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Conclusion: Intertextuality and the Anglospheric Tradition

IT HAS BEEN SHOWN that so-called children's literature in nineteenth-century Anglospheric literary culture had its origins not so much in nationality, but rather in ethnicity, language, and a common tradition. The nineteenth-century boy's own adventure story was, and arguably still is, an expression of ethnic identity; a celebration of whiteness.¹ Every people own a literary tradition that in some way differs from others. Hence, for the people of the Anglosphere, as for all other peoples, the authentic literary tradition can only be their own, for it is in the nature of authentic cultures to privilege their own imperatives.² As we have seen, the nineteenth-century boy's own story promulgated whiteness as a mode of personal and political identification, whose inherent dynamics were transnational, and perhaps also to some degree spiritual. Nineteenth-century whiteness incorporated a binary logic that defined itself not only in its own terms, but also in opposition to an Other; a non-white Other that in turn defined itself against white Otherness. To the degree that it remains authentic, every ethnoculture has no option but to distance itself from other cultures. Indeed, it is just such an aspiration to an autarkic unity in

¹ Arthur Machen, 'The White People' (1904), in *The White People and Other Weird Stories* (London: Penguin, 2012), pp. 111-147 (p. 147).

² Lionel Trilling, 'Society and Authenticity', in *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 106-133.

its representative modes that makes one literary culture distinct from another.³ However, such a particularistic view of white literary identity implies no evaluative differentiation between ethnic literatures *per se*.

Writers of the nineteenth-century Anglosphere produced works that transcended national identity, and this literary ethnography of the Anglosphere reinforced a collective identity and historical community.⁴ These writers shared not just a language, but also a common view of the world, and an intuitive conviction of their ancestral relationship.⁵ The literary community of the nineteenth-century Anglosphere shared common myths and memories. In the act of articulating their Anglospheric identity writers employed narrative devices that presented symbiotic literary viewpoints. Indeed, so many continuities and similarities between nineteenth-century literature produced by Anglo-American and British authors have been evidenced that literary historians ought to treat it as a single historical and literary entity. To be sure, there is nothing amiss with investing in the idea that literature, literary criticism, and literary history is paramount in the fostering of ethnic cohesion. I have indicated that novelists who write about matters pertaining to whiteness do, in their presentation of that concept, invent their own forms of literary whiteness.⁶ Moreover, I have demonstrated that the nineteenth-century boy's own story acted not simply as a mirror of its age, but as an active agent in the construction and perpetuation of a *Weltanschauung* in which

³ Richard M. Weaver, 'The Unsentimental Sentiment', in *Ideas have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 17-31.

⁴ Paula Hastings, "'Our Glorious Anglo-Saxon Race Shall Ever Fill Earth's Highest Place': The Anglo-Saxon and the Construction of Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada", in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, ed. by Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), pp. 92-110 (p. 101).

⁵ The New Englander, H. P. Lovecraft, writing in 1916, expressed an opinion doubtless shared by many of his countrymen. 'England... is not, and never will be, a really foreign country; nor is a true love of America possible without a corresponding love for the British race.' See 'Old England and the "Hyphen"', in *The Conservative: The Complete Issues, 1915-1923* (London: Arktos, 2013), pp. 93-95 (p. 93). See also Christopher Hanlon, 'Transatlantic Bloodlines and English Traits', in *America's England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 17-40.

⁶ Angela Woollacott, 'Whiteness and "the Imperial Turn"', in *Re-Orienting Whiteness*, ed. by Leigh Boucher, Jane Carey, and Katherine Ellinghaus (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 17-30 (p. 18).

whiteness was an integral part of the cultural and psychological formation of Anglospheric society.

As we have seen, the concept of Anglospheric expansionism is ubiquitous in the boy's own adventure stories of the nineteenth century. Intertextuality in such works reflected and transmitted the cultural values of those who authored works aimed at male readers, sophisticated and naïve, even though sometimes bringing into question commonly held values. Adult literature, and so-called children's literature, is oftentimes constructed from very different materials, but it has nevertheless been evidenced that intertextuality is the mortar that binds. One may infer that children's literature has an effect on self-image, for it is often a child's initial introduction to a culture and those who embody it. Hence, intertextuality is key in the imparting of literacy, and perhaps also, in the context of nineteenth-century boy's own stories, the reinforcement of ethnocultural consciousness.

One may also infer from this thesis that the most potent facets of imperialist ideology are the ones of which readers, particularly juvenile ones, are least aware. The socio-political views that readers of nineteenth-century boy's own stories take as incontrovertible — so obviously correct as to be beyond question — are what most firmly defines their sense of belonging, identity, and place in the society in which they live. Indeed, the same may be said for the authors of such works.

We have seen that *The Last of the Mohicans* is a foundational work in Anglospheric intertextuality in literature aimed at young male readers. Fenimore Cooper favours oppositional allusion, sometimes misquoting his source texts, and thereby testing his like-minded readers. In the main, he references, and alludes to, literary sources that have their origins in the British Isles. Fenimore Cooper's imagination conflates the literatures of Great Britain and New England to produce a canonical text in the literature of the Anglosphere, and a touchstone of criticism in the boy's own adventure story genre. *The Last of the Mohicans* is a story of ethnic

triumphalism.⁷ There is much danger to be faced, for the lethally dangerous Other is ubiquitous, but whiteness wins the day.

It has been copiously demonstrated that intertextuality in *Treasure Island* is a melding of the British literary experience and its American counterpart in a distinctly self-conscious manner. The American connection is fundamental to the creation of *Treasure Island*, and an Anglo-American identity can be seen by a perceptive reader to be at one with its British counterpart. Stevenson sews together seamlessly the British and Anglo-American literary experiences, thereby creating an Anglospheric work of literature. In *Treasure Island*, as indeed in much of nineteenth-century Anglospheric literature, whiteness is the identity that need not speak its name.

I have shown that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adheres to a long-established literary tradition. Twain's grasp of that tradition is made all the more moving by the fact he was irredeemably of a piece with the mores of a society he mercilessly mocked. Indeed, one learns from a close reading of *Huckleberry Finn* that tradition, properly understood, is everything that makes the perpetuation of a people's lineage transcendent.⁸ The essence of tradition is the ancestral heritage and its creative continuation. Twain uses allusions throughout the novel that initially appear incongruous, but on closer examination can often be seen to be ironic. Feigned knowledge and feigned ignorance come to have similar ramifications. Intertextuality is at the core of this novel, though the absence of any allusions to African-American literature would appear to be problematic. *Huckleberry Finn* is a white novel, albeit one with a black subtext of a moot nature.

⁷ Julius Evola, 'Race and War: The Aryan Conception of Combat', in *Metaphysics of War: Battle, Victory, and Death in the World of Tradition* (London: Arktos, 2011), pp. 76-85.

⁸ "Transatlantic' and 'transcendent' are semantically entwined through the common crossing root 'trans-'.
Susan Manning, *Poetics of Character: Transatlantic Encounters, 1700-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 8.

Kim is a Punjabi *Bildungsroman* written by an Anglo-Indian for an Anglospheric readership. Kipling has been shown to employ an imitative intertextuality that places his work firmly in the literary tradition of the Anglosphere. Readers in the United States and the United Kingdom were the same and not the same; their similarities went for the most part unremarked and their differences complemented each other. However, *Kim* would not necessarily be read identically on both sides of the Atlantic. *Kim* has been shown to be Punjabi in a very Anglospheric sort of way. The allusions in this novel serve to enrich its Anglospheric elements, many and varied as they are, and *Kim* could perhaps be viewed, even by Kipling's detractors, as the acceptable face of imperialist literature. *Kim* shows how whiteness mutates as it intermittently integrates with, and segregates from, the ubiquitous Other. In the nineteenth-century, and perhaps beyond, Irishness was dismissed by some as an otherly form of whiteness, but Kipling's presentation of *Kim* shows that the concept of a generic whiteness cannot be invalidated.⁹

As has been amply evidenced, the nineteenth-century boy's own story is a form of *Bildungsliteratur*. The authors examined wrote for a like-minded readership (not all of whom were children) who lived in what were for the most part Anglophonic polities. We have seen that the thoughts of writers spread their roots far beneath the surface, and entwine themselves around the roots of other writers' thoughts. In short, all four authors examined exhibit a talent for inventive reconstruction, which in turn awakens the perceptive reader to the nature of a literary matrix that reinforces their white identity.¹⁰ Anglospheric readers are invited to reflect upon not only who they are, but who they are not. In addition, one is left to infer that the devices employed in the creation and maintenance of white hegemony in the Anglosphere were for the

⁹ Alastair Bonnett, 'The instabilities of racial whiteness', in *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 20-25.

¹⁰ In 1910, in an article in the *New York Independent*, W. E. B. Du Bois announced that the world 'has discovered that it is white, and by that token, wonderful'. Du Bois had plainly no interest in reinforcing white identity, and his ironic comment could perhaps be viewed as a back-handed compliment. See 'The Souls of White Folk', in *Dark Water: Voices from within the Veil* (New York: Dover, 1999), pp. 17-29 (p. 17).

most part those of an exclusory nature.¹¹ The authors of nineteenth-century boy's own stories espoused the gospel of whiteness, and in so doing preached to the choir.

We have seen that writers constantly imitate, and in so doing attach themselves to a *tradition*, though not a Leavisite Great Tradition of defining and grading, but rather one of belonging and engaging. Literature, in common with every other complex activity, necessarily adheres to a tradition. Edmund Burke, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), wrote on the preservation of political tradition, but from that text one may extrapolate a defence of literary tradition:

A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and of confined views. People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors...The idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation and a sure principle of transmission; without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free; but it secures what it acquires...By preserving the method of nature...in what we improve we are never wholly new, in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete.¹²

These Burkean sentiments were later refined and redefined in Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. Needless to say, neither Burke nor Eliot was advocating any form of cultural inertia. Indeed, as Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa put it in *Il Gattopardo* (1958), 'If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.'¹³ It is perhaps a truism that the human condition is perforce in a state of perpetual flux, with the only constant being change itself. Tradition, if it is not to become moribund, is required to be inherently metamorphic, embracing the best of the new while retaining the best of the old. Novelty for its own sake is to be abjured. Leavis, and his colleague, Denys Thompson, asserted in *Culture and Environment* (1933) that 'the memory of the old order must be the chief incitement towards the new, if ever we are to

¹¹ Valerie M. Babb, 'Crafting Whiteness in Early America', in *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature and Culture*, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-88. See also Daniel J. Kruger, 'You Can't Root for Both Teams!: Convergent Evidence for the Unidirectionality of Group Loyalty', *Evolutionary Psychological Science*, 4 (2018), pp. 1-14.

¹² Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 211.

¹³ Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*, trans. by Archibald Colquhoun (London: Vintage, 2007), p. 19.

have one',¹⁴ but they were certainly not advocating any form of cultural regress. Tradition, literary or otherwise, has to remain dynamic or enter terminal decline. However, tradition is by no means an *aeterna veritas*, for every tradition has inconsistencies and disputed issues. Indeed, tradition — the accumulated knowledge that stems from experience, history, and habit, and what those closely connected to us have said and done — cannot resolve each and every literary issue. Hence, the necessity of the Anglospheric literary culture balancing its ancestral forms with the creation of new ones, all the while interacting with alien literary cultures. Change occurs through narratives being told in new ways, in part invoked by challenging social changes and changing cultural challenges. As we have seen, tradition is transmitted by making that which is inherited from the past entirely relevant to the present.¹⁵ Writers present original juxtapositions of older insights, which is to say that innovation in a literary sense is no more than the cutting edge of tradition. Indeed, I can do no other than confess that my elucidation of this is redolent of Rudyard Kipling's reflections on eternal truths and human pretensions, which are to be found in his sagacious poem, 'The Gods of the Copybook Headings'.¹⁶ There are, in Kipling's view, rules of human conduct that are so well-trying, and so patently obvious, that they may come to be viewed as platitudinous, though disregard of them may result in ruin.

As has been shown, imitation is so pervasive that one is left to conjecture how originality ever came to be so highly regarded as a literary value. Indeed, since the Age of Romanticism it has been received opinion among the greater part of the *literati* that a copy, or anything derivative, is something that is essentially debased or counterfeit, even though their own studies may well have suggested to them that literary creativity does not begin with a *tabula rasa*. It has been stated that the modern concept of authorship is

¹⁴ F. R. Leavis and Denys Thomson, *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. 96.

¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, 'Tradition and the Modern Age', in *Between Past and Future* (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 17-40 (p. 25).

¹⁶ Rudyard Kipling, 'The Gods of the Copybook Headings' (1919), in *The Complete Verse* (London: Kyle Cathie, 2006), p. 657-658.

the result of a quite radical reconceptualization of the creative process that culminated less than 200 years ago in the heroic self-representation of the Romantic poets. As they saw it, genuine authorship is *originary* in the sense that it results not in a variation, an imitation or an adaptation, but in an utterly new, unique — in a word ‘original’ — work which, accordingly may be said to be the property of its creator and to merit the law’s protection as such.¹⁷

This view of the Romantics has been robustly challenged by a significant number of literary historians. One of them, Robert MacFarlane, claims that

no unified or consistent doctrinal position towards originality and literary resemblance can easily be abstracted from contemporary Romantic documents. Undeniably, Romantic writers can be shown to have espoused the idea that the authentically great creator should be intellectually aloof from his or her place and time, and they can be shown to have coveted novelty and lack of influence as vital poetic criteria. However, they can also be shown to have written in direct response to social and political events, and to have addressed with varying degrees of cynicism and disbelief the concept of originality as creation out of nothing. They did associate genius with originality, but they also perceived creativity as a function of description, assimilation, and arrangement. They did deplore the effects of influence, imitation, and repetition, but they also had richly allusive relations with many of their literary predecessors...¹⁸

As has been evidenced throughout this thesis, no literary text is an island, entire of itself; every text is a fragment of literature’s realm, a part of the main.¹⁹ Imitation and adaptation are legitimate authorial skills that do not transgress the authorship of others.

This thesis has demonstrated that Anglo-American literature and British literature of the nineteenth century were interdependent literary cultures that together formed a still greater culture, while themselves remaining unique. However, the Anglospheric literary heritage has a dual imperative: blood and spirit. It is perhaps no accident that the Golden Age of the boy’s own adventure story peaked during the high noon of *Pax Britannica*. Nineteenth-century

¹⁷ Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, ‘Introduction’, in *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*, ed. by Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 1-15 (pp. 2-3).

¹⁸ Robert MacFarlane, *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 29.

¹⁹ Tom Furniss and Michael Bath, ‘Allusion, Influence, and Intertextuality’, in *Reading Poetry: An Introduction* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007), pp.385-418 (p. 388).

whiteness was so omnipresent, and indeed omnipotent, that it was an invisible norm. Children's literature of this age can be seen to have been an essential component of the literary culture, which was itself a constituent part of the foundation of Anglospheric culture as a whole. Children's literature of this type is serious literature.

The reading, and indeed writing, of the nineteenth-century boy's own adventure story was an affirmation of white identity, tradition, and historical memory. Literary culture does not arise in a vacuum. The past is a lighthouse that illuminates the present. The manner in which Anglospheric authors read and critique each other is an act of rhetorical self-definition. Anglo-American and British writers have so commonly imitated each other that it would be proper to describe their collective output as Anglospheric; a gathering of natural differences within an organic totality. The concept of Anglospheric literature has been shown to rise above opposites, which are merely polarities in an underlying unity that is essentially white. Questions of identity may insinuate their way into all genres of literature, even though not all genres of literature concern themselves with identity. Indeed, never in the history of humankind has any literary culture of substance been fashioned without a grounding in its own ethnic past.²⁰ Yet, ethnic identity does not, and indeed cannot, encompass all aspects of literature. However, in ignoring or denying the sense of kinship that infuses the boy's own story of the nineteenth-century Anglosphere some scholars have been hitherto purblind to that which has long been patent to the common reader.²¹ As we have seen, the nineteenth-century boy's own adventure story is a celebration of whiteness, *quod erat demonstrandum*.

²⁰ Isaiah Berlin, 'The Philosophical Ideas of Giambattista Vico', in *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 21-121 (p. 32).

²¹ This protean consciousness of the Anglosphere has suffered a dilution subsequent to mass demographic transformation and its attendant social and cultural changes. The loosely woven fabric of the Anglosphere is slowly beginning to unravel. See Eric P. Kaufman, *The Rise and Fall of Anglo-America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), *passim*, and Mike Hill, *After Whiteness: Unmaking an American Majority* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), *passim*. See also David H. Stewart, 'The Decline of WASP Literature in America', in *College English*, 30 (1969), pp. 403-417.