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## **Constitutional 'Equality of Status' – From Political Program to Fictional Reality**

### **The Relationship between Anglo- and Franco-Canadians in Anglo-Canadian Children's Literature**

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#### **Zusammenfassung**

*Vor dem Hintergrund, dass das Verhältnis der beiden Gründungskulturen Kanadas nach wie vor einen zentralen Stellenwert für den heutigen Nationalcharakter besitzt, soll in diesem Aufsatz untersucht werden, wie anglo-kanadische Jugendbuchautoren des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts den Kontakt zwischen Engländern und Franzosen im Akadien des 18. Jahrhunderts, d.h. zur Zeit der Deportation der Akadier, darstellen. Hauptziel wird sein, eine Entwicklung in der literarischen Beschreibung dieser beiden Bevölkerungsgruppen in Romanen aufzuzeigen, die vor und nach der Verabschiedung der Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms verfasst wurden, um daraus Rückschlüsse darauf zu ziehen, wie die Texte politisch-ideologische Veränderungen widerspiegeln und welche Rolle den historischen Jugendromanen bei der Herausbildung der nationalen Identität Kanadas zukommt.*

#### **Résumé**

*Les liens entre les deux cultures fondatrices du Canada revêtant, aujourd'hui comme hier, une importance fondamentale dans la constitution de l'identité nationale contemporaine de ce pays, cet exposé a pour ambition de montrer comment des auteurs anglo-canadiens de livres pour la jeunesse des XX<sup>e</sup> et XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles décrivent les relations existant entre les Français et les Anglais dans l'Acadie du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, au moment où les Acadiens furent déportés. Il s'agit avant tout de mettre en lumière l'évolution que nous avons pu constater dans la représentation littéraire de ces deux fractions du peuple à travers des romans ayant été écrits avant et après l'adoption de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés afin d'étudier de quelle manière ces textes reflètent des mutations d'ordre à la fois politique et économique et quel rôle revient aux romans historiques pour la jeunesse dans la formation de l'identité nationale du Canada.*

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Sections 16 to 22 of the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* confirm the equality of status of Canada's two official languages. The fact that seven sections alone of the charter's 34 sections are devoted to the country's bilingualism clearly emphasizes its importance to Canada's national character. It reflects the facet that the two initial European founding cultures still form the two largest groups in today's Canadian society, their relationship thus constituting a crucial issue of the country's national identity. What is often called "the great debate in the 1960s" (Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism 1975, iii) is still topical today.

Historical youth fiction represents a genre that is especially appropriate to enhance the development of a nation, above all because literary renderings of a country's history possess the capability to construct identity by establishing a collective memory in Maurice Halbwachs's sense. In this context, the impact of fiction is particularly strong for, as Sheila Egoff claims, "only invention can bring the reader to an identification with the past" (Egoff 1966, 44). As, naturally, young readers are considerably more susceptible to this, their literature enables educational intervention in the country's next generation. Therefore, the analysis of this genre offers insights into the role literature plays in the process of constructing a national identity against an internal 'Other' and in conjunction with this same internal 'Other'.

It is not only identification with a country's history but also identification with its geography which possesses major significance for a feeling of national belonging. With regard to the Canadian situation, this topographical component is of special importance as – due to the relatively young character of a large corpus of home-grown Canadian (children's) literature – the availability of Canadian settings does not constitute an asset to be taken for granted. Not least since Northrop Frye's influential "Where is here?" a particular occupation with a Canadian literary space can be stated; Margaret Atwood also emphasized this when she stated that Canadian literature can function as a map to Canadians

if we can learn to read it as *our* literature, as the product of who and where we have been. [...] we need to know about here, because here is where we live. For the members of a country or a culture, shared knowledge of their place, their here, is not a luxury but a necessity. (Atwood 2004, 27)

The "idea of place" (Hunt 1992, 86), which Peter Hunt defines as one of the most crucial aspects children's literature can convey to its readers, constitutes an element which was missed by many of today's Canadian authors of children's literature when they were children and had to resort to youth fiction from Great Britain or the United States, territories unfamiliar to them. The awareness of this necessity – intertwined with nationalist motives – has been a trigger to many of them to compose youth fiction set in Canada. The recent boom of Canadian historical youth fiction underlines the ongoing perception of this relevance, while the combination of his-

tory and geography presents itself as an ideal tool for the creation of the country's national narrative.

Hence, this article will examine how Canadian authors for young readers characterize the relationship between Anglo- and Franco-Canadians in their novels dealing with the deportation of the Acadian population in 1755. Against the background of the change in the makeup of the Canadian population and of political moves such as the charter, a development can be expected with regard to the portrayal of these two cultural groups in novels written before and after the repatriation of the constitution. The overall aim will be to detect this development, and the three novels under analysis have, therefore, been chosen to represent different times of publication – before and after 1982. In order to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the character of this development in the ideological rhetoric longer quotations from all three novels will be included. Peter Hollindale's distinction between the "surface ideology" – i.e. the message voluntarily conveyed by the author – and the "passive ideology" – i.e. the subconsciously transmitted values of society – of a text (cf. Hollindale 1988, 11–13) will be applied in the course of the analysis to pinpoint the change of policies. Acadia constitutes a model region for a close look at Canada's national identity: It is not only the place of the first permanent European settlements on Canadian soil and, thus, Canada's nucleus but it is also a region that has been inhabited and contested by both, Anglo- and Franco-Canadian populations. Although the Acadians consider themselves a cultural group different from all others in the country, they still share language, ethnic origin, and religion with the other French-Canadian groups and can therefore be classified as a variety of French-Canadians as Alan B. Anderson and James S. Frideres suggest (cf. Anderson/Frideres 1981, 93). Consequently, it is legitimate to treat the relationship between Acadians and the English depicted in the novels as reflective of the relationship between Anglo- and Franco-Canadians in general. The question of the individual ethnic identities of the two groups will be largely disregarded in the following; the purpose of this examination is to shed some light on the literary representation of the relationship between Canada's two European founding nations and the interrelatedness of these literary renderings with the country's national identity.

## I.

The first novel examined is John Francis Hayes's *A Land Divided*. It was originally published in 1951 and received a Governor General's Literary Award in the year following its publication, which indicates political approval of the author's stance. Hayes's adventure stories for young readers predominated the historical fiction market in Canada for close to twenty years (cf. Egoff/Saltman 1990, 108). While their tone is typical of traditional adventure stories, the setting of all his historical novels in Canada underlines a specificity of Canadian adventure literature: Contrary to adventure story conventions of other national literatures "gemäß derer exotisierend

die ferne Fremde imaginiert wird" (Seifert 2006, 960), Canadian novels of this genre are mostly set in the home country. This reflects the thirst for literature set in Canadian home ground; as readers are, thus, offered a strong idea of place, this specificity may be interpreted as representing the Canadian preoccupation with the constant search for a national identity, which has come to be regarded as an element of the country's national identity in itself.

In *A Land Divided*, the English protagonist Michael and his Acadian cousin Pierre go on a quest to search for Michael's father, an English army officer, who has been kidnapped by a French villain. Because of this constellation of characters one would expect a well-balanced description that takes into account both points of view of the deportation, the English as well as the French, all the more as Michael is half-Acadian, half-English. However, although it is mentioned that the expulsion causes the Acadians difficulties and grief, the author presents a purely one-sided English version, which leaves no doubt that the deportation was the only possible decision on the part of the English, with the Acadians being portrayed as a threat to the latter:

All efforts to get the Acadians to abide by English law had been fruitless, and the rising strength of French garrisons in the disputed land of Acadia was giving the settlers new hope that the British would soon be driven from the country. [...] Brash boasts of an early defeat of the English were openly expressed. (Hayes 1951, 34)

The dramatic style of the quotation illustrates that the English are depicted as only reacting to the situation and defending themselves. In situations where doubts concerning their actions could arise in the readers, the English characters' behaviour is excused by their soldierly obedience to orders. Service to the cause is, thus, ranked above loyalty towards one's own family.

Again and again Captain Harvey repeated that he was under orders, but there seemed to be no escape from the cold fact that he was taking part in sending his wife's family into exile. He was helpless to do otherwise, but he felt his duty keenly [...]. He peered across the table at his wife: 'I'm sorry, Marcelle. I wish there was some other way out.' (Hayes 1951, 233)

This English value operates at both of Hollindale's levels of ideology: The principle itself is introduced to the readers at the level of surface ideology; at the level of passive ideology, the preservation of a British value by a Canadian author reveals the Canadian society's deep-rootedness in the British heritage and Canada's continuing strong ties to her former mother country in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is equally reflected in the military dominance of the English, which constitutes

only one example of the English colonial attitude that is displayed in every part of the novel without the author's questioning it. The region is under British rule, and it is presented as a sign of British generosity that the French population, i.e. the Acadians, is allowed to live there, as becomes evident in Captain Harvey's address to the Acadians:

Gentlemen, you are called together today to hear His Majesty's final resolution concerning the French inhabitants of this His province of Nova Scotia, who for almost half a century have had more indulgence granted them than any of his subjects in any part of his dominions ... (Hayes 1951, 237)

From their possession of the land the English derive the right to dictate the conditions, including the right to expel anyone. The colonial mentality becomes visible again at the time of the deportation: The superior English have to take care of the helpless Acadians, who would be at a complete loss without the soldiers' organisational skills.

[The Acadians were] making no effort to stow their belongings which lay in scattered heaps over the decks. Sailors were trying to sort out their passengers, but only a few of the settlers did anything to help themselves. (Hayes 1951, 251)

Hayes reports that the English even help the Acadians get settled and build a new life after deportation – the Acadians' best interests are, thus, presented as important to the English, i.e. the latter are beyond all criticism. Therefore, Hayes's account of the deportation and the English role in it can only be called euphemistic from today's point of view. What Konrad Gross states for early English-Canadian adult fiction dealing with French-Canada holds true for *A Land Divided* as well: The authors make it seem that "a happier calamity never befell a people than the conquest of Canada by British arms" (Gross 1981, 69).

On condition that the English maintain their ruling power, the relationship between Acadians and the English is portrayed as a good one, which is underlined by a great number of mixed marriages, the classical device; not only Michael's father but "scores of British soldiers" stationed at Fort Annapolis and "most of the officers" (Hayes 1951, 47) are married to Acadian women of the region. Furthermore, Pierre is not only Michael's cousin but has also been his best friend since earliest childhood, which exemplifies that Anglo- and Franco-Canadians are compatible. With family members and Acadian neighbours positive experiences are described; it is only outsiders who pose a threat – or as Patricia E. Johnston puts it: there is "an obvious cast of good guys and bad guys. The bad guys are the extremist, militant Acadians led by Lucien Vaudreuil and the good guys are everyone else" (Johnston 1981, 52).

The friendship between Michael and Pierre could therefore be seen as pointing the way ahead for the country's two principal cultural groups – were it not for the imbalance of power in their relationship: the English boy Michael is the strong one who decides what to do, colonial mentality yet again. Reviews from the 1950s greeted *A Land Divided* enthusiastically and praised it as “an excellent background novel for any young Canadian: history is made to come to life. For boys 12-15, especially” (Review of *A Land Divided* 1951). This underscores that the book was in accordance with the zeitgeist, and that the political attitudes and the values expressed in *A Land Divided* were by no means Hayes's alone but representative of the period.

Unlike most adolescents whose parents are of different cultural origin, Michael's identity is neither torn nor shattered but he feels completely English although he would have been predestined to incorporate the union of the two cultures in Canada. When they try to put this down simply to the author's not exploiting the conflicts inherent in his characters, Egoff and Saltman do not cover all relevant explanations (cf. Egoff/Saltman 1990, 108). Societal aspects should also be considered to account for this surprising characterization: First, Michael's unwavering English identity, again, reflects the notion of English superiority, thus reinforcing the existing imbalance of power. Second, it continues what the title, *A Land Divided*, announces already; it proves to be highly reminiscent of Hugh MacLennan's *Two Solitudes*. This landmark in Canadian nationalist fiction, published only six years prior to *A Land Divided*, paved the ground for the theme of Canadian unity and disunity respectively. By placing his historical novel in this tradition, Hayes signals his intention to contribute to the formation of a Canadian national identity in its own right, in times of a nationalist atmosphere around the introduction of Canadian citizenship.

## II.

Like John F. Hayes, Anne Carter also anchors her time-slip novel *The Girl on Evangeline Beach* (published in 2000) in the literary tradition already by the title. By choosing the site of Evangeline Beach in modern Nova Scotia as central to the setting, the author conjures up Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1874 poem *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie*, which has since become an Acadian identity myth, although it was written by an American poet. Here, parallels between the literary namesakes are even greater. Both are told against the historical background of the Acadian expulsion and Carter's principal Acadian character Marie has to watch her newly “betrothed” die in her arms as does Evangeline. The tragical character of the expulsion is, hence, transferred very clearly. Carter's using an existing identity myth suggests her intention to contribute to the renegotiation of a Canadian identity which includes the open acceptance of past wrongs.

The actual protagonist of *The Girl on Evangeline Beach*, Michael Denshaw, is a 20<sup>th</sup> century Torontonion boy who is attacked by two “thugs” (Carter 2000, 46) at his

school, and falls – badly injured – into a coma. He finds himself travelling back to Grand Pré, Acadia, in 1755 with the task to save the Acadian girl Marie from the same two “thugs”. As Martina Seifert has shown, time-slip fantasies possess even more than conventional historical novels the power to help young Canadian readers understand the importance of their history, their country and the people with whom they belong because the search for identity is inherent in this genre (cf. Seifert 2001, 119). This genre enables young readers still more than traditional historical fiction to draw the connection between history and present and understand the relevance. That way, they can develop an even deeper idea of place and consequently a sense of national belonging and identity. Carter's choice of genre, hence, constitutes another case in point of her intentions in this respect.

The depiction of the Acadians' deportation in this novel is the complete opposite of that presented by Hayes almost half a century earlier: Although the protagonist Michael is Anglo-Canadian like Hayes's Michael, Carter's Michael sides with the Acadians as he explicitly states – “I'm on your side” (Carter 2000, 112). Contrary to Hayes, Carter does not offer a justification for the English acts but rather an accusation of the English throughout her whole novel; the “injustice of the Acadian fate” (Carter 2000, 47) is declared more than once and it is underlined by the choice of words: “the English *deported* their families and *stole* all these lands” (Carter 2000, 4; my emphasis). The English argument that the Acadians form a threat is included in the book, but the fact that this accusation is a pretext becomes obvious by the author's constant emphasis on the Acadians' neutrality, which is historical reality as well as a central part of the Acadian auto-image at least at the time of deportation.

It's urgent that we convince Lawrence of our neutrality. [...] He calls us a security threat. He says all the Acadians will fight alongside Father LeLoutre against the English. Or failing that, we will supply aid to the French soldiers in Fort Beauséjour. We must persuade him that we don't take sides, that we're peaceful farmers like the generations before us. (Carter 2000, 98)

The author's using the Acadian neutrality as a keyword of her novel, almost a leitmotif, constantly reinforces the injustice of the deportation and the guilt of the English. The above quotation exemplifies that the content is underlined by the choice of words: While the urgency of the matter is clearly discernible here, the tone is considerably less dramatic than in Hayes's description of the Acadian threat, suggesting that in Carter's characterisation the Acadians are indeed peaceful whereas the English are the aggressors. In opposition to Hayes, Carter leaves no doubt about the fact that it is the land where the Acadians have been living for centuries and where they therefore belong. She underlines this by a motif often to be found in Canadian adult literature as well as in Canadian youth fiction on Loyalist refugees to Canada (cf. Richter 2004): By presenting the indigenous population, i.e. the

Mi'kmaq, as allies and friends of the Acadians, the author naturalizes the French population. For instance Marie's mother has got an aboriginal cousin with the French name of Louis, who is in close contact with the family. Furthermore, cases of exogamy, i.e. mixed marriages between Acadian and Mi'kmaq partners, lay further emphasis on their firm bonds. The English soldiers in Acadia are portrayed as enemies of the First Nations – "the English have been killing Mi'kmaq on sight; there's a bounty on their scalps" (Carter 2000, 127) – and are, thus, clearly characterized as intruders. The Mi'kmaq's hatred for the English constitutes another case in point (cf. Carter 2000, 223). Like in *A Land Divided*, the English also display a strong colonial attitude; however, in *The Girl on Evangeline Beach*, this attitude is not regarded as natural but on the contrary it is strongly criticized. This becomes particularly evident in an explanation Marie's father provides:

They [the English] are driven to own land, put up fences, slop on taxes. [...] *This is mine*. The Mi'kmaq have been here, maybe forever, and never tried to own the land. But those English – they don't listen to anybody. (Carter 2000, 88)

Carter's presentation indicates a shift in power at least in Canadian literature: As the past acts of injustice are condemned, English supremacy in Canada has come to an end in children's fiction. This change clearly reflects the development in Canada's official policy over the past half century towards a policy of equality, starting with a policy of equality between Anglo- and Franco-Canadians in the 1960s, which was later extended to the multiple ethnic groups living in Canada.

Although the principle of equality was finally anchored in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the process of negotiating the relationship of Anglo- and Franco-Canadians is not completed yet, as the literary evidence suggests. Not only is the issue dealt with at the level of surface ideology but also, different from Michael Harvey in *A Land Divided*, Michael Denshaw's identity is torn and he questions his belonging, which can be seen as a symbol of the discussion of Canadian national identity. Michael Denshaw is Anglo-Canadian with a grandmother of Acadian descent, attends a French immersion school, and possesses an "uncanny facility for French" (Carter 2000, 29). Nevertheless, he feels English in the scenes set in the present. In the past, however, he identifies completely with the Acadians: He is afraid of the English soldiers and speaks and thinks of "the English" (Carter 2000, 188) as if he were Acadian. Therefore, when he introduces himself to Marie and her family as a half-Acadian, half-English boy from Boston (cf. Carter 2000, 53), this does not only help him get along but it also describes his feeling of identity best. His flexible first name underlines his being able to understand both cultures and also to belong to both: In an English environment his name is *Michael*, while his French-Canadian grandmother and the Acadians during his time travel call him *Michel*. After initial mistrust and fear on the side of the Acadians, they accept him as one of their own



and come to the conclusion that they were "so wrong about you. You were a blessing, not a curse" (Carter 2000, 249). These aspects make him a model for modern Canadian society: Both, English and French parts of the population can get along well and bear each other respect and understanding. And, what is more, they can even form one nation incorporating both cultures of equal status, which once more mirrors the political goal of equality. The English soldiers, clearly marked as the 'bad guys' to remain in Johnston's terminology, serve as a deterrent example.

The fact that modern Anglo-Canadians acknowledge the deportation of the Acadians as a reprehensible act in their history is an important step in the process of national identity formation because it constitutes a sign of respect. In the book such a self-critical awareness of historical legacies of guilt is aroused in Michael. The readers are taught a similar awareness by means of the book as becomes particularly evident in one commentary made by Michael's grandfather: "Nowadays they'd call it ethnic cleansing, without the mass graves. Protestant English getting rid of Catholic French" (Carter 2000, 6). This reproach of atrocity also evokes a sense of equality of the two groups in the readers. The sense is underlined by the scenes set in the present where equal rights of Anglo- and Franco-Canadians are uncontested fictional reality. In spite of the described barbarities, the novel's ending is, hence, reconciliatory with regard to Anglo-/Franco-Canadian relations, which both suggests an achievement in that changes have occurred already and holds further promises for the future.

### III.

With regard to the general stance taken, the most recent of the three youth novels analyzed here, Sharon Stewart's *Banished from Our Home. The Acadian Diary of Angélique Richard* (published in 2004), does not differ greatly from Carter's novel. This does not seem surprising since only four years had elapsed between the publication of the two books. The changes which can be stated are mostly changes in degree. *Banished from Our Home* also presents the point of view of the Acadians. Like Carter before her, Stewart expresses the wrongness of the deportation and the guilt of the English but she renders their cruelty as well as the Acadians' sufferings still more drastically. Again the English are presented as the aggressors – "*Les Anglais* are like a nest of wasps [who] keep stinging us" (Stewart 2004, 39) – and contrary to *A Land Divided*, they are depicted as responsible for their actions and not as merely reacting out of necessity. "*Les Anglais* have done us a great wrong" (Stewart 2004, 134) – "What a muddle [they] have made of things!" (Stewart 2004, 132) Powerful examples illustrate the underhandedness of the English; for instance Colonel Winslow issues a proclamation summoning all Acadian men and boys over 10 to the church to "hear a message" (Stewart 2004, 79), yet as soon as they are inside the church, "the guards closed the doors and set a great bar across them [...]. Why would they lock up our menfolk when all had come freely?" (Stewart 2004, 81) The

even greater brutality of the descriptions can in part be put down to the type of the novel; as the title suggests, the work is written in the form of a diary. However, it can also be accounted for by further political actions: In 2003 a Royal Proclamation from Britain, supported by the Government of Canada, was issued, which acknowledges the sufferings of the Acadians during the expulsion. Stewart's changes in degree can, hence, also be seen as a reaction to this proclamation, indicating that the recognition of guilt on the part of the Anglo-Canadian population has gained further ground.

The English feeling of colonial superiority is topicalized here as in the two previous novels – for instance the English make their announcements to the Acadians in English, not caring if they understand (cf. Stewart 2004, 34, 73). In opposition to *A Land Divided*, in *Banished from our Home* the colonial, supremacist attitude is clearly condemned by the Anglo-Canadian author. The change in ideology since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is, thus, evidenced once more. Like in *The Girl on Evangeline Beach*, this critical stance, or rather confession, suggests present equality of the two cultural groups – at least as fictional reality.

Throughout the entire time, the Acadians endure the aggravating situation, they remain peaceful and even so trustful as not to suspect any evil of the English: Angélique's father reassures his family that "though the British may bluster, they never do anything" (Stewart 2004, 22). The Acadians do not give up sending delegations to Halifax with new petitions and – like in *The Girl on Evangeline Beach* – they keep emphasizing their neutrality.

The governor greeted Papa and the others in a rage. He demanded that they at once swear an oath promising to take up arms against the French if they are asked to do so. Papa has always said that Acadians are neutrals. That means we do not fight either the French or the English. [...] The French are our kinfolk. How could we ever fight against them? When our elders said that to Governor Lawrence he clapped them in jail. (Stewart 2004, 57)

Here, the Acadians are clearly assigned the role of innocent victims – still more strongly than in Carter's novel – and they can only be fatalistic: "Maman says we can only wait and pray. Well, I am going to pray to *le bon Dieu* to send a plague upon that wicked governor!" (Stewart 2004, 57) The victim motif constitutes another element which firmly roots the two more recent novels in the Canadian literary tradition. According to Atwood, it is one of the principal motifs of Canadian literature in general with one variety of the motif regarding French-Canadians in French-Canadian literature – "[...] French Canadians are to the English as the natives are to the whites; that is, exploited victims threatened with extinction" (Atwood 2004, 120-121). It seems to be a new variation here that Anglo-Canadian authors adopt this

motif for their work; again, this development points to the societal impact of the Royal Proclamation.

The loss of home which the Acadians experience is a major issue in *Banished From Our Home* not least due to the diary form; completely disregarded in Hayes's novel, this topic is mentioned but neglected in Carter's. The Acadians refuse to believe that they will be deported; they are "sick with sorrow" (Stewart 2004, 101) and the extent of their devastation becomes evident:

Our dear familiar world is dead. It was killed by the British two days ago. Perhaps it would be kinder if they killed all of us, too. (Stewart 2004, 98)

This quotation powerfully illustrates the extraordinary significance of home, not least through its dramatic wording. The deportation deprives the Acadians of the point of reference which constitutes a central pillar of their sense of life. Consequently, their loss of home shatters them so deeply that they would even prefer the loss of their lives over this experience. By underlining this attitude, the author arouses in her readers an awareness of the significance of home at an abstract level. She, thus, goes one step further than merely providing young Canadians with a strong idea of place in Hunt's sense through the setting of her novel. This awareness possesses special weight in Canada with its large immigrant influx: Canadian-born children can gain an understanding of a central issue their New Canadian classmates have to struggle with. What is more, this knowledge fosters their sense of national belonging.

The Acadians' feeling of being entirely uprooted and their planning to return to Acadia after the deportation constitute further instances which demonstrate the utmost importance of home for a person's identity. From this results the importance of a strong regional and, based on this, national identity, all the more as the strong regional diversity constitutes one of the elements Canadians define their country by. As Mavis Reimer and Anne Rusnak point out, "to study the representation of home in fiction is to study an aspect of the narrative by which a nation produces and reproduces itself" (Reimer/Rusnak 2000/2001, 10).

The issue of national identity can be found in yet another context in *Banished from Our Home*: The Acadians distinguish rigorously between the terms *the French* and *the Acadians*, while to the British all are alike, namely all are (French) enemies. When Acadians speak of *the French* they designate the French of European origin, i.e. in the first place French soldiers stationed in Acadian forts. The Acadians define themselves as not-English, so there is an assertion against the internal 'Other'; they are very proud of their French heritage, and call their ancestors' home country "*la douce France*" (Stewart 2004, 18). Hence, one of the principal elements of Canadian national identity, the country's being an immigration country, is included in the novel. Acadians in this book like in Carter's do not consider themselves continental French but have developed their own identity as Acadians, as descendants of the

first settlers in Canada; this symbolizes a colony's having become independent of her mother country. In this regard as well, the two authors writing after the repatriation of the constitution display respect towards French-Acadians. Hayes does not clearly distinguish between Acadians and French in *A Land Divided* but uses both terms interchangeably throughout the entire book when he refers to the Acadian population. Hence, the change in policy towards the equality of Anglo- and Franco-Canadians becomes visible once more; in the historical youth novels published at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Acadians have come to be recognized as an integral part of the Canadian population and no longer as a foreign threat. The fact that the evidence lies at the level of passive ideology indicates that this is fully shared by today's Canadian society; hence, it not only constitutes fictional reality but presents itself as part of everyday reality.

#### IV.

In conclusion, it can be stated that an obvious development has indeed taken place in Canadian historical fiction for young readers: The justification of the Acadians' deportation and a natural, uncontested English predominance before the repatriation of the constitution have given way to the condemnation of the same disrespectful actions and of the same predominance of the English in recent works. All three authors are Anglo-Canadian, their characterization of the English-French relationship therefore offers insights into the Anglo-Canadian political ideology during the respective periods. The development detected involves not only a greater respect for one another but also a shift in power between Canada's two European founding cultures; this change in the literary portrayal can be explained by a change in the political and societal climate. Therefore, the novels analyzed provide an understanding of the auto-image of Canadian society while simultaneously helping construct this same image and by promoting it among the country's next generation. The stated shift in Canada's collective memory constitutes a significant step in the negotiation of the country's national identity: By means of the two recent novels examined, Anglo-Canadians acknowledge and take responsibility for their ancestors' unjust actions, and the writings can therefore be seen as apologies. This reading suggests itself all the more because of the temporal closeness of the literary apology with the 2003 proclamation, which recognized the sufferings of the Acadians – one more case in point for the close interrelatedness of a country's literature and its politics. The fact that Hayes's novel is out of print underlines the development of positions in the past decades; his presentation of the historical events is no longer in conformity with today's official political opinion. A general renegotiation of Canada's collective memory seems to be in progress, as is also indicated by Harper's 2008 apology to Native Canadians concerning residential schools.

Although it would be an overinterpretation to credit the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* alone to have brought about this significant change in attitude,

it doubtlessly played a major role – first, in its function as the country's constitution, i.e. the foundation of national life, which still serves as the "ultimate point of reference" (Kamboureli 1993, 208) in the national narrative; second, as the final step to leave colonial dependency on Britain behind. Furthermore, his bicultural vision was a principal motive of Trudeau's for advancing the repatriation – and as Richard Clippingdale points out "the constitution had meant for some time the Quebec issue in the consciousness of most Canadians" (Clippingdale 1983, 92). A case in this point is the above mentioned emphasis on Canada's bilingualism – for "the written constitution [...] is a powerful symbolic statement of inclusion or exclusion" (Cairns 1993, 205). In addition, since the repatriation the federal government has employed the constitution "to strengthen allegiance to Canada and to promote Canadian identity" (Laforest 1995, 45). But further circumstances have also contributed to the development. The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, which is generally seen as a consequence of the constitution (cf. Kamboureli 1993, 207), on the one hand reinforces the status of the two official languages. At the same time, it encourages the preservation of the varieties of cultural heritage existing in Canada – thus elaborating on section 27 of the *Charter*. Furthermore, the consciousness and preservation of Acadian heritage in present-day Nova Scotia are very vivid, as testified not least by the dedicated maintenance of national sites like Grand Pré. A recently created *lieu de mémoire* in Pierre Nora's sense offers further enhancement: July 28, 2004, was designated as a commemorative day to honour Canada's Acadian people nationwide, concurrent with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of French settlement in North America. A special urge to politically and literarily acknowledge past injustices and emphasize present improvement was certainly also fostered by the repeated upsurges of separatist movements, most recently, the 1997 Referendum on Quebec's independence; its narrow result has doubtlessly aroused what Gross has called in a different context "the need for stroking French-Canadian sensibilities" (Gross 1981, 73) in the English-Canadian part of the population. Stephen Harper's latest move in this matter, i.e. granting Quebec the status of a nation within the nation in the fall of 2006, equally has to be interpreted in this way.

The friendships which are emphasized between individual English people and Acadians in all three novels pave the ground for a positive common future. The novels published after the repatriation of the constitution incorporate a promotion of the country's bicultural character on the premise of equality, which proves that the two cultures have moved closer together on the whole over the past half-century. This greater rapprochement is also evidenced by the fact that some of the aspects dealing with their relationship – especially those that demonstrate acceptance – are not presented at the level of surface ideology but have moved on to the level of passive ideology in the later novels. These observations reflect the results of Stéphane Dion's study concerning the realm of Anglo- and Franco-Canadian values.

En fait, de plus en plus d'études montrent qu'il n'y a plus de différences significatives entre l'échelle des valeurs des francophones et celle des anglophones. La similarité des attitudes est frappante sur des sujets aussi divers que l'échelle de prestige de professions, les questions morales, le rôle du gouvernement, le droit de grève, les droits des autochtones, le rapport à l'autorité, la notion d'égalité, les valeurs à transmettre aux enfants, etc. (Dion 1991, 301)

The negotiation of the two groups' relationship, however, is not complete yet as becomes visible in the fact that the authors present many aspects concerning the Anglo-/Franco-Canadian relationship at the level of surface ideology; this not only highlights the topicality of the issue but also its particular relevance to the Canadian psyche. In the novels under examination, the Acadians' will to return and continue life in Acadia under the English rule in spite of their horrible experiences further emphasizes that the two cultural groups are not incompatible bodies of population. The authors' turning towards the history of Acadia in the novels reinforces the existence of a shared Anglo-/ Franco-Canadian identity because the historical events common to both cultural groups offer elements for identification and, thus, enhance national unity. My findings hence substantiate Claude Romney's claim that "la littérature canadienne d'enfance et de jeunesse constitue, selon moi, un excellent moyen de rapprocher jeunes anglophones et francophones au pays" (Nodelman 1997, 27). The novels analyzed here clearly serve this purpose. The constitutional equality of status has evolved from a political program into – at least – fictional reality.

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