was. Connor's meeting with Roosevelt was arranged and chaperoned by Doran; Connor writes that they "were invited through Doran's good offices to meet him at the White House" (*Postscript* 156). According to Connor, Roosevelt approached him as a fan might, asserting an identification and a proximity: "Ah! I know you well, Mr. Connor. I know your country, lived across the line from you for two years. I know your books. I could pass an examination in *Black Rock* and *The Sky Pilot*" (qtd. in Connor, *Postscript* 157). Connor's emphasis on Roosevelt's claims to "know" him and Canada is a sign of Connor's approval of American-Canadian identifications and shared values. These commonalities are spatial, oriented around "the line" of the border. His transcript also suggests a potential slippage when Roosevelt reportedly says he "could pass an examination," which is like "passing over" from one side of the border to the other, a transfer that has the metaphoric potential of transforming Connor's books into transnational documents: passports.

The implicit presence of laws and regulations in the symbolic passports and "examination[s]" becomes explicit as Connor and Roosevelt proceed with their discussion. As Connor remembers it, despite their alignments they had different views of the West—more specifically, a contrast of assumptions and experiences of the Canadian West:

[H]e knew something about my work in the new wild West country. He became serious and gravely earnest as he spoke of "that big raw West country with its vast possibilities and its perils."

"It's a great country, but it is wild, the 'wild West' all right with its lawlessness and—"

"Lawlessness? Why, Mr. President, the law runs in the western country that I know just as it does in Toronto. I never saw a man offer resistance to one of our Mounties. And what's more I never saw a Mountie pull a gun to enforce the law." [As I consider below, Connor does imagine a

Mountie in *Black Rock* taking away a gun, a gun owned by an American, but not by pulling a gun of his own.]

He was genuinely interested.

“Never pull a gun in making an arrest? You amaze me! And you have seen men arrested?”

“Yes,” I said, “and gun men, too, from across the line. They do come across, you know, Mr. President.”

“Oh, don’t apologize. I know them. Splendid chaps, but—wild, wild! (*Postscript* 158)

Why would Connor “apologize”? Presumably, Roosevelt detected an apologetic tone when Connor otherwise accusingly noted the brazen border crossings of “gun men” into Canada from the United States. Connor implies that Roosevelt was appreciative, even proud; although Roosevelt contrasted “great” and then “splendid” with “wild,” he takes no offence (not according to Connor, who would benefit from a public impression of their friendship) at the insinuation that Americans are breaking Canadian law, or are threatening the Canadian West, by coming armed into Canada.

In a meeting years later with another American president, Woodrow Wilson, Connor is much more pointed in criticizing Americans, but he could also be seen as mildly hypocritical. The contexts of the presidential rendezvous were entirely different: the visit with Roosevelt appears to have been essentially a social call, whereas the meeting with Wilson was arranged by Borden for diplomatic purposes. The potential hypocrisy is that Connor, above, may have been criticizing Americans for crossing borders with their guns, whereas below he is criticizing Americans for *not* crossing borders with their guns—his point being to exhort Wilson to join the First World War by shipping American soldiers to France and elsewhere. The appearance of hypocrisy disappears when we recognize that Connor wished, in both situations, for Canadian allies to help each other rather than harass each other. Although by Connor’s own description he was haranguing Wilson because the United States appeared to be delaying its entry into the war to minimize costs while profiteering—Connor going so far as to claim that Canadians “hate and despise” (*Postscript* 282) Americans—their meeting ultimately resolved diplomatically. Wilson listened patiently, even actively, and convinced his guest that he intended to

join the war when it had become bad enough for the American people “to unite” (qtd. in Connor, *Postscript* 285) in full support rather than joining ineffectively or symbolically. Although the major biographies of Roosevelt and Wilson make no mention of Connor, Connor’s biographer Keith Wilson asserts that “his success [with President Wilson and the speaking tour organized by Doran] did something to hasten American entry into the war” (36). Regardless of the degree of Connor’s influence, he clearly served a diplomatic and international role.

Earlier I suggested that transnationalism and internationalism are not mutually exclusive, and indeed Connor’s border crossings were either a combination of both or were in quick oscillation, phasing from internationalism (with his studies, jobs, and military service) to the transnationalism that enables *further* internationalism. The key example is the piracy of *Black Rock* and its consequences. Connor had serialized parts of *Black Rock*, and these instalments qualified the novel for British imperial copyright in advance of publication as a collection, so his publisher was confident enough to do an initial print run of five thousand copies. Five thousand was “incredibly large for the Canadian market,” but the books sold out, which is when Doran “agreed to bring out an American edition” (Wilson 28). It sold in the hundreds of thousands. Here I quote MacLaren’s aptly cultural-materialist explanation of what happened next:

As [Connor’s] publishers well knew, an anomaly lay at the foundation of his career: [his] first novel forfeited copyright in the United States. . . . *Black Rock* entered the American public domain the moment it was first printed in Toronto, because no simultaneous American edition had been arranged. Because of this error, American firms were free to reprint the novel without authorization, and they soon realized this opportunity, as the number of surviving editions indicates. . . . [Connor] became a famous Canadian author because his first novel was “pirated” in the United States. (510)

Because of the “error” that MacLaren mentions, a “profusion” (510) of pirated editions appeared, thereby undercutting editions that were legal in

Canada and Britain (526–7). The lack of alignment between international laws allowed businesses to profit from Connor without paying him, but this piracy had an unexpected promotional effect. MacLaren’s study also demonstrates how the prices of Connor’s later novels were influenced by transnational economics (528); the availability and cheapness of American editions in Canada helped Connor to gain and maintain a readership here (530). His Canadian reputation as a respectable writer with American connections, and the preceding border crossings of his novels, led to his diplomatic role. Like an ambassador, he belonged at least temporarily in both places.

Americans Reading Canadian Westerns

Partly because of this context of *Black Rock*’s reception in the United States, some American readers saw this Canadian novel as their own. This appropriation was not an isolated incident of contemporary reception; Susan Wood’s essay on “Ralph Connor and the Tamed West” appeared in a collection entitled *The Westering Experience in American Literature* in 1977. According to MacLaren, one reviewer of *Black Rock* dismissed the stereotyped French-Canadian and Scottish-Canadian characters and ignored the “vilification of the gun-toting American, ‘Idaho Jack,’ ” and “saw the novel as a frontier romance with a racial message consonant with the American ideology of manifest destiny” (521).¹³ I agree with the latter quotation from the review, and presumably many patriotic Americans and nationalist Canadians would too, because of the nationally parallel “ideology of manifest destiny,” which the novel endorses through positive representations of the westering missionaries, policemen, and trains. This “manifest destiny” also appears in problematic representations of the landscape as open to colonization because, in *Black Rock*, there are no First Nations. Although the novel does not have the “Indians” to go with the cowboys, nor the heroic violence of an ultimate fatal gunfight that is so strongly associated with the American Western, it does have a few crucial

13 Another reason might be that American readers thought that Canada needs more cowboys: “The presence of the iconic cowboy in the Canadian wilds implies a lack of homegrown, Canadian agency and implicitly asserts the need for a violent, masculine, and explicitly *American* response to Canadian territory and its inhabitants” (Baker 109, original emphasis). Idaho Jack *almost* meets this “need.”

fistfights in saloons, won mainly by a character named Graeme who works for the mining industry and, later, the railroad. He and his idol, the minister Craig, are stand-ins for the mostly absent sheriff or Mountie, and they win their battles through a rather funny combination of brawling, property damage, and temperance union meetings. The complex of symbolic lawmen in *Black Rock* was evidently acceptable, possibly identifiable, to American readers looking for an affirmation of their ideology—assuming that the ideology would also override more personal responses to the stereotypes of Canadian ethnicities and the “vilification” of the American character.

These characters do offer further insight into Connor’s imagination of related, but not identical, Canadian and American cultures. MacLaren implies in passing that the “minor” (521) characters in *Black Rock* are unexpectedly meaningful to national identifications, and I would like to develop this idea with a brief close reading. But first, another plot summary will help. At Black Rock, a mining/company town (265) in the Selkirk Mountains of British Columbia (132, 322), there is a drinking problem. The minister Mr. Craig encourages prohibition to save the souls of the miners from Slavin, the barkeep and owner at the saloon. Craig gets help from his friend Graeme, who basically punches his way through the bad guys (62–3, 182–6) all in the name of Jesus Christ. Together, they (I mean Craig and Graeme) defeat the evils of whisky and gambling and convert Slavin to Christianity. Mrs. Mavor, in love with Craig and loved by all the men, leaves to look after her dead husband’s mother, and Craig leaves to live in the East and Britain. Eventually, Mrs. Mavor’s mother-in-law dies and she (Mrs. Mavor) is able to move again, so she returns to the West; Craig goes back too, and they marry in the mountains; Graeme also returns. The novel ends with their keeping the peace during the development of the West.

Alongside Slavin, Idaho Jack is a crucial enemy, and he is symmetrical with the North-West Mounted Policeman, Stonewall Jackson, who appears in only one scene. The symmetry is obvious in that they both have “Jack” in their names. (Connor also shares his own name—technically, his pseudonym—with the narrator in the novel, a “Connor” who is an illustrator for the railway; the multiple proxies create the possibility that Craig, too, may be proxy to the Mountie, as I have already suggested, or

even to Christ, given the wordplay with names: Slavin/Slaving/Satan, etc.) By extension, Canada and the United States are also symmetrical, and therefore both similar and opposite. In contrast with Idaho Jack, Jackson the Mountie illustrates Connor's idealistic and arguably self-consciously Canadian perspective on the law and gun control, and this Mountie encourages Canadian readers to see *Black Rock* as a Canadian rather than American novel.

The scene in which the Mountie confronts Idaho Jack is notable for its brevity, for how rapidly and neatly Connor tries to nationalize the novel as both un-American and conciliatory toward Americans. Idaho Jack is a "professional gambler" (158), so he is a metonym of the American "smuggled whiskey" (180) that is the social detriment of the mining town and that, historically, was one reason that the North-West Mounted Police were deployed to the West in 1873 (Katerberg 545–6).¹⁴ Connor writes that "Idaho was never enamoured of the social ways of Black Rock. He was shocked and disgusted when he discovered that a 'gun' was decreed by British law to be an unnecessary adornment of a card-table" (158–9). Here we see Idaho Jack's gambling in a saloon enabled by smuggled whisky, and the smuggling is another contravention of Canadian law. In the 1890s, of course, the law was still "British," and even today the name of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police invokes the monarchy. British or Canadian—the point then was that it was not American or First Nations. From Idaho, Idaho Jack would have relatively easy access to the sparsely policed Albertan foothills and the interior of British Columbia. Connor writes that the Mountie is "her Majesty's sole representative in the Black Rock district. Jackson, . . . after watching the game for a few moments, gently tapped the pistol and asked what he used this for" (159). Idaho's threatening response leads Jackson to say, "sweetly" but "with a look from his steel-grey eyes, 'I'll just take charge of this,' picking up the revolver; 'it might go off.' Idaho's rage, great as it was, was quite swallowed up in his amazed disgust at the state of society that would permit such an outrage upon personal liberty. He was quite unable to play any more that evening"

14 For more on the multifariously symbolic use of alcohol in Canadian Westerns, see the conclusion of this book, where I offer a reading of Robert Kroetsch's *The Man from the Creeks* (1998), which, like *Black Rock*, is also about mining.

(159–60). How quaint that evoking “amazed disgust” is enough to maintain law and order. Of course, there is some subtle intimidation too; Idaho Jack refuses to push the Mountie any further, and “in Stonewall’s presence Idaho was a most correct citizen” (160). Referring to him as a “citizen” is ironic because he is American; he gains Canadianness through the “correct” way to be prudent with money, and the language of being “quite swallowed up” and “a most correct citizen” suggests that the Canadianness is, so to speak, quite British. In Connor’s imagination, Britain and Canada are less violent than the United States, and one’s nationality is determined in part by whether one does business peacefully or violently. But here the American is shown to suppress his feelings and make a sensible decision not to fight the law. Whether an American reader then or now would like these attributions remains a question.

Corporal Fitness, Corporal Rank, Inc.

In *Unnamed Country*, Harrison has a similar comparison between the heroes of Wister’s *The Virginian* and Connor’s notable later Western *Corporal Cameron*, which, like *Black Rock*, involves a Mountie who stops a gunman in a gambling den. Harrison chooses *Corporal Cameron* because in it “Connor presents what may be the central archetype of the Mountie” (*Unnamed* 77), an archetype that pairs well with archetypes in *The Virginian*, chosen “because it seems to contain everything—rustling, lynching, a gun duel at sundown, complete with a weeping bride. In action and world view it epitomizes the elements of frontier fiction from Cooper through the ‘Dime Novels’ to Zane Grey and the movie western” (*Unnamed* 76).¹⁵ The comparison is “epitome” to “archetype.” Harrison describes the main difference: “The Virginian draws the gun with which he will enforce the right, while in Connor’s scene [“scenes,” I might add] it is the man with the gun who backs down” (*Unnamed* 78). Harrison’s explanation is that difference is in “the source of the justice” (78), which is embodied in the Virginian but channelled in the Mountie: “One could say that the conception of order in Wister’s West is inductive—order is

15 See Christine Bold’s *The Frontier Club* (2013) for how Wister “whitewashed the vigilantism” (9) of one of the Frontier Clubs, the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, as an already standard technique of late nineteenth-century capitalist rebranding.

generated from the immediate particulars of experience—while that of Connor’s West is deductive—order descends logically from higher precepts to which the individual has no access” (79), including British authority located eastward, not only in Ottawa but also across the ocean. Harrison’s simplification works very well, but Connor also ensures that other “precepts,” if not justice, are “embodied” in Cameron. His strength is a virtue. His body gains a symbolically industrial power even if he does not fully understand it.

Although *Corporal Cameron* is likely the earliest Canadian Western with which readers of this book might be familiar, it probably still needs a quick summary. It focuses on Allan Cameron, in Scotland, who causes trouble for himself by drinking too much booze, falling out of shape, and losing an important rugby match. Soon falsely accused of forgery (39), he plans to run from ignominy and establish a new life in Canada, starting in Montreal. Finding himself unsuited to offices, he goes west to London, Ontario (158), where he saves a drunken farmer by fighting some hoodlums. As a result, he goes to work for the farmer, a Mr. Haley. Cameron befriends Haley’s teenage son Tim and learns turnip-hoeing and other skills from him, but thereby starts a jealous conflict with the hired man Perkins, who loves Haley’s daughter Mandy. Mandy is described as almost thoroughly undesirable but stirs both love and contempt in Cameron, who eventually leaves the farm—in good physical condition again—to prevent the worsening of trouble between himself and Perkins (265). He joins a surveying crew on the Macleod Trail but is soon ambiguously kidnapped, or saved, in a blizzard by the morally chaotic Raven and his sidekick Little Thunder, a former chief of the Bloods. They part ways when Cameron himself saves a North-West Mounted Policeman (371), thereby gaining the officer’s trust and his own entry into the force, in which role he eventually helps to prevent an “Indian war” by arresting “Indians” and the railway builders who were on strike during the Resistance of 1885. (Connor’s own brother actually tried to do this, as Dummitt recounts.) Injured while arresting a man during a riot at a saloon, Cameron is nursed back to health by Mandy, who is now Nurse Haley and has come to the West (412); she has been transformed through her training (427). Cameron’s real heart has improved throughout the novel; now his symbolic heart is transformed too. After a rejected proposal of marriage prior to the injury (442),

he proposes again from his sickbed and is accepted, virtually simultaneously with his promotion to corporal. The moral of the story appears to be that personal ambitions are satisfied by the nation when individuals do something for their country.

There are two scenes in *Corporal Cameron* that I wish to consider, the first of which involves his movement—even before he joins the NWMP—by train across the country. The train is a symbol of nation-building, because it brings settlers farther and farther into the West, but for Cameron it also provides a model of strength, personal strength modelled on that of industry. (Here again we see the relationship between transnationalism and internationalism.) Waiting for the Camerons to arrive by train at a waypoint in the United Kingdom before they leave for Canada (126), a young admirer of Cameron rushes to the oncoming vehicle: “There before their horrified eyes was young Rob, hanging on to the window, out of which his friend Cameron was leaning, and racing madly with the swiftly moving train, in momentary danger of being dragged under its wheels. . . . But as he fell, a strong hand grabbed him, and dragged him to safety through the window” (129).¹⁶ By saving Rob from the train, by taking him into and “through” it, Cameron asserts the Western ideal of natural human strength over industrial strength (which is itself an extension of other animal strength, specifically the horse that becomes the Iron Horse). But Cameron is associated with the train too, and his westward move from Scotland to Canada imitates the westward expansion of railroad technology from Europe and across the continent of North America. When he arrives in Canada and goes to work on a farm, the roles are reversed: Cameron admires the boy Tim, who is self-reliant and industrious and whose strengths have similar associations. When Tim races the trouble-making Perkins in a hoeing competition, Connor compares the boy to a train: “ ‘Good boy, Tim!’ called out Cameron, as Tim bore down upon them, still in the lead and going like a small steam engine” (194). One

16 In 1916, in a slightly later novel, Cody’s *Rod of the Lone Patrol*, young people are warned about trains through the story of Alec Royal, who dies with “[m]any people” (50) in a derailment. But *Rod* has a younger implied reader than does *Cameron*, and its author wants to keep the boys closer to home, so the train in *Rod* has none of the romantic associations of Captain Josh’s safer boat (notably not a seafaring ship). Nevertheless, both novels have some of the Western’s anti-modernism.

might say that Tim has already symbolically gone “through” the train, as if he were born of it, and has become its “small” version. Trains here are associated with evolution and industry through competition, and time through racing. The lesson Cameron learns is to use his strength for a *purpose*, not merely spontaneously. Going west disciplines him so that he is like a train, even as the Western idealizes the pre-modern times in which strength was only natural.

The purpose now is more agrarian than when Cameron first arrived in Montreal. He is at first disillusioned with the surrounding “business” and “smokestacks” (140), thinking that “everything seems closed up except to the capitalist, and yet from what I heard at home situations were open on every hand in this country” (140). Then he finds a job in the office of a railroad company whose general manager is “Wm. Fleming, Esquire” (141)—an obvious reference to Sandford Fleming, whose influence on time appears, in a reductive form, in the following dialogue:

“Oh!” said Cameron, carelessly. “Eight? Yes, I thought it was eight! Ah! I see! I believe I am five minutes late! But I suppose I shall catch up before the day is over!”

“Mr. Cameron,” replied Mr. Bates earnestly, “if you should work for twenty years for the Metropolitan Transportation & Cartage Company, never will you catch up those five minutes; every minute of your office hours is pledged to the company, and every minute has its own proper work. . . . In case you should inadvertently be late again, you need not take the trouble to go to your desk; just come here. Your cheque will be immediately made out. Saves time, you know—your time and mine—and time, you perceive, in this office represents money.” (149)

Cameron becomes a (temporary) slave to time at his office job in the bureaucratic city, and he goes west partly to find a land still free of such strictures and of industry’s lockstep of time and money. But as Tim’s race with Perkins demonstrates, the farm was driven by time too. Cameron must internalize time, incorporate it, absorb the skills of corporate

management, integrate them into the physical strength that he has basically gained from the same sources: the train and nation.

Those sources add up so that we can see Cameron as an embodiment of national movement or transnationalism. The Metropolitan Transportation & Cartage Company prepared Cameron for his later work as a police officer serving distinctly nationalist purposes, and the company is part of the symbolic power of the train that drives Cameron and yokes his self-reliance, ironically, to the nation. The company's transnationalism and its nation's internationalism are obviously linked, and they are also linked in Connor's life and times. Whereas the Internet since the 1990s has created new types of piracy and globalization, an older type enabled Connor's American publisher's success and their mutual internationalism as agents of diplomacy. And his novels, in producing identifications and political positions for readers inside and outside of Canada, use the Western as a literally border-crossing genre that illustrates these transnational themes of imperial empowerment.

Evidently, the imperial and Christian ideological thrust of early twentieth-century globalization was involved in the spinning off of the Northwestern from the Western. The spinoff created a transnational relationship between an imperial America and a nascent Canada with imperial allegiances. In this relationship, Canada influenced the United States—or the United States went looking for symbols of the North that were adaptable to the Western and could maintain interest in one of the classic American genres and the myth of the West. In their novels, Cody and Connor encourage us to notice the Christian elements of Manifest Destiny that were also implicitly globalizing and changing the ideational scale of the vast wilderness of the Northwest.

Genres and Crossovers

Given these themes of Christianity alongside violence rationalized by Manifest Destiny, it might seem strange, at least in retrospect, that these representations of the Mountie and other lawmen, in spite of their potential bad influence, should be written for boys or to be read aloud to boys. Although Norris Yates in *Gender and Genre* (1995) considers several American Westerns written by women with marriage plots that imply a

readership of girls,¹⁷ in Canada—where there are far fewer examples and thus less diversity—the Western appears to be gendered for an expected readership of boys in at least the first half-century of its development as a genre, even if it also appears to seek out other audiences in different ways. In keeping with this chapter’s symbolism of the cross, I will focus now on Cody’s *Rod of the Lone Patrol* as a crossover text of the type that crosses a genre to appeal to both children and adults (increasing its potential market, because even adults without children might want to buy it and read it). Although there is some evidence that boys quickly grew out of Westerns in the early years of the genre (Altman, *Film/Genre* 38), Westerns have often been marketed to boys, as seen on covers of pulp fiction magazines depicting boys caught up with heroes in their adventures. They are also marketed (to use the words of the singer-songwriter Tom Cochrane) to “the boy inside the man.” According to Wyn Wachhorst, “[t]he passing of the Old West . . . was like the coming of adulthood” (12), and so, contrary to other legends, the West(ern) is where to find the fountain of youth, to return to innocence—or at least moral clarity—as in the classic melodramas.¹⁸ Perhaps unsurprisingly in a novel for boys, *Rod of the Lone Patrol* is about learning not only self-reliance but also familial loyalty and co-operation. It has that paradox in the title of “lone” and “patrol.” With its theme of adoption, it also proposes different kinds of family: biological family, adoptive family, the symbolic family of the Boy Scouts troop, and maybe even the genetics of genre. Some of the heroes in this novel are separated from their families, which is a common theme in Westerns. Some of these heroes are also like Western outlaws in their willingness to take the law into their own hands, but there is a higher law: what Cody calls the “Scout Law” (*Rod* 134). This Scout Law in *Rod of the Lone Patrol* helps to

17 In fact, owing to its influence on Wister and his publication of *The Virginian* in 1902, Yates proposes that Mary Hallock Foote’s 1883 novel *The Led-Horse Claim* “could be labeled the first formula Western” (11) by any writer anywhere. Other examples include Frances McElrath’s *The Rustler: A Tale of Love and War in Wyoming* (1902) and Frances Parker’s *Marjorie of the Lower Ranch* (1903). Yates identifies Alfred Henry Lewis—author of *Wolfville* (1897)—as a rare “male author who during the early years of the formula Western paid more than token attention to women in his Western fiction” (14), though Zane Grey was “the first male writer of longer Western fiction to make a woman the protagonist” (15), in *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912). In terms of obvious and unquestionable Westerns, Canada had to wait for George Bowering’s *Caprice* (1987), though I am open to considering Cody’s 1921 novel *Jess of the Rebel Trail*.

18 Here I am thinking of the work of Linda Williams on melodrama, mode, and genre.

teach boys a late-imperial war readiness, fiscal prudence, and what Cody calls a “spirit of true chivalry” (193) strongly associated with the anti-modern conservatism of the Western. To avoid too many more digressions into politics, I will focus on the late-imperial war readiness to position *Rod of the Lone Patrol* as a Western alongside another option, the war novel, and thereby to discuss this novel as a crossover text within a crossover genre.

Notably, *Rod of the Lone Patrol* is not set in the West; its setting is rural New Brunswick mostly around 1911, and Rod’s mentor and Boy Scout leader is Captain Josh, a retired sea captain, not a cowboy. Suffice it to say that he is a so-called saltwater cowboy and that the conventions of the Western were appealing in Eastern Canada (as I suggested in the introduction), though not to the same degree as in the West. In fact, they were appealing around the world, and, in his survey of French Westerns, Mark Wolff finds that “young authors seeking to claim a position in the space that had been opened by [James Fenimore] Cooper not only imitated the American’s tales of life on the frontier, but they also tried their hands at writing novels that described adventures on the high seas” (“Western Novels”). Rod’s adventures are around smaller bodies of water but constantly evoke the sea as a frontier that he will explore when he’s old enough.

The plot can be outlined as follows. On the day that would have been their dead son’s twenty-fifth birthday (13), Parson Dan Royal and his wife Martha enjoy the news that Captain Josh has become friendlier to the missionaries and churchgoers in their New Brunswick community of Hillcrest. More important, a stranger abruptly pushes an orphaned baby named Rod into the parson’s arms (15). With this second chance at parenthood begins the education of a boy who is encouraged by the parson and the captain into the Boy Scouts. Melodramatically, Cody interrelates the narratives of the separated mother and son through a series of increasingly unlikely coincidences, finally prompting incredulity when Rod turns out to be the biological grandson of the Royals. In an episodic form reminiscent of nineteenth-century novels such as R. M. Ballantyne’s *The Young Fur-Traders* (1856) and more familiar examples such as Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Cody creates a series of adventures as Rod the Boy Scout helps to catch robbers, shoots an angry bear, and braves a storm to save a neighbour. I don’t think catching robbers is in the *Boy Scouts Handbook*, but saving

people is straight out of the Bible, and all of the Boy Scouts troop's activities—including catching the robbers for the reward money—are charitably directed to raise funds to pay for an operation to save a girl with a degenerative spinal disorder. At the end of the story, the troop succeeds. Everyone is saved and everyone reunited, especially families.

Through *Rod of the Lone Patrol*, I want to consider a different kind of family—genre—in relation to what is sometimes referred to as the “crossover text.” I do not define this term as in fan studies, where a crossover is a sub-genre of fan fiction in which characters from one author's universe are transported into another author's universe.¹⁹ Crossover literature has other connotations too. Rachel Falconer explains:

“[C]rossover” is still rather a slippery term that can be used to signify very different things. In postcolonial studies, for example, crossover is the critical term for texts that cross cultures or (like [Salman] Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*) represent such cultural shifts in the narrative. In gender studies, crossover is used to signify shifts in gender perspective (as in [Angela] Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*). In children's literature criticism, however, crossover is generally meant to refer to a crossing between age boundaries, the boundaries (for example, young child, nine to fourteen, young adult, adult) themselves being subject to constant redefinition. Even in this field, “crossover” can refer to different aspects of the narrative communication act: the relation between authors and texts, the internal attributes of texts, or the relation between texts and readers, for example. Surprisingly, more has been written about crosswriting and

19 A fan writes a crossover text to create and explore “a new world at the intersection of . . . one or more other universes” (Samutina 6). An example of a crossover in fan fiction would be if Clint Eastwood's character Blondie, from Sergio Leone's trilogy of Italian Westerns, were to cross the river and find himself in a showdown with Han Solo on a planet in the *Star Wars* universe. Blondie's universe and the *Star Wars* universe are already specific, with their own casts of characters, narratives, and settings. The specificity of individual characters seems essential in this type of crossover. In this conception, the generality of genre is less meaningful. Natalia Samutina argues that “[a] comparison of the genre of the new text in relation to the genre of the canon . . . is almost irrelevant” (13). Although the crossover is a genre itself (14), genre is not usually the focus of the crossover in fan fiction or fan studies.

dual address (with a focus on authors and narrators) than about texts or crossover reading. (3)

Indeed, because a genre's definition depends so much on a reader's expectations, we have to consider how trends in taste change over time. So I use the term partly historically, as when Misty Krueger uses the term "crossover" "to see synchrony in the canon, as opposed to abrupt breaks from one period to the next" ("Teaching Jane Austen"). Krueger's historical method applies to genres such as the Western, because genres establish conventions, and these conventions move through time to sub-genres and new genres in a process that Steve Neale describes as "cycles and trends" (*Genre* 141). Although Rick Altman cautions against a "synchronic approach" to genre because of its tendency to become "ahistorical" and to find "homogeneity" ("Semantic" 8) that does not exist in any genre, we recognize patterns of conventions among so many otherwise diverse examples that some generalization is inevitable; indeed, it's definitional to the word "genre."²⁰ Altman therefore proposes that we look for patterns and then interpret them both as conventions and as historical meanings, a method that he calls "semantic/syntactic" ("Semantic" 12). You might say that he wants the parents in the family to be respected, but he allows the children to grow into their own.

One of the proposed results is what Paul Monticone and others call the "hybrid," which is debatably synonymous with "crossover genre." (It also has the racial connotations mentioned in chapter 2.) Monticone's example is the noir Western. Another would be Joss Whedon's space Western *Firefly* (2002–3). In music, crossover genres include Western swing and alt-country. According to Altman, a crossover genre can be explained as a phase in the development of a new genre. Monticone paraphrases Altman: "For a new genre to form, the adjective must be 'substantified' as a noun—that is, 'western chase films' and 'western scenics' must give way to 'the western'" (341). Monticone then argues that "the adjectival term is not merely added on to a noun genre . . . but, as an adjective should, substantially modifies the noun genre" (344). The "noun genre" of *Rod of the Lone Patrol*

20 The Latin word *genus* and its derivative *generalis* are the sources of the English words "genre" and "general."

might be epic or romance or, more colloquially, heroic adventure story. Its “adjectival term[s]” are “for boys” and “Westernesque.” I hesitate to say that this novel “substantially modifies” the epic (or romance), but these adjectives do set expectations about the adventures: they are like those in Westerns (e.g., they peak with moral clarity derived from action), and they are appropriate for boys. In terms of *hybridity*, the biological metaphor encourages us to stop thinking of adventure stories for boys and Westerns as children of the parent known as the epic. Hybridity occurs between different species, but I doubt that the genres of *Rod of the Lone Patrol* are different enough to be inter-species. Probably not, because they seem to be close relatives. So, when the degree of separation is high enough, “hybridity” seems to be the right word. When it is closer, the right words might be “crossover genre.” Although I have been implying hierarchies by referring to genres and sub-genres, or superordinates and derivatives, or parents and children, the term “crossover genre” has an even less vertical orientation than “hybrid,” more like a Venn diagram.

In the absurdly unrealistic conclusion to the novel, however, Cody reasserts the patriarchy and the hierarchy of the family “genre.” Rod’s mother, the famous American singer Anna Royanna, is revealed to have been legitimately married to Rod’s father, Alex Royal, though Cody never explains why Alex never told the parson and his wife of his marriage before dying. Why she did not introduce herself as Alex’s wife instead of abandoning Rod and vanishing into the night is also never explained, except insofar as she describes her sense of personal responsibility for becoming self-reliant and able to support Rod financially, which she does eventually through hard work as a singer. In accordance with melodrama’s value of innocence, her self-reliance protects Rod from allegations of illegitimacy until it also enables her to join the traditional family. In this respect, *Rod of the Lone Patrol* hews to the genealogical line and allows no hybridity, crossing over, or other alternatives in the context of family.

The linear simplicity of *Rod of the Lone Patrol* is a sign both of the Western’s moral simplicity and of the closeness of genres interacting in its story. The adjectives “Westernesque” and “for boys” come together partly because, according to Wachhorst, “[t]he sense of personal limits in an abstract society is assuaged by combining the hero’s childlike moral purity and social isolation with the power of the adult, resolving complex

problems in a single action” (16). Rifkind describes other early Canadian Westerns as “heavy-handed and didactic material . . . very much in keeping with the moral reform discourse of the era’s Muscular Christianity, most obviously the Boy Scout movement founded in both Canada and the United States in 1910” (134). Applying Rifkind’s observation to *Rod of the Lone Patrol* is easy because of the explicit Boy Scouts content in *Rod of the Lone Patrol* and the Muscular Christianity of Captain Josh as both an outlaw and “Scout Law” man. Another reason to associate *Rod* with Westerns is the similarity of the title *Rod of the Lone Patrol* to Cody’s earlier Western entitled *The Long Patrol: A Tale of the Mounted Police*.

And there is one more factor: the cover of the book, which is ambiguous enough to imply a crossover related to genre and to age. The editor and young adult fiction writer Maureen Garvie notes, “it’s hard to imagine a children’s book that wouldn’t have at least some adult appeal. Adults write them, after all” (“Not Just for Children”). A children’s book that also appeals to adults may be marketed as a crossover. According to Falconer, “[p]ublishers have recently been directly involved in promoting this kind of crossover writing, for the obvious reason that a fanbase has already been established in one reading age group and may the more easily cross over into another” (4). I don’t want to judge a book by its cover, but crossover texts in the marketing sense *are* judged in part by their covers when readers are shopping; Thomas O. Beebee interprets book covers to show “how . . . genres carefully differentiate themselves” according to “how they are to be used by their readers” (7). The cover of the 1916 edition evokes the myth of the West in all its seriousness, though it is a story for boys. The image is a silhouette of a rifle-wielding cowboy standing like a giant on the horizon, surrounded by the redness of the cloth cover and some gold highlights stratified above the horizon to illustrate the sunset. (The redness and styles of hat and pants also imply the Mountie.) Because the red pervades the sky and the foreground, and because the cowboy flatly appears to be on the horizon, scale is impossible to determine. It *could* be a boy with a gun, but it could be a man, or it could be a giant—at least a hero planted firmly on the land, defending his claim. Although Cormac McCarthy had probably never heard of the book before publishing *Blood Meridian: Or, the Evening Redness in the West* in 1985, the cover certainly depicts “the evening redness” and the cowboy’s West, even though the story is set in

New Brunswick, in the relative East. And *Rod of the Lone Patrol* is as radically different from *Blood Meridian* as you could imagine—an innocent, wholesome, and hopeful story of a boy who will become a good man, rather than the degenerate, brutal, and deeply cynical story of a boy destroyed by evil in *Blood Meridian*. Tonally, they are diametrically opposed; no one would ever want to read *Blood Meridian* to a child or allow a child to read it. It could never have a crossover audience of children to adults or adults to children. Quite different, *Rod* has potential as a crossover text because of its generic crossings, its readership, and its marketing.

Nevertheless, I admit to the purists that I *am* using the term “crossover” to justify a deliberate misreading of *Rod of the Lone Patrol*, because despite its Western conventions it lacks the essential climactic violence of the Western genre. Krueger refers to “crossover” as a text that “simultaneously represents intersection and transition between time periods,” but she also refers to “Miriam Wallace’s phrase ‘crossover audiences,’ a term that [Wallace] uses to describe readers who examine texts across two literary periods rather than in separate ones” (“Teaching Jane Austen”). This usage is different from the crossover audience that buys children’s literature and reads it themselves. So, for example, any recent Western in the mode of historical fiction, such as those by Guy Vanderhaeghe, has the potential to comment not only on the nineteenth-century West but also on the present. In reading Vanderhaeghe’s novels as dual commentaries in my book, I am a “crossover audience” of the type that synchronizes or at least compares time periods; however, in reading *Rod of the Lone Patrol*, which was written around 1915 and is set in a short span of years around 1911 (153), I am relating it not to my life and times but to the historical contexts of the rise of the Boy Scouts and, somewhat differently, the ongoing First World War, which isn’t mentioned in *Rod of the Lone Patrol*. Why not set the novel a few years later, during the war? Probably the answer involves the novel’s intended “audience” or readership: boys, boys for whom war was too adult a concern.

For a genre to cross over between readerships by age, the scholar Jeffrey Canton argues that adults will read children’s literature that has “compelling writing” and “strong appeal to adult nostalgia” (qtd. in Garvie, “Not Just for Children”). The Western is already a highly nostalgic genre, one that looks back upon an essentially mythic time and place when life

was supposedly simpler, the morals clearer, and the Edenic potential of the West seemingly within the colonial grasp. *Rod of the Lone Patrol* uses childhood and a rural setting to evoke similar feelings, but, more than that, I can imagine an adult reading *Rod of the Lone Patrol* to a son during or after the war as a reminder of a not-too-distant past in which there was peace—a return to innocence. For the adult reader, many of the novel's scenes can be read as allegories, perhaps especially the climactic attempt to seek a doctor to save a young neighbour's life at the entreaty of his father. During the attempt, Rod is swept overboard by the storm and seems for the duration of a chapter to be a young sacrifice to a greater cause. Think First World War. Instead of a showdown between outlaw and lawman, there is a confrontation with nature that signifies the historical context of a confrontation with another seemingly elemental enemy, the Central Powers. This allegory might be appealing to some of the adult readers of *Rod of the Lone Patrol*.

To help with these questions of expectations and appeal, Maureen Garvie provides a typology of children's literature crossovers on which we can attempt to position *Rod of the Lone Patrol*:

- a) the children's book written for children that appeals to any age (classics like *Anne of Green Gables*, new books like *When Smudge Came*);
- b) the children's book that appeals mostly to adults (*Love You Forever*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Tales from Gold Mountain*);
- c) the children's book written for adults but taken over by clever children (*Watership Down*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Treasure Island*, the pre-Waldo puzzle books of Graeme Base);
- d) the book written for young adults but challenging enough to pass as an adult book (*The Outsiders*, *The Chocolate War*, *Up to Low*);

- e) the book written for adults, taken over by children for a while, but now out of favour (*Catcher in the Rye*, the heavily religious *Swiss Family Robinson*); and finally,
- f) the book written for adults to look like a children's book, but which any real child wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole (*Jonathan Livingston Seagull*). ("Not Just for Children")

Having never spoken to another adult or child who has read *Rod of the Lone Patrol*, I hesitate. I proceed by process of elimination. Would *Rod* appeal at any age? Not likely, because the Boy Scout context itself tended to become unpopular for children over the age of fifteen or sixteen, according to David MacLeod (11); most Boy Scouts enlisted at fourteen but quickly became bored and preferred sports. Would *Rod* appeal mostly to adults? Not likely, partly because, as Garvie suggests, young readers often prefer "formulaic stories with action a-plenty and a few basic, baser emotions like fear, greed, and envy" ("Not Just for Children")—a description apt for *Rod of the Lone Patrol*. Is it or its readers likely to be "clever" or "challenging"? No, because it's an almost excruciatingly simple book whose cleverness seems limited to *deus ex machina*. Was it "written for adults, taken over by children . . . , but now out of favour"? I do not know its history of reception, but I arrive at the end of the list thinking that *Rod* must be "the book written for adults to look like a children's book, but which any real child [at least today] wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole." It's too didactic and wholesome for the "real child" whom I imagine, but a sufficiently idealistic parent might like it as a text to read to a child.

Why does all this theorizing about crossovers matter so much to the Western? In an essay on the Western and children's literature, Wolff explains that "[c]ritics of children's literature have wrestled with the unsettling truth that adults construct notions of the child for whom children's literature was and is produced" ("Western Novels"). In *Rod of the Lone Patrol*, the "unsettling truth" is that adults such as its author, Cody, and Robert Baden-Powell, the lieutenant general in the British Army who founded the Boy Scouts, saw boys as future soldiers. The Western was and is one of the many ways in which the popular culture of the Western

world contributes, at least in theory, to war readiness: to prepare to solve problems with violence, beginning with the imagination of children and crossing over into an adulthood of action.

Captain Josh sees Rod and his troop in this way too. He is initially presented as an outlaw—a man outside the church who takes the law into his own hands whenever necessary, as when he arrests the robbers with a little help from Rod. Advising the boys on how to deal with confrontation, the captain warns his troop: “Some day ye’ll come bang up against another troop, and how’ll ye feel if ye git licked” (159). In the city with Rod to get a Boy Scouts uniform, Captain Josh learns of a competition among troops, and he decides to enter. Upon their return to Hillcrest, another character joins the captain in linking the Boy Scouts not only to competition but expressly to war; the girl Whyn immediately pines for more uniforms for the troop and says, “Soldiers never seem of much account until they get their uniforms on” (169). Later, when the troop decides to spend their money to save Whyn’s life rather than win the contest with the other troops, Cody describes Captain Josh in military terms: “He felt at that moment like a general whose men had consented to make a mighty sacrifice for a great cause” (290). And when the lieutenant governor comes to Hillcrest to review the Lone Patrol and the other troops, “[i]t was a proud moment for Captain Josh, as he marched ahead of the procession. Drawn to his full height, and with his long beard sweeping his breast, he might have been taken for a great warrior of olden days leading his men into action” (313). In his present, however, “his men” are in fact boys, and here’s where categorical breakdown is dangerous.²¹

21 According to David I. MacLeod, however, troop leaders were in reality worried less about wartime readiness than the dissolution of traditional families and the transformation of men’s roles. MacLeod quotes Ernest Thompson Seton, a Briton appropriated by Canadians as Canadian, and the first chief Scout of the Boy Scouts of America: “farmboys had once been ‘strong, self-reliant,’ yet ‘respectful to . . . superiors [and] obedient . . . to parents.’ But the rise of industry and growth of spectator sports had turned boys into ‘flat-chested cigarette smokers with shaky nerves and doubtful vitality’” (qtd. in MacLeod 5). The values expressed here imply an association between families (namely “parents”) and armies (via “superiors”). Seton was and perhaps still is Canada’s best-known naturalist writer, in the sense of *naturalism* as a type of realism. He was born in England in 1860 but was raised in Ontario, and he moved to the United States at the age of thirty-six, where he wrote *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) (appearing in the same year as Connor’s pirated *Black Rock*), *Two Little Savages; Being the Adventures of Two Boys Who Lived as Indians and What They Learned* (1906), and a book on woodcraft that developed into the *Boy Scouts of America Official Manual* (1910). He, Baden-Powell, and Daniel Beard established the Boy

Crossing Over into Pulps

In this context of the various dangers I have just considered, and as we approach the next chapter, which is on the morally censured Western in Canadian pulp fiction of the 1940s, it is worth remarking on the pulpiness of some of Cody's and Connor's writing. I know less about Cody's method than I do of Connor's, but the results—flat characters, clunky plots, and other unrealistic elements—are similar enough that I assume their methods were at least occasionally similar. The flatness of Connor's heroes and villains was partly the result of how he wrote his twenty-five novels—and sold up to thirty million of them (Wilson 30). His long-time publisher and promoter, George Doran, explained the process this way:

The beginning of each year we would make a contract for a manuscript to be delivered by July, for his readers wanted [i.e., Doran himself wanted, partly for the readers] a new book by Christmas. July would come and go with only a portion of the manuscript in hand. Finally it became a recognized procedure for me to get him to Chicago, and later to New York, and literally put him under lock and key until the manuscript was completed. . . . Sometimes . . . we would be printing up to page two hundred fifty-six while he was writing page two hundred and fifty-seven onward. (qtd. in Wilson 31)

Few writers could be expected to produce a book a year with fully developed characters in each one. Connor and Doran's "procedure" was much the same as that which delivers a steady supply of pulp fiction to the marketplace, except Doran produced hardcover books rather than cheaply made magazines (and, of course, Christian texts). Although both Cody and Connor aspired to chronicling a place and time and thereby rallying their audiences—as they did from the pulpit and lectern—to enact social change, their novels in retrospect suffer from a pulpy lack of complex

Scouts of America. Later disillusioned with the Scouts, "[h]e levelled charges of militarism and they, in turn, charged him with pacifism" (Redekop).

characterization. It is a criticism that I might levy as an adult that might not be a problem for children and teenagers.

Connor, in fact, predicted the demand for his work and his obliging output in his very first novel, *Black Rock*, in which the narrator has his name—his pseudonym, Connor—and a job not that different from his job as a writer. In *Black Rock*, Connor is a painter who has relinquished his romantic ideals for the regular income of illustrating, probably for magazines:

There is no doubt in my mind that nature designed me for a great painter. A railway director interfered with that design of nature, as he has with many another of hers, and by the transmission of an order for mountain pieces by the dozen, together with a cheque so large that I feared there was some mistake, he determined me to be an illustrator and designer for railway and like publications. I do not like these people ordering “by the dozen.” Why should they not consider an artist’s finer feelings? Perhaps they cannot understand them; but they understand my pictures, and I understand their cheques, and there we are quits. (157)

Later, reflecting on his memories after leaving Black Rock, he echoes this passage: “I was filling in my Black Rock sketches for the railway people who would still persist in ordering them by the dozen” (263). The magazines or “like publications” promoting the railway are a commercial publication akin to a pulp magazine in that they have few literary or generally artistic pretensions, such as the pretension of being “a great painter.” When Craig returns from Britain and reunites with Connor, he tells of meeting “a man who had written a great book” (310) and of the “sinful waste of God’s good human stuff to see these fellows potter away their lives among theories living and dead, and end up by producing a book!” (310–11). Here Connor reveals his misgivings about literature and his preferences for instrumental, practical work; shortly after this scene, Mrs. Mavor writes to Connor to state, “I knew you would not be content with the making of pictures, which the world does not really need” (314). Connor the author presumably sustains the hope that a *useful* book—such as one that promotes

abstinence from alcohol—is acceptable. He likewise has no compunctions about the commercialization of such books, however pulpy they are; in fact, his didactic novels simply reflect a Presbyterian work ethic surprisingly aligned with pulp cultural production though at cross purposes with pulp fiction’s typical seediness.

So, in conclusion, Connor and Cody were dealing with cultural-material conditions, audience expectations based on historical circumstances and the ages of their potential readers, and moral concerns associated with their chosen genres. These were not simple to balance. Cody’s *Rod of the Lone Patrol* can be read as a novel all about the growth of an adopted boy into his real family. His adopted status encourages him and the novel’s readers to join symbolic families such as the army. The theme of family relates to genre, but genre might be better understood intertextually, as a network of crossings, rather than a genealogy or some other hierarchy. On the one hand, *Rod of the Lone Patrol* is an allegorical war novel for adults. On the other, it is a Western. On yet another, though it does not veer into fantasy, it is an adventure story for boys. (Genre always seems to juggle conventions.) It is therefore a crossover by age of audience and by genre. And Connor’s *Corporal Cameron* appears to have a slightly older audience of boys growing into manhood, when moral lessons become more and more practical and pressing, especially in a wartime context of Boy Scouts becoming men. Connor’s famous Mountie is different partly in the fact that Cameron is introduced as a heavy-drinking youth who does not grow up until he goes West. “The ‘north’—or, more precisely, the Northwest—often played the vital role of ‘masculinizing agent’ ” (Dawson 38) in Mountie fiction, including *Corporal Cameron* and later examples such as Curwood’s *The Golden Snare* (1921). As Coleman and Rifkind have shown, this agency is particularly Christian. The “cross” produced by these novels is not only that of the crossover genre but also that of Christianity, which appears in such a different guise in the pulp fiction of Luke Price and his almost mythical outlaw-lawman, the entirely imitable Smokey Carmain, in the next chapter.

