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Abstract

The nineteenth-century boy's own adventure story is a vehicle for the maintenance, and promotion, of ethnic identity. The establishment of ethnic self-consciousness is dependent upon a marked sense of difference; an alienation from, or perhaps opposition to, the Other. A shared myth of descent is in many ways a *sine qua non* of ethnicity. However, I am here concerned not so much with actual descent, but more with a sense of imputed common ancestry; a tribal belonging.

It is helpful to look upon the literary works of this period as the products of the Anglosphere, for a shared ethnicity is the mortar that binds. Intertextuality can be presented as a textual adaptation, appropriation, or influence. The use of intertextuality in the Anglospheric children's novel is different from that to be found in contemporary works, for Anglospheric writers could make assumptions about a prospective readership in respect of Biblical knowledge and Classical allusions that their latter-day counterparts patently cannot.

This thesis is not presented as a comprehensive investigation of the entire field of intertextuality in the Anglospheric boy's own adventure story, for such an undertaking would be monumental in scope and ambition. Instead, an examination of a subset of that field is carried out, which primarily entails comparative studies of four novels. It should be emphasised that these novels have not been chosen at random, but for sound rational and empirical reasons, all of which are explored in the following chapters. There is also an exploration of allusion, appropriation, and intertextuality in a historical context. Throughout this thesis the problem of identifying the legitimate parameters of intertextuality is discussed. How intertextuality is employed in Anglospheric children's literature can perhaps be studied most fruitfully in the borderlands that lie between the related concepts associated with ethnic identity.

The very concept of the literary Anglosphere rests upon an inherited disposition of related peoples, for it would appear to reflect a spiritual morphology that is perhaps transmitted as much through atavism as through experience. There is without doubt a symbolic whiteness in the nineteenth-century boy's own adventure story, for the stories told invoke, implicitly *and* explicitly, the lineage, language, and customs, of their readers, which is to say their collective identity. The concept of intertextuality is central to any understanding of the whiteness that is emblematic of the nineteenth-century boy's own adventure story.