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Abstract

Much of the recent interest in the Canadian long poem has centered on poems that have been written in the last two decades. This thesis links the contemporary Canadian long poem with earlier developments by examining one kind of long poem that appears throughout Canada's literary history: the *Bildungsgedicht* or "formation poem" in which the creation of community parallels the creation of character. Like the *Bildungsroman*, these poems deal with "the formative years or spiritual education" (OED) of characters, but within the context of the growth and development of communities, often using the topos of the garden with its varied implications of planting, progress, and paradise.

In the pre-Confederation period, several poems including John Richardson's *Tecumseh* (1828, 1842) and Adam Kidd's *The Huron Chief* (1830) treat Indian heroes as Adamic figures inhabiting a passing paradise. Adam Hood Burwell gives this Adamic role to the settler in *Talbot Road: A Poem* (1818) anticipating the pattern of Oliver Goldsmith's *Rising Village* (1825, 1834). In *Acadia* (1832-1833), Joseph Howe attempts to incorporate both positions with awkward, but engaging, results. In the Confederation period, the Eve figure comes into her own in the title character of Isabella Valancy Crawford's *Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story* (1884). Crawford attempts a new definition of the garden and a woman's role in it, as does Archibald Lampman in *The Story of an Affinity* (1892). In the Modern period, Anne Marriott's *The Wind Our Enemy* (1937) explores the duality of the Canadian garden as both Eden and Gethsemane as does E. J. Pratt's *Brebeuf and His Brethren* (1940) with its biblical symbolism of the buried seed bearing fruit. James Reaney's *Twelve Letters to a Small Town* (1962) is both different from and similar to Robert Kroetsch's *Seed Catalogue* (1977), a post-modern poem that is self-reflexive and fragmentary, playfully employing and subverting poetic conventions in a context of continuing structure and perpetual growth.

Throughout the thesis, the garden and its inhabitants are studied against a background of changing perceptions and poetics. Both historical context and current theoretical perspectives are used to illuminate structure and theme, intertextuality and subtext, the transplanted and the indigenous.