

Canadian Literature

A Quarterly of Criticism and Review Summer/Autumn 1999 \$25

161/162

A cluster of stylized, light blue dandelion seed heads is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the cover. The seed heads are depicted with multiple radiating lines, giving them a fan-like appearance. Some have short stems with small leaves, while others are just the seed heads. They are arranged in a loose, upward-pointing cluster.

On Thomas King



The University of British Columbia

*Winner of the University of British Columbia
Medal for Canadian Biography, 1998*

Isaiah Berlin: A Life

by Michael Ignatieff

published by Viking

Call for Submissions

Canadian Literature invites submissions for a special issue on Nature and Culture. The topic should be understood as broadly as possible, and might include ecocriticism, nature and science writing, science and other fiction, 'nature' poetry, wilderness thought, institutional and interdisciplinary problems, First Nations perspectives, gender matters, and francophone, anglophone, or 'allophone' differences.

Contributions may be theoretical, critical, historical, or personal. The maximum length for scholarly essays is 7500 words, including critical apparatus; personal essays should not be longer than 3000 words. We also invite submissions of poetry.

Please send your submission in triplicate, with the author's name deleted from two copies, to The Editor, *Canadian Literature*, #167-1855 West Mall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2. Submissions must be accompanied by a self-addressed return envelope with either Canadian stamps or International Postal Reply Coupons.

The deadline for submissions is 31 October 1999.

Canadian Literature / Littérature canadienne

A Quarterly of Criticism and Review

Number 161/162, Summer/Autumn 1999

Published by The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Editor: Eva-Marie Kröller

Associate Editors: Margery Fee, Kevin McNeilly (Reviews); Iain Higgins (Poetry); Alain-Michel Rocheleau (Francophone Writing)

Editorial Board

Jacques Allard *Université du Québec à Montréal*

Neil Bishop *Memorial University*

Helen Buss *University of Calgary*

Gwen Davies *Acadia University*

Marta Dvorak *Université Rennes II, France*

Julia Emberley *University of Northern British Columbia*

Susan Gingell *University of Saskatchewan*

Coral Ann Howells *University of Reading, Great Britain*

Jon Kertzer *University of Calgary*

Wolfgang Klooss *University of Trier, Germany*

Patricia Merivale *University of British Columbia*

Leslie Monkman *Queen's University*

Arun Mukherjee *York University*

Catherine Rainwater *St. Edward's University (Austin, TX)*

Stephen Slemmon *University of Alberta*

David Staines *University of Ottawa*

Martha C. Piper, President, The University of British Columbia
Letter to *Canadian Literature*

5

Editorial

Eva-Marie Kröller, Margery Fee, Iain Higgins, Kevin McNeilly,
Alain-Michel Rocheleau

Canadian Literature at 40

6

Margery Fee

Introduction

9

Marlene Goldman

Mapping and Dreaming Native Resistance in
Green Grass, Running Water

18

Blanca Chester

Green Grass, Running Water: Theorizing the World
of the Novel

44

Thomas King

A Short History of Indians in Canada

62

Interview

Peter Gzowski Interviews Thomas King on
Green Grass, Running Water

65

Articles *continued*

Florence Stratton

Cartographic Lessons: Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* and Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water* 82

Herb Wyle

"Trust Tonto": Thomas King's Subversive Fictions and the Politics of Cultural Literacy 105

Margery Fee and Jane Flick

Coyote Pedagogy: Knowing Where the Borders Are in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water* 131

Jane Flick

Reading Notes for Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*
(including a list of Works by Thomas King) 140

Poems

<i>Tony Cosier</i>	7	<i>Bert Almon</i>	77
<i>Robert Kroetsch</i>	12	<i>Carole Langille</i>	79
<i>Hannah Main-</i>		<i>Stephen Bett</i>	81
<i>van der Kamp</i>	42	<i>Leonard Neufeldt</i>	103
<i>Susan McCaslin</i>	43	<i>Peter Dale Scott</i>	125

Authors Reviewed

<i>Ann Alma</i>	173	<i>Douglas Coupland</i>	238
<i>Nelson Ball</i>	175	<i>G. Thomas Couser</i>	190
<i>Frank Birbalsingh</i>	178	<i>Julie Cruikshank</i>	192
<i>Gloria Bird</i>	197	<i>Rienzi Cruz</i>	218
<i>Lise Bissonnette</i>	184	<i>Cyril Dabydeen</i>	218
<i>Katharine Bitney</i>	210	<i>Jean Marc Dalpé</i>	233
<i>Paul Bowdring</i>	180	<i>Carole David</i>	214
<i>Dionne Brand</i>	182	<i>Richard A. Davies</i>	194
<i>Daniel L. Bratton</i>	222	<i>Marilyn I. Davis</i>	194
<i>Eckhard Breiting</i>	199	<i>Arthur Davis</i>	189
<i>Annie Brisset</i>	184	<i>Pierre DesRuisseaux</i>	243
<i>Stuart C. Brown</i>	210	<i>Janice Dickin</i>	222
<i>Clint Burnham</i>	175	<i>Sara Jeannette Duncan</i>	194
<i>Elspeth Cameron</i>	222	<i>Roger Dunsmore</i>	197
<i>Anne Carson</i>	187	<i>Soraya Erian</i>	227
<i>Cathy Caruth</i>	201	<i>Kathryn T. Flannery</i>	199
<i>William Christian</i>	189	<i>Richard F. Fleck</i>	220
<i>Matt Cohen</i>	205	<i>Gunilla Florby</i>	178
		<i>Luise von Flotow</i>	214
		<i>Arthur W. Frank</i>	201

Brad Fraser	203	France Tremblay	243
Neile Graham	227	Judith Thompson	203
François Gravel	205	Jane Urquhart	245
Elizabeth Greene	235	Josée Vincent	247
Lyn Hancock	207	Eric Walters	212
Loree Harrell	209	Anna Zurzolo	249
Joy Harjo	197		
Carl G. Herndl	210	Reviewers	
Michael Holmes	175	Laurie Aikman	210
James Houston	212	Julie Beddoes	249
Sally Ireland	249	Jennifer S.H. Brown	226
Suzanne Jacob	214	Blanca Chester	192
Mark Anthony Jarman	217	Barry Cooper	189
Victoria Jason	207	David Creelman	178
Chelva Kanaganayakam	218	Glenn Deer	199
AnaLouise Keating	220	Tamas Dobozy	217
Basil King	194	Kegan Doyle	238
Yvonne M. Klein	222	Klay Dyer	194
Norman Knowles	241	Wilhelm Emilsson	230, 231
Robert Kroetsch	212	Janet B. Friskney	240
Karen MacCormack	227	Susan Gingell	182
Lucie-Marie Magnan	247	Terry Goldie	203
Vivian Marple	227	Marlene Goldman	245
Ingeborg Marshall	226	Scott Gordon	218
Shirlee Smith Matheson	173	Sherrill Grace	207, 212
Robin McGrath	180	Stefan Haag	227
Christian Morin	247	Leslie Harlin	184
A.F. Moritz	227	Joy Henley	222
Susan J. Navarette	230	Dean J. Irvine	214
Mike Olito	231	Melanie Kolbeins	190
Edmund B. O'Reilly	190	André Lamontagne	247
Daisy L. Neijmann	231	André Levasseur	233
Ginette Pelland	233	Lawrence Mathews	180
Sharon Pollock	203	Catherine Nelson-	
Concetta Principe	214	McDermott	209
Monique Proulx	184	R. Matilde Mésavage	243
Norman Ravvin	235	Jed Rasula	187
T. F. Rigelhof	214	Catherine Rainwater	197, 220
Jean Rysstad	209	Stephen Ross	175
Vanessa R. Schwartz	230	Judy Z. Segal	201
Arthur G. Slade	173	Batia Boe Stolar	235
Daniel Sloate	214	Ulrich Teucher	205
Russell Smith	238	T.B. Vincent	241
Sam Solecki	240	Gernot R. Wieland	173
Paul Stuewe	217		
Catharine Parr Traill	241		

Canadian Literature welcomes submissions of articles, interviews, and other commentaries relating to writers and writing in Canada, and of previously unpublished poems by Canadian writers. The journal does not publish fiction.

Articles should be submitted in triplicate, with the author's name deleted from 2 copies, and addressed to The Editor, *Canadian Literature*, #167-1855 West Mall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6T 1Z2. Submissions must be accompanied by a self-addressed return envelope, either with Canadian stamps or accompanied by International Postal Reply Coupons. Submissions without SASE cannot be returned.

Articles should follow MLA guidelines for bibliographic format. All works accepted for publication must also be available on diskette.

Canadian Literature reçoit des soumissions d'articles, d'entrevues et autres portant sur les écrivains du Canada et sur leurs oeuvres, de même que des poèmes inédits d'auteurs canadiens. La revue ne publie aucune fiction narrative.

Les manuscrits doivent être soumis en trois exemplaires (dont deux articles anonymisés), adressés à l'Éditeur de *Canadian Literature*, 1855 West Mall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, C.-B., Canada V6T 1Z2, et accompagnés d'une enveloppe de retour pré-adressée et pré-affranchie (timbrée ou munie de coupons-réponse internationaux), sans quoi ils ne pourront être retournés à leurs auteurs.

Les articles soumis doivent répondre aux exigences de forme bibliographique définies par la MLA. Tous les textes acceptés pour publication devront être fournis sur disquette.

Copyright © 1999 The University of British Columbia

Subject to the exception noted below, reproduction of the journal, or any part thereof, in any form or transmission in any manner is strictly prohibited. Reproduction is only permitted for the purposes of research or private study in a manner that is consistent with the principle of fair dealing as stated in the *Copyright Act* (Canada).

Publications Mail registration number 08647
GST R108161779

Publication of *Canadian Literature* is assisted by the University of British Columbia and the SSHRC

Canadian Literature, a refereed journal, is indexed in *Canadian Periodical Index*, *Canadian Magazine Index*, and the *MLA International Bibliography*, among numerous others. It is available on-line in the *Canadian Business and Current Affairs Database*, and is available in microfilm from University Microfilm International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan USA 48106

For subscriptions, back issues (as available), and annual and cumulative indexes, write: Circulation Manager, *Canadian Literature*, #167 - 1855 West Mall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z2

TELEPHONE: (604) 822-2780
FAX: (604) 822-5504
E-MAIL: Can.Lit@ubc.ca
<http://www.cdn-lit.ubc.ca>

SUBSCRIPTION: \$40 INDIVIDUAL;
\$55 INSTITUTIONAL; PLUS GST IN
CANADA; PLUS \$15 POSTAGE OUTSIDE
CANADA

ISSN 0008-4360

Managing Editor: Donna Chin
Donna.Chin@ubc.ca

Design: George Vaitukunas

Illustrations: George Kuthan

Printing: Hignell Printing Limited

Typefaces: Minion and Univers

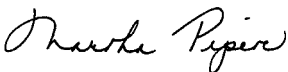
Paper: recycled and acid-free

Letter to *Canadian Literature*

When George Woodcock founded *Canadian Literature* forty years ago, he could not have foreseen how his quarterly magazine of literature and criticism would become Canada's leading literary journal, the standard by which all others in the field would be measured. *Canadian Literature* is at once an essential historical record and an extended critique of the best in Canadian writing and literary scholarship. That it should have maintained pride of place for four decades is a tribute to its own excellence and unwaveringly high standards.

Like most periodicals, *Canadian Literature* has experimented with change, introducing shifts in emphasis or approach from time to time, and undergoing a physical transformation to take advantage of new production methods. At the same time, it has enjoyed an unusual degree of editorial stability: since its inception, the journal has had only three editors, George Woodcock, Bill New, and Eva-Marie Kröller. Though their individual scholarship reflects very different backgrounds and interests, they have shared convictions about the strength and significance of our national literature. Each has helped to promote the work of young or unknown writers, as well as celebrating the accomplishments of the more famous. Each has helped to foster respect, both at home and abroad, for Canadian writing in both English and French and to educate successive generations of Canadian readers to appreciate their own literary heritage.

The University of British Columbia is extremely proud of this fine journal, which has become an indispensable tool in the fashioning and re-fashioning of literature and criticism across the country. We congratulate *Canadian Literature* on its past achievements, and we look forward to its continued success.



Martha C. Piper

President

The University of British Columbia

Canadian Literature at 40

Canada in 1959: the St. Lawrence Seaway is opened by Queen Elizabeth II and President Eisenhower; Diefenbaker's government cancels production of the Avro Arrow; Maurice Duplessis dies. In Vancouver, a vibrant arts scene begins to establish itself, with Jack Shadbolt winning the Guggenheim International Award that year, and Geoffrey Massey and Arthur Erickson receiving the Massey Silver Medal for Contemporary Architecture (the Gold Medal having gone to the Stratford Festival Theatre Design). UBC's Museum of Anthropology acquires "the earliest piece of Pacific Northwest Coast woodcarving known, a 15.5 inch unique specimen of the prehistoric spear throwers widely used up and down the Northwest Pacific Coast." *Canadian Literature* is launched.

It is hard not to evoke the cliché of "the dawning of a new era" for 1959, and even more difficult to assess the exact place of this journal within that historical moment. Nor is a (partisan) editorial the best place even to make such an attempt. Suffice it to say that the journal's current editorial team is proud to build on the tradition established in the forty years of its existence. We are also aware of the daunting challenges posed by the changes in both "Canadian" and "literature," by the electronic revolution in publishing, and by growing budgetary constraints university-wide.

This issue is offered as our thanks to all those who have, for four decades, made *Canadian Literature* a success: its contributors, referees, editorial board members, fund-givers, and, above all, its readers.

Eva-Marie Kröller
Margery Fee
Iain Higgins
Kevin McNeilly
Alain-Michel Rocheleau

from "The Canoe"

RAVEN

A seagoing craft
With a prow as long as the wolfjaw in a Kwakiutl dancer's mask.
The steersman stands in the stern,
Feathered and clawed, far too big for a bird.
A huge eye is round as the sun.
A beak prodigious overrides half the crew,
Sets the shape for the rest.
With a head angled oddly, as though
Creating what he steers at,
The Raven pries with concentration to the right.
They will arrive. Things will change.

MOUSE

Sharp-eared and needle-eyed,
With a nose as thin
As the line of life on the beach,
Qaganjaat
Peers back
At the dwindling coast,
Ruminates on edges, shadows, glistenings
None of the others can know.

STERN PADDLER

The one in the cedarbark cape and spruceroot hat
Has no counterpart.

Unless it is the canoe enclosed in wood;
Or the chief who wears a hat;
Or the woman on the alternate stern;
Or that, like the son of many a father,
He resembles the man who made him.

Being only human sets him off,
And yet his stroke,
Like every other stroke
On either side,
Is at the point just past power
Where going back is mainly coming up,
A sweep toward the next pull,
As though he, too, is bent
On going where they go.

Introduction

I knew I wanted to teach *Green Grass, Running Water* but didn't think first-year students could really handle it, so the first year it came out in paper, I put it on a second-year course in Canadian literature. One of my students came up to me and said "I took this book last year." I said, "In hard cover?" She said yes, and did I want the notes. Her professor in Arts One, Robin Ridington, had these notes, and if I liked, she would give me a copy. Of course I said yes, and shortly after, she returned with the notes, which explained things an Anthropology professor would know, but that an English professor would not, such as who Changing Woman was. I called Robin Ridington to thank him and he said did I want a tape of a *Morningside* interview with King. Well of course I did (we thank Peter Gzowski and Thomas King for permission to publish a transcription of this interview here). Things began to escalate—I showed the notes to Jane Flick, another colleague who was teaching the novel, who had her own set of notes and she had a look at them and said well these are pretty good, but he's got Babo wrong. (Robin hadn't been sure about Babo, but had guessed "the foaming cleanser" in a spirit of cheerful optimism.) Jane said Babo was a character in Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno." Jane kept improving the notes. I began to act as impresario for Jane's notes. Pretty soon we heard they had been seen in Australia, presumably hitchhiking to Uluru. Jane and I wrote a paper about the way *Green Grass, Running Water* drives its readers to the library to look at obscure books by aging Hollywood actors, accounts of the Cherokee syllabary, and histories of the West, and we gave the paper

at the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States conference in Seattle in November 1995. Duplicating the notes had by now become a minor publishing venture, and we realized we wanted to stop, or at least, to duplicate them in a more definitive way, if not once and for all, which we do at the end of this issue (and watch for them on our website—additions welcome)—preceded by the paper about why *Green Grass, Running Water* generates huge sets of notes.

It also generates good papers, as you will see. Marlene Goldman's examination of the Fort Marion ledger art and its connection to Bill Bursum's map begins to take apart stereotyped notions of the distinction between orality and literacy. As we know from Hugh Brody's *Maps and Dreams*, different cultures have different concepts of the map, where it comes from, what it shows and what it is used for. Maps are a form of writing. The ledger art is one culture's version of a map, thus of writing, while Bursum's map made out of televisions is another. The ledger art records the Plains Indians' use of the horse as a military technology as well as the foundation for a whole way of life, while Bursum's map symbolizes the connections between television, advertising, media and conquest, and a way of life built on communications technology. Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan would approve. (Probably no accident that Tom King's "Dead Dog Cafe Comedy Hour" on CBC is on radio, not television.)

Blanca Chester looks at how and why oral storyteller Harry Robinson and literary theorist Northrop Frye end up in the same novel; two men of the same generation whose lives played out in what appear to be wildly different ways. Robinson learned to read when he was twenty-two. But he began to learn stories sitting on his grandmother's lap and could tell many more than the hundred recorded by Wendy Wickwire, a selection of which is published in *Write It on Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller and Nature Power*. He told Wickwire that he "could tell stories for 'twenty-one hours or more' when he got started. 'Kinda hard to believe,' he continued, 'but I do, because this is my job. I'm a storyteller'" (*Write It* 13-14). He had not always been a story-teller, having spent most of his life as a rancher: "I feed stock from January 2, 1917 until 1972—over fifty years I feed cattle without missing a day in feeding season, rain or shine, snow or blizzards, Sundays, holidays and funerals" (13). This seems very different from Frye's brilliant academic career which included the publication of 32 books and monographs and over a hundred articles. However, both men produced

texts that implied an imagined universe, a universe that was not simply personal, but that encompassed the beliefs of whole cultures. King's bringing them together in one work of fiction is a profoundly important syncretic move, one that dramatically reconfigures literary history in Canada.

With Margaret Atwood's publication of *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* in 1970, a new figure took her place at the constructed beginning of Canadian literature (replacing Thomas Haliburton in most accounts). Students who took Canadian literature in the courses that began to burgeon in the 1970s invariably read *Roughing it in the Bush*. As someone who taught it to them (I taught my first class in Canadian literature as a PhD student at the University of Toronto in 1975), I don't recall paying much attention to Moodie's serene assumption that the various properties she lived on were hers, nor to the ways Native people are depicted in her work. I was more interested in the Yankee squatters she despised so much. Neither Moodie, nor I, nor my students were ready to see ourselves as squatters. Florence Stratton's account of the ways in which maps operate in both King and Moodie highlights the persistence of her mindset in Canadians and shows how King undermines it.

Herbert Wyile examines the ways in which King's stories and novels unsettle the notions of Aboriginality and multiculturalism that are already starting to become fixed in discourses of Canadianness. As he points out, King doesn't fit easily into categories, either in his person or as a writer: "Not only is 'Native' less than an exhaustive description of King as a writer, but those looking for a contained, homogeneous cultural community for which King serves as a representative are going to have a hard time." All the articles maintain an awareness of how King's varied perspectives, as a writer and academic of mixed European and Native ancestry, as American-born Canadian, to mention only the obvious ones, have meant that he himself has had to cross many borders in constructing a place from which to write. One of the ways this border crossing has been facilitated is through the figure of Coyote, who manages to trick his way through, past and around difficulties, all the while learning to tell new stories.

WORK CITED

- Robinson, Harry. *Write It on Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*. Comp. and ed. Wendy Wickwire. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1989.

The RK Hornbook Retractions

It fell to me as archivist to arrange Rita Kleinhart's dismembered sequence of hornbooks in a manner that would make at least a modicum of sense. Simply put, this last assemblage constitutes those few hornbooks that do not seem to accord with Rita's own poetic intentions. I am led to suspect that her conversations with me, over the years, on those occasions when we had the good fortune to share small intimacies, led her to doubt her own rather stoutly held convictions. Rather than place my own name in the summary title, I have chosen to call these sometimes hesitant poems *The RK Hornbook Retractions*. By this strategy I give full acknowledgement to Rita and at the same time note her uniquely perspicacious if somewhat sulky disagreements with herself. I might add that there appears in issue #158 (Fall '98) of *Canadian Literature* a further hornbook (#15) which seems to fly in the face of her every idea of poet. I do not for a moment believe Rita composed such a statement, and for that obvious reason I exclude it from the canon (see below).
(Raymond)

Hornbook A

I feared she had entered infinity.
Her eyes refused all diagrams of horizon.

And yet, to rescue language from the infinite
was her first intention. Accordingly,
she set out. I had hoped she would
take me along. You know. A friend.
A companion. Maybe even a lover.

She could smell the farthest galaxy.
Was it heat or cold that gave her direction?

Hornbook B

February is composed entirely of white iron.
In the white cold heat of a February moon,
poets warm themselves with four-line stanzas.
They freeze their tongues to doorknobs.

Politicians distribute promises
to the homeless, white rabbits too
paint themselves no color, betrayed,
if at all, by merest track. Or turd.

One is tempted, vaguely, to hope
that hell might be a realizable fiction.
Except that *colder* than the hobs of same,
in prairie talk, ain't under interdiction.

Fame is a raw and dripping nose
of no allowable consequence.
Farmers unbale their hay.
Famine and the rent come due

warily, like deer, to feedlots,
as if the tight gun itself might be frozen.
Snowblowers howl in the darkness,
they cannot persuade, and quit.

Daybreak, such as it is,
is a pale surrender to stillness.
Even bankers cannot imagine gold.
Magpies hardly manage to shit.

Dogteams and rich Italian tenors
try to crack open the timid sky.
The one clean sheet is a sheet of ice.
And no one utters that cold word, nice.

Hornbook C

This is a shaky proposition, but, let's give it a try: Poetry
is a changing of the light.

Just this morning, for instance, while listening to the rhythms
of your breathing,

I noticed the outline of a window behind the thin red curtain,
then a sort of oak desk or table under the window,
then your plain white panties on the floor by the bed.

We write down words, thinking they will instruct us.

[In this poem we hear a direct reference to the function of the hornbook as a teaching device. That I, Raymond, was not the surrogate author of this poem, fills me with a sadness that borders on lamentation. The curtains in my too small bedroom are a subtle green.]

Hornbook D

Getting here is our only story.
Talk about pissing up a rope.

Why do live poets gather
empty aluminum cans?

Ours is a world bloodied
by a kiss—and ketchup.

P.S., Wear shades after sundown.
Do not peer in at open windows.

Hornbook E

Against reason:

You slid down the hill and laughed.
Later that same afternoon a cat's silver bell
turned into a round green boulder
and went on ringing.

I was kept busy
arranging pitch black watermelon seeds
on the sloped heights of your buttocks.

It's a brave poet
who counts her own toes.

Hornbook F

We are all lonely. We like to announce it.
I raise my loneliness like a dry
laurel wreath. Like a yellow plastic
mushroom. Like a green tomato.

What is the myth of the undone?
Where did I leave my other
glove? And yet, because of it
(the missing glove, the myth),
I am not quite, ever, alone.

Just the other morning, for example,
I had a chat with a woodpecker.
I was under the pile of leaves
in your garden by the walk.

Hornbook G

We are fooled by the map.
Because of the map
we are tricked into setting out.

Because of the map
we pack extra socks and bandages
into the extra shoes we will never wear.

We are always setting out, as if
to discover where the maps end
will allow us to begin.

Hornbook H

What is the poem but an echo of itself, a sound
we do not hear until it is gone?

The poet is merely a hillside barn,
a stone façade in an empty street,
possibly a canyon wall

returning the sound
returning the sound

returning the sound

returning the sound

Hornbook I

Both misers and musicians all, we count,
trusting by accident to find a poem.

Last night I tried with fingers five (or one)
to count the storied stars; and almost done

I thanked the droopy cloud that took away
the blinking lights. But then to my dismay

the poem too was gone, the night was old,
and this is all that I had left to say.

An Afterword on the canon, re: The Poetics of Rita
Kleinhart. The concluding section as represented above
was preceded thus:

The Rita Herself Hornbooks:

*The Battle River Mound**

*The Kyoto Mound***

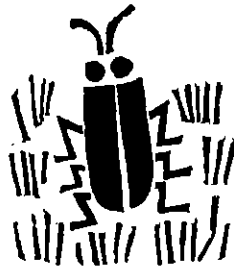
*The Oviedo Mound****

*This sequence, which I choose to call *The Battle River Mound*, appears in a book entitled *A Likely Story: The Writing Life* (Red Deer College Press, 1995), assembled by an author who claimed to be a dear friend of Rita, though I never once in my life heard her speak directly of the man. And again: three hornbooks that were inadvertently omitted from the same volume have since appeared in the Fall '98 issue of *Alberta Views*. (Raymond)

***The Kyoto Mound*, as I assembled it from notes and version and revisions, appeared in the Summer/Fall issue of *Prairie Fire* (1996). Since I was not able to establish the sequence of manuscript drafts in Rita Kleinhart's study and bedroom, I cannot vouch for the authority of the published transcriptions. (Raymond)

****The Oviedo Mound* might possibly have been named *The St. Jerome's Mound* (see the spring '98 issue of *The New Quarterly*), but in fact the saint whose evocation

seems most appropriate here I would guess to be St. James. In my own ingenious (forgive my modesty its one small lapse) sorting of the scattered hornbooks into what I call mounds, I find this partial or scavenged mound to be revelatory of the poet's affection for the Spanish city, Oviedo, located near the Atlantic coast, on the old pilgrims' way to St. James's bones and relics. It is my belief that Rita Kleinhardt, as a conclusion to her mysterious travels, tried at last to profane that sacred pathway by traveling its length with an illicit lover who was not I. Which raises the stark and bald question: Who then might he or she have been? But is not this the question that haunts every poem's apparent dictation to or from an absent presence?
(Raymond)



Mapping and Dreaming Native Resistance in *Green Grass, Running Water*

The dream map was as large as the table top, and had been folded tightly for many years. It was covered with thousands of short, firm, and variously coloured markings. . . . Abe Fellow and Aggan Wolf explained. Up here is heaven; this is the trail that must be followed; here is a wrong direction; this is where it would be worst of all to go; and over there are all the animals. They explained that all of this had been discovered in dreams. Aggan also said that it was wrong to unpack a dream map except for very special reasons. But the Indians' needs had to be recognized. . . . Everyone must look at the map now.

BRODY (267)

The epigraph, as well as the title of this essay, are drawn from Hugh Brody's *Maps and Dreams*, a text that charts the author's experience with the Beaver people of the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains. In the 1970s, Brody spent eighteen months helping the Beaver people to create maps that would indicate all of the ways in which they had used their lands within living memory. At one point, Brody's Native companions invited him to join them on a hunting trip and, while resting by the fire, they told him that "Indian guys, old-timers, they make maps too" (45). They went on to explain that these maps were revealed in dreams and showed the place where the trails of animals converge, and that some of the "really good men" could also see the "dream-trails to heaven" (46). The men recognized that Brody might find their idea of mapping absurd. "You might say such maps are crazy," they told him. "But maybe the Indians

would say that is what your maps are. . . . Different maps from different people—different *ways*” (45-46).

Brody's experience testifies to the fact that Native American peoples have repeatedly asserted the legitimacy of their own maps and contested European maps and strategies of mapping, which have played such a central role in conceptualizing, codifying, and regulating the vision of the settler-invader society. As John Vernon argues, the model of reality afforded by the Western map contributed to the rigidly dualistic philosophy that has enabled Western civilization “to confirm its absolute space of reasonableness, cleanliness, freedom and wealth, precisely by creating equally absolute but sealed-off spaces of madness, dirt, slavery and poverty” (17). Chandra Mukerji puts it even more bluntly when she states that “the meaning of land as property to be consumed and used by Europeans was written into the language of maps just as the meaning of the world as sign of God had been in the late Middle Ages” (31).

In *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993) Cherokee/Greek/German novelist Thomas King revises inherited maps and replaces them with representations that speak to a Native worldview. Before turning to his interrogation of Western culture's maps and mapping strategies—the focus of this study—it might be helpful first to outline the fluid relationship that King and other critics, myself included, envision as existing between maps and books. In his *Book of the Fourth World*, George Brotherson stresses the importance of viewing Native maps (forms of Native pictorial discourse) and literary texts as closely related and equally legitimate modes of representation. Brotherson notes the problems that arise when Native visual modes of representation, examples of which he terms “classic texts,” are not recognized as belonging to the categories of “script” and/or “text.” As he observes:

The concept of the Fourth World text and literature in general has been especially fragmented as a result of having had imposed upon it imported notions of literary medium. For a start, jejune Western pronouncements on what does and does not constitute script, and the categorical binary that separates oral from written, have proved especially inept when applied to the wealth of literary media in native America. . . . Whole modes of representation have as a result been simply ignored, along with the configuring of space and time whose reason is assumed in the placement and enumeration of every native detail. (4)

Brotherson goes on to point out that, even within the Western philosophical tradition, the overlap between writing and pictorial and/or oral modes of

representation has been recognized. As he explains, “for Derrida [in *Of Grammatology*] ‘writing’ is in fact present everywhere, in gesture and speech itself, in the traces and paths of landscape . . .” (42).¹

Green Grass, Running Water adopts this broad understanding of “writing” and opens with a consideration of an example of a Native “classic text,” namely, the Fort Marion Ledger Art. King’s novel underscores how this text affirmed Native people’s solidarity in the face of exile and territorial dispossession, and recalls how it revised the status of the “book” in Native culture. In King’s novel, writing and mapping are conceived of as complicitous activities that often serve to secure a Western world view. Owing to the close relationship he perceives between visual and written forms of codification, and the role they have played in securing the settler-invaders’ understanding of “reality,” King’s project also involves subverting a whole range of Western representational strategies, including the map, the linear narrative (in books—particularly the Bible—but in movies, as well), the stereotype, and literacy itself.

As critics such as Graham Huggan observe, works by other Canadian writers frequently strive toward a “cartography of difference, which endorses a dynamic view of cross-cultural exchange,” but their efforts remain primarily directed “toward a de/reterritorialization of Western culture” (24). This is precisely what sets King’s novel apart from other fictions; *Green Grass, Running Water* succeeds in articulating a Native cosmography, and, as we will see, serves as a map in the traditional, Native sense of the word. More specifically, through its allusions to, and depictions of, the Sun Dance, the novel inscribes an aboriginal conception of the world in which the individuals can locate themselves at the centre of a land-based, communal, and non-hierarchical spiritual practice that involves both body and soul.

1. The Fort Marion Ledger Art and the Cartography of Exile

I saw seventy-two big Indians yesterday: proper men, and tall, as one would wish to behold. They were weary, and greatly worn; but as they stepped out of the cars [of the train], and folded their ample blankets about them, there was a large dignity and majestic sweep about their movements that made me much desire to salute their grave excellencies. Each had his ankles chained together; but managed to walk like a man, withal. They are confined,—by some ass who is in authority—in the lovely old Fort, as unfit for them as they for it. It is in my heart to hope sincerely that they may all get out.

King repeatedly alludes to the historical events described by Sidney Lanier, the Southern musician and poet, in the epigraph above. In this trickster-infused fiction, the incarceration of the seventy-two Indians at Fort Marion in the late 1800s serves as a formal and thematic touchstone that highlights the challenge of the novel to the imposition of non-Native boundaries and enclosures and, more generally, to European modes of mapping. Readers first become aware of the event's significance in the opening section, when Dr. Alberta Frank, a professor of Native history at the University of Calgary, delivers a lecture on the subject to her students. The text continues to emphasize the event's centrality by concluding each of its four sections with a portrayal of a variety of mythical protagonists being dragged off to the Fort.

The repeated allusions to Fort Marion raise a number of questions, including what led to the Native people's incarceration and what happened at the Fort? But readers must also consider why King focuses on this particular historical incident and how it informs his novel. Before answers to the latter questions are offered, a brief review of the historical events might be helpful.

In the summer of 1874, U.S. government officials launched a brutal campaign to force the remaining Plains Indian tribes onto reservations. That same year, various tribes, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Plains Apache, and Comanche had broken out of their reservations to prevent the extermination of the buffalo. To protect the remnant of the southern herd on the High Plains, these tribes fought engagements at Adobe Walls, Anadarko, and Palo Duro Canyon (see Meredith 92-93). Determined to maintain a traditional life, members of these tribes protested against the slaughter of the buffalo and the limited and artificial boundaries imposed on their people.²

To forestall their efforts, the military hounded the tribes and burned their camps, one after another. Although the Native people attempted to outrun the army, they had no time to hunt and replenish their supplies. First their horses died of exhaustion and hunger; then, after one of the most severe winters of the decade set in, the Indians themselves began to perish. In the end, starving and freezing, the remaining members of the tribes made their way on foot to the agency and surrendered (see Peterson ch. 1).

To ensure the complete subjugation of the Plains Indians, the government subsequently rounded up the so-called "notorious hostiles," a total of

seventy-two individuals accused of crimes against white settlers and soldiers. After the Indians surrendered to the agency, those considered guilty were locked up and "the most hostile were placed in double irons" (Peterson 15). While the rest of their peoples were sent to reservations, these so-called "hostiles" were chained to wagons and initially transported to Fort Sill, in what is now known as Oklahoma. Shortly after, in April of 1875, "without a trial or a hearing," the prisoners were chained into wagons and carried away under guard "to what they believed would be their execution" (Peterson 15). Their journey ended at Saint Augustine, Florida. Sidney Lanier, whose remarks are cited in the epigraph, encountered them on May 21, the day they arrived and were interned in the dank, seventeenth-century Spanish stone fort, then called Fort Marion.

King's text repeatedly depicts this journey. But the novel also alludes to what happened at Fort Marion and highlights the unusual fact that the prisoners became warrior-artists. Although the government's behaviour was brutal, it is unlikely that the fate of the seventy-two prisoners, or the "Florida Boys" as they were called, would have garnered public attention if their jailer, Lieutenant Richard H. Pratt, had not decided to launch an experiment in penal reform.³ Pratt insisted that his charges be taught reading and writing, be given religious instruction, and be assigned to manual labour. More importantly, Pratt allowed them to earn money and privileges by making items to sell to tourists. The prisoners produced trinkets, such as polished sea beans, bows and arrows, as well as beautifully rendered drawing books filled with autobiographical pictures. Nowadays, these books, which sold in the 1800s for two dollars apiece, have garnered considerable fame. They contain striking images of the Native peoples' life on the Plains, their journey to Fort Marion, and their experience as prisoners, and are known collectively as the Plains Indian Ledger Art.

Dr. Alberta Frank's lectures on the Fort Marion episode and the creation of Plains Indian Ledger Art contain the whole gruesome story of the prisoners, including what happened to the Cheyenne Indian, Grey Beard who, after jumping from a window of the train with chains on his hands and legs, was hunted down and shot (against orders) by his captors. She goes on to explain that, when they arrived at Fort Marion, Pratt provided the men with drawing materials, ledger books, and coloured pencils, as "a way to help reduce the boredom of confinement" (15). She then shows her students slides of the inmates' art, but they pay no attention. Though Alberta warns

them that the drawings will be on the test, her students remain uninterested. The episode draws to a close after the only attentive pupil, Helen Mooney, asks a simple yet pertinent question:

"Professor Frank," Helen said, "the seventy-one Indians. The ones at Fort Marion. I was wondering."

"About what?"

"Well, for one thing, what happened to them?" (17)

Her question remains unanswered; yet, owing to the emphasis placed on this event, readers sense that the students overlook the importance of this history lesson at their peril.

As noted earlier, the text emphasizes the centrality of this incident by circling back to the fate of the inmates at Fort Marion at the end of each of its four sections. In section one, the narrator tells Coyote a story that concludes with soldiers putting the mythical First Woman and Ahdamn on a train to Florida. We are told that "there are a bunch of Indians on that train with chains on their legs. First Woman and Ahdamn have chains on their legs, too" (82). When they arrive in Florida, they all "sit around and draw pictures" (82). Although Ahdamn loves having people from "New York and Toronto and Chicago and Edmonton come down to Florida" to watch him draw, First Woman refuses to remain imprisoned (82). Disguising herself as the Lone Ranger, she strolls out of the front gate, leaving Ahdamn behind (83).

In the next section, the narrator tells Coyote a story featuring Changing Woman; this tale ends similarly with the protagonist being dragged by soldiers down a dirt road. When Changing Woman looks around, she sees that there "are soldiers with rifles everywhere. And there are Indians, too. There are Indians sitting on the ground drawing pictures" (188). In the third section, the narrator's tale featuring Thought Woman likewise concludes in what is, by now, a familiar fashion, although to reflect the changing times (presumably the 1960s), the soldiers who arrest Thought Woman have flowers in their hair. In the final section, the narrator's story about Old Woman concludes in the same way, with the military putting the protagonist on a train to Florida. When Thought Woman arrives, she meets the same fate as the other mythical characters: the soldiers "throw her in Fort Marion" (349).

On one level, the repeated emphasis on the historical event conveys the overwhelming impression that North American Native people are caught up in a socio-political situation akin to a rigged game of Monopoly. No matter what card the Native characters draw from the Chance pile, it always

says the same thing: "Go to Jail." That being said, King could have chosen any number of historical encounters between non-Native and Native people to illustrate this point. Is there, then, something unique about the Fort Marion incident that led King to select it?⁴

Given the emphasis on the prisoner's artwork, King may have chosen this incident because it draws specific attention to Native acts of self-representation and to the status of the book, in particular. Unlike many other historical events, the Fort Marion episode reflexively addresses what it means for Native people to disseminate artistic representations of tribal life in the overarching context of widespread domination by the settler-invader society. By adopting the fate of the "Florida Boys" as a primary intertext, King self-consciously positions himself as a contemporary warrior-artist, whose work, like that of the Fort Marion prisoners, speaks both of the need for resistance and for the preservation of Native rituals and tradition. For the inmates of Fort Marion and for King, the book serves as repository of Native ritual and tradition. To borrow a central metaphor from the novel—a metaphor that this essay will go on to explore—both the ledger books and *Green Grass, Running Water* serve as maps that challenge European modes of map-making, which Native and non-Native people can use to orient themselves in the world.

The role played by the map in Native culture should not be underestimated. Long before contact, Indian peoples of the Great Plains were accomplished map-makers.⁵ They also possessed a strong sense of history and were accustomed to plotting their history pictorially. As Janet Berlo points out:

Images inscribed on rock walls served for hundreds of years as a large-scale, public way of marking historical events and visionary experiences. Narrative scenes on buffalo hide robes and tipis provided records of a man's experiences and visions. His exploits in war or success in the hunt would be painted on his garments and his shelter to validate and memorialize those heroic deeds. This was personal history made public, for all to see. (12)

Modes of representation changed, however, when non-Native explorers and traders began travelling across the Great Plains and introduced different methods and materials for inscribing history.

Owing to their encounters with non-Natives, Plains Indians began drawing their maps and inscribing historical information into books. As Berlo explains, some of the Indians' new-found regard for books was the result of the influence of white culture, but some "was also grounded in an indige-

nous Aboriginal belief in the power of history and of images, now combined with a new belief in the power of the written word" (16).

Through its allusions to the Fort Marion episode and Plains Ledger Art, King's novel emphasizes that, for Native writers, the tradition of drawing on paper and in books is fundamentally "an art of intercultural communication" (Berlo 13). The self-conscious allusions to the Fort Marion ledger art also remind readers that books by Native authors (and *Green Grass, Running Water* is no exception) constitute a complex polyphonic discourse located at the interface between two radically distinct cultures.

The Fort Marion ledger books garnered a profit for the company of upwards of five thousand dollars, painfully demonstrating that the "interface" between cultures was not based on equality (Peterson 66). The patronage of whites, who placed orders for painted fans and requested duplicates of ledger books they fancied, exposed what some critics refer to as "the unspoken truth of the Anglo-Indian relationship," namely, that Indians "existed for the convenience and entertainment of white society" (Wade and Rand 48).

The references to the Fort Marion Ledger Art not only throw light on the exploitative and performative expectations that characterized Native-white relations, they also underscore the powerful role played by books in the preservation of Native culture. As Berlo points out, the creation of "small but eloquent" autobiographical images helped to keep a tribal spirit alive inside men "whose hair had been cut and who were forced to wear military-issue garments" (14). When a warrior, who has been transformed into a schoolboy and forced to wear a blue serge uniform, draws pictures of the old way of life, he is, as Berlo insists, "keeping that way of life alive" because "to draw the past is to remember it and to convey it to others" (14). Thus, at a pivotal moment in Native history, when Plains cultures were under siege, when people were being hounded onto reservations, and when the foundation of tribal existence was being challenged, books served as repositories for Native wisdom and tradition.

However, ledger books and the Fort Marion books, in particular, did not simply record personal and public history; they were also inextricably connected to Native resistance. The simple act of writing in a ledger book must be considered, in and of itself, a gesture of defiance and self-assertion:

During the most brutal and extensive period of U.S. government violence against Native Americans, between roughly 1860 and 1900, certain warriors of the Great Plains would take ledger books, turn them horizontally, and begin to draw. These

narrow, lined vertical bound books, meant for recording details of commerce or tallying prisoners, were unmistakable artifacts of white settlers and the United States military. . . . [The Indians drew] over this space of foreign calculations, thereby transforming the nature of their own drawing and the ledger book itself, creating a middle place, an in-between place, in a place of writing. (Blume 40)

Blume goes on to liken the ledger book to a silent rifle, that, once possessed, “even without the necessary ammunition, could potentially give the warrior some of the power of his opponents, which had proven to be so devastating” (42).

Not surprisingly, given the circumstances of their production, the drawings of the Fort Marion prisoners register profound transformations in Native practices of self-representation. Whereas in the past, Native peoples typically recorded individual heroic deeds, the warriors imprisoned in Fort Marion articulated an emerging sense of community and an appreciation of domestic life, both of which signalled a significant departure from earlier forms of representation:

The art of Fort Marion prisoners affirmed more general ideals of social solidarity through the exploration of tribal histories, elevation of the commonplace as a central artistic theme, and assertion of Native American dignity in the face of cultural purification experiments. The drawings made at Fort Marion from 1875 to 1878 are nothing less than an incipient national literature. (Wade and Rand 45)

Furnished with only this cursory understanding of the Fort Marion incident, readers can appreciate why King’s text acknowledges its debt to this “incipient national literature.”

Turning to *Green Grass, Running Water*, one can identify virtually all of the characteristics associated with the creation of Fort Marion ledger art. First, as many critics have argued, King’s narrative self-consciously locates itself at the intersection between Native and non-Native culture.⁶ In keeping with the warrior-artists who first appropriated ledger books, King has likewise created a palimpsest—a work that both recognizes and draws “over the space of foreign calculations.” Second, the novel emphasizes the thematic elements associated with the radical changes introduced by the Fort Marion drawings, including the affirmation of solidarity, the elevation of the commonplace, and the assertion of Native dignity. Third, by populating the novel with characters who work in the service and/or entertainment industry, the narrative interrogates the “unspoken truth” that Native people exist

"for the convenience and entertainment of white society." Finally, and most important, in accordance with the traditional role played by the book in Native culture, *Green Grass, Running Water* serves as a tool for the preservation and transmission of tribal traditions and wisdom.

In his autobiographical narrative *The Names*, Kiowa author N. Scott Momaday offers insight into the precise nature of this tool when he describes his ancestor, Phod-lohk, taking out his treasured book: "Now that he was old, Pohd-lohk liked to look backwards in time, and although he could neither read nor write, the book was his means. It was an instrument with which he could reckon his place in the world" (48). In keeping with Momaday's association between the book and an instrument used to reckon one's place, this study argues that King's novel serves as a map; with the aid of this map, both characters and readers can "reckon . . . [their] place in the world."

The relation between Native fiction and mapping is a long-standing one. As James Gray observes, "the figuration or mapping of space in time, the undoing of imposed boundaries and enclosures and the negotiation of rightful passage and claim" (56) remain foregrounded concerns in works by American Indian writers, including King's. Bonnie Berthold argues further that "recent Native American fiction can be read specifically in reaction to the modern European mode of mapping" (qtd. in Gray 56-57). She contrasts with Western mapping a "specifically Native American mode of temporal mapping, which she calls 'story-mapping'" (57).

From the start, King's book signals its interrelated preoccupation with mapping and the Fort Marion episode. Images of trains, cars, roads, traffic lights, as well as the act of driving abound. Taken together, they highlight the novel's on-going interrogation of what Bakhtin cites as one of literature's most common "chronotopes," the spatial and temporal setting established by "the road" (120). This image evokes the age-old concern with mapping one's journey through life, although it assumes a straightforward, linear unfolding of plot. It is no coincidence that all three of the younger characters, namely, Lionel Red Dog, Alberta Frank, and Charlie Looking Bear lack direction in their lives and are in dire need of guidance and/or maps. At one point or another, all three embark on road trips that go awry. Yet the novel intimates that their journeys will never assume a meaningful direction, so long as they stick to the man-made road and continue to rely on non-Native discursive maps.

2. Fixing a Direction

"Pretty soon we'll fix it up. We've made maps and everyone will see where we have our land." (Joseph Patsah in Brody 270)

Through its portrayals of Lionel, Alberta, and Charlie, the narrative demonstrates that the younger generation lacks direction. Furthermore, owing to the account of the experiences of Amos Frank (Alberta's father) and Portland Looking Bear (Charlie's father), readers appreciate that the younger generation's inability to reckon their place in the world stems, in part, from the fact that generation after generation of Native peoples have been forced to take direction from non-Natives, who expect them to play stereotyped, over-determined roles.⁷

In a wonderfully comic scene, the novel brings together both the cartographic and performative connotations associated with the word "direction." On the morning of Lionel's birthday, Lionel's boss, Bill Bursum, owner of the Home Entertainment Barn, screens one of Portland Looking Bear's early Hollywood films, *The Mysterious Warrior*, on a wall entirely covered with tv sets. Bursum has arranged the tvs to form a map of Canada and the United States. When Eli, Charlie, and the four mythical Indians show up at the store to wish Lionel a happy birthday, Bursum seizes the opportunity to explain that the Map was "more than advertising. . . . It was a concept, a concept that lay at the heart of business and Western civilization" (249). For Bursum, "the Map" serves as a means to gain power: "It was like having the universe there on the wall, being able to see everything, being in control" (109). Like most maps, it offers a vision of wholeness, permanence, and stability; everything is known, named, and claimed.

Rather than allow the Map to maintain its power and broadcast the film and reinstall the cowboys' age-old slaughter of the Indians, the four magical escapees from Fort Marion decide to "fix" the ending of "the best Western of them all" (157). To revise the script, they begin to chant, and their ceremonial performance produces startling effects; the film changes from black and white to colour (perhaps because the relationship between whites and Indians is, after all, not-black-and-white issue) and the Indians begin to massacre the cowboys. Bursum, Lionel, Charlie, and Eli watch the Map in amazement, as bullets rip through John Wayne's chest (267). Overcome with pride for his father, who, for the first time, is clearly not taking direction from Hollywood, Charlie hollers, "Get 'em, Dad" (267). This episode is

instructive because the escapees successfully alter the Map—a graphic mode of representation “whose systematic inscriptions upon an ‘empty’ landscape [figured here as blank tv screens] support the territorial imperative of ‘literate’ cultures”; to effect this change, they introduce an oral chant, and through this story/songline they construct “a polyphonic acoustic space, a network of interconnected voices” (Huggan 144).

The Indians’ simultaneous subversion of the Map and of the Hollywood script again recalls the impact of the Fort Marion Ledger Art. By “fixing” the film, King’s escapees from the Fort continue to adopt and adapt the technology of non-Native society to represent more accurately Native perspectives. Like the warrior-artists of the 1800s, who appropriated the ledger books of their captors, King’s mythical escapees also create “a middle place, an in-between place, in a place of writing” (Blume 40). At bottom, this episode intimates that Native people must come to grips with The Map inscribed by the settler-invaders—a map that is reinscribed on a daily basis through the media.

While tampering with the Map and reversing the linear Hollywood script offer instantaneous comic relief, the novel treats Western modes of figuration far more subversively than this. The text implicitly suggests that readers must not simply revise the content of racist scripts, but challenge their fundamental conventions, specifically, the linear, monologic, narrative structure itself. In *Green Grass, Running Water*, oral storytelling, chanting, dancing, and the circle of performance epitomized by the Sun Dance, interrupt and contest the linear trajectory of the printed word.

By now, it has become rather commonplace to distinguish between white “linear” time from Indian “circular” time. Nevertheless, the significance of the circle in Native culture cannot be underestimated. Native spiritual leaders repeatedly refer to the circle as the basis of the Indian Way of Life.⁸ More importantly, the circle continues to play a central role in Native writing. Native authors have made “their greatest inroads into mainstream literature, without giving up the belief in the circle” (Lutz, “Circle” 88) Tomson Highway once drew a circle on a piece of paper to clarify the difference between Native and non-Native narrative models. As Highway explains:

Whereas the Indian system . . . is a circle, a never-ending circle . . . the European system, is a straight line, what I call the Genesis to Revelations line: progress, progress, progress from point A to point B, until the apocalypse comes. As a result, the circle was shattered and got stretched open to a straight line, and the impact psychologically and spiritually was devastating. (8)

Similarly, when asked about the parallels between the structure of contemporary Native novels and the image of the circle, Jeannette Armstrong also insisted on the importance of the circle. Speaking of her own fiction, she stated:

Native people have asked me, "Is this accidental that there are four parts [in your novel] and it's like the four Directions, and there are the prologue and the epilogue being the direction above us and below us?" And I said, "No, it wasn't, actually." (qtd. in Lutz, "Contemporary" 20)

As we will see, King's fiction examines the reliance of western culture on a teleological narrative structure—epitomized and conveyed primarily by the Bible—and engages in modes of figuration other than those the linear narrative sequences seem to be driving toward.

Through its playful subversion of linear trajectories, ranging from road trips to traditional Western modes of storytelling, King's novel revises the narrative Map and questions a few highly cherished assumptions of Western culture, specifically, the belief that there are no alternatives to Western culture's end-driven stories with their "Genesis to Revelations line." To interrogate the linear narrative—one of the West's essentially tragic 'terminal creeds' (Gray 18)—and install the essentially comic world view of Indian tribes, the novel tackles the problem at its root. From the start, the novel invokes the Biblical story of Genesis, "point A" of Christianity's narrative of progress.

On page one, echoing *Genesis* 1:1-2, the text proclaims that in the beginning was nothing—nothing, that is, but water and Coyote. Next, we are told that Coyote has a "silly" Dream, which he names a Dog Dream. This Dream, which is contrary by nature, gets "everything backward" and insists on being called GOD (2). Following the narrative's playful logic, readers are made aware that the Judeo-Christian God is merely a troublesome figment of the Native trickster's imagination.

The text continues to undermine canonical beginnings when the four escapees from Fort Marion, who are given power to narrate the story, explore different ways of introducing their tales. Initially, First Woman, who goes by the name of the Lone Ranger, tests a variety of opening phrases, including "Once upon a time. . ." (7), "A long time ago in a faraway land. . ." (8), and a parody of Native story-telling, "Many moons comechucka . . ." (9). But her companions reject each narrative foray, insisting that she begin again until she gets it right. At one point, in an attempt

to appease her friends, she cites the opening of *Genesis*, only to be informed that it, too, is "the wrong story" (10). As it turns out, the only beginning deemed acceptable consists of phrases drawn from the opening a Native divining ceremony. The words, written in Cherokee syllabics, invite the people to "listen up" (Hoy). As Jennifer Andrews explains, this ceremony, in which the movement of pine needles floating on water is used to read the future, "playfully subverts the fixity of history in its official (meaning written) form by focusing on the possibilities yet to come" (18).⁹ Just as the escapees from Fort Marion "fix" the ending of the Hollywood movie, in this instance, they likewise draw over the space of foreign calculation and revise the non-Native beginning of the book. Rather than install a linear, print-based trajectory, the four Indians offer a beginning rooted in oral performance, just as, later, they rely on chanting to subvert the filmic narrative.

For the most part, the text relies on parody in conjunction with an emphasis on alternative oral traditions to undermine the legitimacy of the fixed Map, which stands for the sum total of Western culture's hegemonic linear narratives. To further derail the Map's linear trajectory, secured by the story of *Genesis*, the first section goes on to offer both a retelling and a realistic displacement of the story of the Garden of Eden. In the text's version, readers encounter Dr. J. Hovaugh (Jehovah),¹⁰ whose garden serves as a pleasant distraction from the mental institution which he oversees. In a brilliant comic gesture, the text conflates the Garden of Eden with Fort Marion; it is within this asylum that King's four magical Indians are finally incarcerated. The text appropriately designates Dr. J. Hovaugh's place of work as an "insane asylum" presumably because it is insane to believe that constructs such as the Garden of Eden and, by extension, Judeo-Christianity (not to mention reservations and places like Fort Marion) afford any kind of asylum to Native peoples. King's narrative also exposes the deathly aspects of Western culture's asylum; in Hovaugh's garden, the trees are all moribund (see 60, 79). Moreover, it appears that the Tree of Knowledge has been axed. Dr. Hovaugh proudly sits behind a dead tree, a massive wooden desk, which, as he points out, represents a "rare example of colonial woodcraft" (12). The tree has been "stripped, repaired, stained blond, and moved into his office as a surprise;" nevertheless, it continues to remind him of "a tree cut down to the stump" (12). Owing to its references to the garden and the dead tree, the text subtly aligns the death of knowledge with colonization,

a practice that petrifies living entities and stains them white or "blond."

By portraying Hovaugh as a man who views events in the world from the warped perspective of his own "terminal creed"—the Bible's apocalyptic narrative—the novel continues to highlight the limitations of linear narratives that underwrite the colonial tales of progress. Wedded to dreams of catastrophe and death, Hovaugh misguidedly associates the four old Indians' repeated escapes from his asylum with global disasters, and he can find only one solution to the paranoid scenario he has invented; he demands that his friend, John Eliot, sign the escapees' death certificates, though they are alive and well. A sensible man, Eliot tries to convince Hovaugh that the paranoid plot he has concocted bears no resemblance to reality. After Hovaugh rattles off a series of dates on which the Indians escaped and insists that they establish a pattern, Eliot counters his argument, saying, "Maybe there wasn't [a pattern]. . . . Maybe nothing happened on those dates. Or maybe something good happened on those dates. You ever think of that?" (39). Eliot invites Hovaugh to consider more important issues, such as where the Indians go when they escape (40). Captive to his morbid train of thought, Hovaugh does not even hear his friend's remarks; instead, he sets off on a road trip to round up the Indians.

As noted earlier, in King's novel, road trips have a tendency to go awry. In a series of magic realist episodes that confirm the validity of Charlie's initial association between cars and flowing rivers, several of the characters' cars are submerged in pools of water that mysteriously appear and sweep away the vehicles. At one point or another, the cars driven by Charlie, Alberta, and Hovaugh all disappear. At the end of the novel, they reappear, floating in Parliament Lake, where they act as battering rams to destroy the dam.¹¹

On one level, the repeated depiction of cars being submerged in water reminds readers that Native tales of origin begin, not with a void to be mapped and driven across, but with water (Matchie and Larson 158). But the image of a car being washed away also offers a tangible image of the more abstract tensions between non-Native and Native narrative structures. As Gray argues, "in the Native American novel, the broad aim of style and strategy would be to uncover potential beneath surface 'givens' to release fluidities latent within apparent rigidities" (62). In King's text, the performance quality, which is enacted through oral storytelling, "is figured in the water that constitutes the book's dominant metaphor" (121).

3: Mapping the Sun Dance

Located as it is, at the interface between two radically distinct cultures, the novel deploys both linear trajectories—the point A to B route from Genesis to Revelation, represented by cars, roads, and driving—and non-linear narrative trajectories—identified with the circular world view of the Native peoples, and conveyed by the organic flow of water, the cloud cycle, and, most strikingly, by the Sun Dance. As the novel unfolds, however, it becomes apparent that, to orient themselves in a meaningful direction, the younger characters must relinquish the linear trajectory of Western culture, put themselves in the hands of those who can guide them, and embark on the organic path of the circle and performance favoured by Coyote.

Prompted by his aunt Norma's repeated suggestion, Lionel's uncle, Eli, takes Lionel under his wing and drives him to the Sun Dance. As they drive, Eli talks to Lionel about the direction his own life has taken. Although he never states it explicitly, the reader senses that Eli knows that he should never have lived the greater part of his life as a white man, removed from people and traditions; he perceives his error now that he has returned home and is fighting on behalf of his people and their land. Lionel, who has no idea where they are going, listens to his uncle without comprehending Eli's message. Ultimately, the latter's awareness of the importance of the land and community is tangibly conveyed when Eli leaves the paved road and turns onto the lease road. Together they share the experience of exchanging the familiar linear route for the road less travelled. As the narrator explains:

It had been a long time since Lionel had travelled the lease road. Normally, he came in through Medicine River on the road that ran to Cardston. That road was all asphalt and mileage signs and billboards. This road was a wild thing, bounding across the prairies, snaking sideways, and each time they came to a rise, Lionel had the uneasy feeling that just over the crest of the hill the road would vanish, and they would tumble out into the tall grass and disappear (301-02).

Their journey to the Sun Dance entails a move away from the predictable non-Native trajectory to a non-domesticated, vital path that virtually fuses with the natural world.

In many respects, Alberta's journey mirrors Lionel's. She, too, is escorted to the Sun Dance by a woman who, like Eli, knows where home is and understands the importance of Native tradition. As they turn off the lease road, Alberta's guide, Latisha, observes that, for as long as she could remember, her aunt Norma's lodge was "always in the same place on the east side

of the camp. And before that Norma's mother. And before that" (307). Both Lionel's and Alberta's guides have internalized a sense of Native history and, therefore, can reckon their place in the world and help others to do the same.

Throughout the novel, primarily owing to Eli's reminiscences of the ceremony, readers are given a foretaste of the power and centrality of the Sun Dance. At one point, while driving Lionel to the ritual site, Eli pulls onto the side of the road as they reach the crest of a hill, so that Lionel can survey the scene that lies before them. As the narrator explains: "Below in the distance, a great circle of tepees floated on the prairies, looking for all the world like sailing ships adrift on the ocean" (302). Images of ships and the ocean recall the text's overarching emphasis on water imagery. Taken together, the images in the passage suggest that, in contrast to western culture and its great Map (a fixed concept associated with Bursum's tv screens and the Great Balleen Dam), ideally, the Native peoples live a nomadic existence invested with the meaning of ceremonial performances, which, although based on the principle of the circle, remain open to the contingencies of chance.

The vision of the "great circle of tepees," however, provides far more than a simple contrast between Native and non-Native philosophies. Throughout the novel, the circle and the Sun Dance, in particular, are offered as alternatives to the Map. The importance accorded to the Sun Dance only makes sense when readers understand that its goal lies in furnishing participants with a map of the universe in which their location is clearly demarcated. Yet readers lacking knowledge of the Sun Dance miss the numerous and intricate allusions to the ceremony scattered throughout the text. Before going on to analyze the novel's treatment of the ceremony, an overview of the elements associated with it and an explanation of its principal function might be helpful.

The Sun Dance is an annual, communal festival, celebrated out of doors during the summer. It takes place in ritual space defined by a tree that is cut and replanted for the purpose of forming the centre of a circle. The tree selected is always the "rustling tree," also known as the cottonwood. In Black Elk's tale of the Sun Dance, the warrior Kablaya explains the purpose of the tree: "He will be our center, and will represent the way of the people" (47). All the ritual action of the dance takes place within and around the circle, which is typically 40 to 100 feet in diameter. Spectators watch the dancing from the periphery, generally under an awning made of evergreen boughs.

The Sun Dance circle is variously described as the sacred hoop and/or the mystery circle, and, as many Native spiritual leaders have argued, it serves as a tangible model of the universe. At the centre of the circle is an altar, also in the shape of a circle, in which a cross has been inscribed. The lines of the cross are oriented to the four cardinal points and represent the four winds; hence, at the centre of the Sun Dance is a map of the Sacred Circle. Within this map of the cosmos, the dancers move in a sunwise or clockwise direction in harmony with the motion of the earth.¹²

In Black Elk's *The Gift of the Sacred Pipe*, the leader of the ritual, known as the intercessor, sums up the meaning of the dance at the end of the ceremony:

By your actions today, you have strengthened the sacred hoop of our nation. You have made a sacred center which will always be with you, and you have created a closer relation with all things of the universe. (148)

The "sacred center" of which Black Elk speaks is, in fact, a map of sorts. Participants create a "sacred center" by inscribing the map of the universe onto their bodies; a black circle is drawn around the face, representing *Wakan Tanka* (the Lakota term for the godhead); next, a line is drawn on each cheek and the chin. Taken together, the four lines represent the four directions.¹³ In this way, during the Sun Dance, the body itself becomes a map.

Armed with this cursory sketch of the ceremony, readers can appreciate how the references to the Sun Dance serve to champion Native modes of representation based on the circle over the Western culture's linear apocalyptic trajectory. An awareness of the Sun Dance ceremony alters the reader's perception of the text. Thus readers are in a position to understand "what Eli's dancing signifies, why Eli takes Lionel there to celebrate his birthday, and why Lionel's getting his face painted is not a trivial or childish birthday treat" (Fee and Flick 5). Moreover, rather than view the contrapuntal narrative structure of the text as a postmodern innovation, it can be seen as an attempt to replicate the structure and rhythms of the Sun Dance.

King's novel oscillates among at least nine different narrative perspectives, all overseen by the narrator and his companion, Coyote. In many ways, the narrator serves as the intercessor or announcer at the Sun Dance, who supervises "the constant activity in a general way" (Holler 174). Typically, the announcer provides a running commentary on the dance, makes necessary announcements, enforces order, and introduces various leaders; he is also responsible for enforcing "a standard of traditional behaviour," which,

during a dance that Holler attended, "occasioned an intermittent stream of censure directed toward those present who lacked sufficient knowledge of traditional ways" (173). In King's novel, the narrator acts as an intercessor, by overseeing the different focalizers and by teaching Coyote about Native stories and modes of storytelling; at times, the narrator also chastises Coyote for his ignorance about Native history and tradition.

The carnivalesque rotation among focalizers also parallels the multi-faceted structure of the Sun Dance. As Holler explains, "since the ritual takes place 'in the round,' different points of view on the dance reveal different aspects of it," and the effect is "kaleidoscopic" (174). The circular or kaleidoscopic structure is both implicit in the constant shift in focalizers and reflexively underscored by the four Indians, who each ceremonially take a turn and narrate one of the four sections (see 87, 192, 273).

At various points in the novel, the mythical Indians emphasize that everyone, save Coyote, perhaps, deserves to take a turn and narrate his or her version of the story. The use of the word "turn," in these instances, denotes both a change in the speaker or player of the narrative game as well as a physical shift or "turn" in the story's narrative direction. Viewed cartographically, the sum of the turns taken by each of the elderly Indians comprises a circle.

In the novel, the word "turn" is also associated with the act of turning something on and off (see 201, 273). For instance, while they are discussing whose turn it is, one of the Indians suggests that maybe Coyote "can turn on the light" (192). Shortly after this episode, they admire a sunrise:

As the old Indians watched, the universe gently tilted and the edge of the world danced in light.

"Ah," said Hawkeye. "It is beautiful."

In the east the sky softened and the sun broke free and the day rolled over and took a breath.

"Okay," said the Lone Ranger. "Did Coyote turn on the light?"

"Yes," said Robinson Crusoe. "I believe he did." (195).

Through the various meanings associated with the word "turn," the text links the circular structure of its own narrative with the circular motion of the sun and, by extension, the Sun Dance.¹⁴

What is perhaps most astounding about the novel is that it does not simply refer to the Sun Dance. Instead, like a participant in the dance itself, the text internalizes and embodies the cosmic rite with its sacred circle. As

noted earlier, *Green Grass, Running Water* serves as a map—a tool with which one can reckon one's place in the world. To come to grips with the nature of this map, readers must pay attention to Native codes. For example, at the beginning of each section is a word in Cherokee. Rather than signify a linear progression, such as chapter one, two, and so on, each word announces one of the four directions and the sacred colour associated with it. The narrative begins with east and red, then proceeds to south and white, west and black, and north and blue, in that order (Hoy). In *Wisdom and Power*, Native spiritual leader Fools Crow offers a catalogue of the directional and colour system of the Cherokees and identifies these colours with the cardinal directions (Mails 60). At bottom, these references to the sacred directions and colours, in conjunction with the description of the four Helpers and the Sun Dance, suggest that King's novel does not simply describe the Native ceremony, but is itself an evocation or map of the ritual.

Thinking along cartographic lines, readers can appreciate that the text physically inscribes a circle, ending as it does on page 360. It also now makes sense that on page 180, the text portrays Lionel asleep in his chair with the "tumbling light [of the television] pouring over him like water." Here the "tumbling light" foreshadows the novel's conclusion—the tumbling water that destroys the Great Baleen Dam. Thus, midway through its own circular journey, the text looks across its horizontal axis and catches a glimpse of events that take place at the end (or should I say beginning) of its narrative orbit.

In the end, the escapees from Fort Marion, together with the community, fix the world by defending the Sun Dance against an intruder, Latisha's abusive husband, George. He tries to take pictures of the ceremony and sell the images for profit; his behaviour uncannily echoes the treatment of the Plains Indians' ledger art. When the ordeal is over and the spiritually vacant opportunist has been vanquished, Lionel turns to the four Indians and asks, "Is that it? . . . This is how you help me fix my life?" The Lone Ranger replies, "You bet." Robinson Crusoe goes on to explain that, in "years to come . . . you'll be able to tell your children and grandchildren about this" (322). Thus, in keeping with their real-life counterparts, King's escapees from Fort Marion continue to safeguard Native tradition, while engaging in acts of resistance that highlight the significance of representation, in this case, storytelling.

Although they magically return to Dr. J. Houvagh's asylum, where they are once again confined "by some ass who is in authority," to borrow

Lanier's words, the fate of the warrior-artists remains ambiguous. Despite the fact that they are imprisoned, in the light of the trip they have taken and the message they have conveyed to the younger generation, the novel implies that it is possible for Native people who are lost to escape the restrictions imposed by Western culture and to find direction. According to the text, gaining a meaningful direction in life involves earthshaking the map,¹⁵ the seemingly entrenched plot, and opening oneself to tribal ways of understanding, which arise "in pre-novelistic, oral performance contexts more closely associated with land and community" (Gray 4). Perhaps, then, there is no definitive answer to Helen Mooney's question about what happened to the prisoners. On one level, as the novel demonstrates, they are alive and well because their subversive energy remains available to contemporary Native artists such as King, who adopt the book and draw the circular map of Native ritual and tradition over the space of foreign calculations.

NOTES

- 1 Brotherson's understanding of the relationship between mapping and writing recalls the Russian semiotician Yuri Lotman's assertion that maps are merely one form of "modeling system"—a system that also includes literary texts. (For a discussion of Lotman's views, see Huggan 5).
- 2 As Clyde Holler notes, after the end of the Civil War in 1865, Americans began to pursue the project of westward expansion, and the army turned to Indian fighting. Although the benevolence of those who advocated moving Indians onto reservations may well escape contemporary readers, it is important to understand that, within the historical context of the Indian Wars, the attempt to relocate the Indians and to civilize them was, in fact, the era's liberal humanitarian response to the army's ongoing slaughter of the Indians (see 111).
- 3 This experiment had tremendous repercussions in Canada, since Pratt's system of penal education and subsequent creation of industrial boarding schools were used as the prototypes for Canadian Indian education. When Nicholas Flood Davin was charged by Prime Minister Macdonald to develop a school system in Canada, he took the simplest solution: he went to the United States to inspect their schools; he arrived at a time when Pratt's system was "enjoying its heyday" (Samek 138).
- 4 The Indian prisoners at Fort Marion were incarcerated for three years, whereas the entire Chiricahua and Warm Springs Apache people—men, women, and children—were held as prisoners of war for twenty-six years by the United States (Meredith 101).
- 5 See Ewers, ch. 10: "The Making and Uses of Maps by Plains Indians Warriors," 180–90.
- 6 A number of critics highlight the hybrid status of the text, including Fee and Flick, Andrews, Donaldson, Gray, and Matchie and Larson.
- 7 Latisha's first husband, George was pleased that she was, "as he said, a real Indian" (112).

Similarly, Eli Stands Alone's girlfriend, Karen, also liked the fact that he was Indian and referred to him as her "mystic warrior" (138).

- 8 As the spiritual leader of the American Indian Movement, Philip Deere stated: "[Y]ou hear the Indian people talking about the sacred book,—or the circle. That circle is important to us because we do not believe in the square measurements. But the ancient belief was in the circle. The moon is in a circle, the sun is round, and our ancestors knew the earth was round. Everything that is natural is in a round form." (qtd. in Lutz, "Circle" 85)
- 9 Alan Kilpatrick 46-47, 55 offers a more extensive description of this Cherokee ritual.
- 10 Dr. J. Houvagh first appears in Thomas King's story "A Seat in the Garden" from *One Good Story That One* 83-94.
- 11 Fee and Flick note in this volume that there is an important intertextual reference at work in this episode. Five hundred years after Columbus, three cars, a red Pinto, a blue Nissan, and a white Karmann-Ghia (235)—the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria—crash into the already-stress-fractured Grand Baileen Dam and break it during an earthquake.
- 12 The purpose of the dance is multi-faceted and has also changed over the years. Initially, it enshrined the fundamental aspects of Plains Indian life: "war and the buffalo hunt" (Holler 180). The principal reason for dancing to the sun was to "secure victory over enemies," although it was also viewed as a way of offering thanks for recovery from "some sickness or trouble" (Holler 42, 69). However, the Sun Dance also served other important functions: for instance, it was an effective mechanism for the redistribution of wealth, providing a means for "the poorer people in the society to obtain the goods needed to survive the extreme Dakota winter" (Holler 180). In addition, studies also confirm that the dance served an important teaching function, "inculcating and preserving the values and mythology of the society" (180).
- 13 Holler 146-47; see also *The Gift of the Sacred Pipe* 62. For an account of the symbolic meaning of the colour black, refer to Black Elk's comments 146.
- 14 The episode cited above not only highlights the importance of the sun, but further derails the Judeo-Christian narrative by suggesting that Coyote, rather than God, is responsible for turning on the light and initiating the circular pattern of night and day, as well as the seasons.
- 15 The role played by the earthquake in King's text recalls Aritha van Herk's rejection of the desire to "fix" the prairie by imposing what Rudy Wiebe described as "great black steel lines of fiction" (259). In response to Wiebe, van Herk asserts that the west has to be "earth-quaked a little, those black steel lines and the looming giant toppled. Not destroyed, oh no, but infiltrated" ("Women" 24). To an extent, her feminist project mirrors that of King's. In this case, however, the earthquake and the flood specifically signal the crying out of the earth. As Fools Crow explains:

"Grandmother Earth is crying out about it [environmental destruction]. She is shaking the land [earthquakes] more and more to tell us how she feels, and to get our attention. Waken-Tanka has told me that the Thunder Being will be sending great floods to show us the great cleansing that needs to go on within people." (qtd. in Mails 67)

WORKS CITED

- Andrews, Jennifer. "Reading Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*: Cross-Border Humor and Laughter." Unpublished essay. 1998.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Berlo, Janet Catherine. "Drawing and Being Drawn In: The Late Nineteenth-Century Plains Graphic Artist and the Intercultural Encounter." In Berlo, Ed. 12-18.
- , Ed. *Plains Indian Drawings 1865-1935: Pages from a Visual History*. New York: Harry N. Abrams in Association with the American Foundation of Arts and the Drawing, 1996.
- Black Elk. *The Gift of the Sacred Pipe*. Ed. Joseph Epes Brown. 1953. Rpt. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982.
- Blume, Anna. "In a Place of Writing." Berlo, Ed. 40-44.
- Brody, Hugh. *Maps and Dreams: Indians and the British Columbia Frontier*. 1981. 2nd ed. Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988.
- Brotherston, George. *Book of the Fourth World*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1992.
- Donaldson, Laura. "Noah Meets Coyote, or Singing in the Rain: Intertextuality in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Studies in American Indian Literature* 7.2 (Summer 1995): 27-43.
- Ewers, John, C. *Plains Indian History and Cultural Essays on Continuity and Change*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.
- Fee, Margery and Jane Flick. "Coyote Pedagogy: Knowing Where the Borders Are in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Canadian Literature* 161/162 (Summer/Autumn 1999): 131-39.
- Gray, James. *Between Voice and Text: Bicultural Negotiation in the Contemporary Native American Novel*. Ph.D. Diss. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995.
- Highway, Tomson. "Nanabush in the City." [Interview with Nancy Wigston] *Books in Canada* March 1989: 7-9.
- Holler, Clyde. *Black Elk's Religion: The Sun Dance and Lakota Catholicism*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
- Hoy, Helen. "Translation of Cherokee." E-mail to the author. 28 July 1998.
- Huggan, Graham. *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
- Kilpatrick, Alan. *The Night Has a Naked Soul: Witchcraft and Sorcery Among the Western Cherokee*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997.
- King, Thomas. *Green Grass, Running Water*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993.
- . *One Good Story, That One*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Lanier, Sidney. *Centennial Edition of the Works of Sidney Lanier*. Vol. 9. Ed. C.R. Anderson and A.H. Starke. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963.
- Lotman, Yuri. *The Structure of the Artistic Text*. Trans. Ronald Vroon. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963.
- Lutz, Hartmut. "The Circle as Philosophical and Structural Concept in Native American Fiction Today." *Native American Literatures*. Ed. Laura Coltelli. Pisa: SEU (Servizio Editoriale Universitario), 1989. 85-97.
- . *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations with Canadian Native Authors*. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1991.

- Mails, Thomas. *Fools Crow: Wisdom and Power*. Tulsa: Council Oaks, 1991.
- Matchie, Thomas and Brett Larson. "Coyote Fixes the World: The Power of Myth in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *North Dakota Quarterly* 63.2 (1996): 153-68.
- Meredith, Howard. *Dancing on Common Ground*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1995.
- Momaday, N. Scott. *The Names: A Memoir*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976.
- Mukerji, Chandra. "Visual Language in Science and the Exercise of Power: The Case of Cartography in Early Modern Europe." *Studies in Visual Communications* 10.3 (1984) 30-44.
- Peterson, Karen Daniels. *Plains Indian Art from Fort Marion*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971.
- Samek, Hana. *The Blackfoot Confederacy 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987.
- van Herk, Aritha. "Women Writers and the Prairie: Spies in an Indifferent Landscape." *Kunapipi* 6.2 (1984): 14-25.
- Vernon, John. *The Garden and the Map: Schizophrenia in Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973.
- Wade, Edwin and Jacki Thompson Rand. "The Subtle Art of Resistance: Encounter and Accommodation in the Art of Fort Marion." Berlo, Ed. 45-49.
- Wiebe, Rudy. "Passage by Land." *The Narrative Voice*. Ed. John Metcalf. Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1972. 257-60.



Manicheans

At the impassable end of beach
where the creek mouth, debris-wracked
sputters over slimy cobbles,
turkey vultures congregate
with their plucked, boiled faces, no-necked
heads ridiculous marbles on a 6 ft. span.

Untouchables at their melancholy chore,
chattel to carrion, labouring for the meat
that perisheth. Offal scoundrels, what is
their recompense? To love thee, garbage, more.
To delve deeper into detritus: rotten salmon,
washed up chopped seal.

Does their demeanor signify mortification?
Inarticulate, they squabble over titbits,

turn from our reproach, loft off.
Two tones on the underside
of each wing; mud and cloud.
Diurnal dualists, they soar dihedral.
In flight, a loveliness far surpassing
that of swans. A contrariness
that endureth
to everlasting.

Your Metaphors Aren't Allegories, Teresa

For from those Divine breasts, where it seems that God is
ever sustaining the soul, flow streams of milk, which
solace all who dwell in the castle.

TERESA OF AVILA, *Interior Castle*

for they just won't serve a teaching,
any teaching,

despite the theologians'
and even your own bold frames.

Silkworm spins out of its crystal palace,
utters and is air.

Christ enters the room
without using a door.

Gender explodes, metaphors meld,
as bridegroom receives the bride

offering her his milky breasts.
But one thing is sure—

all is effortless at the core.
Further down and in

the waters well up
borne without buckets

or handles.

Green Grass, Running Water: Theorizing the World of the Novel

When I tell the story,
a lot of times I like to tell something,
then I find that I switch to another one.
And I couldn't help it.
I got to tell that.
In that way, it takes longer.
But they important stories anyway.

HARRY ROBINSON¹

Dialogic Interactions

Thomas King's short story collection *One Good Story, That One* and his novel *Green Grass, Running Water* both pay homage to the distinctive voice of the Okanagan storyteller, Harry Robinson. *Green Grass, Running Water* also provides a thoroughgoing critique of the literary theories of Northrop Frye, literary theories that dominated Canadian and Anglo-American literary criticism between the publication of *Anatomy of Criticism* in 1957 to Frye's death in 1991. The influence of Robinson's voice is clear in King's own (written) storytelling. But the oral tradition out of which Robinson speaks is both a mode of artistic expression, incorporating principles and aesthetics of Native verbal art, and part of a broader social context. Above all, the stories, as Robinson observes, should be enjoyed. "That is how you learn," he says, "That is, if you enjoy the stories" (*Nature Power* 8). When Robinson tells stories, he is theorizing the world. His storytelling ultimately moves beyond either written or spoken word to tell us something about life as he has experienced it. The stories reveal knowledge as narrative. Moreover, they show how Robinson's world is experienced through several language and cultural systems—Okanagan, English, oral and written, for example.

His collections of stories, *Write It On Your Heart* and *Nature Power*, are part of the dialogue between those languages and cultural systems. *Green Grass, Running Water*, a co(s)mic creation narrative told from a First Nations (Coyote) perspective, uses humour to create another sort of dialogue, a dialogue between oral and written, between Native and Christian creation stories, and between literary and historical discourses.

Like Robinson, King writes theory by telling, or in this case, writing, stories. King draws from oral tradition to incorporate aspects of Native storytelling into a highly contextualized and literate novel. A substantial source of King's reworking of oral storytelling performance within the context of "high" literature, I suggest, originates in the stories of Harry Robinson. While Robinson "tells" us theory, King writes theory by telling stories within what appears to be a post-modern novel. The novel itself mirrors Lee Maracle's claim that theory cannot be separated from story. She says that, "There is a story in every line of theory" (88). King's apprehension in *Green Grass, Running Water* of theory as narrative, or as narrativized, also emphasizes the differences between Native and non-Native ways of knowing the world. He brings together Western theory and Native theory in a way that creates a dialogue between the two.

King's storytelling is saturated in dialogue; the storied dialogues shared between writer and readers resemble and resonate with the kinds of dialogues that storyteller and audience share in oral storytelling performances. Native storytellers like Robinson and King theorize their world by telling stories. Their theory, therefore, is interactive and dialogic, rather than monologic. This kind of Native literary theory sees novels as an open genre. The first part of this paper examines some of the connections between Native oral tradition and King's writing, and suggests the continuity of Native oral tradition within the novelistic form. King uses an interactive and dialogic literary theory to dismantle the kind of theory that sees novels as closed systems. He writes Northrop Frye and structuralist literary poetics into *Green Grass, Running Water*, for example, in a way that suggests viewing Western theory through the lens of Native experience and traditions, rather than the other way around. What if, instead of reading the novel as a literary exercise, one reads it in the context of oral storytelling tradition? What happens if one takes for granted, as Robinson does, that stories are real? What if one assumes that Natives have always been writing novels in one way or another?

Robinson's literary influence on King was, as King himself says, "inspirational."² When one reads King's earlier novel, *Medicine River*, and compares it with *Green Grass, Running Water*, Robinson's impact is obvious. Changes in the style of the dialogue, including the way King's narrator seems to address readers and characters directly (using the first person), in the way traditional characters and stories from Native cultures (particularly Coyote) are adapted, and especially in the way that each of the distinct narrative strands in the novel contains and interconnects with every other, reflect Robinson's storied impact. The "oral" influence of Robinson on King's writing, however, paradoxically comes through written texts.³ This irony is perhaps reflected in King's own multi-faceted translations and recreations of various stories and characters from different Native cultural traditions. King connects Robinson's Okanagan Coyote with stories from the Blackfoot⁴ of Alberta, and the traditions of Thought Woman (Pueblo), First Woman (Navajo), Old Woman (Blackfoot, Dunne-za), and Changing Woman (Navajo).⁵ As Robin Ridington observes of these kinds of culture stories and culture heroes, "They are parts and they are wholes in conversation with each other" (n.p.). The conversation between these narratives in *Green Grass, Running Water* is framed with no real beginning, no middle, and no end—it is a continuous cycle that is always beginning again, as the world itself is constantly being re-created, through story.

King's narrator, the "I" of the text, addresses the reader directly: "you," like Robinson's listening audience, are drawn into the performance, and are ultimately transformed into another character in one of King's stories. Through the process of reading one becomes part of a storied world. The reader, like Robinson's listening audience, thus becomes an active participant in the process of constructing "the text." The various written dialogues that are created and carried on throughout *Green Grass, Running Water* suggest a dialogism that reflects oral tradition and First Nations and Native American perspectives of the world. The world is always brought into being, or created, through story.

The word "dialogism" also brings to mind Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the novel itself as an unfinished, developing genre; he suggests a view of the novelistic genre as dialogic process rather than literary product. To get a dialogue really going, however, one needs an intimate relationship between those who speak and those who listen. Dialogue by its nature thus privileges local and regional narratives over universal and global meta-narratives.

When that dialogue is presented as a First Nations conversation between Native storytelling traditions and a literary novel, it reveals how a storyteller approaches each telling of a story as simultaneously new and old.⁶ It reveals a dialogue with the past that moves into the present, a history of Native tradition that now includes European elements within it.

Green Grass, Running Water plays with chaos. It resists externally imposed structures from Western cultural and literary traditions and it juxtaposes Native oral traditions against Western written traditions. Native stories interconnect with the literary works of American and Canadian authors like Melville, Hawthorne, Cooper, and Frye, among others, with the Christian creation story, mainstream history, and with a host of storied icons from popular culture, including John Wayne and Marilyn Monroe. By juxtaposing these different narratives, fragmented texts contextualize each other, creating meaning in gaps that cannot be read linearly. Consequently, another voice “speaks” to the reader: Native reality consistently intrudes on the carefully constructed realities of Western tradition. By drawing on his or her knowledge of different characters, events, and discourses, the reader is drawn into apparent chaos and confusion to become part of the performance. By playing on the interconnectedness of a wide range of stories, King shows how meaning is always process-driven and consensual—how it is inherently dialogic.

The conversation that King sets up between oral creation story, biblical story, literary story, and historical story resembles the dialogues that Robinson sets up in his storytelling performances. These include the incorporation of modern-day European elements into old stories—telling us how Coyote’s son and Neil Armstrong both traveled to the moon, for example, and how white people were already there at the time of the Okanagan creation. Ridington notes, “Conversation between the myriad human and non-human persons of a storied world is at the heart of Native American poetics” (n.p.). The intimate relationship between human and non-human worlds of experience is reflected in King’s novel where Coyotes and dogs “commune” with Old Woman, Thought Woman, and Changing Woman. Ridington, however, uses the word poetics to mean more than just the formal properties of the text; he uses it “to mean the ways in which people create meaning through language” (n.p.). This meaning, as Bakhtin suggests, lies in dialogue. Since Native American poetics, through oral tradition, emphasizes dialogue and dialogism, why wouldn’t we, in the

twentieth century, expect Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Fenimore Cooper, Northrop Frye, John Wayne and the Lone Ranger to turn up in a novel written by a First Nations author?

But Melville, Cooper, and Frye are written into *Green Grass, Running Water* in a way that suggests they are part of contemporary Native literary tradition. It is their presentation as part of a particular narrative perspective, however, that constructs them in this way. King translates stories from the Bible, as well as canonical Canadian and American literary texts into the context of a Native novel. The issue of translation is particularly complicated because, in this instance, both “sides” of the translation use the same language—English—but they are not necessarily writing out of the same cultural traditions. First Nations texts with highly literate contexts can create dialogues with a wide variety of other contexts, just as orally told stories constantly absorb and transform their own context.

King’s Dr. Hovaugh, for example, focuses on how “In the beginning all this was land. Empty land” (78). Hovaugh’s story suggests the European conceptualization of Canada as empty wilderness—a land devoid of everything, including Indians, before the whites arrive. Hovaugh then tells what he considers the “long and boring story” of how “our” Indians came to be at the mental institution (78). Canadians, of course, have long considered their history (and literature) as “boring,” especially when compared to those of their neighbours to the south. Babo, in contrast, tells a Native story of creation, beginning with how Thought Woman falls from the sky (75-76). This story has its source in storytelling tradition, in fiction, while Hovaugh’s focuses on the “facts” as he sees them. Babo, the four old Indians, and Coyote, all point out the importance of getting the story right. Stories are powerful entities. When the story is not quite right, Babo repeats it, noting, “That’s not right either. I better start at the beginning again” (76). But just as Babo and the four old storytellers never know where to begin their narratives, they never quite get to the end of them either. The stories defy teleology as they float from one place in the text to another, continually generating new meanings.

Babo has told Sergeant Cereno earlier that the escaped Indians were women, not men. They are, in fact, Indian goddesses who tell stories and, through the stories, create realities. Babo’s favourite is the creation story. This story, however, like the story of the old Indians themselves, keeps escaping the confines of Western tradition—just as the old Indians slip

away from Dr. Hovaugh's cultivated garden. It is the same story that King, or his narrator, is telling us now. But the question of who, exactly, is narrating the story is a slippery one. Is it Coyote, the "I," of the text, or is it King himself? The ambiguity that surrounds this narrator reflects the problematic underpinnings of Native identity: who really is speaking and how is s/he situated in the text, and in the community?

King situates himself carefully as a storyteller. He tells a Native story within the context of what he knows (academic discourse, literature, history, popular culture, and so on) and is careful *not* to tell us about certain things. The Sundance, for example, is alluded to but not described, and it is pointed out that recording and photography are forbidden. These small pieces of information are revealed throughout the narrative, but it is left to the reader to connect them with King's role as a member of the Native community.

Circling the Bush Garden

Green Grass, Running Water requires participants, readers, to interact with it. In dialogue with the text, the reader moves between the world of the novel and the world as experienced. The open-ended and dialogic quality of the storytelling contrasts with the literary theory of one of King's central characters, Dr. Joe Hovaugh, whom King models on Northrop Frye. As one reads the different stories within *Green Grass, Running Water*, it becomes more and more clear how interconnected they are, and how difficult it is to separate one from another. Their web-like interconnectedness, and their ability to absorb new elements, implies a system of thought that is inclusive rather than exclusive. This is an open work of literature, rather than a closed one.

Hovaugh's unease with the Canadian (literary) landscape leads, King's narrative suggests, to his compulsion to search out "occurrences, probabilities, directions, deviations" (39). Through the character of Hovaugh, *Green Grass, Running Water* alludes in a variety of ways to Frye's extensive schematization of literature in books such as *The Anatomy of Criticism*, *The Great Code*, and *The Bush Garden*. The narrator observes how Hovaugh felt that "Things in Canada seemed slightly wild, more out of hand, disorderly, even chaotic. There was an openness to the sky and a wideness to the land that made him uncomfortable" (260). Frye has written extensively of a "garrison mentality" that permeates Canadian literature. The wild physical environment (or nature, of which Indians are seen as a part and settlers are not) is ominous seen from a (civilized) perspective. In an attempt to create order

from out of potential literary chaos, out of wildness, Frye schematizes and classifies literature. But Frye's structuralist theory reveals a closed system. Meaning, whether in literary texts or in general, arises from relationships between elements within the system. It is based on oppositions, and the referent, the "real" world, exists somewhere outside the system. Thus the literary text has less to say about the outside world than it does about some thing called "literariness."

Frye's emphasis on the structural and synchronic elements of a text, and his emphasis on the importance of archetypes and myths rather than history, suggest, among other things, that historical progression has ended. Hovaugh's mystical and reclusive retreat to his mythical garden also suggests his own escape into timelessness, into a world of his own mythic making. Ironically, however, the four Indians have also managed to slip away from the confines of linear and chronological time to create their own histories, their own versions of reality. In *Green Grass, Running Water*, Hovaugh develops maps and charts, and correlates natural catastrophes to the old Indians' various escapes from his institution. The events of the old Indians' narrative history, however, are important to him only because they function to reveal the system as a whole. For Hovaugh, it is the pattern that is crucial. "It's a pattern," he says of the Indians' disappearance and he struggles to make sense of that pattern in terms that he can understand (40). The possibility that he has contributed to the catastrophes that the old Indians cause because of his inability to see them for who they are never enters his mind. The Indians "fix" things—disrupting Hovaugh's patterns—because they need to restore some balance to a world where Natives and their ways no longer seem to exist, and where white monologues have taken over.

Dr. Joe Hovaugh is not only Northrop Frye, but also Jehovah, able to describe (from above) a mythical Biblical creation and divination (*The Great Code*). He cultivates his garden of literary theory carefully in Canada, lest wildness take over (*The Bush Garden*). He then charts his course towards Parliament Hill using the "literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogic" (*Green Grass* 324) modes of literary expression that Frye develops in *The Anatomy of Criticism* (72). In the place of a wild and chaotic land, Hovaugh has created a carefully manicured garden where tropes and conventions behave as they should. The problem is that the Native keeps going wild. And just as the four old Indians keep escaping the confines of Western institutionalization, King's text self-consciously defies categorization in Frye's terms.

In Frye's schema, the mythical mode operates out of the grammar of mythical archetypes. Myth provides a universal model of literature, but only within a structuralist universe. This mythical mode then aligns itself with the language of literature. Collectivity, history, and culture are not parts of this discourse; reality lies outside the system. But, in *Green Grass, Running Water* floating imagery replaces mythic archetypes. The reader experiences history continuously beginning and ending, beginning and ending again, through a series of cycles. The distinctions between myth and story, and between myth and reality, in these cycles of narrative, collapse as Coyote dreams stories into reality.

When Coyote dances in and out of creation stories (244) anything is possible. As Coyote thinks or dreams up something, anything can happen: reality is changed. For Frye, however, form is more important than (real) content. And satire requires both humour and "an object of attack" (Frye *Anatomy* 223-25). The Native American writer, Gerald Vizenor, however, argues that the comic operates at a collective, rather than individual, level. Native satire appears to be something different from what Frye describes. It is always connected to the trickster. This satire has an attitude that Vizenor describes in *Narrative Chance* as comic, and it is based on what he describes as chance, rather than system. When Vizenor argues that the trickster is based on chance, he connects Native satire with post-modernist notions of fragmentation, de-privileging unity in favour of the locally and regionally specific. The trickster always works from out of chaos rather than within an ordered system.

Coyote's dance constantly requires the "I" of the narrator to participate in the collective performance of storytelling. King's recreation of myth and the idea of mythic archetypes to include stories and icons from popular culture, stories from the Bible, and from canonical literary works, reconstructs the idea of myth as part of a changing and vital tradition. Myths contain storied realities. Coyote myths play with chaos—with the narrative chance that Vizenor argues also "lessens the power of social science and humanism" (192)—and defy schematization. Thus, King's kind of mythic literature runs counter to a Western literary tradition that is built on "occurrences and probabilities and deviations" of "literal, allegorical, tropological, anagogic" modes of expression.

Even symbols, which Frye describes as "any unit of any literary structure that can be isolated for critical attention" (*Anatomy* 71) mean something

culturally different in *Green Grass, Running Water*. When questioned about the meaning of the floating imagery, the “I” of the narrator simply says, “That’s the way it happens in oral stories” (293). Archetypal figures like God, and Adam and Eve are transformed to fit their new situations. They consequently engage in dialogue with a Native creation. This kind of dialogic creation contrasts with the structuralist approach of disregarding situation or context (locally specific Native literature, history, and culture, for example) in favour of the universal archetype. Frye says, “In all literary verbal structures the final direction of meaning is inward. In literature the standards of outward meaning are secondary” (*Anatomy* 74). In such a closed system, myths and archetypes are universalized categories, just as the Indian becomes a kind of universal archetype for Hovaugh. Consequently he is unable to describe the Indians who have lived with him for years, and he cannot even guess at how old they are.

In Hovaugh’s carefully constructed world, meaning lies in circular and closed systems. Thus he draws a “deliberate circle around Parliament Lake.” He then draws another, and another (324). King’s narrator then describes Indian “gifts” and white “gifts” for us (327), defining each in a play on paradigmatic opposites (327). Real Indians don’t exist in this system. But in the novel Hovaugh’s organization of the world ultimately reveals itself as petrified and static. His is a world where circles are no longer cycles—where circles construct borders around knowledge. His world, unlike the world of the old Indians, exhibits a garrison mentality.

The differences between the four old Indians are as substantial as their similarities. For one thing, they all come from different Native cultures. But the differences between them are finally like the differences between white and Native. King sets them up in such a way—through chance—that the oppositions refuse to fully reconstitute themselves. All kinds of differences show themselves as interconnected, rather than opposed to each other. And it is through storied dialogues that they reveal their connections.

Frye, the story of *Green Grass, Running Water* suggests, plays God with literature just as Hovaugh plays God with the lives of the Indians. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye argues that the context of literature is not the world. But the stories that the old Indians tell keep slipping into the world as experienced, into reality. Literature, in a structuralist system, rarely reveals new content or experience, but merely new ways of perception. This inward movement is related to the aesthetic: Frye states, “The reason for

producing the literary structure is apparently that the inward meaning, the self-contained verbal pattern, is the field of responses connected with pleasure, beauty, and interest" (*Anatomy* 74). And he goes on, "In literature . . . the reality-principle is subordinate to the pleasure-principle" (*Anatomy* 75). The illusion of reality is created through the construction of universal, and psychologically real archetypes. The old Indians, according to Hovaugh, are, therefore, "really" dead. But in King's narrative, stories create reality; words have the power to affect the world in ways that go beyond "pleasure, beauty, and interest." And so the old Indians live on.

Hovaugh, however hard he tries, cannot make any real sense out of the patterns that the old Indians make. Part of the confusion lies in his apparent unwillingness to acknowledge that the old Indian archetypes might be "real." As they would in oral tradition, the old Indians in *Green Grass*, *Running Water* keep turning up in new forms and new guises, re-creating reality as they go along. In distinguishing between oral and literate modes of discourse, Frye separates literary (figurative) and "ordinary" uses of language.⁷ Literally, the old Indians should no longer exist. But the belief in a literal language can encourage and deceive one into believing in the transparency and objectivity of language as a form of neutral communication. In contrast, within a self-consciously metaphoric (and metonymic) worldview such as Robinson's and King's, no division between the literal and figurative seems to exist. Coyote is here and now. The story that one tells here and now can have repercussions somewhere else. Linguistic objectivity is not taken for granted. Language is always subjective, always contexted, and always material.

In *Green Grass*, *Running Water*, the literary world and the real world are inseparable, just as in Robinson's stories human and animal worlds and story and reality are interconnected. As King's characters fall into other stories, other realities, they move between narrative forms, and between media: Alberta, Charlie, and Lionel are watching the same movie Western that Eli is reading. The four Indians from the mental institution are in the televised movie story too. The four Goddesses have fixed the movie, fixed things for the benefit of the Indians, but they have to harmonize things again because the cavalry keeps returning (186). Whites keep tipping the balance—dialogue keeps becoming monologue, the text suggests. The story has to change so that reality changes. Here is a realism that theorizes the world through storytelling.

Oral stories, literature, film, and reality contaminate each other's narratives. As the author/narrator inserts himself into the story (the "I" of *Green Grass, Running Water*), he moves between narrative events and what appear to be narrativized storytelling performances. In the outer frame is the Coyote story where Hawkeye, Ishmael, Robinson Crusoe, and the Lone Ranger interact in an apparent storytelling circle. This story ends, only to begin again. This story permeates and slips into the narrative where Alberta, Charlie, and Lionel are trying to get on with their lives in Blossom, Alberta. King creates a dialogue between different cultural stories. He shows us that the question of otherness is a question of perspective. What we think of as otherness or difference is always relational; multiple characters, stories, and theories contextualize each other in the real world in meaningful ways. Ultimately, King's novel shows how First Nations storytelling continues to theorize the world through a Native literature written in English. But just as we are not accustomed to hearing stories as answers to questions, we are not accustomed to reading stories as theory.

Of Tricksters and Transformations: Language Games

By playing with stories that have no beginnings, middles, and endings, King maintains the dialogic fluidity of oral storytelling performance in a written text. These are stories influenced by oral literature in a variety of ways. In addition to the storied recursivity of the narrative as a whole, several aspects of King's translation of oral performance into writing reveal the complexity of the relationship between the English language and Native cultures. King uses the English language to translate Native worldview. But language is a kind of spatial construct. Written language separates and contains the world in specific sorts of ways, and translating between the oral and the written suggests the same kind of meaningful displacements that occur in the translation between different languages.

King manipulates the sound of certain names in a way that requires the reader to read the text out loud. He emphasizes the sound of the names as puns so that only through their auralty does the reader understand the reference. In order to "get" the reference, one has to speak the words out loud, and only then do "Louis, Ray, and Al," for example, reveal themselves as "Louis Riel"—thereby suggesting connections to yet another narrative thread. Other names that function the same way in *Green Grass, Running Water* include Joe Hovaugh (Jehovah), Sally-Jo Weyha (Sacajawea), and the

Nissan, Pinto, and Karmann-Ghia (Columbus's Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria). In conjunction with the focus on the narratorial "I," and implied "you," of the text, such features maintain oral resonances in the process of writing. They resemble, in a highly literate context, the "interfusional" spirit of Harry Robinson's writing where, as King has observed, the stories resist being read silently (see King, "Godzilla").

The names, however, do more than insist on simple oral pronunciation. In each case, as soon as the reader enunciates the words out loud, there is the suggestion of an assumed addressee or audience. No one usually speaks to him or herself. Embedded into the importance of names, therefore, is another aspect of storytelling performance. In creating a dialogue, or conversation, with the text the speaker/reader/listener enters into a highly contextualized discourse where every name suggests a story, and every story suggests yet another story. As Ridington says, "Native stories are more than about the world. They actually create it. They are parts and they are wholes in conversation with each other" (n.p.). And Dennis Tedlock notes, "Storytellers can talk *about* stories, but their observations and speculations come from accumulated experience at hearing and telling stories" (15). Thus, a storyteller's observations and speculations are often inferred and carry with them an element of presupposition. The storyteller does not tell all he or she knows, or explain the meanings of names, places, and things. There is an assumption of a common matrix of cultural knowledge, and invoking words—names and places—suggests that shared epistemology. In King's novel, that sharing covers a broad spectrum of cultural knowledge.

Joe Hovaugh's name/story resonates with the biblical senses of Jehovah, and with the literary analogies of Northrop Frye at the same time. Of course, part of that resonance also lies in the fact that Frye worked extensively with the Bible. The story of Louis, Ray, and Al connects with the narrative of Louis Riel, and also resonates with the place of Nietzschean theory in an Indian theory/story—the Dead Dog Café bringing to mind Nietzsche's famous words that "God is dead," or at least contrary in Blackfoot country.⁸ It also brings to mind the nihilism inherent in the myth of the vanishing Indian. None of these stories is separable from another, and the names themselves conjure up the stories. Sometimes the stories range far apart in place and time. Their multiple interconnections imply the syncretic and transformative abilities of oral stories. They are interpreting an ever-changing world by integrating new elements into old narratives.

In one of Robinson's stories Coyote, who is not Coyote yet, has a conversation with God and chooses his name. Before he chooses his name, as Ridington points out, "Coyote embodies paradox. His name is not a name that means something. How can he have a name that is not a name and still be Coyote before he has been given it as a name?" (n.p.). The name that Coyote chooses determines his role in the world. Since he has arrived late to the "name-giving place" (*Write It* 53), he has to choose between the name KWEELSH-tin, the name for Sweathouse, and the name Shin-KLEEP, the name for Coyote (*Write It* 60). The power that he gets when he chooses to be Shin-KLEEP is the power of Coyote; the "essence" of Coyote's being cannot be separated from the word, or the name, itself. As Ridington explains it, "No matter what his name and job description, Coyote retains his essential nature." (n.p.). But Coyote's nature is one that repudiates essentialism: he has the power to change things around, to transform reality and himself, in ways that are limited only by his imaginative abilities to conjure up stories. Even his choice of a name moves away from ideas of essence, given the spiritual associations of the name for Sweathouse, the name and identity that Coyote rejects. Coyote's essential nature, it could be said, is a storied one that contains multiple realities. Stories that feature Coyote, or stories that are created by Coyote, make him who he is.

In King's story, the trouble starts with Coyote Dream choosing his name and his identity as an upper-case GOD that corresponds with the name. The discussion over names and identity at the beginning of the book resembles Robinson's story about how Coyote chooses his name and gets to be Coyote. The similarity between the two stories is so striking that it is possible King may have been inspired to write this passage by Robinson's Coyote story. One's identity, both of these narratives imply, comes out of the dialogue between words and their apparent essences, as well as through the relationship between different words and worlds of experience. In Robinson's story, Coyote only has two choices left to him. The chief tells him:

"There's only two left,
but you not going to have them both.
You can have only one of them."

So Shim-ee-OW didn't know what to say.
He don't know what to do and what to say.
So the Chief told 'em,

"All right, I can explain how you're going to be
 if you're KWEELSH-tin,
 that is, if you're Sweathouse.
 And I can explain how you're going to do,
 How you're going to be if you're shin-KLEEP."
 That's Coyote.

(WIOYH 60)

In King's novel, Coyote and his dream argue about names and identity as well:

Who are you? Says that Dream. Are you someone important?
 "I'm Coyote," says Coyote. "And I am very smart."
 I am very smart, too, says that Dream. I must be Coyote.
 "No," says Coyote. "You can't be Coyote. But you can be a dog."

(1-2)

In both instances there can only be one Coyote. Coyote, culture hero and trickster, however, reveals that language, words, are as deceptive and tricky as he is.

Stories are not always what they appear to be on the surface. Their form can even disguise meanings. The stories constructed through Coyote's dog dream, as they float in and out of their written contexts, play with language in a way that resembles what Vizenor describes as "trickster discourse." But unlike Vizenor's conceptualization of post-modernist trickster discourse, which, like Frye's literary theory, remains grounded in the separation between language and reality, language seems connected to material reality for King. And Coyote creates both the stories and his audience. King observes, "As Native storytellers have become bilingual—telling and writing their stories in English, French, Spanish—they have created both a more pan-Native as well as a non-Native audience" (Introduction to *All My Relations* ix). Jeannette Armstrong, in her discussion of traces of Okanagan language and worldview in her own writing, observes, "In the Okanagan language, perception of the way reality occurs is very different from that solicited by the English language. Reality is very much like a story: it is easily changeable and transformative with each speaker" (191). The development of a First Nations English that reflects Okanagan rhythms and worldview, Armstrong suggests, is more often found in colloquial and "Rez English" than it is in the formal style of academic writing. But Rez English and the idea of trickster discourse are connected, at least in part, through a collective kind of (Native) worldview. Vizenor emphasizes that the sign of

the trickster is the site of meaning because it is held in common by a community of people. But, non-Natives as well as Natives read books like *Green Grass*, *Running Water*, and meaning is therefore created not so much through the signs themselves as it is in the dialogue between them.

As King's narrator says, "There are no truths, Coyote . . . Only stories" (326). This comment, of course, is as much a reflection on the nature of truth as it is of stories. In this kind of a conceptualization of language, the referent no longer exists outside the system, but is a part of it. Signifier, signified, and referent are interconnected in a way that they are not in structuralist and post-structuralist views of language. This idea of language as real, I suggest, is closer to Native American conceptualizations of the power of words, than the idea of language as a simple "medium" of communication. Rather than mediating between different conceptualizations of reality, language in this view retains the power to influence and construct multiple realities.

Just as Coyote is instructed to "Stick around. This is how it happens" (*Green Grass* 89), the reader has to stick around. He or she has to make sense from the novel after thinking about the stories a little while. As Ridington notes, Coyote epistemology challenges us to think about signs and signification differently. The storyteller is engaging in a conversation with Coyote and with the reader. The storytelling "I" of King's text suggests the kind of doubly-oriented speech that Bakhtin argues is characteristic of the novelistic genre. Bakhtin divides doubly-oriented discourse into several categories, one of which is dialogue—described by David Lodge as a "discourse which alludes to an *absent* speech act" (33). The speech act that has historically been absent in the discourse of North America is a Native speech act—an Indian voice. It is a presence that is very likely to reveal itself as a story, in narrative form, rather than as a simple speech utterance.

As Coyote and the narrator discuss storytelling, or theorizing, they construct messages about an argument—a theoretical point of view. In this case part of their argument seems to be that one should read stories as theory and as aspects of social process,⁹ rather than as literary play alone. The idea of stories as social process is closely connected with the conceptualization of language as part of material culture. The question of what constitutes history in the context of fictional narrative is closely linked to our ideas about what constitutes truth, reality, and story. As Julie Cruikshank notes, "The writing of history has always involved collecting, analyzing, and retelling stories about the past, yet the very act of collection means that

some stories are enshrined in books while others remain marginalized" (4). She goes on to observe that any kind of history is based on "a selective reading of the past, especially when they [stories] are retold to make meaningful connections in the present" (4). Literary history is, obviously, also a kind of history, and the narratives that this history preserves remain implicated in how stories are connected as both past and present in a contemporary Native reality. King's use of Western literature and theory to re-create a Native story is the kind of social process that bases itself on the experience, rather than the essence, of a Native worldview.

Bakhtin distinguishes the novel from the epic and the poem on the basis of its dialogism, its complexity. But the same sorts of complexity are clearly found in Native storytelling. In his argument that the novel is a vital and living tradition, Bakhtin's words closely resemble descriptions of a vital oral storytelling tradition. He says, "The novel has no canon of its own, as do other genres; only individual examples of the novel are historically active, not a generic canon as such. Studying other genres is analogous to studying dead languages; studying the novel, on the other hand, is like studying languages that are not only alive, but still young" (3). The ability of oral stories to change, to incorporate new experiences into older ones, implies the sort of vitality that Bakhtin writes about. The inclusion of newer, European elements into fresh versions of traditional stories ensures their vitality. When King uses traditional stories in the context of the novel form, the stories themselves are re-created and they simultaneously re-create the world—again and again. The stories continue to theorize, and thus to create, Native reality. Not to blend the new into the old would suggest stasis, the stories frozen through a (printed) moment in time. It would suggest stories as word museums rather than as vital and living, like language and culture themselves.

NOTES

- 1 From an unpublished tape transcription of tapes held by Wendy Wickwire (Tape NMM#5-Jan.28, 1982).
- 2 From an interview with Peter Gzowski on CBC radio, "Morningside," 5 April 1993, reprinted, this volume.
- 3 According to Wendy Wickwire, King was offered audio tapes of Robinson's stories, but he did not take them.

- 4 Note that Blackfoot is the plural used in Canada, while Native Americans from the same cultural group south of the border now use Blackfeet .
- 5 Thanks to Robin Ridington for pointing these out to me. The characters of the four women also turn up in slightly different forms and guises in other Native traditions.
- 6 Wendy Wickwire discusses the variations in Robinson's telling of stories by saying they "illustrate how Harry approached a story freshly each time he told it" (Introduction to *Nature Power* 18).
- 7 This separation of literal and figurative is, of course, characteristic of most structuralist literary criticism. For the differences between Frye's criticism and French structuralism, see Eagleton 94
- 8 In plains Indian culture, some people lived their lives backwards, as contraries (see Hirschfelder).
- 9 Cruikshank examines the role of traditional Yukon storytelling in the context of social process.

WORKS CITED

- Armstrong, Jeannette C. "Land Speaking." *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*. Ed. Simon J. Ortiz. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998. 175-94.
- Bakhtin, M.M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Cruikshank, Julie. *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- . *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*. Toronto: Anansi, 1971.
- . *The Great Code*. Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982.
- Hirschfelder, Arlene. *Encyclopedia of Native American Religion*. New York: Facts on File, 1991.
- King, Thomas, ed. *All My Relations*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990.
- King, Thomas. "Godzilla vs. Post-colonial." *World Literature Written in English* 30.2 (1990): 10-16.
- . *Green Grass, Running Water*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993.
- . *Medicine River*. Toronto: Penguin, 1989.
- . *One Good Story That One*. Toronto: HarperPerennial, 1993.
- Lodge, David. *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Maracle, Lee. "Oratory: Coming to Theory." *Give Back: First Nations Perspectives on Cultural Practice*. North Vancouver: Gallerie Publications, 1992. 85-94.
- Ridington, Robin. "Theorizing Coyote's Cannon: Sharing Stories With Thomas King." *Theorizing the Americanist Tradition*. Ed. Lisa Phillips Valentine and Regna Darnell. University of Toronto Press. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999 (In Press).

- Robinson, Harry. *Nature Power*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992.
- . *Write It On Your Heart*. Comp. and ed. Wendy Wickwire. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1989.
- Tedlock, Dennis. *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Literatures*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.



A Short History of Indians in Canada

(from *Toronto Life*, August 1997)

Can't sleep, Bob Haynie tells the doorman at the King Edward.

Can't sleep, can't sleep.

First time in Toronto?

Yes.

Businessman?

Yes.

Looking for some excitement?

Yes.

Bay Street, sir, says the doorman.

Bob Haynie walks down Bay Street at three in the morning. He loves the smell of concrete. He loves the look of city lights. He loves the sound of skyscrapers.

Bay Street.

Smack!

Bob looks up just in time to see a flock of Indians fly into the side of a building.

Smack! Smack!

Bob looks up just in time to get out of the way.

Whup!

An Indian hits the pavement in front of him.

Whup! Whup!

Two Indians hit the pavement behind him.

Holy Cow! shouts Bob, and he leaps out of the way of the falling Indians.

Whup! Whup! Whup!

Bob throws his hands over his head and dashes into the street. And is almost hit by the van.

Honk!

Two men jump out of the van. I'm Bill. I'm Rudy.

Hi, I'm Bob.

Businessman? says Bill.

Yes.

First time in Toronto? says Rudy.

Yes.

Whup! Whup! Whup!

Look out! Bob shouts. There are Indians flying into the skyscrapers and falling on the sidewalk.

Whup!

Got a Mohawk, says Bill.

Whup! Whup!

Couple of Cree over here, says Rudy.

Amazing, says Bob. How can you tell?

By the feathers, says Bill. We got a book.

It's our job, says Rudy.

Whup!

Bob looks around. What's this one? he says.

Holy! says Bill. Holy! says Rudy.

Check the book, says Bill. Just to be sure.

Flip, flip, flip.

Navajo!

Bill and Rudy put their arms around Bob. A Navajo! Don't normally see Navajos this far north.

Is he dead?

Nope, says Bill. Just stunned.

Most of them are just stunned, says Rudy.

Some people never see this, says Bill. One of nature's mysteries. A natural phenomenon.

They're nomadic, you know, says Rudy. And migratory.

Toronto's in the middle of the flyway, says Bill. The lights attract them.

Bob counts the bodies. Seventy-three. No. Seventy-four.

What can I do to help?

Not much that anyone can do, says Bill. We tried turning off the lights in the buildings.

We tried broadcasting loud music from the roofs, says Rudy.

Rubber owls? asks Bob.

It's a real problem this time of the year, says Bill.

Whup! Whup! Whup!

Bill and Rudy pull green plastic bags out of their pockets and try to find the open ends.

The dead ones we bag, says Rudy.

The live ones we tag, says Bill. Take them to the shelter. Nurse them back to health. Release them in the wild.

Amazing, says Bob.

A few wander off dazed and injured. If we don't find them right away, they don't stand a chance.

Amazing, says Bob.

You're one lucky guy, says Bill. In another couple of weeks, they'll be gone.

A family from Buffalo came through last week and didn't even see an Ojibwa, says Rudy.

Your first time in Toronto? says Bill.

It's a great town, says Bob. You're doing a great job.

Whup!

Don't worry, says Rudy. By the time the commuters show up, you'll never even know the Indians were here.

Bob walks back to the King Eddy and shakes the doorman's hand. I saw the Indians, he says.

Thought you'd enjoy that, sir, says the doorman.

Thank you, says Bob. It was spectacular.

Not like the old days. The doorman sighs and looks up into the night. In the old days, when they came through, they would black out the entire sky.

Peter Gzowski Interviews Thomas King on *Green Grass, Running Water**

PG Over the past couple of years Thomas King has popped up on *Morningside* from time to time, usually along with a couple of other people, to talk about what's new in fiction by Native authors. This morning he's here to talk about a book of his own. The book is *Green Grass, Running Water*. I've already raved about it today. Thomas King is in our Calgary studio. Morning.

TK Morning.

PG Now, you wouldn't have heard my opening remarks because it's still too—we haven't crossed into Alberta yet, but boy, I felt like I was talking cover-blurb stuff. I love this book.

TK Oh, wonderful!

PG Well, who doesn't? I've never seen such reviews, either!

TK Well, they've been okay so far. I tend to be pragmatic about those things and just sort of hold my breath, but so far the reviews have been good.

PG I have to confess it took me a little while to slide into it, you know, I was warmed up and I said, "Oh no, this is another one—it'll be too complicated for me—too abstruse and too magical"—and then all of a sudden I sort of glided in and I found myself laughing and having a wonderful time.

TK Good, well, that's partly what the book is supposed to do, I suppose, is to . . . All novels, I think, are supposed to be entertaining to begin with, and I was trying to make mine that way.

PG One of the reviews I read—Sarah Shear, I think, in the *Globe and Mail*—talked about the complexity, the trick you bring off—the Coyote trick—it's keeping all those plates spinning in the air all at the same time. She says it's like juggling chainsaws, and you catch them all at the

* Originally broadcast on "Morningside," CBC Radio, 5 April 1993

end with the rattling side out. Is it hard to write like that, to keep all that stuff in your head all the time?

TK Well, I don't think I'll do another novel like that. I wanted to do a novel, I suppose, a kind of pan-Indian novel, something that looks at something larger than just the specifics of a local area, something that talks about Native people in general, in North America, in Canada and the U.S. And, yeah, it was, as a matter of fact—I don't do much research for my novels and I never keep notes or cards to tell myself where I am, but on this particular one, when I got halfway through, I discovered that I didn't know where I was, either, and I had to keep a set of cards just to know who had spoken last and who was supposed to speak next. It did drive me a little bit crazy at times.

PG A lot of the scenes are short, and sometimes it's very filmic, it cuts back and forth: one scene will be going on, and you'll bounce over here, and come back over here. Did you write it that way, or did you do it all and break it up later?

TK Yeah, no, I wrote it that way. What happened was, I got into the novel a little ways and I discovered that if I had long chapters I was going to lose the reader between the people who were talking. I was afraid the reader was going to sort of get bored, or, you know, would go off and do something else—like make some toast—and then come back to it and not know where they were, and so what I tried to do was—if you have a deck of cards, you know, you can see each individual card, but if you take that deck and you flip it really quickly it gives you the illusion of movement. Each individual card is a rather short section, but if you snap 'em fast enough then you wind up with this sense of movement, and that's what I wanted to do in the novel.

PG If I talked like a Tom King character I would respond to that by, by—

TK (laughing) Don't do it.

PG No, but I'd ask you something about the university you teach at, or something. I don't know how to characterize the magic touch you have with dialogue, which makes it so real, but people bounce back and forth—*non sequitur* after *non sequitur*.

TK The people that I know best, I suppose—the people around, out in Lethbridge, and many of the people off the reserve, and just my own *family*—that's the way conversations go a lot of times: you have two people who are talking about the same thing, but you'd never know it to

listen to them, but in the end it all comes out all right.

PG Well, let's start with, now—we've got to figure out something—who—
which of the characters is real, which one you made up and where the
resonance is in some of the names. Let's start with the four old Indians,
okay—

TK Oh, the four old Indians, yeah—the Lone Ranger, Ishmael, Robinson
Crusoe and—

PG Hawkeye.

TK Hawkeye, right. Well, I wanted to create archetypal Indian characters. I
wanted to create the universe again, and those characters—

PG Tom?

TK Yes?

PG The Lone Ranger's not an archetypal Indian character.

TK Well, actually, he sort of is, in some kind of a strange way, within North
American popular culture, you know, you've got the Lone Ranger and
Tonto, and you've got Ishmael and Queequeg, and you have Hawkeye
and Chingachgook, and you have Robinson Crusoe and Friday, and
these are all kind of—they're not archetypal characters in literature, but
they're Indian and white *buddies*, I suppose. They're kind of, not buddy
movies, but buddy books, I suppose. But those are just the names that
the old Indians have at the time that we meet them. In actual fact, these
are four archetypal Indian women who come right out of oral creation
stories, and who have been more or less—

PG Ahhh!

TK So each one of the women who open up the various sections that come
out of the oral stories are really those old Indians as they come along,
but they've just been forced to assume these *guises*—by history, by liter-
ature, by just the general run of the world—and so that's what they call
themselves now.

PG So when Babo tells the sergeant who's looking for them that they're
women—

TK Yeah, Babo's right. I mean, Babo's always right. The sergeant's always
wrong.

PG See, sometimes—I want to read it all again, 'cause I'm never sure when
I get all the resonance of the names, and I'm not sure when you're
Coyote-ing me, you know, when you're just *twiggin'* me.

TK Well, that's always a problem. Coyote's there from the get-go, from the

very beginning, and you always have to look over your shoulder when you're dealing with Coyote.

PG Or Tom King, I think.

TK Well, (laughs) Coyote in particular.

PG Can I just run through a few characters who pop up—

TK Sure.

PG —and see where the reson—I want to know whether the resonance is intended or whether you're just playing.

TK Hmmm.

PG But I also—I'm just blurbing on here, and I want to make sure that people get a sense of how this book works. I don't know how on Earth to do that. Let me follow my own curiosity. Dr. Joe Hovaugh—say his name.

TK Joseph Hovaugh, or Joe Hovaugh, as—

PG Jehovah?

TK —as Jehovah is properly called, yes.

PG So that's a God resonance?

TK That's a God resonance, absolutely. I've used Joseph Hovaugh in a couple of stories, now. I just happen to like the name, and what it conjures up, but in this case, of course, Joseph Hovaugh or Joe Hovaugh is the head doctor at a mental institution which—

PG Makes him God.

TK Which makes him God, yeah, sure.

PG Now there's a guy who's building a dam—his name is Clifford Sifton—what are we doing here?

TK Well, this is the nice thing about the book, for me, at least: there are a number of Canadian allusions, and there are a number of U.S. allusions, and not everybody's going to get all of them, but if you get 'em, the book's a lot more fun, and if you don't I don't think it hurts it at all. But Clifford Sifton—who do you think Sifton is?

PG Well, I think Sifton is (laughing) a *bad* guy—

TK Well, he is—

PG —a colonizer, of the Canadian West.

TK Yeah, he is, he is. And he was involved in dams at one time, sort of helped with that Western flood of migration, I think, produced—I'm not sure about this—produced pamphlets, I think, lauding the West and getting people to move out there. So he appears in the book. I thought he should be there. As well as a great many *other* characters.

PG Well, and they just come and they flicker across the screen. There's a whole bunch of tourists—I won't blow the way to figure out that they're Canadian—who show up at the Dead Dog Café.

TK Yes.

PG But they don't serve dog meat there, do they?

TK Well, you know, I'm not sure, uh, you know—maybe it *is* Black Lab.

PG Black Lab. I had a Black Lab. I loved that damn Black Lab. We used to sing—it wasn't singing—and that Black Lab lived to be fourteen.

They're no good for eating, after (laughing)—after three or four years old, eh?

TK That's right. You gotta stew 'em after that—it's no good for general consumption.

PG They don't serve dog!

TK That's right. You're right. They serve . . . well . . . um . . . *beef*, maybe . . .

PG Or maybe Black Lab (laughing).

TK Or maybe Black Lab (laughing).

PG Now these tourists show up, on the bus. One of them's *S. Moody*, called *Sue* by her friends.

TK That's right, that's Sue Moody—

PG And at one point she says she's roughing it.

TK That's right (laughing).

PG And one's *P. Johnson*.

TK Right, right.

PG Called *Polly* by her friends.

TK Polly Johnson. That's right.

PG That's Pauline.

TK Yep, Pauline Johnson.

PG Well, who's *Belany* who's there with them?

TK Archie Belany.

PG Oh, that's—oh, yeah—that's Grey Owl.

TK Grey Owl, right. Right. Grey Owl's along for the tour, looking to find Indians.

PG Right.

TK And of course the last one's John Richardson, the nineteenth-century novelist who was part Ottawa.

PG Was he?

TK Yeah, at least according to the couple of biographies written on

Richardson. Yeah, he was. He didn't make a big deal out of it, particularly, but I thought, you know, with the rest of the group there, I might as well put him on the tour, too—to see the Canadian West.

PG If I keep all this playful talk going, people won't understand that there is real stuff in there—I mean there's a real commentary on the relationship between the Indian people and the people who came later.

TK Yeah, the novel does deal with some of the primary attitudes that Canadians, and, in fact, North Americans have towards Indians, and it also deals with the fact that that line that we think is so firm between reality and fantasy is not that firm at all, that there's a great deal of play in it, and that the line itself is an imaginary line, and that you can have these—that's one of the reasons why you have these historical and literary characters who sort of float across time, in and out of this novel, to affect the present, or at least be a part of the present.

PG Now, there's a Creation myth, or creation—the *theme* of creation—echoes all the way through—

TK Yeah.

PG —in fact, I suppose you could—it's funny: all the reviews, all admiring, all seem to see it through a different lens—

TK Yeah.

PG —but the creation part keeps coming back to you. In my non-Ph.D. view, there was a lot in here about people grabbing hold of other people's myths and distorting them and changing them to fit their own vocabulary, but at the same time about the *universality* of myth. Is that. . . ?

TK Yeah. What I wanted to do when I started writing the novel . . . I started off, not *knowing* this, of course, but working on the assumption that Christian myth was the one that informed the world that I was working with. And the more I got into the novel I discovered that I couldn't work with that: it didn't give me enough freedom to work with my fiction, so all of a sudden one day I thought, my god, why don't I just recreate the world along more Native lines, and use Native oral stories—oral Creation stories—rather than the story that you find in Genesis. So I went back, and I began to use that as my basis for the fiction, and then all I had to, well, not *all* I had to do, but one of the things I wanted to do, was to sort of drag that myth through Christianity, through Western literature and Western history, and see what I came up with—sort of push it through that, that *grinder*, if you will, as Native culture's been

pushed through that sort of North American grinder. And so that's partly what happens, is that you get this movement in each one of the sections, you get this movement through an oral Creation story, through a biblical story, through a literary story, through a historical story, and that repeats itself each of the times in the four sections.

PG So—I'm sorry—the name of the mythic Indian figure—is it Falling Woman?

TK It's First Woman—

PG First Woman, sorry—

TK First Woman—

PG She's—

TK Go ahead.

PG Well, she's *falling* into a lake, but there's a white canoe there which turns out to be the Ark, or some version of the Ark.

TK Possibly more Timothy Findley's version of the Ark.

PG Yeah.

TK Yeah. There are kind of two kinds of stories that exist in oral Creation stories—they're not the only two, but there's what they call an "Earth Diver Story" where the main characters in the drama of Creation come out of the sky and land in the ocean and start things from there. Yet there's another set called "Emergent Stories" in which we have the characters come out of the ground, through tubes and whatnot, onto the surface of the Earth. And I decided I'd work with the "Earth Diver Stories," and so in each of those sections you have this archetypal woman who does come out of the sky, winds up, you know, somehow, in a body of water, and the whole process begins from there. It was kind of nice, too, because it gave me a chance to talk about a more Native sense of the creation of the world within the novel.

PG Now, what's your access to all that Native or that Indian lore? You weren't raised amid it, were you?

TK No, no I wasn't raised, uh . . .

PG Father's Cherokee . . .

TK Father's Cherokee—mother's Greek and a little bit of German. I was raised in a small town in, actually in Northern California, up in the foothills. And, really it began with just being around other Native people when I was in my teenage years. And then I began to sort of make that my field of study, and I did quite a bit of work on oral Creation sto-

ries when I was at university and then, of course, you know, just listening to oral story tellers, and simply hanging out. I spent ten years out at Lethbridge—at the University of Lethbridge—and it's very close to the largest reserve in Canada. I got to listen to Blackfoot storytellers, and Cree storytellers, for that matter, too, so it's just a, kind of a culmination of years of just—just *listening*—and having a good time listening to those stories, too.

PG Where does Harry Robinson fit in?

TK Harry Robinson is a wonderful storyteller, and, as far as I'm concerned, Robinson really is a person who . . . set me going. I'd finished *Medicine River* before I'd read any of Robinson's stuff, and I was working on what I like to call some "voice pieces," where I was trying to recreate the sense of an oral storytelling voice in a written form. And I was having some success, but not much, to be honest. I was working on an anthology at the time and Wendy Wickwire, who worked with Robinson, sent me out some of Robinson's stories, and when I saw those things I was just blown away. I couldn't believe the power and the skill with which Robinson could work up a story—in English: they weren't translated, they were simply transcribed—and how well he understood the power of the oral voice in a written piece. I read those stories and they just sort of turned things around for me. I could see what he had done and how he worked it and I began to try to adapt it to my own fiction. It was *inspirational*—I don't use that word very often, because I think it's so badly misused—but I remember sitting in my office, just sort of sweating, reading this stuff: it was so *good*.

PG What's your own linguistic breadth? There's some Cherokee in here.

TK There is. I wanted to . . . I had a choice of putting in a Native language, or I had the choice of making it up myself. I've got a couple of stories where I simply made it up. I wasn't about to be bothered with people saying, "Is this authentic, or is this not authentic?" I figured if I made it up myself it had to be authentic. But this time around I wanted to pay some attention and some respect to that part of me that was my father's life. So I used Cherokee in there to separate the chapters, and a little Cherokee for a little section that begins the story itself. After the Lone Ranger is done fooling around with how to start a story, then he gets serious, and he breaks into Cherokee at that point.

PG Tell me a bit about the—what do you say—the typography? What's that

alphabet? When we tend to think of Native languages written, we often—or aboriginal languages written—we tend to think of *syllabics* or something, but is this thing an alphabet of its own? Or did you make it up?

TK No, no (laughs) that's a good question to ask—

PG I don't trust you, you know!

TK I know—and you shouldn't. No, it's the Cherokee syllabary. I promise it's that. And my Cherokee is so poor that I had to be very careful to get it right. I'm not even sure that I *did* get it right, but I had a colleague of mine, who's also Cherokee, who speaks and writes and reads it, and he gave me a hand with it, so I'm hoping that it's okay.

PG Did it ever occur to you that another book that opens with the theme of falling has got itself in trouble over playing with deeply felt religious . . .

TK Oh! Oh, yes—yes, no, when I was writing this book—

PG I'm talking about your *Satanic Verses*—

TK I *know* what you're talking about, yeah, actually there's a little bump to Rushdie at the end of the book, when the old Indians are complaining about Coyote not apologizing, and they say, "Remember what happened last time you rushed into a story, and—"

PG Oh, *rushed in*—

TK "—and didn't apologize." (Laughs).

PG I've got to read this whole damn thing again!

TK Yeah, no, I *was* worried about that, and *remain* a little bit worried about that, because I don't know just how much offence you give—in fiction—I mean, obviously you can give *great* offence in fiction—I mean Rushdie's proved that. And it is bothersome, and maybe it's because of the power of fiction—that it can have that effect on people—drive them to the heights of ecstasy, I suppose, and drive them to do all sorts of terrible things.

PG Surely not here. I mean, surely no offence from this book—

TK Well, I would hope not, but I would—

PG Bigots might—

TK Well, yes (laughs) there are enough of those in the world, too.

PG Okay, here's another question about real or not real.

TK Okay.

PG Sally Jo Weyha, Frankie Drake, Polly Hantas, Sammy Hearne, Johnny Cabot, Henry Cortez, C. B. Cologne, Barry Zannos.

TK (Laughing)

PG Are they all *real* actors?

- TK Well, they're real characters, I mean, John Cabot, and Sacajawea, and—you know, these people haven't had any time to be on stage, for the most part—they reside just within our history, and it seemed only natural that you might want to take 'em to Hollywood. I mean, Samuel Hearne probably would have liked to have done a bit part in a movie.
- PG Oh! *Sammy Hearne*! There was no *actor* called Sammy Hearne! That's *Samuel Hearne*!
- TK That's Samuel Hearne. These are all historical characters, for the most part, who wind up there. C. B. Cologne is, of course, Cristobal Colon, the famous mariner who is now running extras in Hollywood—people aren't going to have any clue what this book is about, you know that? (laughs)
- PG (laughing) Okay, you tell 'em—you've got a minute and a half—describe this indescribable book.
- TK I don't know how to describe it. They asked me when they did the dust jacket. They said, "Tom, Tom—please help us out. Could you please tell us what the book is about?" I said, "Jeez, I don't know." And so they did a fairly decent job on the dust jacket. I can't complain.
- PG Well, when you've got your Tony Hillerman and your Leon Rooke and your Margaret Atwood all raving about the book on the dustjacket, you're not doing too bad.
- TK No, it's nice. That's always helpful, too. Although, on my first book Tony Hillerman gave me a nice bump and somebody wrote me a letter and said that they were halfway through the book, after buying it on Tony Hillerman's recommendation, before they realized that no one was going to get shot, and that it was not a murder mystery.
- PG Are you going to move back to Canada?
- TK Yeah—soon as I can. Jobs at universities are tough to come by right now, but we're looking around. I may be in Toronto for the next year. Helen and I are trying to get back . . . we will, we will. It's just a matter of time.
- PG Did you really not start writing seriously until you met Helen?
- TK That's right. That's right, I wrote a short story just to impress her. I had nothing else to impress her with.
- PG She was teaching literature?
- TK She was teaching literature at the University of Lethbridge. We both had gotten there at the same time, and I was desperate to impress her. (laughs) So I showed her a piece of my poetry one night, and she said,

"Uh huh, that's okay," and I thought, "watch this, I'll write a short story!" And so I did and she said, "that one's okay, too," and then I just got, I got dead serious, I mean, I'd been writing before, but not seriously—and away it went. I'm still trying to impress her.

PG Is it working?

TK Yeah, we have two kids and a very nice life. I think I've impressed her.

PG Now, there's a film coming of *Medicine River*?

TK There is a film that's going to be aired either in October or November on CBC Television.

PG Did you write it?

TK I wrote the script for it, yeah. I even had a small part in it.

PG Really? Who do you think you are, Tom Jackson?

TK Well, no, no, I'm not *that*! I wrote a part in for myself and then auditioned for it. It wasn't in the book, but I thought, "I'll write this part in, and I'll write it in in such a way that they can't cut it, and then I'll audition for it." So I did, and Stuart Margolin, who directed the film, either liked my audition, or was laughing so hard he couldn't say no—one of the two—but I got to be in the film. That was fun.

PG Is Graham Greene in it?

TK Graham Greene's in it, Tom Jackson's in it, Sheila Tootoosis, Ben Cardinal—just a whole bunch of people—some really fine Native actors are in the piece. It was a lot of fun to do.

PG I was just thinking—*Green Grass, Running Water*—you couldn't conceivably film it, could you? Because you'd have to throw out forty-two levels of meaning and half the jokes!

TK That's what happens when you do a film script, anyway. Films are never as complex as novels, and I thought when I wrote *Green Grass, Running Water*—I said to myself, "Ah ha! Here's a book that they can't make into a movie!" But actually there's a lot of interest in it, and so I don't know what's going to happen. My great fear is that they're going to come back to me and say, "Would you script it?" and then I'll be in *deep* trouble.

PG I'm just trying to . . . wait a minute . . . who'd do the Lone Ranger? Who'd do Ishmael?

TK You want to do Ishmael?

PG No! (laughs)

TK I'll play the Lone Ranger. (laughs)

PG What's the name of that guy—'cause you use it—the guy who was

always the Indian? . . . Jeff whatsit—what is that guy's name?

TK The guy who was always the Indian?

PG The actor guy.

TK Oh, Portland Looking Bear—

PG No, no, this is in real-life—in the movies. Jeff Chandler.

TK Oh! Jeff Chandler, yeah, Jeff Chandler. Oh yes, there were a number of people who played Indians over and over again. Jeff Chandler, Sal Mineo, uh—

PG (Laughing) Great! I forgot Sal Mineo.

TK Victor Mature, I think, played Indians. Anthony Quinn played Indians. Everybody gets to play Indians except Indians. For good reason—like the book points out, a lot of Indians don't have Indian noses.

PG Well you have your guy get the false nose. He gets a false nose so he can play an Indian—

TK That's right.

PG —and then he nails it to the wall.

TK Yeah, and then he takes it down again because he realizes that he's going to have to wear the stupid thing if he's going to get parts. And that's the way life is, I s'pose.

PG Well, this little fifteen-minute interview's lasted for twenty-five minutes! And I still . . . I just hope we've done justice to the . . . I stole your elk joke—stole the elk substituting for artichokes joke—at the opening of this morning's program.

TK Oh, great, yeah—it's a wonderful dish. You should try it.

PG What, substituting elk for artichoke?

TK You bet! Try it sometime. It's great.

PG At the Dead Dog Café.

TK At the Dead Dog Café.

PG Blossom, Alberta.

TK Yep, yep—I keep hoping that somebody out there is going to open a thing called the "Dead Dog Café" with that menu—I'd go there and eat.

PG (Laughing) Don't hold your breath. Thank you, sir.

TK Thank you.

PG Thomas King, the author, first of all, of *Medicine River*, and *A Coyote Columbus Story*—we haven't talked about that, either—and, most recently—the book we *have* been talking about this morning: *Green Grass, Running Water*.

Robert Ripley and the Eleven Bridges of Wayne, Alberta

Eleven bridges in four miles
cross the loops of Rosebud Creek—
it's written up in Ripley's *Believe it or Not*

I believe it having driven over them
Each bridge is a different colour
and numbered so you can keep track

They will all be closed tomorrow
for the filming of a mini-series
about psychopathic killers
It's a remake of *In Cold Blood*
though I think that Rosebud Creek
would be the place for a new *Citizen Kane*—
maybe the life story of Jesse Gouge
(a real-life name)
who brought coal mining to this valley

A mass murderer could hardly practice his trade
in a town where bridges outnumber people

The *Last Chance Saloon* is closed
—a last chance indeed—
but the *Confectionery and Arcade* is open

The confectionery has a row of candy bars
and its arcade is one pinball machine

Mr. Ripley never actually came to Wayne
for a coke and candy bar
He did all his research without leaving the city
compiling all those trivial wonders
in the New York Public Library

And the miracle remembered around here
never made it into Ripley:
the time old Albert
sold his cattle at a top price
(a wonder in itself)
and celebrated a little in the tavern
then drove to the top of Excelsior Hill
but couldn't shift back into third

Finally he realized
that he'd made it to the summit
in high gear
though most people couldn't make it in second
Believe it or not—
and in Wayne they mostly believed it

Phone Survey

We're doing a phone survey, asking
average people like yourself, attractive, cynical, smart, etc.
people who cook with garlic, who, if married,
it's not the first time. People who have had
2 or more jobs in the last few years.
We want to know what your preferred response is
when you hear,
if in fact you *do* hear
the voices. Shall I clarify?
Voices that converse
on the great unhappiness and failure
that is yours. How often would you swear
you're not drunk, no
but the trees are swaying. We're calling to ask
if you ever get confused and mistake
the swaying of trees for the lapping of water,
so that you can't get your bearing. Is that when
the voices advise you, smooth
as a nail going in. Are there certain words that,
should I say, sneak in from behind, know all
the back entrances? Would you agree
that the secret of their strength
is that they will not let you give in
to your hunger. How often—
all you've said and all you've done, torn
like meat from a bone. Is that when you go out, walk
past lighted windows? Go to a movie? Have a coke?
Or do you drift off till the voices wake you
with a jolt or a slap: "Payback time."
Like a street person by a diner begging for change
who will not let you pass and go in and get your
lousy cup of coffee
though the sign on the diner flashes: OPEN ALL NIGHT.

Are the voices familiar with, say,
streets you walked on as a kid,
torn signs, dead trees?
We're asking if the voices, now or in the past,
have ever told you that you have to go back
to the path by the precipice. Because *that* is your path.
Would you mind answering? Or am I
interrupting something?
Shall I call back later?
What time would be best?

Save-On-Black Hole

We are the dust of long dead stars. Or, if you want to be less romantic, we are nuclear waste.

SIR MARTIN REES, "A Conversation," *New York Times*,
Apr. 28/98

The most unnaturally selected locus in which to procure Astronomer Royal cousin Sir Martin's new book on cosmology (intro by S. Hawking) is the promo shelf in front of the skin & muscle mags adjacent the freeze-dried zone in the local aluminum-box mega-store

Pretty much akin to decoding a metonymic universe from the current multiverse stacked deep in black holes

This one's slurping up fluorescent lite as it slices, dices across the bleary eye tripping, peaking (as we used to say) down aisles of diminishing return.

Here you really are like the cyber-manual astronaut soul-sucked by a "gravitational imprint frozen in space"

You're pasta, astro-babe, low percentage karma, instant "spaghettification" layered, 10-D superstring squeezed thru an "inflationary universe"

And near the low-cue checkout, final buzz of Tim-Oh-Leary time, they'll be pumping in a second, unplugged Steverino "We are stardust" all the way from Yasgur's farm to wide-aisle warehouse bulk-world waiting on options to your choice of slow expanding flushed out heat-death, or vacuum pull Big Crunch returning the entire merchandise, as it were, after its consumption.

Cartographic Lessons

Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* and Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*

As much as guns and warships, maps have been the weapons of imperialism.

J. B. HARLEY, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power" (282)

This essay investigates some of the mapping strategies that are employed in Canadian culture. The question it addresses is: How does Canadian culture colonize and then decolonize the Canadian landscape? I begin by attempting to define the relationship between cartography, the Canadian landscape, and colonial discourse, using mainly Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* to illustrate the connections. Then I examine Thomas King's treatment of land and maps in *Green Grass, Running Water* as part of his subversion of colonial discourse.

My analysis is intended to complement Graham Huggan's study of maps and mapping strategies in Canadian (and Australian) literature, the most substantial work that has been done in the area. Huggan does not treat any First Nations texts.¹ As well, his definition of Canadian literature, as "characterized by the gradual displacement/replacement of a 'cartography of exile' . . . by a 'cartography of difference'" (147), does not include First Nations literature. These omissions or exclusions may be either a cause or an effect of his categorization of European Canadian writers as "post-colonial":² that is as writers who "engage in a dialectical relationship with the colonial history of their respective countries" (xii-xiii). Huggan's analysis is part of a general tendency in European Canadian culture to see itself as the colonized and not as the colonizer. It is a viewpoint which discounts First Nations experience of colonialism. My essay tries to offer a different perspective.

In 1832, as part of a wave of emigration from Britain, prompted by the ending of the Napoleonic Wars and an economic recession, Susanna Moodie

and her husband J. W. Dunbar Moodie immigrated to Canada. Were the term "economic refugee" not so evidently racially coded, it might be applied to the Moodies, for they came to Canada with the hope, if not of making their fortune, then "of bettering [their] condition, and securing a sufficient competence to support [a] family" (Moodie 526). A half-pay officer in the British army, Dunbar Moodie had been given a military land grant of four hundred acres in Upper Canada as part of a land settlement scheme which, following the War of 1812, served as a way of keeping a military presence in Canada without the cost of maintaining a large army. In 1834, the Moodies settled on this land, which had been secured for them in Douro Township, about six miles north of Rice Lake, in what is now Peterborough County.

One day in the mid-to-late 1830s, Susanna Moodie was paid a visit by "our Indian friends," as she calls them. The visit itself was not unusual, for the Moodies and the Mississauga were neighbours of a sort, part of the Moodies' property having "originally been an Indian sugar-bush. Although the favourite spot had now passed into the hands of strangers, they still frequented the place, to make canoes and baskets, to fish and shoot, and occasionally to follow their old occupation." What marks this particular visit in Susanna Moodie's memory is the reaction of the callers to a certain object in the Moodies' possession:

With a large map of Canada they were infinitely delighted. In a moment they recognised every bay and headland in Ontario, and almost screamed with delight when, following the course of the Trent with their fingers, they came to their own lake.

How eagerly each pointed out the spot to his fellows; how intently their black heads were bent down, and their dark eyes fixed upon the map! What strange, uncouth exclamations of surprise burst from their lips as they rapidly repeated the Indian names for every lake and river on this wonderful piece of paper!

The old chief, Peter Nogan, begged hard for the coveted treasure. He would give "Canoe, venison, duck, fish, for it; and more by-and-by."

I felt sorry that I was unable to gratify his wishes; but the map had cost upwards of six dollars, and was daily consulted by my husband, in reference to the names and situations of localities in the neighbourhood. (280-81)

As the geographer J. B. Harley reminds us, maps are not accurate, objective or scientific representations, as we tend to think of them, but rather are "a socially constructed form of knowledge" which operate as "a political force in society." They are like books: instruments of knowledge and of power (277-79). And since the main struggle in imperialism is over land, cartographic representation is, arguably, more crucial to the process of colonization than other forms of cultural representation.

The map scene in Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* actually features two maps, one of which conceals the other. The first is, of course, the Moodies' map of Canada, a palimpsest which over-writes an alternative and prior but also present mode of territorial representation: a Mississauga map of the same area. Testimony of the coexistence of the Mississauga map is provided in Moodie's narrative by the geographical discourse engaged in by her visitors: "they rapidly repeated the Indian names for every lake and river on this wonderful piece of paper." The difference between the Moodies' map and that of the Mississauga is not the degree of their correspondence with the real world, but rather their relative power in that world. The Moodies' map is more powerful because it accompanies European colonial expansion.

In its suppression of First Nations place names in favour of English ones, the Moodies' map already reveals colonial violence. Erasing First Nations geographical and cultural patterns from the Canadian landscape—denying First Nations past and presence—the map legitimates colonial territorial appropriation: the dispossession of First Nations people. Through its naming practices, the Moodies' map also traces a British cultural hegemony over the Canadian landscape, inscribing the same all-encompassing and homogenizing identity construction of the nation as Susanna Moodie's narrative, which, likewise, upholds the myth of national origin that the British are Canada's sole founding people: "Canada! . . . The offspring of Britain, thou must be great" (73).³

Moodie herself also actively participates in colonial naming practices. Invoking the myth of the (so-called) new world as a "second Eden" (36), a myth which removes all traces of First Nations from the Canadian landscape, she casts herself and her husband in the role of humankind's first progenitors and begins, in good cartographic fashion, to (re)name places:

The pure beauty of the Canadian water, the sombre but august grandeur of the vast forest that hemmed us in on every side and shut us out from the rest of the world, soon cast a magic spell upon our spirits, and we began to feel charmed with the freedom and solitude around us. . . . We felt as if we were the first discoverers of every beautiful flower and stately tree that attracted our attention, and we gave names to fantastic rocks and fairy isles, and raised imaginary houses and bridges on every picturesque spot which we floated past during our aquatic excursions. (278-79).⁴

As W. H. New shows, the language of starting over (as in Moodie's figuring of the Canadian landscape as a new world Garden of Eden) occurs repeatedly in European Canadian literature. And while, as with Moodie, it "suggests

the possibility of a reclaimed innocence," it also "codes a set of ingrained attitudes" (23). In Moodie's case, these include a view of land as private property and of the (already Edenic) Canadian landscape as requiring some upgrading: the imposition of British names and of marks of European occupancy on it.⁴

The Moodies' map of Canada may have been the one of Upper Canada produced by the Canada Company in 1830.⁵ Or perhaps it was an 1833 map of the British North American Provinces.⁶ Both of these maps, as well as many others of the period, display the township grid. An apparatus of colonial power, the grid map served as a medium of appropriation of First Nations territories and also as an open declaration of the right to European settlement. With the grid marking townships into concessions and lots, it also gave further legitimacy to immigrants' claims of land ownership, allowing them to make statements such as the following by Susanna Moodie: "It was mid-winter; the Indians had pitched their tent, or wigwam, *as usual, in our swamp*" (292, emphasis added)—in other words, authorizing them to say "This land is my land. Here are its boundaries."

Douro Township had been surveyed in 1823 (Gentilcore and Donkin 52), which opened it up for European settlement. The magical transformatory powers of the grid survey are proudly conveyed by the authors of *Land Surveys of Southern Ontario*:

From an unmapped and unknown wilderness, the southern parts of [Ontario] were transformed into a landscape bearing the marks of a new occupancy, many of which were creatures of the survey: the checkerboard of rectangular fields, the alignment and spacing of farmsteads along the fronts of the concessions, the allowances for roads at regular intervals, even the shapes and forms of towns. (Gentilcore and Donkin 1)

Douro Township, and hence the land the Moodies settled on, had belonged to the Rice Lake Mississauga until 1818, when it was surrendered (Patterson 220).

The grid laid out by the rectangular land survey imposed a new space discipline on the land which had very concrete material effects on people's bodies. In 1550, at the time of initial contact with Europeans, the First Nations population of what is now Southern Ontario is estimated to have been 65,000 (Trigger 41). In 1840, by which time well over half of Southern Ontario had been surveyed into townships, the First Nations population of the whole province was a mere 8000. In the meantime, immigrant population, which had been steadily increasing, had reached almost half a million

(Surtees, "Land" 112). The decline in First Nations population was owing to disease, famine, and "resettlement." The case is well illustrated by the situation of the Rice Lake Mississauga in 1818, at the time they ceded their land in return for "Cloathing in payment every year" (quoted in Surtees, "Land" 113). Nearly all of the surrounding land had been ceded much earlier, in 1784 and 1785 (Patterson 220), and much of it had been surveyed before the turn of the century (Gentilcore and Donkin 30-86). The desperate state of the Mississauga is indicated by the words of Chief Buckquaquet, spoken at the time of the surrender:

If I was to refuse what our Father has requested, our Women and Children would be more to be pitied. From our lands we receive scarcely anything and if your words are true we will get more by parting with them, than by keeping them—our hunting is destroyed and we must throw ourselves on the compassion of our Great Father and King. (quoted in Surtees, "Land" 113)

Thus the land of Susanna Moodie's "Indian friends" "passed into the hands of strangers."

In Moodie's analysis, "a mysterious destiny involves and hangs over [the Indians], pressing them back into the wilderness, and slowly and surely sweeping them from the earth" (299), the phrase "mysterious destiny" both mystifying and naturalizing the suffering and death of thousands of First Nations people brought about by European immigration to Canada. As Daniel Francis observes, the myth of the vanishing Indian was a very expedient notion: "[Indians] occupied land of value to farmers. In the minds of many Whites they presented a threat to the peaceful expansion of settlement. . . . It was convenient that they should simply disappear" (59). As Francis also points out, the image of the vanishing Indian persisted in immigrant culture well into the twentieth century, long after the decline in First Nations population was reversed in the 1920s.

"Population bomb ticking on reserves" warns a front-page headline in a recent *Globe and Mail* (Mitchell A-1).⁷ It would have been naive to think that a considerable increase in First Nations population would be a cause for national celebration. The horrified reaction of the mainstream media to Canada's changing demographics is the flip side of the lament for the vanishing Indian: an immigrant population's recurring nightmare of the return of the dispossessed. As Homi Bhabha describes the operations of power in another context, it denotes "the visibility of the subject as an object of surveillance, tabulation, enumeration, and, indeed, paranoia and fantasy" ("Other" 156).

Another population myth which has persisted in Canadian immigrant culture is the myth of the empty continent—a myth which is not unconnected to the township grid. An instrument of inclusion and exclusion, the grid is what marks off “civilization,” or the known, from the “wilderness,” or the unknown—that is land which is still beyond the control of European colonialism. Thus Susanna Moodie speaks of Dummer, a township which had not been completely surveyed until 1831 (Gentilcore and Donkin 53), as a “far western wilderness;” it is “this *terra incognita*” (439). The colonial task is to transform the “wilderness” into “civilization” by imposing European geometrical and cultivated order on it—by surveying, clearing, and settling it. Writing in 1871, about forty years after she first arrived in Canada, this is how Susanna Moodie measures the nation’s “progress:” “The rough has become smooth, the crooked has been made straight, the forests have been converted into fruitful fields, the rude log cabin of the woodsman has been replaced by the handsome, well appointed homestead, and large populous cities have pushed the small clap-boarded village into the shade” (529). As W. H. New observes, Moodie draws on the Bible in this passage (Isaiah 40.4), using it to convey her notion of progress as a European ordering of the landscape, “the result of surveyed edges and the cultivated replacement of the wilderness” (75).

On colonial maps of Canada, land which has not been surveyed appears as a blank, which is sometimes labelled “wilderness.”⁸ Such maps display the power of cartography to erase and dispossess, the blank spaces ignoring current occupancy and ownership of land and appearing ready and available for colonial possession and exploitation. A blank space is also a metaphor for the absence of history, thus supporting the conventional colonial claim, made repeatedly by Moodie, that the history of colonial territories began with the arrival of Europeans. And even when a blank is given a label, such as “Indian Territory” or “Chippawa Hunting Country” (as, for example, on the 1833 Map of the British North American Provinces), the inscription, as Harley argues, serves less as a recognition of territorial integrity than “as a signpost to future colonial expansion” (292). In the case of the huge tract of land described as “Indian Territory” on maps of the early 1830s, most of it was surrendered by the Chippewa in 1836 (Patterson 220).⁹

The myth of the empty continent is also a recurring feature of Canadian immigrant literature. Susanna Moodie inscribes it in her narrative every time she uses the term “wilderness.” Occasionally Moodie is more blunt and

speaks of the “unpeopled forest plains” (28) or “unpeopled wastes” (268) of Canada. Writing about a hundred years later, Stephen Leacock is equally straightforward: the title of the opening chapter of his *Canada: The Foundations of its Future* is “The Empty Continent.” Hugh MacLennan also erases First Nations from the Canadian landscape with his description in the famous opening passage of *Two Solitudes* of the Canadian north as empty tundra: “Nothing lives on it but a few prospectors and hard-rock miners and Mounted Policemen and animals and the flies that brood over the barrens in summer like haze” (2).

As Edward Said observes, colonial culture is remarkably cohesive. Group of Seven paintings depicting a pristine northern wilderness also perpetuate the myth of the empty continent. Nor has the practice been discontinued in the 1990s, a very recent example being the 1997 celebrations of John Cabot’s “discovery” of Canada. The *Maclean’s* article covering the event even features a map of Newfoundland, with Cabot standing beside it, Christ-like, on the water, his outstretched arms a (chilling) reminder of the colonial project. The map is a complete blank, thus anticipating, we might say, the extermination of the Beothuk which resulted from European immigration. In another act of erasure, the article barely mentions the objections raised by First Nations groups to the celebrations (Bergman 14-17).¹⁰

Like other forms of colonial discourse, the colonial map “seeks authorization for its strategies by the production of knowledges of colonizer and colonized which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. The objective . . . is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha, “Other” 154). On colonial maps of Canada, the blank spaces are the signifiers of racial degeneracy, encoding First Nations as an absence or a lack: as savagery or barbarism. The township grid and English toponyms, on the other hand, represent the plenitude or full presence of colonial society: history, culture, civilization.

In her narrative, Moodie maps the identity of colonized and colonizer according to the same formula, while also clearly demonstrating Homi Bhabha’s claim that colour is “the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype” (“Other” 165). In the map scene, the “black heads,” “dark eyes,” and “strange uncouth exclamations” of her Mississauga visitors are the main signifiers of their inferiority. In another scene Moodie celebrates the “racial purity” of her daughter: “Was she not purely British? Did

not her soft blue eyes, and sunny curls, and bright rosy cheeks for ever remind me of her Saxon origin. . . ?" (166). It may be tempting to think patronizingly of Moodie as a person of her own time. If so, it is probably worth considering Thomas King's statement that there are only three images of the Indian: "the dissipated savage, the barbarous savage, and the heroic savage"—that these "represent the full but limited range of Indian characters" in all Euro-North American literature, including contemporary Canadian literature (Introduction 8).¹¹

As Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson state, the colonial practice of conceptually depopulating the landscape—as in the myth of the empty continent or of the vanishing Indian—was a necessary act, for "only empty spaces can be settled" and settlers do not wish to see themselves as invaders (5). This analysis might initiate a reconsideration of the terminology employed in the fields of both "postcolonial" and Canadian literary studies, apparently to indicate the birthplace of writers but also, it would seem, to encode race or ethnicity—terms such as "settler writing," "immigrant writing," and "ethnic writing." While I have used the term "immigrant" to refer to Susanna Moodie, "settler" is the more usual designation, an unsatisfactory term on several counts. Aside from the fact that it is usually employed in an exclusionary manner to designate only European (and often only British) immigrants, it carries with it the implication that First Nations people were not "settled"—that is, were not utilizing the land or, perhaps, were not even present, thus perpetuating the myths of imperial culture.¹² However, the term "immigrant" is itself not entirely satisfactory, for, as "settler" also does, it masks the violence of colonialism. Though any and all terms will be problematic until relations between First Nations and other Canadians cease to be colonial, the term "invader" might be used occasionally as a reminder of Canada's colonial history.

While it continues to perpetuate colonial myths, Canadian immigrant/invader culture is unable to establish the basis for a decolonized society. At the very least, the process of decolonization requires a remembering of Canada's colonial history. Decolonization is a project which Susanna Moodie herself, writing in 1871, just four years after Confederation, urged her adopted country to undertake by developing, among other things, an autonomous literature (533-34). Caught up in the binaries of colonial culture, Moodie is unable to recognize the oral literatures by which she is surrounded. Nor does she presume a tradition of First Nations writing.

While the map episode in Moodie's narrative implies the triumph of colonial power, it also "inscribes a much more ambivalent text of authority" (Bhabha, "Signs" 168). The geographical discourse engaged in by Susanna Moodie's Mississauga visitors—once again: "they rapidly repeated the Indian names for every lake and river on this wonderful piece of paper"—is subversive in character, asserting First Nations presence in, as well as occupation and possession of, the land. It represents "Indian names" as a stake in what Foucault would call the "tactics and strategies of power" (77). Hybridized in the context of colonial culture, the colonial map's authoritative representation is undermined by the First Nations map, itself a symbol of First Nations resistance to colonial occupation. Thus, though Moodie's narrative does not admit the possibility of anti-colonial resistance, her Mississauga visitors, through their geographical discourse, establish "another specifically colonial space of power/knowledge" (Bhabha, "Signs" 179).

Susanna Moodie makes a cameo appearance in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*. She is on a trans-Canada bus tour, along with Pauline Johnson, John Richardson, and Archibald Belaney (aka Grey Owl). They are looking for "Indians" (158). Although they stop for dinner at a First Nations owned and operated restaurant, they do not realize that they have come to the end of their quest because the restaurant staff members do not fit any of the stereotypes of the Indian that Moodie and her travelling companions have done so much to define and perpetuate.

Green Grass, Running Water is about the representation of First Nations. It sets out to subvert the colonial discourse produced by writers such as Moodie—to expose and ridicule the discriminatory knowledges of colonial authority.¹³ King's tactic of displaying for ridicule the loaded oppositions used to establish colonialism's discursive field is particularly well-illustrated in the following exchange between two of his characters: Nasty (that is, Natty) Bumpo, the hero of one of the classic American novels of colonization, James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, and Old Woman, a figure from a number of First Nations narratives:

Indians can run fast. Indians can endure pain. Indians have quick reflexes. Indians don't talk much. Indians have good eyesight. Indians have agile bodies. These are all Indian gifts, says Nasty Bumpo.

Interesting, says Old Woman.

Whites are patient. Whites are spiritual. Whites are cognitive. Whites are

philosophical. Whites are sophisticated. Whites are sensitive. These are all white gifts, says Nasty Bumpo.

So, says Old Woman. Whites are superior, and Indians are inferior.

Exactly right, says Nasty Bumpo. Any questions? (393)

King also explores the relationship of cultural representation to identity in his narrative, showing how the psychologies of both populations have been shaped and continue to be shaped by the discriminatory knowledges of colonial culture. The novel is set in 1992, on a Blackfoot Reservation and in the nearby town of Blossom, Alberta. Its central character, Lionel Red Dog, whose fortieth birthday is celebrated in the narrative, has from childhood taken John Wayne as his model: "Not the actor, but the character. Not the man, but the hero. The John Wayne who cleaned up cattle towns and made them safe for decent folk. . . . The John Wayne who saved stage-coaches and wagon trains from Indian attacks" (241). As Homi Bhabha says is typical of the colonial subject, Lionel "desires not merely to be in the place of the white man but compulsively seeks to look back and down on himself from that position" (*Location* 60). Indeed, what Lionel compulsively seeks to do from that position is to shoot himself. Induced into a state of paralysis by his ambivalent identification, Lionel is unable to do anything about the dismal state of his personal and professional life. Thus, rather than going to university or finding work at home on the Reservation, he continues, year after year, to work at a minimum-wage, dead-end job as a clerk in Bill Bursum's Home Entertainment Barn. Another John Wayne *aficionado*, Bursum, too, "is caught in the ambivalence of paranoid identification, alternating between fantasies of megalomania and persecution" (Bhabha, *Location* 61).

King's major concern in *Green Grass, Running Water* is with the ways and means of resistance to the mechanisms of colonial power. As Laura E. Donaldson states, one of his chosen modes of resistance is a "contestatory intertextuality," through which he effects "a subversive reordering of relations in the dominant fields of imperialist, capitalist and masculinist power" (40). One of the stories King rewrites is the foundational narrative of Judeo-Christianity: the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In his rewriting, King makes the most of the theme of new beginnings—a theme, which, as we have already seen, features prominently in European Canadian literature—exposing it (as Moodie does inadvertently in her narrative) as masking the actual transference of "existing presumptions and

prejudices, changing locale, but not expectation" (New 24). Thus, in King's version of the story, God (who, like Susanna Moodie, views land as private property) is cast in the imperial mode—"this is my world and this is my garden" he asserts repeatedly—while Eve is played by First Woman, from the Navajo narrative of origins. First Woman offers a stinging critique of the values of imperial culture by demonstrating an alternative mode of living: offering to share with God all the resources of the garden (which include fried chicken, hotdogs, and pizza, as well as apples) and remarking on his refusal to partake, "You are acting as if you have no relations" (68-69). Meanwhile, in a scene reminiscent of the map scene in Moodie's narrative, Adam ("Ahdamn" in King's version), a carbon copy of his creator, is busy colonizing the garden by "naming everything":

You are a microwave oven, Ahdamn tells the Elk.
 Nope, says that Elk. Try again.
 You are a garage sale, Ahdamn tells the Bear.
 We got to get you some glasses, says the Bear.
 You are a telephone book, Ahdamn tells the Cedar Tree.
 You're getting closer, says the Cedar Tree.
 You are a cheeseburger, Ahdamn tells Old Coyote.
 It must be time for lunch, says Old Coyote. (41)

In this hilarious parody of colonial (mis)naming practices, King highlights, as he does repeatedly in the novel, the values of imperial culture, values which are very similar to the ones Moodie's narrative endorses: a belief in hierarchy, technology, exploitation, mastery over nature, progress, private property.

King also offers another rewriting of the Garden of Eden story, in this version, taking to its "logical" conclusion Moodie's desire to improve the Canadian landscape by imposing the marks of British "civilization" on it. In this case the garden has been transformed into a mental institution. The director of the asylum is one Dr. Joe Hovaugh ("Jehovah" in case, like me, you didn't get it on first reading), a man who, not incidentally, is obsessed with maps which he uses to locate Indians who have escaped from his control and surveillance.

Maps are everywhere in *Green Grass, Running Water*, implicit even in its title which refers to the treaties between First Nations and the colonial or Canadian government, with the latter obtaining title to the land and thereby making it available for European settlement, and establishing Indian reservations which were to last "as long as the grass is green and the

waters run" (267). The main plot of King's novel centres on a hydroelectric project which is being developed by the Canadian government on Blackfoot land. Once in operation, the dam will flood reserve land, including the house of Lionel's uncle, Eli Stands Alone—a house which Eli's mother had built all by herself, "log by log" (114). Having determined to try to save his ancestral land, he refuses to leave his mother's house and applies for an injunction to stop the project.

If the township grid was the hallmark of nineteenth-century Canadian "progress," the hydroelectric mega-dam is the great icon of twentieth century "development"—each being one of the most effective technologies "yet developed for the genocidal annihilation of Native cultures" (Donaldson 39). As James Waldram observes in his study of the effects of hydroelectric projects on First Nations communities, hydroelectric dam construction has generally not taken place near urban centres, but rather "in the vast hinterland"—those blank spaces on contemporary maps of Canada—which is where "Native communities . . . are inevitably located" (xi). And while "southern-based industries and consumers . . . have reaped the benefits of the development of relatively inexpensive power," the effects on "northern residents, who are mostly Native people," have been devastating (8): the flooding of reserve land, the loss of water resources, the destruction of livelihood, the relocation of entire communities. Nor has there ever been much consultation with the people who are to be affected. Thus, as Waldram states, there is remarkable historic continuity in the treatment of Native people in the process of hydroelectric development and their treatment in the last century in the negotiation of treaties:

It has been a century or more since most Native people in western Canada signed treaties or were given scrip to simultaneously acknowledge their aboriginal rights and surrender many of those rights. The treaties were to have lasted "as long as the rivers run." The hydroelectric era seems to represent both the symbolic termination of these agreements and the re-emergence of the treaty and scrip processes which once again have allowed governments to exploit Native resources for the "common good." New agreements have been signed. But the rivers no longer run. (xv)

King names the dam in his novel the "Grand Baleen" (112), that is the Great Whale, after the Great Whale project in northern Quebec, which was to have been the second phase of the James Bay project, thus specifically contextualizing his narrative in the ongoing conflict between First Nations and Canadian colonialism over the development of hydro power. In 1992,

Great Whale suffered a tremendous setback when New York state cancelled its contract to purchase power from Hydro Quebec, the result of a Quebec Cree campaign against further development. It is a victory which King implicitly celebrates in his novel. In 1994, the project was cancelled altogether.

In the struggle against the hydro project in King's novel, *Eli Stands Alone*'s antagonist is the engineer in charge of the dam, one Clifford Sifton. Many, perhaps all, of King's characters are named after figures from literature or history, this being one of the many delights of this hilarious but deadly serious novel: discovering who the characters are named for. It is also another of King's strategies of resistance through which he effects a reordering of relations of power. From 1896 to 1905, Clifford Sifton was both Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in the Laurier government. He was thus an instrumental figure in the redrawing of the map of Canada which occurred in this period, culminating in the creation in 1905 of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta from the North-West Territories. As Minister of the Interior, Clifton was responsible for organizing "the settlement and development of the West," which, according to the immigration historian Freda Hawkins, "he proceeded to do with tremendous energy and dedication," recruiting tens of thousands of settlers from Britain, the United States, and central Europe. In Hawkins's view, "There is no figure like him in the history of Canadian immigration to the present day" (4-5). As Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Sifton was in charge of negotiations for Treaty 8, which involved the ceding of a huge tract of land: all of central and northern Alberta, part of northern Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the western portion of the North West Territories, and the eastern part of the Yukon. The main objective of the negotiations was, in his words, "to pacify and keep pacified the North-West Territories" and avoid "having an Indian trouble on our hands" (cited in Hall 273). Sifton also made a number of attempts to appropriate First Nations treaty land in order to make it available for European settlement (Hall 271).

In King's novel, the name "Clifford Sifton" is a reminder of Canada's colonial history, as well as an indication that relations between First Nations and immigrants/inlanders continue to be colonial. King also implies that racist views, such as Sifton's, of almost a century earlier, remain current in contemporary society. Indeed, King's Sifton expresses the same self-privileging value system of European colonization as the man he is named after,

believing that Native rights are "a barrel load of crap" (138) and wishing that the myth of the vanishing Indian had been a reality. "Who'd of guessed," he says irritably, "that there would still be Indians kicking around in the twentieth century" (141).¹⁴

One of the people who is to benefit from the Grand Baleen hydro project is Bill Bursum, named, appropriately, for the Bursum Bill which was introduced into the U.S. Senate in 1921 by Senator Holm O. Bursum of New Mexico and which proposed the opening of Pueblo land to European American settlement. "Even before the dam had been started, before the contours of the lake were actually realized, Bursum had looked at the topographical map . . . and picked out the best piece of property on the lake" (266). Like the Moodies' map of Canada, this topographical map overwrites an earlier, though in this case still colonial, map of the same area: one showing a river running through a Blackfoot reservation, rather than a lake obscuring its boundaries. Like the Moodies' map of Canada, too, this map functions as a form of territorial appropriation, legitimating Bursum's claim to lakefront property. In his view—a view evidently shared by the Canadian government—the phrase "green grass, running water" is a mere metaphor: "Treaties were hardly sacred documents. They were contracts, and no one signed a contract for eternity" (267).

Bursum is also the creator of "The Map," as it is referred to in the novel. With the assistance of Lionel Red Dog, he has arranged the television sets in the wall display of his Home Entertainment Centre into the shape of a map of North America. Though Bursum is no literary theorist, he seems instinctively to know his Foucault: "The Map. Bursum loved the sound of it. There was a majesty to the name. He stepped back from the screens and looked at his creation. It was stupendous. It was more powerful than he had thought. It was like having the universe there on the wall, being able to see everything, being in control" (128). Then, having positioned himself so that he can both see each screen individually and take "in the panorama" (188), Bursum watches a video of his favourite movie, a Hollywood western, playing on all of the screens simultaneously. At the movie's climax, the Indians are wiped right off The Map when they are shot and killed by John Wayne and his cohorts.

An act of cartographic imperialism, The Map justifies the colonization of North America—"our home on Natives' land," as King puts it in his witty (or devastating, depending on your perspective) rewriting of the Canadian

national anthem (270). By making *The Map* part of a complex television and video display, King highlights the function of maps as technologies of power. To the same end, King models this scene of *The Map* on the figure of the Panopticon, another instrument of power/knowledge, which, in Foucault's words, is "designed to solve the problems of surveillance" (148). Under the panoptic regime, the individual becomes an object of knowledge over whom power is exercised. And because observation is singular, self-operating, and continuous, the gaze of power is soon internalized and self-regulation replaces the need for external surveillance, thus assuring the automatic functioning of power. This is what Bursum represents in King's novel: the "dominating, overseeing gaze" of colonial power (152)—a gaze which not only sees everything but also seeks to cancel the returning gaze of the other.

There are, however, two more map scenes in *Green Grass, Running Water*, scenes in which "the strategic reversal of the process of domination. . . . turn[s] the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (Bhabha, "Signs" 173). These scenes involve First Woman, as well as three other ancient Indians who, having escaped from Dr. Hovaugh's asylum, set about, with the help of trickster Coyote, "to fix up the world" (123). One of the things they "fix" is Bill Bursum's Map. By reversing the end of his favourite John Wayne western, they transform a narrative of conquest and subjugation into one of victorious anti-colonial resistance and confront the triumphalist discourse of colonialism with its own savage violence. In the new version of the movie, it is the white men who are wiped off *The Map*, dying gruesomely, as the Indians do in the original version, "clutching their chests or their heads or their stomachs" (321). Bursum, who believes that the concepts of "[p]ower and control" are "outside the range of the Indian imagination" (128-29), goes ballistic.

The Indians and Coyote also fix the Grand Baleen Dam, destroying it with an earthquake. Once again Bursum is quite literally at the centre of the scene. In this case he is out admiring the view from his lake front property, a panoramic view of the North American landscape over which he casts his usual commanding gaze:

He could see the world from here. To the east was the dam. Bursum could just see the lip of the structure and the control tower. . . . Beyond that was the prairies, a wondrous landscape that ran all the way to Ontario.

To the west, beyond the lake and the trees, the mountains ran north to Banff and Jasper and south into Montana. (403)

But then the earthquake rearranges the geography, restoring the landscape to its pre-dam contours and obliterating Bursum's lake front property. Bursum runs frantically down the beach chasing after his disappearing shoreline. While the subsequent flood demolishes the Stands Alone house and kills Eli, the territorial integrity of the Blackfoot Reservation is restored, their land recovered. And Lionel, having rediscovered a sense of place, begins the process of remapping an identity and of locating a space of resistance and freedom. Thus at the end of the novel, he thinks that, once they have rebuilt the family house, he might "live in it for a while. You know, like Eli" (423).

The map scenes in Thomas King's novel are about colonial power and anti-colonial resistance. They are an attempt to reclaim First Nations territory through a strategic intervention in the long and bitter struggle over land between First Nations and successive Canadian governments. Effecting a radical reordering of relations of power/knowledge in these scenes, as he also does elsewhere in the narrative, King exposes and reverses the process whereby colonial maps, in order to justify the territorial dispossession of First Nations people, imposed and continue to impose their political authority on the Canadian landscape. King thus writes a text which not only "can answer colonialism back," but one which also "anticipates another condition beyond imperialism" (Perry 44).

The struggle continues. One of the current sites of conflict is Churchill Falls, Labrador, billed as the second largest hydro project in the world. The proposed development is right in the middle of Innu territory in Labrador and Quebec. Up to the time of the meeting between Premiers Bouchard and Tobin to publicly announce the project, the Innu had not been consulted, though they had formally requested to be included in the negotiations ("Power Play").

However, another lesson in cartography may well be in the offing—the result of the 1997 ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada on the *Delgamuukw* case, brought by the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples of northern British Columbia. While the ruling "is specifically directed to treaty negotiations in British Columbia," it also "significantly changes the legal landscape in which Aboriginal title and rights litigation is adjudicated in Canada and in other colonial contexts world wide" (Culhane 369-70). The *Delgamuukw* ruling acknowledges the existence of Aboriginal title: the historic and legal right of First Nations people to the land of their ancestors.

It also stipulates what constitutes proof of title: evidence of continuous occupation of the land from before the Canadian government claimed sovereignty (Culhane 363-64).

Thanks to this historic court ruling, the Innu have the law on their side in the court case they have launched to force a negotiation of the conditions for developing the hydro project. As evidence of long-term occupation of the land, the Innu are submitting a map tracing the travel routes of the Innu over the past several generations (Gray A-4). It is a development which almost seems to be anticipated by the map scene in Moodie's narrative.

NOTES

- 1 Huggan claims that "the map topos" occurs relatively infrequently "in works by indigenous writers" (126). Given publishing dates, Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water* would have been "in press" when Huggan was working on his study. There are, however, some First Nations texts which would have been available and which feature "the map topos" as Huggan has defined it. These include Bill Reid's *The Raven Steals the Light* (1984), written in collaboration with Robert Brighurst, and Lee Maracle's *Sundogs* (1992).
On a minor note, Huggan misses the map in *Roughing It in the Bush*, seeing Moodie as belonging to a pre-map phase in Canadian literature when Canadian writers "were mainly concerned with the discrepancy between conventional and observed landscapes" (40).
- 2 "Postcolonial" is a very problematic term. Jo-Ann Thom's critique of it, in her description of a course she teaches on First Nations literature, uncovers one of the functions of the term both in its application to First Nations and non-Native Canadian literature: its masking of colonial power relations between Canadian First Nations and other Canadians. "Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Literature," Thom writes, "is often categorized as 'postcolonial' literature. Most Aboriginal writers find this amusing. 'When did the colonizers leave?' they ask." Thomas King also provides a critique of the term in "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial."
- 3 As Benedict Anderson reminds us, maps, like books, played a crucial rule in the invention of the colonial nation: "[Maps] profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion—the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry" (163-64).
- 4 Some places have, of course, escaped the renaming process and retained their First Nations names. To take a (for me) local example, in 1882, when Regina was first settled by Europeans, it was called "Wascana," a corruption of the Cree word *oscana* meaning "bones," apparently in reference to a large pile of buffalo bones found in the area. Not deemed dignified enough for a capital city, this name was cancelled and the city was renamed in honour of Queen Victoria. Nonetheless, the Cree-derived name has been conserved in a number of city facilities and businesses: Wascana Lake, Wascana Park, Wascana Country Club, Wascana Energy. Regina also stages an annual "Pile O' Bones" day as part of its civic celebrations. The survival of First Nations place names can be explained by the impossible desire of immigrants for indigenous status: in an attempt to claim a hereditary connection to the land, First Nations toponyms are adopted. As Edward Poitras states, "There's a long history in this country of using aboriginal words to name things.

If you take a people's name and use it for your own purpose, you diminish them" (Cited in Beatty E-4). As Poitras shows is the case with Regina, place names also tend to contain (in both senses of the word) another knowledge: the grim underside of the place's official history or founding myth. Thus the names "Wascana" and "Pile of Bones" point not only to the success of immigrants in establishing a settlement, but also to the collapse of First Nations economies, dependent on the buffalo, which was brought about by European immigration. Moreover, Poitras has found documentary evidence that the original "pile of bones" contained not only buffalo but also human bones, the remains of members of the Assiniboine Nation who died during a smallpox epidemic (Beatty E-4).

- 5 Reprinted in Thelma Coleman, *The Canada Company*, 84-85.
- 6 Reprinted in W. A. Langton, ed. *Early Days in Upper Canada: Letters of John Langton*, Frontispiece.
- 7 Maclean's expresses sentiments similar to those of the *Globe and Mail* in its use of the phrase "ominous demographic wave" (DeMont and Geddes 71).
- 8 See, for example, the 1800 map of Upper Canada, compiled by D. W. Smith, and reprinted in Ladell 107; and the 1811 map of Upper and Lower Canada, published by John Cary, and reprinted in Mika 109.
- 9 In at least this respect, late twentieth-century maps of Canada are no different from those of the 1830s: they too feature blank spaces. On some current provincial highway maps, for example, Indian Reservations appear as blanks, thus reiterating the notion that First Nations lack history and culture and inviting non-Native intervention and exploitation. Blank spaces also appear on contemporary maps of Canada in the northern areas of all of the provinces, except the Maritimes; in the northern part of Labrador; and in the Yukon and the North West Territories. Significantly, these are parts of Canada in which First Nations people account for a fairly high percentage of the population. The current conventions of mapping, which are biased in favour of densely populated urban areas, are to blame for this practice. The political function of these maps in Canada is to reinforce the view of the North as requiring southern development and settlement, thus helping to maintain the political and economic status quo of the North as an internal Canadian colony. (For an excellent discussion of the colonial status of the North in Canada, see Peter J. Usher.)
- 10 A commemorative stamp was also issued to mark the anniversary of Cabot's voyage. In a celebration of European hegemony, it features a period map of Europe superimposed over a world globe.
- 11 In Moodie's case, her stereotyped descriptions conform to all three of these images. Interestingly, in Robert Surtees' analysis, the birth of the modern reservation, which he dates as taking place in 1830, coincided with a change in the image of the Indian in colonial culture: "the 'noble savage', almost overnight, became a poor unfortunate, uncivilized barbarian who should be granted all the amenities of white civilization" ("Indian" 23). In its construction of colonial space, the reservation enforced geographical and economic separation, literally dividing, in the typical Manichean fashion of colonialism, the colonizers from the colonized (Fanon 37-43). It also made much more land available for the colonizers who continued to arrive in ever-increasing numbers—in the summer of 1832 alone, 50,000 would-be settlers (including the Moodies) arrived in Canada from Britain (Ladell 123)—the construction of First Nations as in need of civilization enabling and justifying their dispossession. And by physically delimiting the place of the Native, it also made surveillance and regulation of movement and behaviour much easier.

- 12 The “notwithstanding” clause, in the following passage by Graham Huggan, provides a particularly blatant example of the way in which European Canadian scholarship sometimes makes First Nations peoples and their histories invisible. Huggan is attempting to distinguish between “settler” and “non-settler” colonies:

there are large and obvious differences, for example, between the colonial histories of Africa and India, where those countries’ indigenous peoples were colonized on their own home ground, and the colonial histories of Canada and Australia, where—aboriginal groups notwithstanding—the settlers’ main task consisted not so much in imposing one culture upon another as in adapting the “parent” culture to the “new” land. (xiii, emphasis added).

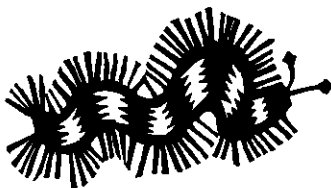
- 13 There is another intertextual connection between Susanna Moodie and Thomas King on the subject of First Nations representations—what seems to be an unlikely coincidence. One of the final scenes of Thomas King’s *Green Grass, Running Water* takes place at a Sun Dance ceremony at which a white photographer is surreptitiously taking pictures. His film is destroyed by Eli and others and he is encouraged to leave the area because photographs of the Sun Dance ceremony are prohibited. Susanna Moodie’s granddaughter, Geraldine Moodie, was a professional photographer, who, in 1895, took pictures of a Sun Dance ceremony which was held in the Battleford area. In the fall of 1998, many of these pictures were placed on public display, at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, as part of an exhibition on early photographers and filmmakers in western Canada. The pictures have also recently been published in Donny White’s *In Search of Geraldine Moodie*. White’s commentary on one of the photographs states that it “appears that many of the women do not approve of Geraldine’s presence or that they did not wish to have their picture taken as several have looked down or away from the camera” (20). The same could be said of several of the men and women in a number of the other photographs. But the issue of cultural appropriation is not only relevant to Geraldine Moodie’s taking of the photographs in the first place, but also to the current recirculation of her Sun Dance pictures in Canadian culture. What, for example, is the role of these photographs in White’s book, the overall function of which is to celebrate immigrant culture?
- 14 Such views are also frequently heard in contemporary Canadian culture. Peter C. Newman provides an example in a *Maclean’s* article in which he argues against the ratification of the Nisga’a Treaty. As Maurice Switzer points out in his response to the article, the Treaty is not a “form of restitution for past wrongs,” as Newman characterizes it, but rather “represents the long-overdue settlement of a legal obligation.” As Switzer also notes, Newman has the bad taste to mock “one of the most sacred of First Nations symbols, the eagle feather” (6). In the same article, Newman makes use of the colonial possessive pronoun, as in “our natives,” an expression which is not only patronizing and paternalistic, but which also assumes European Canadian superiority and ownership of the nation and all of its inhabitants.

WORKS CITED

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 1991.
- Beatty, Greg. “The Skeletons in Regina’s Cultural Closet.” *Globe and Mail* 16 May 1998. E4.
- Bergman, Brian. “Rediscovering Newfoundland.” *Maclean’s* 23 June 1997. 14-17.

- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- . "The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism." *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-1984*. Ed. Francis Barker et al. London: Methuen, 1986. 148-72.
- . "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817." *"Race," Writing, and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 163-84.
- Coleman, Thelma. *The Canada Company*. Stratford: County of Perth and Camming Publisher, 1978.
- Culhane, Dara. *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology, Law and First Nations*. Burnaby: Talonbooks, 1998.
- De Mont, John and John Geddes. "Aboriginal Expectations." *Maclean's* 29 Dec. 1997 / 5 Jan. 1998: 70-71.
- Donaldson, Laura E. "Noah Meets Old Coyote, or Singing in the Rain: Intertextuality in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 7.2 (1995): 27-43.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. Trans. Colin Gordon et al. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.
- Francis, Daniel. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992.
- Gentilcore, Louis and Kate Donkin. *Land Surveys of Southern Ontario: An Introduction and Index to the Field Notebooks of the Ontario Land Surveyors, 1784-1859*. Toronto: Department of Geography, York University, 1973.
- Gray, John. "Innu Chart Path to Tobin Table." *Globe and Mail* 2 May 1998: A-4.
- Hall, D. J. *Clifford Sifton: The Young Napoleon—1861-1900*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981.
- Harley, J. B. "Maps, Knowledge, and Power." *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*. Ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. 277-312.
- Hawkins, Freda. *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1991.
- Huggan, Graham. *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
- King, Thomas. "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial." *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Ed. Ajay Heble, Donna Palmateer Pennee, and J. R. Struthers. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997. 241-48.
- . *Green Grass, Running Water*. 1993. Rpt. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994.
- . Introduction. *The Native in Literature: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives*. Ed. Thomas King, Cheryl Calver, and Helen Hoy. Oakville: ECW Press, 1987. 7-14.
- Ladell, John, L. *They Left Their Mark: Surveyors and Their Role in the Settlement of Ontario*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993.
- Langton, W. A., Ed. *Early Days in Upper Canada: Letters of John Langton*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1926.
- Leacock, Stephen. *Canada: The Foundations of its Future*. Montreal: The House of Seagram, 1941.
- MacLennan, Hugh. *Two Solitudes*. 1945. Rpt. Toronto: Stoddart, 1993.

- Mika, Nick and Helma Mika, Ed. *The Shaping of Ontario: From Exploration to Confederation*. Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1985.
- Mitchell, Alanna. "Population Bomb Ticking on Reserves." *Globe and Mail* 14 Jan. 1998: A-1+.
- Moodie, Susanna. *Roughing It in the Bush; or, Life in Canada*. 1852. Rpt. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989.
- New, W. H. *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Newman, Peter C. "A Treaty that Threatens the National Agenda." *Maclean's* 10 Aug. 1998: 52.
- Patterson, Gilbert C. *Land Settlement in Upper Canada: 1783-1840*. Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1921.
- Perry, Benita. "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse." *The Oxford Literary Review* 9:1-2 (1987): 27-58.
- "Power Play." *National Magazine*. Intro. Hanna Gartner. Narr. Ross Rutherford. Prod. Heather Abbott. CBC. 2 April 1998.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Surtees, Robert J. *Indian Reserve Policy in Upper Canada: 1830-1845*. Ph.D. Diss. Carleton U, 1966. Ottawa: National Library of Canada Microfilm, 1966.
- . "Land Cessions, 1763-1830." *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*. Ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994. 92-121.
- Switzer, Maurice. "The Mail." *Maclean's* 31 Aug. 1998: 6.
- Tiffin, Chris and Alan Lawson. "The Textuality of Empire." *De-scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and Textuality*. Ed. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson. London: Routledge, 1994. 1-11.
- Thom, Jo-Ann. "Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Literature." *English Department, University of Regina: Winter 1998 Courses*, 2-3.
- Trigger, Bruce G. "The Original Iroquoians: Huron, Petun, and Neutral." *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*. Ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994. 41-63.
- Usher, Peter J. "The North: One Land, Two Ways of Life." *Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada*. 2nd ed. Ed. L. D. McCann. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1987. 482-529.
- Waldram, James B. *As Long as the Rivers Run: Hydroelectric Development and Native Communities in Western Canada*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988.
- White, Donny. *In Search of Geraldine Moodie*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998.



The Gene that Ages Words in Winter

i

An angel is the hope of a message
larger than itself if we believe
the white circle in which it stands,
its blue eyes, its small English hand
paler than most but otherwise perfect.

Forgive me for writing this season.
Winter is long enough as it is.
In the lamplight tonight
the street shines with salt and snow,
and small drifts clumsy
with the white of hospitals
feel the world crawl this way
and that around them and beneath.

ii

In the beginning the word said
“let there be winter.”
But the woman already had felt change
in the air for more than a day,
and she covered the man
with her thin white coat.
On the Plaza’s south side the flowers
were brown, and by afternoon
black trees jutted out of snow
and the sky between them grew immense

with two redtail hawks
circling lower, one of them
screaming its ice-age secrets
over and over to the river below.

iii

For all the students in the doorway
and their long disorder of laughter
on the river's far sides
the wind had made its adjustments,
and the man watching them
from the bench by the riverwalk
subsides into what remains of him.

iv

Winter read out of itself.
How none of the shadows is right.
How the hawk will not relent.
How students have come outside to argue.
How the stillness of young ice
at the edge explodes like a rifle shot.
How a woman buying a newspaper
is warmed by the setting sun.

“Trust Tonto”

Thomas King’s Subversive Fictions and the Politics of Cultural Literacy

When we think of multiculturalism in North America, the two main metaphors that come readily to mind are the melting pot and the mosaic. The former image, associated with the United States, suggests a mixture in which the constituent elements become indistinguishably blended—a kind of cultural puree—and has been generally discredited as a euphemism for assimilation. The latter image, usually associated with multiculturalism in Canada, suggests a composite of discrete pieces—more like a tossed salad—and is increasingly being viewed as dissatisfactory because, for one thing, it is premised on an illusory unity within and discontinuity between cultural communities. In literary criticism, as Smaro Kamboureli argues (3), the latter view of multiculturalism tends to reinforce the marginalization of minority or non-dominant cultures and voices, because it suggests that those cultures are homogeneous and leads to the tendency to view writers associated with minority cultures exclusively within the context of multiculturalism and/or as representatives of their communities.

Such formulations of multiculturalism have been radically revised in recent decades under the influence of a number of factors: greater consciousness of the diversity of those communities, growing resistance to the notion of cultural purity, and the increasing influence of postcolonial notions of hybridity and cross-fertilization. As a result, cultural production in Canada, as elsewhere, is increasingly being recognized as syncretic, as a heterogeneous complex in which different cultural elements are neither absolutely discrete nor absolutely blended. As Arnold Krupat argues in the

context of the United States, “[i]n a certain sense, indeed, the term multiculturalism is redundant if, as I have suggested, culture is best conceived in a manner analogous to Bakhtin’s conception of language as a socially plural construct in which our own speech is never entirely and exclusively our own, but always heteroglossic and polyvocal, formed always in relation to the speech of others” (237). However, because of the history of colonial relations between Canada’s settler cultures and the Aboriginal peoples they displaced, as well as the problematic representation and reception of multiculturalism historically, a view of the Canadian cultural landscape as syncretic requires a critical practice grounded in a historicized, pluralistic and nuanced cultural literacy. Developing such a literacy presents a number of challenges, and I aim in this essay—by focusing (as a non-Native and non-expert) on the work of (Native) writer Thomas King—not only to address some of these challenges, but also to illustrate the degree to which King’s fiction itself makes a substantial contribution to a decolonized cultural and literary critical practice.

“Trust Tonto” is the title of a regular feature of the Dead Dog Café Comedy Hour, a CBC radio show written by and featuring Thomas King, in which Tonto is, rather than trusty Indian sidekick, the authority on questions about Canadian culture, because he is from Six Nations, as opposed to the Lone Ranger, who is dismissed as “an American.” The title of the feature provides an apt phrase for approaching King’s fiction, as it suggests two important characteristics of his work: the reclamation of images of Native people from stereotyping by the dominant culture, and the reassertion and privileging of a Native perspective. Because of its emphasis on perspective and its implicit revisionism, the title also by extension raises interesting questions pertinent to debates about multiculturalism and the politics of interpretation, a discussion of which helps to contextualize King’s work as a whole.

In English-Canadian literature, as recent debates about multiculturalism, the academy, and critical practice have illustrated, the response on the part of the literary and academic establishment to the increasing cultural diversity of literary production has at times been a conflicted one; tokenism and the reinforcement of ethnic stereotypes, as Kamboureli points out (3), have often been the result of attempts to “include” other communities. Such dubious inclusion has certainly characterized the treatment of Native writers, in part a legacy of the institutional racism and ethnographic condescension that has marked non-Natives’ representation of native cultures

historically. "Anyone familiar with the history of Native literatures in the Americas," writes Kimberley Blaeser, "knows well the particulars—translation, re-interpretation, appropriation, romanticizing, museumization, consumerization, and marginalization. . . ." ("Critical Center" 54). Native stories have a long history of misrepresentation from within a Eurocentric ethnographic perspective as being incoherent and unsophisticated, and, given that such misunderstanding and misrepresentation have not evaporated with time, a lack of appreciation of the culturally specific contexts and subtexts of King's writing can certainly lead to similar treatment, which points to the significance of critical perspective and cultural context in the politics of literary multiculturalism.

In response to such appropriation and misrepresentation, Native writers and critics such as King, Jeannette Armstrong, Kimberley Blaeser and others have called for accurate and informed representation of writing by Native writers from within their cultural communities as an essential redress to its historical neglect or misrepresentation, because the dominant culture has monopolized representation of Native and other minorities and it is time to give minority voices more exposure. As Kateri Damm observes, "'Who we are' has been constructed and defined by Others to the extent that at times we too no longer know who we are. The resulting confusion, uncertainty, low self-esteem and/or need to assert control over identity are just some of the damaging effects of colonization" (11). Yet, at present, because of institutional imbalances and wider social barriers, those voices are still fairly marginalized.

Balancing this need for accurate cultural contextualization, however, is the need to recognize "the complex, differing affiliations of individual writers" (Siemerling 18). While debates about representation and appropriation of non-dominant cultures by the dominant culture have raised awareness about cultural boundaries and the politics of cultural negotiation, recognizing the hybridity and syncretism of English-Canadian writing further complicates these debates, because such a recognition puts in question the cultural discontinuity upon which many positions in those debates are premised. Winfried Siemerling observes that the "presumable 'purity' of the identities of both dominant and ethnic cultures is construed, albeit relationally between communal self and other, through the ascription of exclusive qualities whose oppositional homogeneity can only be guaranteed by a maintenance of symbolical boundaries" (15). Both dominant and non-dominant cultures, therefore, are not only much more heterogeneous and much

less self-contained than many expressions of multiculturalism suggest, but they are also ultimately provisional, the result of rather than the source of social and cultural practice. As Smaro Kamboureli argues, “[l]abels are vexing and sneaky things because they are intended to express a stable and universal representation of both communities and individuals” (4).

To see any writer as representatively “Native” is thus both reductive and problematic. As King himself observes in an interview, “for Native people, identity comes from community, and it varies from community to community. I wouldn’t define myself as an Indian in the same way that someone living on a reserve would. That whole idea of ‘Indian’ becomes, in part, a construct. It’s fluid. We make it up as we go along” (Canton 98). In trying to provide a more nuanced account of the work of Native writers, then, not only does consciousness of different tribal traditions become important, but so does a recognition of those who write out of a more “pan-Indian” consciousness, those whose work cuts across different traditions, and those who go beyond, as King puts it, the “set of expectations that are used to mark out that which is Indian and that which is not” (“Introduction” 1990, xv).

King’s own work particularly illustrates the need for a more flexible understanding of the concept of “Native” and for a greater appreciation of cultural syncretism and intertextuality. Of Greek, German and Cherokee ancestry, King writes predominantly of Blackfoot characters in southern Alberta; in talking about Native writing, he gives primacy to “the firm base that we have in places” and adds, “[i]f I think of any place as home it’s the Alberta prairies, where I spent ten years with the Blackfoot people. I’m not Blackfoot, but that feels like the place I want to go back to” (Canton 99). His fiction is steeped in oral conventions and forms of storytelling, and he draws eclectically on a range of tribal traditions. At the same time, King’s writing is substantially grounded in the Western tradition of fiction, as evident in the accessibility of his comic realism to non-Native readers and also in the wide swath he cuts through the Western literary canon in *Green Grass, Running Water*. “By implying that there is a specific essence, say, to the writing of First Nations authors,” Kamboureli observes, “labels prematurely foreclose our understanding not only of the complexity inherent in individual communities but also of the various ways in which authors position themselves within their cultural groups and the Canadian society at large” (4). So not only is “Native” less than an exhaustive description of King as a writer, but those looking for a contained, homogeneous cultural commu-

nity for which King serves as a representative are going to have a hard time.

Postcolonial theories, furthermore, emphasize that non-dominant cultures have always been heterogeneous and synthetic rather than homogeneous, particularly because of the cultural impositions of colonialism; as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam note, "while hybridity has existed from time immemorial, as civilizations conflict, combine, and synthesize, it reached a kind of violent paroxysm with European colonization of the Americas" (43). Those theories also emphasize that dominant cultures—including the so-called dominant culture in Canada, as an extension of European cultures—have also always been heterogeneous and syncretic, not least because of the long history of non-European cultures' influence on (and appropriation within) European cultural traditions. This does not mean, however, that "we are all one." To recognize the relative nature of dominant and non-dominant or minority cultures and literatures, and the historical and contemporary intersections between them, is not to efface the difference between syncretism in a dominant culture and syncretism in minority cultures, nor to downplay the significance and complexity of critical mediation between the two. Cultural exchange and cross-fertilization have not exactly taken place on a level playing field, nor have they yet produced one. Thus, as Shohat and Stam argue, a "celebration of syncretism and hybridity *per se*, if not articulated with questions of historical hegemonies, risks sanctifying the *fait accompli* of colonial violence" (43).

Recognizing the way that cultural boundaries have been both constructed by and crossed within colonial discourse, however, does not necessarily make them easier to negotiate. Nonetheless, in response to the growing recognition of writing in Canada as fundamentally multicultural, providing an accurate representation of the diversity of that writing is becoming a central pedagogical imperative, and critics of all stripes are engaging in that cross-cultural and cross-racial reading. Given the historical and contemporary inequities of such cultural border-crossing, such a situation calls for a delicate critical balance. On the one hand, stressing a politics of agency and identification over a politics of identity has a certain amount of merit; Jeanne Perrault, for one, argues that an "academic retreat from the complexities of cross-cultural and cross-racial reading and writing can serve only those who wish to maintain the status quo" and that the "questions that engage us . . . are not, now, so much those of fixed identities, but rather closer to the question Adrienne Rich asks of herself, '*with whom do you*

believe your lot is cast?” (Bruchac and Perreault 10). On the other hand, past experiences of misrepresentation and/or insufficient appreciation of the quality of minority writers’ work have understandably produced a great deal of reluctance about such reading on many fronts. Certainly, assuming artistic or critical freedom of passage—as in the case of, say, W.P. Kinsella—and/or responding to concerns about critical or artistic misrepresentation and appropriation of images of minorities by charging censorship is erroneous and, as Hartmut Lutz argues in the context of Native writing (5), historically and culturally naive.

In navigating this conflicted cultural territory, one obviously risks ultimately contributing to a recolonizing rather than decolonizing of Canadian culture and society. Thus, one requires both an awareness of cultural boundaries, however relative and constructed, and an awareness of cultural production as syncretic, crossing and in some cases displacing those boundaries. The delicacy of this critical negotiation is reflected in the challenges of approaching the work of Thomas King, which not only requires an awareness of these dynamics of cultural interaction but also inscribes such dynamics in innovative and instructive ways.

The need for careful qualification and for self-consciousness about one’s assumptions is particularly evident in attempting to describe the heterogeneous formal qualities of King’s writing. His work, from the comic realism of his first novel, *Medicine River*, to the challenging, eclectic *Green Grass, Running Water*, makes use of techniques of verisimilitude, reversals of fortune, mistaken assumptions, romantic entanglement, and so on, that are familiar to readers grounded in the Western comic tradition. Yet King also echoes stories from various Native traditions (Iroquois, Seneca, Cherokee, Blackfoot); he consistently draws on traditional forms of oral stories such as creation stories, cycle stories, and trickster tales; and he makes use of discursive conventions from oral storytelling, such as digression, repetition, a more informal and less elaborate syntax, and narratorial interaction with the audience. Finally, evident in his last two books is a parodic touch—an irreverent, subversive representation of dominant figures and narratives out of Western literature, religion and history—which has affinities with certain kinds of postcolonial texts which rewrite the canonical texts of the colonial centre, though King himself has expressed discomfort with the term “post-colonial” because it posits colonialism as the

defining term and also suggests a literature evoking a continuing trauma ("Godzilla" 11).

Given these various elements, it might be tempting initially to describe his work as blending Western literary forms with forms from Native cultures. A more appropriate characterization, however, can be found in Kimberley Blaeser's description of the trickster figure in Native writing as "[n]ot a composite, which is made up of distinct and recognizable parts, but a complex, which is one unit whose makeup is intricate and interwoven" ("Trickster" 51). Her description applies nicely to King's writing, since in those Native cultures (and King's writing as an extension of them), that blending or syncretism is already there, because of the cross-fertilization historically and currently between different tribal traditions and because of the legacy of the history of colonialism, during which cultural interaction was imposed. Consequently, as Shohat and Stam emphasize, cultural syncretism is varied and—as a result of the generally conflictual cultural relations within colonialism—often uneven, reflecting hegemonic relations and cultural tensions (43). Such tensions are manifested in the consistent and humorous subversiveness of King's work, including its formal qualities, as he draws on conventions consistent with those of mainstream Western fiction, but, as an overview of his work serves to illustrate, has progressively resisted its teleology, causality, and ontological cohesion.

Medicine River is easily the most accessible of King's three books of fiction, and yet elements of it depart from the linear structure and verisimilitude of Western bourgeois comic realism. In "Godzilla vs. Post-colonial," King underlines a number of features of contemporary Native writing in describing what he calls "associational literature," the definition of which in many ways applies to *Medicine River*. This kind of writing organizes

the elements of plot along a rather flat narrative line that ignores the ubiquitous climaxes and resolutions that are so valued in non-Native literature. In addition to this flat narrative line, associational literature leans towards the group rather than the single, isolated character, creating a fiction that de-values heroes and villains in favour of the members of a community, a fiction which eschews judgments and conclusions. (14)

The structure of *Medicine River*, which focuses on the return of photographer Will Horse Capture from Toronto to the town of Medicine River in southern Alberta and his gradual immersion in the community, avoids the bourgeois individualism associated with the novel in the Western tradition

by consistently breaking up the focus on Will as protagonist; most of the chapters in the novel juxtapose episodes from Will's childhood or his life in Toronto with vignettes which focus on characters from the town or the nearby reserve. The juxtaposed pieces are obviously, though in some cases obliquely, associated; in one chapter, for instance, a portrait of a white neighbor from Will's childhood trying to hide the marks of her husband's physical abuse is intercut with the story of Will's cousin January Pretty Weasel, who forges a suicide note for her abusive husband after his suspicious death from a gunshot wound. This juxtapositioning of vignettes helps to disperse the emphasis from Will to the community and his relationship to it, and to give the narrative a composite rather than linear structure.

The other significant element of *Medicine River* that breaks up what is otherwise fairly conventional comic realism is the presence of the trickster-ish Harlen Bigbear. Though Harlen is a realistic character, he also reflects the typical ambivalence of the trickster; as Will says, "Harlen Bigbear was my friend, and being Harlen's friend was hard" (11). Harlen is at once a force of chaos, meddling in Will's life and complicating the life of the community in general, is gossipy, verbally slippery and contradictory; but he is also a force for healing, attempting to smooth over disagreements, to ease the pain of others, and to encourage respect for tradition. "He took on a lot of weight," Will notes, "and the one thing he enjoyed more than helping someone out with their burden was sharing it with others" (2). Harlen is the source of much of the novel's comic flair and verbal dexterity, and can also largely take the credit for Will's finding a sense of community, place and family—one of the key themes of the novel. Thus King's evoking of the figure of the trickster further distinguishes the novel from the Western tradition (in that the trickster is a central fixture of Native cultures) and reflects the pluralism of its cultural influences and characteristics.

King's 1993 collection *One Good Story, That One*, like *Green Grass, Running Water*, is formally much more heterogeneous than *Medicine River*, and in various ways departs from its comic realism, making use of oral storytelling conventions and/or disrupting the sense of a consistent, contained, empirical reality that *Medicine River* retains. The stories in the collection are engagingly diverse and, while most of them are in some way concerned with negotiating cultural borders, they make use of differing strategies for doing so.

Some of the stories, such as "Trap Lines" and the hilarious *tour de force*, "Borders," are similar in tone and form to *Medicine River*, first-person,

comic realist vignettes about Native characters. In some cases, however, similarly realistic situations are disrupted, at least for the white characters, by some extraordinary occurrence involving Indians. In "Totem," for instance, in an art gallery featuring "contemporary Canadian art from the Atlantic provinces" (13), totem poles begin to grow and to disturb the curators with their singing. In "How Corporal Colin Sterling Saved Blossom, Alberta, and Most of the Rest of the World as Well," science fiction meets trickster discourse (to use Gerald Vizenor's term) as blue coyotes descend in spaceships and make off with Indians all over the world; the action centers on Blossom, Alberta, where RCMP officer Corporal Colin Sterling "saves" everybody else but is unable to prevent the "kidnapping"—though one of the Indians is heard singing "What took you so long?" (63), this is how Sterling sees it.

Other stories, such as "Magpies," a story about Granny's desire to be buried in a tree in traditional fashion rather than die in hospital, employ a more oral discursive voice and evoke an oral storytelling situation: "This one is about Granny. Reserve story. Everyone knows this story. Wilma knows it. Ambrose knows it. My friend, Napioa. Lionel James. Billy Frank knows it, too. Billy Frank hears this story in Calgary. He hears it three times. Maybe six. Boy, he tells me, here comes that story again" (21). A similar narrative voice characterizes the title story, in which a storyteller entertains a group of anthropologists who have come to the reserve to tape traditional stories; what he tells them instead is a parodic version of the story of Adam and Eve: "But that one says that Evening and Ah-damn better leave that good place, garden, Evening's garden, go somewhere else. Just like Indian today" (9). In a couple of stories, King also makes use of the bumbling trickster Coyote, whose zealous attempts to fix the world usually result in catastrophe, to subversively rewrite North American history from a Native perspective; in "A Coyote Columbus Story," for instance, Old Coyote precipitates the arrival of Columbus, who, discovering no saleable goods, steals Old Coyote's Indian friends and sells them in Spain. Thus *One Good Story, That One* represents a diversification in King's formal strategies that not only provides an engaging variety but also a series of alternative representations of cultural interaction.

Coyote also figures prominently in *Green Grass, Running Water*, which combines the range of forms described so far in a complex and ambitious narrative that constitutes one of the most sustained and hilarious assaults on the Eurocentrism of North American society in contemporary fiction. In

the book's prologue—preamble might be a better word—King evokes both creation stories from Native traditions and the book of Genesis, but within a clearly oral discursive framework that is crucial to appreciating the form and subversive intent of the rest of the novel:

So.

In the beginning, there was nothing. Just the water.

Coyote was there, but Coyote was asleep. That Coyote was asleep and that

Coyote was dreaming. When that Coyote dreams, anything can happen.

I can tell you that. (1)

King describes his version of Coyote in the novel as “a sacred clown”: “Someone who could point out the fallacies in situations and arguments and who made sure that nothing stayed done, whatever you tried to do, that particular figure would take apart. My Coyote wants to see the world in a slight state of turmoil” (Canton 100). In true Coyote form, Coyote's dream, by virtue of a series of puns, turns into a demanding, megalomaniacal Old Testament God—a Eurocentric intrusion that is repeated in various ways throughout the text:

I am god, says that Dog Dream.

“Isn't that cute,” says Coyote. “That Dog Dream is a contrary. That Dog Dream has everything backward.”

But why am I a little god? shouts that god.

“Not so loud,” says Coyote. “You're hurting my ears.”

I don't want to be a little god, says that god. I want to be a big god! (2)

Each of the four books that follow attempts to explain the presence of the water through a creation story, which then goes wrong—courtesy of Coyote's interference. In these stories, creation figures from various tribal traditions such as First Woman, Old Woman, and Changing Woman encounter figures from Western culture such as God, Noah, and Fenimore Cooper's hero Nasty Bumpo. The latter all attempt to appropriate these women within the terms of a Eurocentric Christian patriarchy; for instance, A.A. Gabriel, Heavenly Host, interrupts a creation narrative involving Thought Woman to try to convince her to play the role of the Virgin Mary (270), and Young Man Walking On Water (namely, Christ) invokes Christian rules when Old Woman upstages him by calming the waves that are rocking a boat full of his disciples:

Hooray, says those men. We are saved.

Hooray, says Young Man Walking On Water. I have saved you.

Actually, says those men, that other person saved us.

Nonsense, says Young Man Walking On Water. That other person is a woman.

That other person sings songs to waves. (351)

To elude being apprehended/appropriated, the women take on the names of canonical figures—Lone Ranger, Robinson Crusoe, Hawkeye, and Ishmael—paired with indigenous, colonized sidekicks, “Native accomplices who symbolize the ‘noble savage’” (Horne 266). In this allegorical fashion, as Dee Horne notes, “King critiques appropriation and the settler culture’s emphasis on individualism through the four Indian tricksters who appropriate the names of settlers who, in turn, have appropriated ‘Indians’” (265).

The book’s intertextual play eclectically crosses ontological, generic and cultural boundaries, but in a way that underlines the oppressive Eurocentrism of those boundaries and asserts the primacy of a native perspective. Myth, reality, the sacred, and the absurd are generally recognized in Western thought as different and distinct orders of being, but in this book, as in much native orature and literature, they are constantly merged in playful, creative, and purposeful ways. Furthermore, the sendup of such canonical figures clearly has affiliations with such postcolonial texts as Derek Walcott’s *Pantomime*, Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Timothy Findley’s *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, which rewrite key texts of the colonial centre and undermine the assumptions they inscribe. Such subversion thus is an important part of the way the book illuminates, as Laura Donaldson argues, “not only how reading and interpretation constitute a crucial component of the relation between culture and empire, but also of Indian resistance to this nexus” (40).

These narratives provide, in a way, an allegorical genealogy of the four Indians (Lone Ranger *et al.*), who are present (ostensibly as escapees from the psychiatric ward of a hospital in the U.S.) in the relatively realistic sequences that comprise most of each book of *Green Grass, Running Water*. In these sequences, set in and around Blossom, Alberta, the four Indians, intent on fixing the world, intervene in the lives of an ensemble cast of Blackfoot characters. Starting small, they focus their reform attempts on the hapless Lionel Red Dog, a television salesman turning forty, whose career options have been limited through his “mistakes”—somewhat comic misunderstandings which have been compounded by the racism of mainstream society. Also in need of “fixing” is Lionel’s hot-and-cold relationship with Alberta Frank, a Native studies professor who wants a baby without a man,

and as a result is constantly playing Lionel off against another potential prospect: Charlie Looking Bear, a yuppie lawyer working for a company constructing a nearby dam. The intervention of the four Indians on Lionel's behalf and the catastrophic meddling of Coyote, while seeming to transgress codes of literary realism, are an affirmation of the belief in most Native cultures "that sacred beings inhabit the same space as humans and that frequent interchanges with them form a necessary part of both individual and tribal experience" (Donaldson 31-32).

King's subversive treatment of the conventions and icons of Western fiction is not restricted to his use of oral conventions, reworked creation stories, and counter-colonial parody in the allegorical sequences. In the more realistic sequences, he also hilariously disrupts causality and plausibility, particularly but not exclusively through the involvement of Coyote and the four Indians. For instance, he playfully foregrounds the use of narrative suture by continually starting one sequence off on exactly the same note with which the previous sequence ended, and at one point he has all the characters tuned into the same Western (in various media), with Charlie's father Portland—a Hollywood Indian who goes by the name Iron Eyes Screeching Eagle and is forced to wear a rubber nose to make himself look more Indian—as the mysterious warrior of the story's title. The story, however, has been "fixed" by the four Indians so that, this time, the Indians and not the cowboys win; the cavalry vanishes into thin air, and the heroes stare in perplexity at the seemingly invincible Indians bearing down on them: "John Wayne looked at his gun. Richard Widmark was pulling the trigger on empty chambers. The front of his fancy pants was dark and wet" (321).

The most obvious and ingenious bit of orchestration in the novel is the destruction of the dam, which is built on a fault line on Indian territory and (with a nod both to *Moby Dick* and, presumably, to the Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River) is named the Grand Baleen. The work on the dam has been halted by injunctions from Lionel's uncle Eli, a retired University of Toronto literature professor who has completed a return to his heritage somewhat reminiscent of that of Will in *Medicine River* and whose family cabin stands in the dam's spillway. At the end of the book, King contrives to have several characters' cars—a Nissan, a Pinto and a Kharmann-Ghia—sail into the dam as a (Coyote-precipitated) earthquake strikes; Eli is killed in the aftermath, but the destruction of the cabin provides the opportunity for Lionel to assert his commitment to his family, and by extension to his

people, when he expresses a wish to rebuild it and live in it (though this gesture, in typical fashion, King undercuts by having Lionel's aunt Norma insist on being first). The bursting of the dam is obviously a subversive send-up of the arrival of Columbus, but it also echoes traditional oral stories in which Coyote breaks a dam to provide water for others or to free passage for the salmon; thus Coyote's ambivalent position as a source of both catastrophe and deliverance is emphasized by the divergent consequences of the dam's destruction, particularly for Eli and Lionel.

Thus, in a reversal of condescending ethnological treatment of Native cultures and the subordinating inscription of Native people within a Eurocentric world view, King's versions of European religious, cultural, literary and historical narratives are contained and subverted within an oral and circular framework, rather than a linear and teleological framework, emphasizing a native perspective. Margaret Atwood says of "One Good Story, That One" that "we are forced to experience first hand how it must feel to have your own religious stories retold, in a version that neither 'understands' nor particularly reverences them" (250), a subversion which is a fundamental structural principle in *Green Grass, Running Water*. Trickster stories, Kimberley Blaeser notes, "frequently work to enlighten the audience to their own flaws or to caution against certain actions by exposing the ludicrousness of Trickster's actions" ("Trickster" 55), thus venting social tensions and often challenging the status quo, functions that *Green Grass, Running Water*, eclectic a trickster story as it is, certainly fulfills. This manifestation of syncretism and subversive cultural negotiation through formal innovations is characteristic of King's work as a whole, but in *Green Grass, Running Water* it reaches an almost carnivalesque culmination.

Blaeser's comments about the reformist and satirical dimensions of trickster discourse raise questions about the "audience" of King's fiction—the kinds of readers to whom his texts speak—and considering the question of King's audience necessarily involves further considerations of multiculturalism and decolonization. To some degree, King's work is directed at a particular readership; he has noted that *Medicine River* was written principally for Native readers (Rooke 72) and has voiced an understandable skepticism about whites' appreciation of his work (Weaver 57)—understandable especially since universalizing arguments about a work's significance or appeal have all too often been colonizing. On the other

hand, he also has commented that *Green Grass, Running Water* is, more than his previous work, directed at non-Native readers, reflecting the need to engage those readers in a mutual decolonization. To that degree, I would argue, while King's work may speak primarily to Native readers, it's certainly worth it (as *Green Grass, Running Water* in particular makes clear) for others to listen.

Especially important for Native *and* non-Native readers, for instance, is King's representation of Native people, which might be described as a decolonization that deemphasizes colonialism. King's work quite clearly reflects a consciousness of and a resistance to a long history of Eurocentric misrepresentation, but King prefers to respond, as he makes clear in interviews and essays, primarily by normalizing such representations and by concentrating on the relationship between individual characters and their communities. While *Green Grass Running Water* and the stories in *One Good Story, That One* do foreground the struggles and hardships of being Native in a racist society, they do so in a way that resists depicting Native people as victims and resists defining them exclusively in relation to the dominant culture or according to its expectations. At the same time, his work inscribes a consciousness of the way in which "Indigenous peoples in literature," as Terry Goldie argues, "are not a reflection of themselves but of the needs of the white culture which created that literature" (78). If "the Indigene is a semiotic pawn on a chessboard under the control of the white signmaker" (Goldie 70), King moves to break that control and actively engages, especially in the allegorical sequences of *Green Grass, Running Water*, in rewriting the rules of the game.

King's portrayal of Native characters consistently subverts the stereotypical or fetishized versions that are common currency among non-Natives. He recurrently lampoons the retention of archaic images as expressive of Native identity, such as when he has Lionel James, an elder, lament in *Medicine River* that non-Native audiences are not interested in contemporary stories about natives and only "want to hear stories about how Indians used to be" (173), and when he has Clifford Sifton, the builder of the dam, complain to Eli in *Green Grass, Running Water*, "... you guys aren't real Indians anyway. I mean, you drive cars, watch television, go to hockey games" (141). This stereotype, of course, has its roots in a romanticizing of Native people which is as old as writing by Europeans in Canada, and it has the effect of discrediting and disenfranchising those who fail to fit the bill.

King also frequently exposes the stereotypical association of Native people with violence, poverty, and alcoholism, the product of a similar sort of circular thinking. In the story "A Seat in the Garden," for instance, the white main character assumes that the three old Indians picking up bottles from his yard are alcoholics supporting their habit, though they are actually drinking lemon water and cleaning up his litter. Likewise, King has Alberta retort to a desk clerk who apologizes for doubting that she is a university professor, "I could have been a corporate executive" (*Green Grass* 174). An important part of *Medicine River*, as Percy Walton observes, is the way in which King cultivates expectations on the part of Will and the reader based on stereotypical images of the Indigene and then deftly undercuts or qualifies them (81). This strategy is important in *Green Grass*, *Running Water* as well, as a sequence of vignettes featuring Alberta's father Amos illustrates. Amos is first introduced as a pathetic, drunken man verbally abusing Alberta's mother, but this impression is modified in subsequent scenes in which we see Amos as a tribal cop quietly avenging a friend who has been swindled by a white used car salesman, and seething with anger when sacred dance outfits are confiscated by border police who subsequently return them (only after political pressure is exerted) desecrated and ruined. The effect is to contextualize and historicize the reader's initial impression of Amos, deflecting attention from his state to the causes of it: the debilitating effects of racism.

Through such undercutting of stereotypes, King turns the tables by showing that it's whites, not Native people, who have some problems, and by portraying Native people as patient (though not quiescent nor romantically stoic) survivors of the obstacles the dominant culture has put in their way. Native people, Kateri Damm emphasizes, have not been unaffected by the dominant culture but nonetheless have endured—"we have not faded into the earth like snow before the summer sun of 'progress' nor have we stagnated in some sort of retrograde time capsule" (16)—and King's subtle subversiveness underlines and indeed epitomizes this spirit of endurance.

Another aspect of the decolonizing of attitudes at work in King's fiction is his representation of whites, a turning of the tables obviously to be relished by a Native readership, but also an important opportunity for readers from the dominant culture to look in the mirror of stereotypical caricature. King's white characters generally display a blithe and sometimes malevolent ignorance, insensitivity, and sense of superiority towards Native people and

Native cultural practices, and the attitudes of whites towards Native people range from patronizing sympathy to antagonism and exploitation. For instance, the estranged husband of Lionel's sister Latisha, the airheaded American George Morningstar, is initially a charming good-for-nothing who engages in playful banter with Latisha about the superiority of the United States: "Put fifty Canadians in a room with one American, and the American will be in charge in no time" (132). Later, however, he becomes physically abusive and precipitates a small crisis at the end of *Green Grass, Running Water*, when he violates the sanctity of a Sun Dance by secretly attempting to photograph the ceremony. In the story "Borders," a woman and her son on their way to Salt Lake City end up stranded between Canadian and American customs when she insists on proclaiming Blackfoot as her nationality—a literalization of liminality which nonetheless foregrounds that, as King notes elsewhere, "within the collective mind of contemporary tribes such as the Iroquois confederacy in the east and the Blackfoot confederacy in the west, the forty-ninth parallel is a figment of someone else's imagination" ("Introduction" 1987, 10). As individuals and as representatives of institutions, whites are generally presented as a disruptive presence in King's fiction, underlining the obstacles that their assumptions of superiority and their stereotyping of Native people present for King's protagonists (one notable exception to this rule being the title character of the richly comic "Joe the Painter and the Deer Island Massacre" in *One Good Story*).

King also at times presents whites as cartoonish colonial stereotypes, particularly through his use of character names, which are often playful allegorical and intertextual ciphers. In "A Seat in the Garden," for instance, the main character, Joe Hovaugh (Jehovah when you say it fast), gets annoyed by the appearance of a ghostly Indian in his garden—a playful sendup of the Eurocentrism of the Christian myth of Eden (with echoes of the movie *Field of Dreams* as well). In *Green Grass, Running Water*, such play on names is extensive. Hovaugh reappears as the director of the hospital who pursues the four Indians into Canada. Two security guards who escort Lionel from a Salt Lake City hotel—to which he returns after being mistakenly jailed as an AIM supporter—are named Tom and Gerry, and the police who take him to the station are Chip and Dale (all literally cartoon characters). A busload of Canadian tourists descending on the Dead Dog Café, where Latisha works as a waitress, bear the names of famous figures from Canadian litera-

ture who, as King observes, “blur the line between reality and fiction and between what we think of as history and just gossip—between Indian and non-Indian” (Canton 100): J. Richardson, A. Belaney, Polly Johnson, Sue Moodie; incidentally, Latisha guesses that they are Canadian and not American by the way “they filed off the bus in an orderly line and stood in front of the restaurant and waited until they were all together” (155). Clifford Sifton, who tries to convince Eli to clear out of his cabin and to give up his resistance to the dam, is named after Wilfred Laurier’s notorious Minister of the Interior, who presided over settlement of the west; in a similar spirit, the name of Lionel’s patronizing boss, Bill Bursum, is a clever reversal of an early twentieth-century American bill designed to free up Pueblo land for squatters. Finally, in a particularly cutting allusion, Lionel’s boss during a short-lived stint at the Department of Indian Affairs, in whose place Lionel is to give a talk on “The History of Cultural Pluralism in Canada’s Boarding Schools,” is named Duncan Scott, a replaying of the bureaucratic, assimilationist paternalism of poet and Indian Affairs administrator Duncan Campbell Scott; needless to say, after Lionel is mistakenly arrested, Duncan doesn’t return his calls. Along with King’s normalizing of representations of Native people, such satiric and intertextual representations of whites, and indeed King’s characterization of whites in general, function as a kind of counter-discourse to traditional white imaginings of the Indigene, depictions of Native people as one-dimensional, stylized caricatures. If anybody’s “wooden” here, it’s not the Indians.

Such intertextual allusiveness and strategic satire highlight the way in which King’s work must be approached and appreciated in the context of issues germane to Native peoples and cultures historically and currently. Yet we also have to recognize in King’s writing a highly unique and varied (rather than representative) style that reflects a wide range of influences and forms, and that his writing speaks to non-Native readers as well as Native readers. Thus King’s work serves as an example of how we have to balance our appreciation of cultural difference and concerns about appropriation and misrepresentation with a respect for the individuality of the writer (aside from that writer’s connection to a specific community). In recognizing that non-Native readers stand to benefit from King’s decolonizing fictions, however, it is important not to stress Native people’s relations with the dominant culture nor to privilege a non-Native audience, which

would essentially be a kind of recolonizing, a continuing fixation on the centre which has been a significant focus of debate in postcolonial writing and criticism. Furthermore, one has to be conscious of the uneasy relation between Native literatures and critical theorizing, and of the potential for colonization when “authority emanat[es] from the mainstream critical center to the marginalized native texts” (Blaeser “Critical Center,” 56). These larger issues of cultural literacy and critical politics, indeed, are brought home through the challenges of approaching King’s work as a non-Native reader and developing a greater appreciation for it. While I happen to think King’s work is extremely rich, enjoyable and significant, my appreciation of it is obviously limited, and in such cross-cultural reading an awareness of one’s limitations is crucial. Thus, as much as it is tempting to assert the importance of King’s voice to an increasingly culturally diverse Canadian literary scene, that assertion raises the larger issue of the uneasy place of Native writers in “Canadian” culture, as well as the danger of erasing more specific and more significant cultural and communal ties.

Present theories of multiculturalism, syncretism and hybridity may have taken us beyond the notion of homogeneous cultural enclaves of which individual writers are unproblematically representative—though such theories should be differentiated from arguments against ethnic ghettoizing which are intended as strategies to contain and erase cultural pluralism. However, appropriation, misrepresentation, and cultural hegemony are still live issues which complicate a representation of the multiculturalism of cultural production in Canada. Thus a necessary strategy in decolonizing Canadian culture is the development of a more pluralistic, historicized cultural literacy, and, furthermore—to ensure that that cross-cultural reading doesn’t slide into recolonization—the development of a consciousness of the syncretism of Canadian writing. This involves recognizing in Canadian writing not a comfortable fusion of cultural influences, but a complex and hierarchized set of cultural interactions, negotiations, appropriations and subversions at a textual level that are a reflection of larger dynamics within Canadian society. What makes the work of Thomas King so significant to a literary scene in which these dynamics are increasingly evident is that his writing not only dramatizes the importance of being conscious of such syncretism but also illustrates its creative potential.

So, ultimately—to come back to the metaphors of food with which this discussion began (and which are staples of celebrations of multiculturalism)—

we're not talking about a cultural puree, and we're not talking about a tossed salad. Where does that leave us? In *Green Grass, Running Water*, Lionel's culinarily innovative mother makes Tortino de Carciofi with Ribollita (vegetable soup and an artichoke omelet) and substitutes elk for the artichokes, and in making Hawaiian Curdle Surprise substitutes moose meat for the usual main ingredient, octopus. Maybe there's a metaphor in that.

WORKS CITED

- Atwood, Margaret. "A Double-Bladed Knife: Subversive Laughter in Two Stories by Thomas King." *Canadian Literature* 124/125 (1990): 243-50.
- Blaeser, Kimberley M. "Native Literature: Seeking a Critical Center." *Looking at the Words of our People*. Ed. Jeannette Armstrong. Penticton: Theytus, 1993. 51-62.
- . "Trickster: A Compendium." *Buried Roots and Indestructible Seeds: The Survival of American Indian Life in Story, History, and Spirit*. Ed. Mark A. Lindquist and Martin Zanger. Madison: U Wisconsin P, 1992. 47-66.
- Bruchac, Joseph and Jeanne Perrault. "Notes from the Co-editors." *Critical Visions: Contemporary North American Native Writers*. Special issue of *Ariel* 25.1 (1994): 7-11.
- Canton, Jeffrey. Interview with Thomas King. *Paragraph* 16.1 (1994): 2-6. Rpt. in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* 89 (1996): 98-100.
- Damm, Kateri. "Says Who: Colonialism, Identity and Defining Indigenous Literature." *Looking at the Words of our People*. Ed. Jeannette Armstrong. Penticton: Theytus, 1993. 9-25.
- Donaldson, Laura E. "Noah Meets Old Coyote, or Singing in the Rain: Intertextuality in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Studies in American Indian Literature* 7.2 (1995): 27-43.
- Goldie, Terry. "Fear and Temptation: Images of Indigenous Peoples in Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand Literature." *The Native in Literature*. Ed. Thomas King et al. Downsview: ECW, 1987. 67-79.
- Horne, Dee. "To Know the Difference: Mimicry, Satire, and Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 56 (1995): 255-273.
- Kamboureli, Smaro. "Introduction." *Making a Difference: Canadian Multicultural Literature*. Ed. Kamboureli. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1996. 1-16.
- King, Thomas. "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial." *World Literature Written in English* 30.2 (1990): 10-16.
- . *Green Grass, Running Water*. Toronto: Harper, 1993.
- . "Introduction." *All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction*. Ed. King. Toronto: McClelland, 1990.
- . "Introduction." *The Native in Literature*. Ed. Thomas King, Cheryl Carver, and Helen Hoy. Downsview: ECW, 1987. 7-14.
- . *Medicine River*. 1989. Rpt. Toronto: Penguin, 1990.
- . *One Good Story, That One*. Toronto: Harper, 1993.
- Krupat, Arnold. *Ethnocriticism*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1992.
- Lutz, Hartmut. "Preface." *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations with Canadian Native Authors*. Ed. Lutz. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1991. 1-11.

- Rooke, Constance. Interview with Thomas King. *World Literature Written in English* 30.2 (1990): 62-76.
- Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. SightLines Series. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Siemerling, Winfried. "Writing Ethnicity: Introduction." *Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Québécois Literature*. Ed. Siemerling. Toronto: ECW, 1996. 1-32.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Narrative Chance: Post-Modern Discourse on Native American Literatures*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.
- Walton, Percy. "'Tell Our Own Stories': Politics and the Fiction of Thomas King." *World Literature Written in English* 30.2 (1990): 77-84.
- Weaver, Jace. Interview with Thomas King. *Publisher's Weekly* 240.10 (1993): 56-58.



FRS

(from *Minding the Darkness*)

II.ii

As an only child
 whose father was often absent
 I studied his ways

not just on fishing trips
 when from the back of the canoe
 he showed how to twist the paddle

silently in the water
 so as not to scare the loon
 or when at Lachute

how to make the boomerang
 float through the blue air
 to drop at our feet

I remember his netted sling
 I thought of him as David
 when the round pebble sailed

far over the cedars
 and in his absences
 at meetings to make things better

for prisoners poets
 then hopefully all Canada
 through the CCF Party Cooperative Commonwealth Federation

I knew that he had angered
 not just the Montreal police
 or the McGill Board of Governors

when he spoke up against
 the attack with truncheons
 on the march of the unemployed

but sometimes friends and allies
 with his dominant will
 Why even he confessed
 how when he and his brothers
 camped in the wild country
 up the Murray River
 they would climb to a cliff top
 and topple huge boulders
 to crash through the forest beneath—
 a side to the law professor
 and defender of human rights
 against the excesses
 of the Prime Minister of Quebec
 not everyone knew about
 (he candidly admitted
 that even in wilderness
 you couldn't be certain
 there was no one else around)
 It must have been Frank who showed
 how to rock a rotting tree trunk
 slowly backwards and forwards
 finding and feeding the rhythm
 that would finally bring it down
 in a chaos of broken branches
 and the first time I did it on my own
 in front of four young girls
 as the pine began to fall
 there leapt out from a hole near the top
 one two three four five a whole family
 of flying squirrels
 as I looked in the feral eyes
 of the youngest sister
 I saw myself as demiurge
 and believed for a moment with Goethe
 that to discover the mysteries
 of nature one must violate them

Was there something in our line
 that was tempted by decay
 to bring it crashing down?
 When after Kent State
 and Nixon's invasion of Cambodia
 I moved the faculty amendment
 to suspend all campus teaching
 and the Governor responded in rage
 did I pause even for a second
 to ask What have we wrought?
 and though by acting out
 that particular drama I still believe
 we avoided the violence
 that divided teachers from students
 at Harvard and Columbia
 I have finally seen this moment
 why Milosz remembering
 the gangs of Central Europe
 turned his back on me then
 the same year my father
 in the *Crise d'Octobre*
Quebec crisis 1970
 counseled Pierre Trudeau
 to invoke the War Measures Act
 and for the sake of law
 to suspend due process
 while rounding up leaders and poets
 even the chanteuse Pauline Julien
 who lived near us at North Hatley
 and sang for the anti-war movement
 My mother who like myself
 took the part of those arrested
 understood better than my father
 that his paranoid fear
 (giving her a US \$50 dollar bill
 and saying *Meet me in Rouse's Point*
 across the border

if we get separated
and if the rioters
have not closed all the bridges
off Montreal island)
 went back to that week of terror
 Quebec City in 1917
 six days of martial law
 from the conscription riots
 and before that the gangs speaking *joual*
 that used to wait for him
 on his way home from school
 Must our states become engines
 of self-fulfilling paranoia
 driving peoples apart?
 I remember my father's sling
 it was just before she died
 my mother told me
 how police had come to the door
 of St. Matthew's Rectory
 in the Upper Town of Quebec
 to show my grandfather the Archdeacon
 the stone that had broken a window
 in the French-speaking Lower Town
 the same year my father
 obsessed with the explosiveness
 of guns and gunpowder
 stuffed one with the other
 yanked the trigger with a long string
 to which nothing happened
 till all at once the gun
 blew up in his arms and face
 not even the special train
 from his uncle the Vice-President
 of the Grand Trunk Railway
 that took him from Quebec to Montreal
 could save his eye and his ear

Québécois

1917

Nothing not even the fire
 has affected me like that
 I escaped in World War Two
 when by accident I bicycled
 through the middle of what turned out later
 to have been a conscription riot
 with no worse than catcalls after me
 and I have learned from experience
 how even a rotting pine trunk
 may be someone's home
 while my father a rugged man
 beloved by many
 though usually from outside
 with a mind sometimes benign
 or else volcanic with frustration
 from his failure to build
 the Blakean commonwealth
 of the Anglican Hymnal
I will not cease from mortal strife
 sung by a whole football stadium
 on the Pink Floyd record
 a poet with his own voice
 and also that older voice
 Till we have built
Jerusalem
 speaking in Wordsworth's dream
 of apocalyptic deluge
 approached his death struggling
 with almost prophetic forces
 from something unfulfilled
 inside of him still cursing

ii

the mindfulness
 of fire-tending

 taught me by my father
 the importance

of not resorting to paper
how in a rainstorm

to split softwood with an axe
and kindle with splinters

from the tree's core
or with a penknife

to whittle dead twigs
for their inner shavings

how birchbark
will burn when wet

the secret
inner heart

of that public man

[*Minding the Darkness* is the sequel to *Coming to Jakarta* (1988)
and *Listening to the Candle* (1992)]

Coyote Pedagogy

Knowing Where the Borders Are
in Thomas King's
Green Grass, Running Water

The most striking effect of *Green Grass, Running Water* is its ability to arouse readers' desire to "get" the in-jokes, to track the allusions, and to find answers to a whole series of posed but unanswered questions. An unidentified speaker begins the story in an unknown location—an allusion to Northrop's Frye's comment that the Canadian sensibility "is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?'" (220). We are across a border, but which one? And then we hit the Cherokee syllabics: this is Cherokee territory, but even when we translate the words, when we know the colours and the directions, we still don't know what they mean to the culture that uses them. There is no reader of this novel, except perhaps Thomas King, who is not outside some of its networks of cultural knowledge. But every reader is also inside at least one network and can therefore work by analogy to cross borders into the others. We want to put as much emphasis on the "knowing" in our title as on the "borders": borders are constructed by what you know and don't know. Coyote pedagogy requires training in illegal border-crossing.

Here are some examples of how this works. If, for example, you put together the word play of Louis, Ray and Al, the fishing buddies from Manitoba who plan "to hang around Scott Lake" (335) and come up with Métis leader Louis Riel (1844-1885) and the hanging of Thomas Scott, then you will probably suspect that Sally Jo Weyha (182) can also be tracked, however deviously, back to "real" life, to Sacajawea (1784-1884? or 1812?), the Shoshone who was the sole woman and guide on the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1803-1806).

If you get Clifford Sifton, then you might suspect that King has drawn Bill Bursum (80) from "real" life. Sifton (1861-1929) was an aggressive promoter of white settlement (and Native displacement) through the Prairie West Movement. He was also Federal Minister of the Interior and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Wilfrid Laurier's government (1896-1905). That the historical Sifton was quite deaf is apt—many characters in this novel don't listen when they should. Bill Bursum? He is Sifton, American Style. The historical Bursum was Holm O. Bursum (1867-1953), a senator from New Mexico, who advocated the development of New Mexico's mineral resources. He proposed the infamous Bursum Bill of 1921, which aimed to give Pueblo land and water rights to non-Indians (Sturtevant). And Buffalo Bill (43) is an appropriate nickname for the proprietor of the Home Entertainment Barn, as the Wild West Shows of the original Buffalo Bill, William F. Cody (1846-1917), provided subject matter for many a male fantasy in dime novel or movie.

King's strategy for writing for an audience primarily composed of the uninformed is not to pander to its preconceptions or to produce explanations, but to entice, even trick this audience into finding out for themselves. The reward for following King's merry chase is the pure pleasure of getting the point or the joke, the pleasure of moving across the border separating insider and outsider. Borders make us stupid and allow us to remain so if we let them. Lionel, told that "Massasoit was the Indian who greeted the Europeans at Plymouth Rock" responds "I'm Canadian" (58). This is not so much an explanation of his ignorance as a defence of it. Remember, Lionel wants to be white even if to do this requires paying no attention at all to what is going on around him and falling asleep during his Aunt Norma's frequent instruction sessions. King similarly bombards us with allusions to what is basic general knowledge for at least three distinct groups: Canadians, Americans, and Native North Americans. Anyone who wants to understand (or teach) the novel has to be prepared to cross the political border between the two countries, the disciplinary borders between English literature, Native Studies, and Anthropology, the literary border between Canadian and American literature. The most important border is between white ignorance and red knowledge: for King this is not a border that Euro-North Americans can cross without passing an IQ test. And this means, as the narrator says to Coyote "pay attention . . . or we'll have to do this again" (104) and "forget being helpful and listen" (229).

Borders mark the edge of the expected, the edge of the known. When Babo, who is keenly perceptive and catches every nuance of what people say to her, goes into the Canadian border post, she notices “a large picture of a woman in a formal with a tiara” (236) hanging on the wall behind the counter. Canadian readers will be particularly amused that “the Queen,” Elizabeth II, can be reduced to “a woman,” an unknown. This is, by analogy, how whites “see” Native culture: as totally decontextualized. Babo can’t know what she is seeing if it is completely foreign to her, but years of oppression have taught her to try. And this is how the reader must learn to operate: to pay attention, especially in foreign territory.

Green Grass, Running Water is full of jokes that require detailed cultural/historical knowledge for full appreciation. The biggest joke is the climax of the novel, the bursting of the dam that kills Eli Stands Alone. The climax is tragic because a good man dies for his people and at the same time a huge groaner of a pun that is the punch line for a ridiculous shaggy dog (read shaggy coyote) story. Five hundred years after Columbus, three cars, a red Pinto (23), a blue Nissan (175) and a white Karmann-Ghia (235)—the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria—crash into the already stress-fractured Grand Baleen Dam and break it during an earthquake caused by Coyote’s dancing. In a sense then, this novel climaxes, flushes or overflows in an outburst of scatological humour (see Lowe 195), as three used cars, the symbolic shit of twentieth-century technology, overflow the toilet. To get the shaggy dog story one has to have some specific cultural knowledge about Christopher Columbus, his ships, and the flat-earth view commonly (but wrongly) attributed to early explorers. One also has to have been listening, since a shaggy dog story works on sound play, on puns. This is an oral story, don’t forget.

To get the point about the timing of the dam break, one also needs some understanding of the Sun Dance. The dam bursts at sunrise (412) on a Sun Dance day; it is the morning after Eli has joined in the dancing (388). To get this point, we only have to “pay attention” to the details of the text itself. Even without insider knowledge, we can understand what Eli’s dancing signifies, why Eli takes Lionel there to celebrate his birthday, and why Lionel’s getting his face painted is not a trivial or childish birthday treat (Powell 811-29). If as non-Natives we get this, we cross the border into an area of knowledge about Native spirituality.

To get more of the point about the dam’s giving way, Parliament Lake’s disappearing because of stress (136) and the refusal of Eli Stands Alone to

move his mother's cabin, one needs knowledge about Elijah Harper, the Meech Lake Accord, the Charlottetown Conference, and the Canadian constitutional debate, as well as knowledge about dam projects affecting North American Natives, for example the James Bay Project, specifically the Great Whale/Grand Baleine Dam and the Cree in Quebec, the Oldman Dam and the Blackfoot in Alberta; and the Kinzua Dam and the Seneca in Pennsylvania (see Waldram, Wallace 5, and Deloria, *Custer* 36). King asks us to bring together different "sets" of information to emphasize the similarities between the struggle over land and water rights on both sides of the border. The promises made in early treaties were to last as long as the sun shines, the waters run and the grasses grow (208, 271, and so on.)

Thus the different views of the dam. Cliff, for example, sees the dam as "a beauty," to which Eli responds "Reminds me of a toilet" (136). King shows what the dam means for both Native economics and Native spirituality. Fishing in Parliament Lake is "probably very good" according to Latisha (336), but there is a court order prohibiting fishing. The dam, in fact, "is killing the river" and if there are no floods, the cottonwoods will not get the nutrients they need; thus, Harley asks "And if the cottonwoods die, where are we going to get the Sun Dance tree?" (376). Just as Native Americans saw their lands disappearing under the rising waters of dam projects, so Bill Bursum is transfixed as his high-priced shoreline disappears after the dam bursts and "the water roll[s] on as it had for eternity" (415). Norma starts to rebuild her mother's cabin where they "can see the sun in the morning" (424). Treaty rights are asserted again; those who think of dams only in terms of economic progress are left, like Bursum, standing on shaky ground.

In order to really "get" the whole joke, one has to learn not only the facts, but also come to terms with a sense of humour that can only be described as subversive, which may explain what the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service is doing in the novel. Consider, for example, the ways in which King fools around with the Bible, literary canons, and taken-for-granted social, political and sexual norms.

King introduces Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* appropriately enough in the section beginning "This according to Ishmael" (104) with several references, including "I read the book. It's Moby-Dick, the great white whale who destroys the *Pequod*" (196). Changing Woman finds herself on the *Pequod* with Ahab and his men. No white whale appears but the cry goes

up: "Whaleswhaleswhaleswhalesbianswhalesbianswhaleswhales!" (195), and a frenzy of killing ensues. Changing Woman, appalled at the killing, is told "This is a Christian world, you know. We only kill things that are useful or things we don't like" (196), which covers just about everything. Ahab's men keep looking for the white whale and another cry goes up, "Blackwhaleblackwhalesblackwhalesbianblackwhalebianblackwhale" and Ahab responds "You mean white whale, don't you? Moby-Dick the great male white whale?" (196). Our attention now turns to black instead of white. As in the first cry, King "buries" *lesbian* in the words. Then he uses Ahab to draw particular attention to the maleness of Moby-Dick. What have we got here? An attack on lesbians and the refusal to recognize blackness (and oh, how students of Melville have had to consider the ambiguity of the *whiteness* of the whale!). Though his crew tells him the whale is black and female, Ahab persists in seeing a great white male whale. He also throws overboard anyone willing to see her for what she is (black, female, lesbian). Changing Woman, of course, not only sees her quite clearly, but she thinks she is "a very beautiful whale" (197). She is told to grab a harpoon and make herself useful (if she won't act like a man—Queequeg, the harpooner—then she is, as a woman who might well be slotted into the category black and who seems quite uninterested in sex with men, in danger herself). She instead jumps overboard and joins Moby Jane for a semi-erotic ride (224). The great male adventure story turns into a female friendship story. This inability to see blacks, females, lesbians as people explains why no one has noticed that the four old Indians are women; because they act like men, they have been mapped on to male mixed-race pairs of Western literature that operate on the hierarchical model of the Lone Ranger, whose name in Spanish, *Kemo Sabe*, means "He who knows" and Tonto, whose name means "Numbskull."

To put this all together we have to juxtapose knowledge from different sources. Moby-Dick/Moby-Jane points explicitly to Melville and establishes how gender differences are marked in names (except for Babo!). Most readers will still get the "Look, look, see Dick and Jane" allusion to the perfect white family of the Ginn readers. Dick and Jane also establish the difference between a Moby with a dick and a Moby without one (or any interest in one) and so we can make the jump to lesbian, too. White versus black takes us into a society based on oppressive binaries, hard categories and rigid borders. Even Coyote has trouble seeing Moby-Jane because he has "read the book" (196).

And in this episode too, King the history teacher adds the Native twist. His play on Pequod and Pequots reminds Coyote that he may have been reading part of the Western canon, but he ought to have been reading Native history: *Moby-Dick* covers over a white society that killed its foes, sold all the survivors into slavery, and abolished the use of any Pequot names, effectively wiping out any record of them. There are no "others" left to recognize. Thus the process by which the Western canon (not to mention American school readers) has obliterated possibility and difference is laid bare.

The scene between A.A. Gabriel and Thought Woman is too complex to unpack completely here, but the Virgin Birth is the centre for the novel's other main trick: Alberta's pregnancy. This Annunciation scene uses the common misreading of the "immaculate conception" as the conception of Jesus in Mary (rather than Mary's own sinless conception). When Thought Woman says no, Coyote says "So she really means yes, right?"—we are back in the world of compulsory heterosexuality, where every woman is assumed to want sex and a man, whatever she says. Coyote does think about it, clearly, and right after Thought Woman floats away, he starts to dance, the wind rises and the rain falls, a downpour that soaks Alberta "right through to her underwear" (353). In the Cherokee story, Star Woman is made pregnant by the wind (Ywahoo 31). Coyote, apparently, is responsible for impregnating both Alberta and Mary: "But I was helpful too . . . That woman who wanted a baby. Now that was helpful" (416). Note that earlier the narrator has explained bestiality to Coyote, but Coyote says "But he doesn't mean coyotes" (146). Rules are made for coyotes to break! Apart from ignoring borders between animal and human (or divine and human, if you prefer), this subversive move makes the central story of the Christian religion into a Coyote story, and repeats the novel's overall strategy which subsumes European culture and history into an Aboriginal framework, and counters a patriarchal religion with a matriarchal one.

And here it's worth making another point: you can never assume that you have got the complete joke: there is always more. For example, Thought Woman floats around thinking about good points and bad points to her situation and we all think of those jokes that begin, well, there's a good side to this and a bad side, which would you like to hear first. But as she floats around, she thinks "Under the good points . . . there are no coyotes" (323). Defoe's Robinson Crusoe does this. So does God in a story called "Coyote Challenges God" told by Harry Robinson in *Write it on Your Heart*; God tells Coyote,

you've done a lot of good things
 and you've done a lot of bad things
 And it seems to be the bad you've done,
 it's more than the good.
 So that's why I'm going to put you in one place.
 And you going to stay there until the end of the world.
 (122)

This explains why Old Coyote turns up only in the Native stories—although the narrator says that Coyote can't be contained so easily: "this world is full of Coyotes" (272).

Similarly, the Louis, Ray and Al who hang around Scott Lane also may allude to Canadian modernist poets Louis Dudek, Ray Souster, Al Purdy, and F.R. Scott. And remember when Babo notices that the American flagpole tilts to the right and the Canadian flagpole to the left at the border crossing? (see also King "Borders"). This may refer to the dominant politics of each country, but it may also refer to the Sun Dance pole, which must stand absolutely straight in the ceremony (Welch 49). So it's not good enough to pay attention, you have to keep on paying attention. Significantly, Sitting Bull's vision at the last great Sun Dance before Little Big Horn included a voice saying "I give you these [U.S. soldiers] because they have no ears" (Welch 51).

The move from eschatology to scatology is part of Native subversive humour (Lowe 195). Norma turns Latisha's restaurant into a successful tourist trap by taking a racist epithet used against Indians ("dog-eater") and turning it on tourists, who are happy to pay to eat pretend doggy-doo and Black Labrador stew. Lionel, typically, doesn't get Norma's joke, "The Blackfoot didn't eat dog" (57). And it is a pretty complex one. Native Americans turn the sad reality of near-starvation for the Sioux around the time of Little Bighorn, when they had to eat dogs after the buffalo disappeared, into a joke. Vine Deloria Jr. says that "other tribes . . . announce that their chef has prepared a special treat for the Sioux guests at the annual banquet through the special cooperation of the local dog pound" (*Custer* 165). But this joke crosses the border (as did the Sioux/Lakota with Sitting Bull after the Battle of Little Bighorn); it also alludes to the White Dog Ceremony—part of a revival of old traditions among the Six Nations at the end of the eighteenth century, now referred to as the Longhouse religion, and practiced on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border (see Hoxie). And of course, the café name alludes to Vine Deloria's book *God is Red*, which pro-

poses that religion should derive ecologically from particular territories, and concludes that as Native people “discover the meaning of the lands of their ancestors, the invaders of the North American continent will finally discover that for this land, God is Red” (301). But if you don’t get the Native jokes, there are some white jokes here too, for example the pun, signaled by the God/Dog jokes on the opening pages, on Nietzsche’s famous aphorism, God is Dead, since this is the Dead Dog, or rather Dead God Café.

This is Native pedagogy. We are not only being taught Native history, but we are also being taught it in the Native way—we are not just acquiring information, but learning how to process it differently. As Lee Maracle explains it

Most of our stories don’t have orthodox ‘conclusions’; that is left to the listeners, who we trust will draw useful lessons from the story—not necessarily the lessons we wish them to draw, but all conclusions are considered valid. The listeners are drawn into the dilemma and are expected at some point in their lives to actively work themselves out of it. (11-12)

Thus, she argues, Native children “grow bored quickly under European instruction” because “not much is left to the imagination in European stories” (12). Native stories demand that the reader use imagination. (Norma says to Lionel “Always best to figure those things out for yourself” [422]; and Eli says “Can’t just tell you that straight out. Wouldn’t make any sense. Wouldn’t be much of a story” [361]). In *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* Julie Cruikshank notes her expectation that the women she talked to would tell her stories about the Klondike Gold Rush or the building of the Alaska highway; instead they insisted on telling her traditional stories about how the world began and how their clan got its name. That is, to tell one’s story is to begin at the beginning. Ron and Suzanne Scollon explain that Native story tellers are sometimes reluctant to tell stories to outsiders or children because of “the length of time it can be expected to take to make things intelligible to an uninformed audience” (177). King has used all the resources of wit, pun and allusion to compress his story. He tells the story of the creation of the world in order to tell the story of Lionel Red Dog and Alberta Frank in 1992 in Blossom, Alberta, Canada. There’s a lot of material to pack in and the only way to do it is through promoting lateral (or bilateral or trilateral) cross-border thinking in the reader.

WORKS CITED

- Thanks to Robin Ridington, Professor Emeritus, Anthropology, University of British Columbia, for his detailed assistance and wide knowledge of Coyote.
- Cruikshank, Julie, with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith and Annie Ned. *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders*. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 1990.
- Deloria, Vine Jr. *Custer Died for your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. New York: Avon, 1969.
- . *God is Red*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1973.
- Frye, Northrop. *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*. Toronto: Anansi, 1971.
- Hoxie, Frederick E., ed. "White Dog Ceremony." *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*. Boston: Houghton, 1996.
- King, Thomas. "Borders." *One Good Story, That One*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993. 129-45.
- . *Green Grass, Running Water*. 1993. Rpt. Toronto: HarperPerennial, 1994.
- Lowe, John. "Coyote's Jokebook: Humor in Native American Literature and Culture." *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. Ed. Andrew Wiget. New York: Garland, 1994. 193-205.
- Maracle, Lee. Preface. "You Become the Trickster." *Sojourner's Truth and Other Stories*. Vancouver: Press Gang, 1990. 11-13.
- Powell, Peter J. *Sweet Medicine: The Continuing Role of the Sacred Arrows, The Sun Dance, and the Sacred Buffalo Hat in Northern Cheyenne History*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1969.
- Robinson, Harry. "Coyote Challenges God." *Write It on Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*. Comp. and ed. Wendy Wickwire. Vancouver: Talonbooks/Theytus, 1989. 119-22.
- Scollon, Ron and Suzanne B.K. Scollon. "Cooking it Up and Boiling it Down: Abstracts in Athabaskan Children's Story Retellings." *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse*. Ed. Deborah Tannen. Advances in Discourse Processes, 12. Norwood, NJ: ALEX, 1984. 173-97.
- Sturtevant, William C., gen. ed. *Handbook of the North American Indians*. Vol. IV. *History of Indian-White Relations*. Ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn. Washington: Smithsonian, 1988.
- Waldman, Carl. *Atlas of the North American Indian*. Maps and illus. Molly Braun. New York: Facts on File, 1985.
- Waldram, James B. *As Long as the Rivers Run: Hydroelectric Development and Native Communities in Western Canada*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 1988.
- Wallace, Anthony F.C. *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*. New York: Random House, Vintage, 1969.
- Welch, James with Paul Stekler. *Killing Custer: The Battle of Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*. New York: Norton, 1994.
- Ywahoo, Dhyani. *Voices of our Ancestors: Cherokee Teachings from the Wisdom Fire*. Boston: Shambala, 1987.

Reading Notes for Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*

Page numbers refer to the paperback edition,
Toronto, HarperCollins, 1994.

The Notes are followed by a bibliography of critical works, and a
list of works by Thomas King.

The following annotations are chiefly informal in tone, for they began as notes to share with students after class discussions of *Green Grass, Running Water* in a senior Canadian fiction class at UBC in 1994. My students said they would have liked more “clues” to their reading—clues *written down*. I told them I would type up my annotations to share with them, and suggested that they add their own as they read. That began a very entertaining search for the answers to little puzzles. Not long after, my colleague Margery Fee shared some notes given her by Robin Ridington in Anthropology (now retired). I added some of his (and I hope I have remembered to acknowledge Robin’s particular contributions). Helen Hoy of the University of Guelph also provided several suggestions, as well as the list of works by King. Contributions by Robin Ridington are noted with [RR], those by Helen Hoy with [HH].

The notes reflect my experience in discussions. In writing up the notes, I assumed that reasonably current, non-specialized points would be familiar. For example Joe Hovaugh’s remark about money and evangelism (King, *Green Grass* 95) would suggest Jim Bakker and other money-making, fundamentalist TV evangelists.

The annotations follow order of appearance in the text, except for notes on the four Indians. These are dealt with first since the Lone Ranger, Robinson Crusoe, Hawkeye, and Ishmael, along with their “Indian friend” (71) counterparts (Tonto, Chingachgook, Friday and Queequeg) figure so prominently in the narrative. With these, as with other characters and situations, King purposefully plays with expectations about naming and gender.

TONTO Faithful Indian companion to the LONE RANGER, familiar from the 1950's ABC and CBS television series and from movies. He was played by a number of actors, but most memorably by Canadian Mohawk actor Jay Silverheels (born Harold Jay Smith) in *The Lone Ranger* (1956), and *The Lone Ranger and the Lost City of Gold* (1957). See E. O'Connor's *The Hollywood Indian* (1980), and other such books for more details. This "Indian-sounding" name means "numbskull," "fool," or "stupid" in Spanish: "That's a stupid name, says those rangers" (71). Note other variations in the text on "that's a stupid name:" for example, Nasty Bumpo's remarks to Old Woman (394).

LONE RANGER Masked man with faithful Indian companion, TONTO. Hero of western books, the 1933 radio serial written by Fran Striker (see Yoggy 221), the 50's television series, and numerous movies, among them: *The Lone Ranger* (1938), *The Lone Ranger Rides Again* (1939), and *The Legend of the Lone Ranger* (1981). At the centre of stories about the Texas Rangers and the lone survivor of a raid. He is a Do Gooder. The Texas Rangers myth has it that one ranger could be sent to clean up a town. A later version of this frontier figure is the Clint Eastwood loner in *High Plains Drifter* (1971) and *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964). Tom King's interest in the Lone Ranger also extends to his work as a photographer. He is engaged in a project, *Shooting The Lone Ranger*, to capture well known Native Americans wearing the Lone Ranger mask.

CHINGACHGOOK Faithful Indian companion to HAWKEYE (who first appears as Natty Bumpo), in Cooper's *Leatherstocking Saga* (1826-1841). Also known by the names Great Serpent, Indian John, John Mohegan, and Uncas. Chingachgook is a "noble savage" and the last of his tribe (the Mohegans/Mohicans). He goes on adventures with Hawkeye/Bumpo: he helps Bumpo fight Magua in *Last of the Mohicans* (1826); helps Bumpo guide Mabel Dunham to her father in *Pathfinder* (1840), and helps rescue Wah-Ta!-Wah in *The Deerslayer* (1841). He is converted to Christianity, and then dies in a fire in *The Pioneers* (1823). Interestingly, Jay Silverheels also played Chingachgook in the film of *The Pathfinder* (1953). (See above TONTO).

HAWKEYE Another adopted "Indian" name. Most famous of the frontier heroes in American literature, when the frontier was in the East—Appalachia, before the frontier "moved" West. Hawkeye is one of the nicknames for James Fenimore Cooper's Nathaniel Bumpo, a white

woodsman and guide with knowledge of “Indian ways.” He is the hero of *The Leatherstocking Saga* (1826–1841)—including *The Deerslayer*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers* and *The Prairie*. Nathaniel Bumppo’s other nicknames: Natty (see “Nasty”), Deerslayer, Leatherstocking, la Longue Carbine (“big rifle”), and Pathfinder. He has a faithful Indian companion, CHINGACHGOOK.

Hawkeye wears a distinctive leather jerkin. His cultural presence in America and elsewhere is signalled by popular tastes. He is featured in five major Hollywood films of *Last of the Mohicans* (1922, 1932, 1936, 1977, and 1992); two sauerkraut westerns, *Der letzte Mohikaner* (1965) and *Chingachgook—Die Grosse Schlange* (1967); and two television series—a BBC series, *Last of the Mohicans* (1971) and an American series, *Hawkeye* (1993–94). Hawkeye is also the name of the irreverent hero of the Robert Altman movie *MASH* (1970) and of the long-running 1970s television series, *M*A*S*H*.

FRIDAY ROBINSON CRUSOE’s “savage” companion and servant in Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and another variation of “Indian friend.” He is the original of the expression, “Man Friday.” Crusoe rescues him and names him Friday, because he “found” him on Friday. King plays with the name, as for example, “Thank God. . . it’s Friday”; and Coyote’s lame joke, “I’ll call you Friday.”

CRUSOE, Robinson Hero of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). This narrative of a shipwrecked mariner, based on the true story of Alexander Selkirk, is the most famous of all desert island narratives, or Robinsonnades. Crusoe survives through ingenuity and finds spiritual strength through adversity. He is aided by his Man Friday, the “savage” he rescues from cannibals, and then Christianizes. The novel contains meticulous details about survival. King mocks Crusoe’s passion for making lists and for weighing the pros and cons of various situations: “I was very pensive upon the subject of my present condition when reason as it were expostulated with me t’other way . . .” (Defoe 62). Note that Crusoe’s shirt, “the one with the palm trees” (9), signals the desert island connection.

QUEEQUEG ISHMAEL’s good friend in Melville’s *Moby Dick, or the Whale* (1851). He, too, is a variation of the faithful “Indian” companion. Queequeg, a cannibal, is the “soothing savage” harpooner on the *Pequod*, Captain Ahab’s ill-fated whaling ship. See the exchanges on naming between Changing Woman and Ishmael (194–95).

ISHMAEL Character in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, who begins the story with one of the most famous opening lines in American fiction: "Call me Ishmael." He is strong friends with the cannibal QUEEQUEG, and when Moby Dick destroys the *Pequod*, Ishmael survives by staying afloat on Queequeg's coffin. The name is Biblical: Gen.15:15.

THE VOLUME HEADINGS Each volume begins with a direction and a colour, in the Cherokee syllabary. Volume I: East/red; Volume II: South/white; Volume III: West/black; Volume IV: North/blue. Perhaps the following is helpful: "In the Medicine Lodge, each direction has a ceremonial meaning. The East represents the new generation, still green, and just beginning to grow. The South represents further growth. The West represents ripeness. Finally, the north represents old age—the complete generation of a man or being" (Powell 2:852). Note also that Joe Hovaugh's garden is in the east, in Florida: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden" (Gen.2:8).

COYOTE (1) The familiar trickster figure from First Nations/Native American tales, an especially important personage in the mythology of traditional oral literature of Native North America; one of the First People, "a race of mythic prototypes who lived before humans existed. They had tremendous powers; they created the world as we know it; they instituted human life and culture—but they were also capable of being brave or cowardly, conservative or innovative, wise or stupid" (Bright xi). See Bright's *A Coyote Reader* for tales and a bibliography; see also Harry Robinson's coyote stories in *Write It on Your Heart* (1989) and Hirschfelder, *Encyclopedia of Native American Religion* (ENAR).

DREAM, COYOTE DREAM, AND DREAM EYES (1). Dreams are powerfully significant in First Nations cultures. See Hirschfelder for information on dreams and the parts dream visions play in determining the ordinary (for example, where to hunt) as well as the extraordinary (for example, what fate holds in store).

GOD/dog (2) A contrary, and a play on words and names. A dog (*Canis familiaris*) is, of course, a "lesser" form of coyote (*Canis latrans*)—and a god is a backward kind of dog. Or as Robin Ridington suggests, God is a contrary from a dog's point of view. GOD turns out to be the loud-voiced God of the Old Testament. See "What happened to my earth without form?" "What happened to my void?" "Where's my darkness?" (38) and compare Gen.1:2.

CONTRARY (2) In the cultures of the Plains Indians, those who acted in contrary fashion [RR]. For example, they did things “backwards”— even to the extent that they rode into battle and then rode against their own people, firing arrows at them instead of the enemy. See Connell, Schwartz and Hirschfelder, *ENAR*.

“GHA!” SAID THE LONE RANGER. “HIGAYV:LIGE:I.” (15) The first words in Cherokee by the Lone Ranger are the ceremonial opening of storytelling in a Cherokee divining ceremony, divining for water and so in a sense for the future. [HH]

HOVAUGH, Joseph, Dr. (16) Joe Hovaugh is a play on the name *Jehovah*. He is the authority figure running the asylum (Babo’s “crazy hospital”) from which the Indians escape in Florida. Likely St. Augustine, site of Fort Marion, in Alberta’s lectures (19). The four old Indians are locked up, though they pose no threat. Dr. Hovaugh is more interested in contemplating his garden than in most other things. Note Gen. 1:31, “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good*,” and compare with Joe Hovaugh’s thoughts, “. . . and he was pleased” (italics in original: 16, 425). Joe Hovaugh also appears in King’s story, “A Seat in the Garden,” in *One Good Story, That One*.

FRANK, Alberta (18) The principal female character in the realist story. *Alberta* suggests the province in western Canada, and usually Alberta herself is *frank*. King may be showing a little fondness for the province itself since he lived in and taught in Lethbridge, Alberta, from 1980-1990. King may also have drawn her name from Frank, Alberta, on the Turtle River. This town was a major disaster site, buried by the famous Frank Slide of 1903. In class discussions, we have speculated about this being one of the disaster dates that Dr. Hovaugh tracks (46).

DAWES, Henry (18) Author of the Dawes Act of 1887 which privatized communally held Indian land and led to the dispersal of Indian lands in the U.S., estimated at more than 90 million acres (Hoxie 154). Much theft and trickery and deeding away of lands followed this enactment. Note Henry’s behaviour in Alberta’s lecture.

COLLIER, John (19) US Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Roosevelt’s “New Deal” administration in the 1930s. He reversed the assimilationist policies of Dawes [RR]. In 1923, he organized the American Indian Defense Association to fight the Bursum Bill (see *BURSUM* 43). Responsible for Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, based on Indian opin-

ion and advice. Not surprisingly, he's a good listener in Alberta's lecture.

ROWLANDSON, Mary (19) (1635c.-1678c.) Indian captive during King Philip's War (1675-76). Author of gory anti-Indian narrative, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God Together with the Faithfulness of His Promise Displayed: Being, a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682). For captivity narratives, see Namias.

DUSTON, Hannah (19) Indian captive (mid 1700s) who, with others, tomahawked and scalped her captors—including children—in revenge for the death of her baby. Included in writings by Cotton Mather, Thoreau (*A Week on the Concord*, 1849) and Nathaniel Hawthorne, who retold the story for children.

GOODALE, Elaine (19) A young reformer (Superintendent of Indian Education for the Dakota Territory) who became the wife of Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa), a Sioux doctor who was the first doctor to reach the killing field of Wounded Knee (1890). They met during the first weeks following the massacre and married soon after [HH]. See Hoxie.

MOONEY, Helen (19) This name may be connected with James Mooney, a pioneering ethnographer who wrote about Cherokee sacred formulas and the Ghost Dance [RR]. This is also a private joke [HH].

THOSE INDIANS. DID ANY OF THEM ESCAPE? . . . NO. (20) Allusion to *Apache* (1954) in which the warrior Masai, shipped to Fort Marion with Geronimo in 1885, escapes from the train and walks back to his ancestral lands. As Alberta points out, none escaped. See Brown 412.

JONES, Babo (23) In Melville's story "Benito Cereno" in *Piazza Tales* (1856), Babo is the black slave who is the barber and the leader of the slave revolt on board the *San Dominick*. He deceives the visiting Captain Amasa Delano into thinking that "it's business as usual on board," though Babo is in control and the ship is under sail for freedom in Africa. King provides lots of little jokes that reinforce the connection between Babo and a ship. For example, she carries around Life Saver candies (25). See PINTO (23) for more details.

Also, Babo may be one of the three Wise Men of the East (the black King) following the mysterious star/light, indicated by the "westward leading" clue (276)—to Blossom and Alberta's mysterious pregnancy [RR].

CERENO, Sergeant Ben (23) Benito Cereno is a character in Melville's story "Benito Cereno." A mutiny occurs on board ship, led by the black barber and slave leader, Babo. Babo asks Sergeant Cereno "Is that [name] Italian

or Spanish, or what?" (25); "What's your first name? Let me guess. Is it Ben? That's my boy's name" (26).

DELANO, Jimmy (23) A possible connection with Captain Delano of "Benito Cereno," but more likely Columbus Delano, a career politician who was head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the administration of Ulysses S. Grant. In 1875 Delano defended the BIA against charges of mistreatment of the Indians in the Red Cloud Agency in South Dakota—despite evidence of rotten foodstuffs and tobacco given to the Indians which was brought forward by a famous fossil hunter, Othniel Charles Marsh. The bad press for the BIA in connection with this incident led to Delano's resignation.

PINTO (23) Ford automobile. Plains horse. A piebald or "painted" pony associated with Indians of the Plains. Note that Pinto ponies are prominent in the drawings of the Cheyenne imprisoned at Fort Marion, described in Alberta's lecture (19). Jokes about naming cars after horses, Indians and explorers may be at work here, as well as the play on words with Columbus's ship, the *Pinta*. Babo thinks "the Pinto [in the puddle] looked a little like a ship," and then, "not exactly a ship . . . Not a ship at all" (27). At the dam episode, Babo recognizes the red Pinto as "The cars [sail] past the bus" (406).

NISSAN, THE PINTO AND THE KARMANN-GHIA (407) The Pinto is the first of a series of jokes about the disappearing cars that go over the dam. The three ships of Columbus on the voyage sponsored by Isabella of Spain were the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. The belief that their ships would fall off the edge of the world is often (falsely) attributed to old-world mariners. Note another minor funny bit: Dr. Hovaugh drives the slightly more upscale car; the Karmann-Ghia is *white* and a *convertible*, just the thing for a theological figure on tour.

LOOMIS, Dr. (31) A private joke [HH].

OLD CROW, Martha (31) A medicine woman, the "doctor of choice" for people on the Reserve. She also appears in King's *Medicine River*.

MORNINGSTAR, George (33) His name alludes to Custer. "Son of the Morning Star" or "Child of the Stars" was the name given to George Armstrong Custer by the Arikaras in Dakota territory. The Crow scout White Man Runs Him, who was also known as Son of the Morning Star, may have conferred this—his own name—upon Custer. "No matter how he got the name, he liked to be called Son of the Morning Star. Without doubt he liked it better than several names the troopers called him: Hard

Ass, Iron Butt, Ringlets" (Connell 184). King alerts us to the importance of George's name *per se*: "Latisha even liked his name. It sounded slightly Indian, though George was American. Best of all, he did not look like a cowboy or an Indian" (131-32), a likely reference to Custer's style of dressing. George's jacket is the key to the Custer connection later. Note also George's statement, "Right. . . . And I'm General Custer" (384). See CUSTER (61).

JOHN WAYNE (33) First of *many* references to actor famous for roles in westerns. Wayne did play one or two roles sympathetic to Indians, such as that in John Ford's thin version of the Custer myth *Fort Apache* (1948); but as film historian Newman observes, Wayne came "to epitomise the Injun-hating screen cowboy," especially after his performance in *The Searchers* (1956), a captivity narrative (*Wild West Movies* 58). Late in his career Native Americans picketed his films. Wayne first made his name in John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939); he made many films with Maureen O'Hara, including *Rio Grande* (1950). Lionel's childhood desire to be John Wayne and to have his jacket signals his denial of "Indianness." King uses Wayne's movie costume of leather jacket, hat and gloves to parallel George Morningstar's "Custer" jacket, hat and gloves.

FIRST WOMAN (39) North American Indian mythology. The story of First Woman falling from the sky with the subsequent creation of Turtle Island is a common one in Seneca and other tales. The Cherokee variation involves Star Woman and is also a variant of the earth diver creation stories. Lots of fooling around with the Genesis creation story here. Note that the Lone Ranger finally gets the story off to a proper start with the mention of First Woman in Cherokee, *Higayv:ligé:i* (15).

AHDAMN (40) Play on Adam and the Garden of Eden story in Genesis. Note that First Woman, not God, makes the garden. See also King's, "One Good Story, That One" for another narrative about Ahdamn and the Garden of Evening, who is First Woman. There King has the same kind of fun with Adam's naming of creatures.

BLOSSOM (43) The setting, a town in Alberta. Blossom is also featured in King's *One Good Story, That One*; see "How Corporal Colin Sterling Saved Blossom, Alberta, and Most of the Rest of the World." The name suggests natural beauty and regeneration, as well as the smallness of the town. The name has affinities with W.O. Mitchell's town, Crocus, Saskatchewan, in *Who Has Seen the Wind?* (1947). RR observes there may

- be a simple life-affirming message in the direction, "Blossom! Alberta."
- BURSUM, Buffalo Bill** (43) King combines the names of two men famous for their hostility to Indians. Holm O. Bursum (1867-1953) was a senator from New Mexico who advocated the exploration and development of New Mexico's mineral resources. With his eye on the map of New Mexico, he proposed the infamous Bursum Bill of 1921, which aimed to divest Pueblos of a large portion of their lands and to give land title and water rights to non-Indians. See bibliography, Washburn, *HNAI*. The Buffalo Bill part of the name refers to William F. Cody (1846-1917), an exploiter of Indians for entertainment in *Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show*.
- ELIOT, Dr. John** (46) Perhaps missionary John Eliot (1604-1690) the "Apostle to the Indians" in Massachusetts; he opposed enslaving Indian captives.
- OCTOBER 26, 1929** (46) The crash of the New York Stock Exchange.
- MR. RED, MR. WHITE, MR. BLACK AND MR. BLUE** (52) Seemingly arbitrary naming of the Indians by Dr. Hovaugh's institution. Perhaps some relation to colours in the volume headings, with respect to the narratives of each of the old Indians. RR also suggests there may be a possible connection with the film *Reservoir Dogs* (1992).
- JEMIMA, Aunt** (54) Racial stereotype of the "black mammy" type (in *Gone With the Wind*, for example); this invented character was used as the marketing image for pancakes and syrup and other food products. Now widely regarded as a racist slur, this name is used by (no surprise) Cereno behind Babo's back.
- SCOTT, Duncan Campbell** (1862-1947) (55) Lionel's boss. One of Canada's Confederation Poets and a civil servant in the Department of Indian Affairs; he became Deputy Superintendent in 1923. Among his works are poems on Indians, many of these very romantic in tone but usually figuring Indians as a dying race. Scott was involved in treaty negotiations and responsible for ordering the prosecution of Indians taking part in feasts or potlatches. See *Duncan Campbell Scott: The Poet and the Indians* and Dragland. Also RR notes that Scott was directly responsible for the suppression of Dan Cranmer's 1929 Village Island potlatch, regalia from which were confiscated for the National Museum. The seizure of Amos Frank's family regalia at the border also alludes to such confiscations.
- WOUNDED KNEE** (56) South Dakota, site of the last major battle of the Indian Wars. 200 Sioux—men, women and children—died at the massacre at Wounded Knee on December 29, 1890. In 1973, 200 members of

the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied Wounded Knee for 69 days to protest conditions for Native Americans.

DEAD DOG CAFE (57) Part of the jokes about traditional Blackfoot cooking and tourists' desire for the exotic. Ruth Beebe Hill exploited the eating of dogs in *Hanta Yo* (1969) and Custer mentioned it in *My Life on the Plains* (1982-1874). Also refers to starving Indians having to eat their dogs. Possibly a play on Nietzsche's assertion that "God is Dead" [RR]. Note that Thomas King's *Dead Dog Café Comedy Hour* (CBC 1996-) is a "spinoff."

MASSASOIT (58) (1580-1661) Powerful chief of the Wampanoag. Plymouth Rock, Dec. 1620. Treaty with the Pilgrims, 1621.

BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIGHORN (61) "Custer's Last Stand," the stunning defeat of U.S. troops in the Great Sioux War, June 25-26, 1876. The Sioux and Cheyenne victory prompted a massive offensive against the Indians.

CUSTER, George (61) George Armstrong Custer (1839-1876), Union General in the Civil War and famous Indian fighter who has acquired mythic status in American history. Note details about Custer's garb, in particular his fringed leather jacket as part of his costume. Custer was a bit of a dandy and proud of his frontier style. He was recorded as wearing his famous buckskin jacket at the battles of Washita and the Little Big Horn.

SHAGGANAPPI (66) The name of this lounge comes from the Algonquian word for rawhide cord. Since Alberta contemplates finding a sperm contributor here, perhaps this is a pun, "shag a nappy;" that is, *shag* (sexual slang) and *nappy* (diaper).

A REALLY NICE CANYON AND AT THE BOTTOM ARE A BUNCH OF DEAD RANGERS (70-71) All the details of the original Lone Ranger story emerge here: the canyon, the ambush, the deaths of all but one, young John Reid left for dead, his rescue by his Indian friends, and the donning of the mask. See Yoggy 220.

LITTLE BEAVER (71) A child's role in the *Red Rider* western serial of the 1930s, played by child actors Tommy Cook and Bobby Blake.

MY GREAT-GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS A BARBER ON A SHIP (92) Here and in the conversation following, allusions to Melville's slave revolt in "Benito Cereno." See JONES, Babo (23).

WERE THEY ON DRUGS? DID THEY DRINK? (94) More stereotyping. Investigative assumptions about Indians. King pursues this stereotyping

in "A Seat in the Garden," in *One Good Story, That One*.

MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER AND HIS VISION (95) Joe Hovaugh speaks of his great-grandfather's establishing the site in Florida. Joe Hovaugh's hospital is in Fort Marion, St. Augustine. His remarks may be a reference to Augustine and *The City of God* (*De Civitate Dei* 413-427 A.D.), a powerful defense of Christianity against paganism—cast here in terms of real estate and vision. See Donaldson.

OLD AGENCY PUPPY STEW (108) A joke about "local dishes." Old Agency is a Blackfoot settlement on the Blood Reserve six miles from Lethbridge.

PLAINS, SOUTHWEST OR COMBINATION? (108) Costumes wholly inappropriate to the Alberta Blackfoot but having more colourful appeal to the tourists.

HORSE CAPTURE, Will (109) This character is the photographer protagonist in King's earlier novel, *Medicine River* (1989). King may also be borrowing part of the name of George Horse Capture, Deputy Assistant Director of Cultural Resources of the National Museum of the American Indian in New York. [RR]

SIFTON, Sir Clifford (1861-1929) (110). Aggressive promoter of settlement in the West through the Prairie West movement, and a champion of the settlers who displaced the Native population. Federal minister of the Interior and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Laurier's government from November 1896. Knighted in 1915. Ironic detail: he suffered from deafness throughout his life.[RR]

STANDS ALONE, Eli (110) The name suggests Elijah Harper, who blocked the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord in 1990 by being the standout vote in the Manitoba legislature. He voted against a debate that did not allow full consultation with the First Nations and that recognized only the English and the French as founding nations. King may also have drawn upon the name of Blood Elder, Pete Standing Alone, subject of a National Film Board documentary in 1982.

GRAND BALEEN DAM (112) Grande Baleine or Great Whale River Project, part of the James Bay hydroelectric project. Massive diversions of water from the Eastmain and other rivers destroyed traditional Cree hunting territories.

The Oldman River Dam in southern Alberta is not too far from the fictional Blossom. This dam, completed in 1991, was built without consulta-

tion with the Peigan people whose sacred lands, archaeological sites and hunting and fishing grounds were inundated. After an eight-year struggle to terminate the dam's operation, the Peigan lost their case in the Supreme Court of Canada in 1996.

CAMELOT (112) Lionel Red Dog's mother. Any guesses why King chooses this name? Camelot was the site of King Arthur's court, and the Kennedy administration was identified with this idealistic, roundtable approach to government. Camelot also applied to the administration's covert security operations. [RR]

WEST EDMONTON MALL (115) World's largest shopping mall.
Edmonton, Alberta's most identifiable and controversial symbol.
Connection with Charlie Looking Bear's materialistic interests.

STANDS ALONE VS. DUPLESSIS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATES (116)
Duplessis invokes both duplicity and the political corruption of the Duplessis régime in Québec (1936-39; 1944-59) [HH].

PARLIAMENT LAKE (116) Just as Elijah Harper blocked the Meech Lake Accord, so Eli blocks development of the dam.

CROSBY JOHNS AND SONS INC. (117) John Crosbie, appointed Minister of Justice in Brian Mulroney's Conservative government, was involved in a patronage scandal in June 1985, when his sons were found to be on a federal payroll of standing agents who could receive government work.

ALBERTA NOW (117) Play on Ted Byfield's right-wing publication *Alberta Report* [RR].

THE AMERICAN VISITORS TO THE DEAD DOG CAFE: NELSON AND JEANNETTE, ROSEMARIE DE FLOR, and BRUCE (130) all these figures have been active in the stereotyping of Canadian Indians and Canadian life in the North or West. Jeannette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy starred in *Rose Marie* (1936), a Hollywood musical romance about life in Canada's north, Mounties and all. It's likely that Rosemarie and Bruce are the principal players. Other popular Mountie representations were *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* (CBS 1955-58) and *Renfrew of the Royal Mounted* (SYN 1953).

GEORGE WAS AMERICAN, FROM A SMALL TOWN IN MICHIGAN . . . WITH SOFT LIGHT BROWN HAIR THAT JUST TOUCHED HIS SHOULDERS (131-32) Two references to Custer. At 23 he was the youngest general in the Union Army; he was given command of the Brigade. He was famous for wearing his tawny blonde hair to his shoulders.

There is a famous equestrian statue of Custer in Michigan. See bibliography, Barnett.

TECUMSEH (132) A Shawnee Chief (1768-1813), distinguished leader, noted for his courage and sagacity. Active on the side of the British in the war of 1812.

WHEN I'M CALLING, YOU-OO-OO-OO, OO-OO-OOO (133) . . . definitely not the opera! The "Indian Love Call" song from *Rose Marie* (1936).

KHALIL GIBRAN'S THE PROPHET (134) (1923) A collection of inspirational thoughts, widely regarded as soft hokum, phony philosophy—just the kind of stuff for George Morningstar. Gibran (1883-1931) was a Lebanese/American philosopher and writer of mystical poetry.

THE BIG PROJECT IN QUEBEC (136, also 407) The James Bay Project, a monumental hydroelectric-power development on the east coast of James Bay—one phase of which is the Grande Baleine/Great Whale complex. Announced in 1971, it was contested by the Cree, who had not been consulted. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975 is the first major agreement between the Crown and First Nations since the numbered treaties of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Cree settled for \$225 m. and retained hunting and fishing rights.

CHANGING WOMAN (144) Navajo deity [RR]. "Navajo myths recount the emergence of mankind into this, the fifth world, through four previous subterranean realms. In the fifth world, the Navajo have been especially blessed by Changing-Woman, a holy person of miraculous birth" (Hinnells 229). Note the "changes" King rings on *lesbian* with this character and Moby Jane.

BIG CANOE AND THE LITTLE MAN (144) The Noah and the Ark story in Gen.5-9. According to Noah's "Christian rules on his Christian ship," animals don't talk, as they do in Indian narratives. The *big canoe* is likely a swipe at missionary adaptations of biblical stories for Indians.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT? SAYS COYOTE (146) A reference to Coyote narratives about his/her couplings with humans.

NOT WANTED ON THE VOYAGE (148) Reference to Timothy Findley's novel of this name—another radically different treatment of the Noah story. King's Noah is very like Findley's Dr. Noyes, a humourless tyrant. See Lamont-Stewart and Donaldson.

BACK BEFORE THEY HAD ANY INDIAN HEROES (150) An allusion to the shift in the presentation of Indians in some Hollywood films, starting

in the 1950s and becoming pronounced in the 1960's and then again in the 1990s with such films as *Dances With Wolves* (1990).

YOUR FATHER CHANGED HIS NAME TO IRON EYES SCREECHING EAGLE (150) Joke about choosing a "really Indian" name for the movies. The first part recalls the Cherokee actor, Iron Eyes Cody. One of many jokes about the image of the Indian in popular American culture. Portland's roles also indicate the view that "all Indians are the same" (151). King is also alluding to the stylized Indian names of actors such as Chief Thundercloud, Chief Big Tree, and Chief Yowlachie. See bibliography for Cody's autobiography.

C.B. COLOGNE, A RED-HEADED ITALIAN WHO PLAYED SOME OF THE INDIAN LEADS (151) Cristóbal Colón is the Spanish name for Cristofor Colombo (born Genoa, Italy 1451), known in English as Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) who was sent by Queen Isabella I of Spain to find a route to the Indies. King draws attention to *Cristobal Colon* by having the initials C.B. stand for *Crystal Ball*, a near-sounding word combination (181). *Crystal Ball* involves another pun, too, for it is a kind of perfume, a *cologne*. C.B. also recalls the film director Cecil B. DeMille.

Note a minor point for the "Benito Cereno" connections: the figure-head on Babo's ship is Cristobal Colon, beneath which a corpse is tied. Christopher Columbus as slave trader appears in King's children's book, *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992): "Say, says Christopher Columbus. I'll bet this is India. And he looks at the human beings. I'll bet these are Indians. And he looks at his friends. I'll bet we can sell these Indians" (18).

HE PLAYED QUICK FOX IN DUEL AT SIOUX CROSSING, CHIEF JUMPING OTTER IN THEY RODE FOR GLORY, AND CHIEF LAZY DOG IN CHEYENNE SUNRISE (151) The Indian chiefs' names are based on "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog," a popular phrase for practising hand-writing and forming letters of the alphabet. The movie titles are good "western-sounding" titles patterned on such movies as *Duel at Diablo* (1966), *They Died with Their Boots On* (1942) and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964).

PORTLAND'S NOSE WASN'T THE RIGHT SHAPE (152) Portland doesn't conform to the stereotype of the Hollywood Indian, as was the case with the Cherokee actor Chief Thundercloud who played in *Geronimo* (1939). "He had to be heavily made up because in the judgement of the director

- he didn't look enough like an Indian" (Francis 106).
- SAND CREEK MASSACRE** (152) Appalling massacre of Indians by US cavalry run amok. Even the subject of a B-movie, *2000 Maniacs* (1964). See also the massacre at **WOUNDED KNEE** (56).
- JOHN CHIVINGTON** (152) Not an actor, but Colonel John M. Chivington, who led the attack at Sand Creek.
- CHIEF LONG LANCE** (153) An actor and writer of a fake autobiography of a Blackfoot chief growing up on the Plains. Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance was an impostor of Cherokee/Catawba and Black ancestry, a.k.a., Sylvester Long and Sylvester Long Lance. He was inducted as an honorary chief of the Blood tribe and given the name Chief Buffalo Child. See Smith.
- N. BATES** (153) Manager of the Blossom Lodge. Norman Bates is the motel keeper in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Note the drollery of the name—not *motel*, but *lodge*, for Indian dwelling.
- CANADIAN VISITORS TO THE DEAD DOG CAFE** (156) All are figures connected with Indians, or writers who exploited "Indianness" for some purpose in their work.
- POLLY JOHNSON** (156) Pauline Johnson (1861-1913) daughter of a Mohawk father and white mother, Johnson was famous for her public appearances—in buckskins—across the country to read from her work. *Legends of Vancouver* (1911), *Flint and Feather* (1912), *The Shagwanappi* (1912), and *The Moccasin Maker* (1913).
- SUE MOODIE** (156) Susanna Moodie (1803-1885). Her *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) contains romantic anecdotes that show the Indians as noble savages, "Nature's Gentlemen."
- ARCHIE BELANEY** (156) (1889-1938) An Englishman who as a boy was inspired by Buffalo Bill's visits to England with his Wild West Show. Belaney "became" the famous Cree-Ojibwa writer and conservationist **GREY OWL**. Author of *Pilgrims of the Wild* (1934), *Sajo and Her Beaver People* (1935), *Tales of an Empty Cabin* (1936), and other popular books about the wilderness and nature. Famous for his lecture tours. Like Johnson, he also appeared in buckskin, and he enjoyed being photographed in feathered headdress. Note Sue's remark, "Archie is from England, but he's been here so long, he thinks he's Canadian, too" (158).
- JOHN RICHARDSON** (156) (1796-1852) In his novel *Wacousta* (1832), Richardson wrote about an Englishman who transforms himself into the

savage Wacousta. Some argue that Richardson was himself part Ottawa.

LEWIS AND CLARK (156) Merriwether Lewis (1774-1809) and William Clark (1770-1838). Mapped western expansion in the US: Lewis and Clark Expedition 1803-1806. Clark was later superintendent of Indian Affairs and Governor of the Missouri Territory; Lewis was made Governor of the Louisiana Territory in 1807.

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN AND JACQUES CARTIER (156) Champlain (1567-1635) French explorer and founder of Québec. Cartier (1491-1559) French seafarer and explorer; discovered the St. Lawrence River 1535. George makes a joke about Canada as a nation dependent on its French heritage.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, ANDREW JACKSON, GEORGE ARM-STRONG CUSTER, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (157) George Washington's great military men—most associated with anti-Indian activity. For example, George Washington (1732-99) was active in the Indian Wars of the 18th century; Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) led troops in the Creek War of 1836-37—and at one battle killed 900 Indians; Custer, as Union general, warred against Indians and drove them off their lands; General Eisenhower (1890-1969) was President (1953-61) when the Bureau of Indian Affairs instituted a policy to terminate the federal government's trust relations with many tribes.

MONTCALM (157) Louis Joseph de Montcalm (1723-59) French General. He died at the battle on the Plains of Abraham (1759), fighting against Wolfe's English forces. These actions were part of the French and Indian War, in which the French and the Indians took sides against the English who were seeking French and Indian territory.

WOLFE James Wolfe (157) (1727-59) English General opposing Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham. More or less canonized in Benjamin West's painting, "The Death of Wolfe."

LOUIS RIEL (157) (1844-85) Leader of the Métis and of the Red River Rebellion (1869-70) a movement for self-determination by the Métis of the Red River colony (now Manitoba). Riel established a provisional government and armed combat followed. The Métis executed Thomas Scott, a supporter of the Orange Order. Riel was forced to flee the country.

RED RIVER AND BATOCHE (157) Métis bids for self-determination were ignored, leading to the Red River Rebellion (1869-70) and then to the Northwest Rebellion (1889) when the Métis joined with Native allies Big Bear and Poundmaker, and clashed with the Northwest Mounted Police

and Dominion forces at Batoche, Saskatchewan.

SHAGGANAPPI (159) A book by Pauline Johnson. The \$20.00 tip left with this book is probably Polly's effort to get someone to read her book.

THE ONE ABOUT THE HALIFAX EXPLOSION (161) Hugh MacLennan's novel, *Barometer Rising* (1941).

THE ONE ABOUT A KIND OF MYTHIC CHARACTER WHO COMES OUT OF THE GROUND (162) Howard O'Hagan's novel, *Tay John* (1939; reprinted 1960).

ONE BY THAT PAINTER (162) Emily Carr's *Klee Wyck* (1941). Carr, an eccentric, was very fond of animals; she was a curious sight in Victoria as she went out with her monkey on a leash.

HERE'S ONE BY A NATIVE WRITER ON INDIAN LEGENDS (162) Probably Pauline Johnson's *Legends of Vancouver* (1911).

A THIN VOLUME BY DOROTHY SOMEBODY. IMAGIST POETRY (162) Probably Dorothy Livesay's chapbook, *Green Pitcher* (1928).

THIS ONE ABOUT THE BLACKFOOT (162) The composite novel King creates as film script for *The Mysterious Warrior*. Note the allusions to Eli as Karen's "Mystic Warrior" following (164). See *The Mysterious Warrior* (188).

A.Y. JACKSON, TOM THOMSON (163) Prominent Canadian painters, members of the Group of Seven. Jackson (1882-1974) and Thomson (1877-1917) gained fame for painting Canadian landscapes in—for their time—very unconventional ways. They represent Canadian artists making efforts to identify and define quintessentially Canadian qualities. They are part of Karen's efforts to immerse Eli in "Canadian Culture."

THE BENNETT CLINIC (177) Ironically named for R.B. Bennett (1870-1947), a prominent Alberta politician, member for Calgary, who was Prime Minister from 1930-35.

MEXICANS, ITALIANS, GREEKS, ALONG WITH A FEW INDIANS . . . PLAYING INDIANS AGAIN AND AGAIN (182) Jaoquin Martinez (Ulzana), Sal Mineo (Cheyenne warrior), Anthony Quinn (Paiute) and Chief Thundercloud illustrate each of these groups.

THE HOLLYWOOD ACTORS (182) These friends of Portland Looking Bear want parts as Indians in films. Most have names connecting them with explorers or with Indians who had early contacts with whites. King also alludes to the many actors of Hispanic and Italian backgrounds who played Indians in the movies. Among these were Ricardo Montalban,

Tony Curtis, and Delores del Rio.

SALLY JO WEYHA (182) Sacajawea (1784-1884? or 1812?) “Bird Woman” or “Boat Woman,” a Shoshone. Sole woman and guide for Lewis and Clark on their exploration of the upper Missouri River.

FRANKIE DRAKE (182) Sir Francis Drake (1540-96), explorer for Elizabeth I.

POLLY HANTOS (182) Pocohontas (1595-1617), Daughter of Chief Powhatan, credited with saving the life of Capt. John Smith, leader of a group of English colonists in Virginia. She embraced Christianity and married an Englishman, John Rolfe. She died in England. The subject of a feature animated Disney film (1995).

SAMMY HEARNE (182) Samuel Hearne (1745-92) Explorer for the Hudson’s Bay Company into Canada’s northern regions. Contact with Coppermine Indians c. 1769.

JOHNNY CABOT (182) John Cabot, born Giovanni Caboto in Genoa, Italy (1451?-1500). The explorer credited with “discovering” Canada and the mainland of North America.

HENRY CORTEZ (182) Hernando Cortez (1485-1547) Spanish Conquistador in Montezuma’s Mexico. “Remember Henry Cortez? He played Montezuma” (184).

BARRY ZANNOS (182) Giovanni da Verrazano (1485-1528) This Italian navigator and explorer was the first European to sight what became New York. He took Indians captive and returned to Europe with them. He was killed by Indians in the West Indies. The Verrazano-Narrows suspension bridge in New York was named for him.

JEFF CHANDLER (185) White actor famous for playing Indian roles, such as Cochise in *Broken Arrow* 1950. Others include Burt Lancaster, Charlton Heston, Victor Mature, Chuck Connors, Jack Palance, and Charles Bronson. Also Audrey Hepburn and Raquel Welch.

REMMINGTON’S (185) Western style bar, ironically named after Fredric Remington (1861-1909), the most famous artist of the Old West. His sculptures, engravings and paintings romanticized and glorified the West, especially cowboys and horses. His depiction of Indians is essentially hostile. His work was featured prominently in the controversial exhibition of art about the Old West on show in Washington DC in the late 1980s.

See 209-210 for details of stereotyping Indians through dress (feathers, loincloth) and behaviour (grunts) to appeal to tourists.

FOUR CORNERS (185) Burlesque theatre, ironically named. The Four

Corners area of the Southwest is the point at which Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah meet. It is an area of particularly rich cultural associations. Note also, the six cardinal directions: four corners of the world as well as the zenith and the nadir. See 211-12 for details of the "Indian" elements in the burlesque strip routines.

THE MYSTERIOUS WARRIOR (188) A composite of western films. King combines western stars Wayne, Widmark and O'Hara; these stars appeared with each other, but not all together. This title alludes to *The Mystic Warrior* (1984), a television movie based on Ruth Beebe Hill's *Hanta Yo* (1979). This novel ignited a firestorm of protest from Native American groups outraged by misrepresentation of the Lakota Sioux. The Four Indians have a lot of work to do to "fix up" this movie.

THE MOVIE OPENED WITH A SHOT ACROSS MONUMENT VALLEY (188) An allusion to John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939), the movie that made John Wayne a star.

GEORGE'S FRINGED LEATHER JACKET. . . . A HAT AND GLOVES THAT GO WITH IT (191-92) See the portrait of Custer in Lionel's hotel (61).

AHAB (194) Captain of the *Pequod* in Melville's *Moby Dick*, the saga of Captain Ahab's obsession with the great white whale. King plays with opposites when he creates Moby Jane, the great black whale (196) and introduces Moby Jane as lesbian—an obvious challenge to Melville's male-dominated world.

CALL ME ISHMAEL (195) Opening line of Melville's *Moby Dick*.

PEQUOTS (196) Natives of the Eastern Woodlands. During the Pequot War of 1637, most were killed or enslaved. The very few survivors lived with the neighbouring Mohegans/Mohicans.

DE SOTO (201) Like so many American cars this is named for an explorer, Hernando De Soto (1500-1542). Spanish Conquistador, with Pizarro in Peru. Moved through Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Oklahoma, wreaking cultural havoc.

AS LONG AS THE GRASS IS GREEN AND THE WATERS RUN (208) This protestation of undying love borrows from common phrases in treaties between government and Indian nations as a token of the government's sincerity. For example: "I want you to think of my words, I want to tell you that what we talk about is very important. What I trust and hope we will do is not for today or tomorrow only; what I will promise, and what

I believe and hope you will take, is to last as long as the sun shines and yonder river flows." A.G. Jakes, Secretary to the Treaty Six Commission, quoting Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris at Fort Carlton treaty signing with the Plains Cree, August, 1876 (Morris 202). The building of dams killed the grass and stopped the running of waters.

TODAY IS A GOOD DAY TO DIE (217) One of the rallying cries of Crazy Horse as he led his followers against Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn (Welch 161).

WATCH ME TURN ON THE LIGHTS (230) The next creation story begins with Coyote as a creator. Gen. 1:3 "And God said, Let there be light."

THOUGHT WOMAN (231) A figure from Navajo mythology who creates the world by thinking it into being. She also appears in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977). [RR]

ANYTHING YOU PLAN TO SELL OR LEAVE AS A GIFT? . . . ALL PERSONAL PROPERTY HAS TO BE REGISTERED (237) The border official takes one look at Babo and assumes she is Dr. Hovaugh's "property." Another reference to Babo the slave, in "Benito Cereno."

SAM MOLINA'S BOOK ON PASTA (245) A pun on *semolina*, the flour for pasta.

DAVID KARAWAY'S COOKBOOK ON BREADS (247) A pun on *caraway* seeds baked into breads.

GEORGE LEFT. . . HE WAS GOING HOME TO GET HIS LIFE TOGETHER. TO FIND HIS ROOTS. TO MICHIGAN FIRST. THEN TO OHIO, WHERE HE WAS BORN. (249) Another reference to George Armstrong Custer. He was born in New Rumley, Ohio, and at age 23 had charge of the Michigan Brigade, the so-called "Wolverine Brigade." Our George's Custer-like behavior becomes clearer still.

WE'LL BE CONFISCATING ALL THESE MATERIALS. (257) Duncan Campbell Scott was directly responsible for the suppression of Dan Cranmer's 1929 Village Island potlatch, the regalia from which were confiscated for the National Museum. Under Scott's command, Indians were jailed for holding traditional feasts. [RR]

THAT MOVIE WITH RICHARD HARRIS (263) *A Man Called Horse* (1970), another variation on the captivity theme in westerns.

A.A. GABRIEL (269) Archangel Gabriel, and the annunciation to the Virgin Mary in the New Testament, Luke 1.

NAME? . . . THOUGHT WOMAN. . . MARY, SAYS A.A. GABRIEL (270)

A.A. Gabriel, briefcase carrying bureaucrat, ignores Thought Woman's Indian name. Church and government officials re-named First Nations individuals with familiar, especially Christian names. King reverses this, re-naming Christ as Young Man Walking on Water (349).

ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT? (270) King substitutes AIM for the Communist party. This question was asked in the witchhunt investigations of Senator Joseph McCarthy's Committee on Un-American Activities (1953).

ANY FIREARMS? ANY ALCOHOL OR CIGARETTES? (270) More stereotyping. Card-carrying security officer A.A. Gabriel targets possible "Indian goods" smuggling.

WHITE PAPER (271) In 1969 the Trudeau government presented a White Paper proposing the eventual removal of special status of Indians. First Nations in Canada strongly opposed the White Paper, becoming vocal and organizing in protest.

"...RETURN OF THE RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS THAT WERE STOLEN BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?" (281) The "collecting" of Indian artifacts by agents of government for government institutions or museums was widespread. Native peoples have asked for repatriation of their cultural belongings—including ancestral bones. For a Canadian example of one family's efforts, see Gloria Cranmer Webster's discussion in The National Film Board video, *Potlatch* (1974).

GREY OWL (285) See BELANEY, Archie (156).

FIRST NATIONS PIZZA (300) May, 1988. The Crown Counsel for British Columbia argued that Native people are no longer Native if they use white society's fast food. This testimony was the subject of a cartoon in the *Province* newspaper, May 19, 1988. See bibliography, Monet and Skanu'u.

A LEATHER JACKET. WITH LEATHER FRINGE. . . . IT'S GOT A COUPLE OF HOLES HERE IN THE BACK, BUT NOTHING SERIOUS. . . .

IT'S PRETTY OLD (302) Another reference to the Custer/Wayne jacket.
"CRUISE SHIPS?" "SOMETHING LIKE THAT" SAID BABO (314) More Melville. Babo enslaved on the *San Dominick* as body servant of the captain.

"THAT MUST HAVE BEEN EXCITING." "I HAVE HIS RAZOR. HIS

- NAME WAS BABO, TOO." (314) More Melville. Babo holds a razor to the Captain's throat, seemingly shaving him.
- "IS THAT THE PRESIDENT?" (316) AND "HE DIDN'T GET TO BE PRESIDENT" (317) Allusion to Ronald Reagan, who appeared in a number of B-westerns, usually as a good guy.
- OLD WOMAN . . . TENDER ROOT (328) Star Maiden/Star Woman appears in a Cherokee creation story. While digging under a tree in her father's special garden one day, she created a hole through which she fell from the sky to the earth below. Also a figure in Blackfoot stories.
- LOUIE, RAY, AND AL, FROM MANITOBA (334) Louis, Ray, Al, a pun on Louis Riel.
- HANG AROUND SCOTT LAKE (335) Part of the Louis Riel references. Riel's provisional government executed Thomas Scott for bearing arms against the state. Scott's death became a flashpoint and government forces were called in against Riel, who fled for his life.
- OLD WOMAN (348) North American Indian mythology. She is an archetypal helper to a culture hero. Here, she offers help to Young Man Walking on Water, the "Christian culture hero" [RR].
- A WHALE (348) Jonah and the whale. Jonah 1:17
- A FIERY FURNACE (348) Daniel 3
- A MANGER (348) Luke 2:7
- THE BOOK (349) with all the stories in it is the Bible, the repository of Christian stories.
- A GOLDEN CALF (349) Exodus 32
- A PILLAR OF SALT (349) Genesis 12:26
- A BURNING BUSH (349) Exodus 3:2
- YOUNG MAN WALKING ON WATER (349) Christ, with his "Indian-sounding" name. See Matthew 14:2; 8:23-37.
- ANN HUBERT (369) Conflation of Anne Cameron and Cam Hubert. As Anne Cameron, she has written *Daughters of Copper Woman* (1981) and as Cam Hubert *Dreamspeaker* (1978). She has been the subject of discussions about cultural appropriation. In particular, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, who were supposedly represented in *Daughters*, have rejected the work. RR notes that *Daughters of Copper Woman*, which describes a supposed society of women, has become almost liturgical among New Age feminists.
- THE DAM IS KILLING THE RIVER. . . . NO FLOOD, NO NUTRIENTS, NO COTTON WOODS. . . . SUN DANCE TREE (376) The building of

dams staunched the flow of the rivers. Cultural sites and the sweetgrass and the willow, so important to Indian cultural life, were destroyed. In the midst of the Oldman River Dam controversy, the popular magazine *Harrowsmith* ran an article containing the following observation from Little Mustache of the Brave Dog Society, "How would the government and its ministers feel if I went to their forefathers' graveyard and started to build on it?" He also observed that the Oldman Valley had always "provided the Peigans with willow to build sweat lodges; animal furs and feathers to make the holy ceremonial bundles; roots and herbs for healing; and cottonwood posts for the sun dance" (Nikoforuk and Struzik 44).

MAYBE WE SHOULD GIVE THE CREE IN QUEBEC A CALL (376) The Cree were successful in getting injunctions to delay the Great Whale projects. And as a result of bargaining for the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, signed in 1975, the Cree received millions of dollars and secured a measure of legislated control over some of their traditional lands. Their capital base allowed them to finance new self-governing institutions. However, in recent years, the Cree have once more been engaged in legal confrontations with the Québec government over expansion of phase 2 of the James Bay Project. For background on dams, see Waldram.

"LOOKS A LOT LIKE MY JACKET." . . . **"YES," SAID THE LONE RANGER. "IT'S YOUR JACKET ALL RIGHT."** **"IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY," SAID ISHMAEL, "YOU CAN TELL."** (383) The jacket directly connects George Morningstar to George "Morningstar" Custer (see p.61).

TURNING THE CHART AS HE WENT, LITERAL, ALLEGORICAL, TOPOLOGICAL, ANAGOGIC (389) These (originally medieval) categories are used by Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*. "The book" likely refers to Frye's book about the Bible, *The Great Code*.

GLIMMERGLASS (391) An exceptionally beautiful lake in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* (*Leatherstocking Saga* 62).

THAT SKINNY GUY IN THE LEATHER SHIRT WITH FRINGE. . . I'M NATHANIEL BUMPPPO, POST COLONIAL WILDERNESS GUIDE AND OUTFITTER (391) Joke on the "colonial hero" of Cooper's book and the "post-colonial" treatment he gets in King's book. Another wearer of a fringed, buckskin jacket.

A REALLY BIG RIFLE (392) This recalls the nickname La Longue Carbine

INDIANS HAVE INDIAN GIFTS. . . . AND WHITES HAVE WHITE

GIFTS (392-93) A send-up of Cooper's construction of whites and Indians in his stories, as well as a direct reference to Natty Bumppo's many comments on "gifts." One example: "I am of a Christian stock, and scalping is not of my gifts" (*The Pathfinder* 112, *Leatherstocking Saga*).

MY FRIENDS CALL ME NASTY (392) Natty as nickname for Nathaniel Bumppo.

THE SERIES OF "KILLER NAMES" (395) **BOONE, Daniel** (1734-1820)

Frontiersman active in the Indian Wars. Hired in 1775 to open the Cumberland Gap and Wilderness Trail, an Appalachian travel route important to Indians, for access to settlement in the Ohio Valley.

Displacement of Indians resulted. In 1779 he defended Boonesboro against Indians. **TRUMAN, Harry** (1884-1972). While he was President (1945-1953) he authorized the use of the Atomic Bomb against the Japanese at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. **WATKINS, Arthur** Senator of Utah in the 1950s and a very aggressive proponent of Indian assimilation; advocated relocation of Indians to urban centres.

HAWKEYE? SAYS OLD WOMAN. GOOD NAME, HUH? SAYS NASTY

BUMPPPO. AND THAT ONE DROPS DEAD (395) In Cooper's *Leatherstocking Saga* Bumppo "disappears" and becomes Hawkeye once he is given this name by a dying Indian chief.

CHINGACHGOOK ASKS "HAVE YOU SEEN A SKINNY GUY IN A LEATHER SHIRT WITH A REALLY BIG RIFLE?" (395) Chingachgook, faithful Indian companion, seeks Natty Bumppo.

THERE IS AN INDIAN STANDING BY A TREE (395) Mocks the cliché about Indians appearing silently in the forest.

MAYBE THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE GUNMAN . . . IT WAS A CONSPIRACY (395) Kennedy assassination and conspiracy theories.

AND THEY ALL TAKE OUT A BOOK FROM THEIR PACKS (396) James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*.

AND THOSE SOLDIERS PUT OLD WOMAN ON A TRAIN AND SEND HER TO FLORIDA. (396) Another old Indian goes to prison in Fort Marion, Florida, site of Dr. Joe Hovaugh's hospital.

WEST WIND TOURS (400) "Starwoman was impregnated by fruitful winds" (Ywahoo 31). This may be a reference to myths about wind as procreator.

Harry movies.

THE ELEVENTH LARGEST MAN-MADE LAKE IN ALBERTA (405)

Many lakes in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada and the US were created by damming rivers.

A NISSAN, A PINTO, AND A KHARMANN-GHIA (407) See PINTO (23).

"IT'S GOING TO BE A GOOD DAY," SAID THE LONE RANGER (409)

Perhaps an echo of Crazy Horse's "TODAY IS A GOOD DAY TO DIE" (217).

THE CARS TUMBLED OVER THE EDGE OF THE WORLD (414) Recalls the belief falsely attributed to Old World mariners that the world was flat, and that they would sail over the edge.

"THE LAST TIME YOU FOOLED AROUND LIKE THIS," SAID ROBINSON CRUSOE, "THE WORLD GOT VERY WET." "AND WE HAD TO START ALL OVER AGAIN," SAID HAWKEYE (416) Coyote, not God, was responsible for Noah's flood.

"BUT I WAS HELPFUL, TOO. THAT WOMAN WHO WANTED A BABY. NOW THAT WAS HELPFUL." (416) Alberta becomes pregnant.

"YOU REMEMBER THE LAST TIME YOU DID THAT?" (416) Likely reference to the Immaculate Conception commonly misunderstood to refer to the conception of Jesus in Mary (rather than Mary's own sinless conception).

"WE HAVEN'T STRAIGHTENED OUT THAT MESS YET." (416)

Christianity? The result of Mary's pregnancy, one of Coyote's mistakes.

BIG MUDDY RIVER (418) Probably the Mississippi. Implied parallel, the parting of the Red Sea for Moses.

DR. HOVAUGH SAT AT HIS DESK. . . . (425) See page 16. The narrative has come full circle.

WE COULD START IN THE GARDEN (428) If they offer "to help" Joe Hovaugh fix up the world, they will have to start, of course, in the garden. That is, Eden—or Frye's "central story"—since everything went "wrong" there. Once everyone is able to mind his or her relations, there may be hope of fixing up the world.

REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME YOU RUSHED THROUGH A STORY AND DIDN'T APOLOGIZE? (430). A reference to Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1989). Noted by Thomas King in his interview with Peter Gzowski, published in this issue.

Bibliography

- Barnett, Louise. *Touched by Fire: The Life, Death, and Mythic Afterlife of George Armstrong Custer*. New York: Owl/Henry Holt, 1996.
- Bataille, Gretchen and Charles P. Silet. *Images of American Indians on Film: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland, 1985.
- "Book Ignites an Indian Uprising: Sioux Critics Charge that Bestselling *Hanta Yo Is Demeaning*" *Time* 5 May 1980. 73.
- Bright, William. *A Coyote Reader*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.
- Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. 1970. New York: Owl/Henry Holt, 1991.
- Cody, Iron Eyes. *My Life as a Hollywood Indian*. As told to Collin Perry. New York: Everest House, 1982.
- Connell, Evan S. *Son of the Morning Star: Custer and the Little Big Horn*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1984.
- Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Leatherstocking Saga*. 1826-1841. Ed. Allan Nevins. New York: Modern Library, 1966.
- Custer, George A. *My Life on the Plains*. [23 installments 1872-74] New York: Citadel, 1962.
- Defoe, Daniel. *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*. 1719. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1981.
- Donaldson, Laura E. "Noah Meets Old Coyote, or Singing in the Rain: Intertextuality in Thomas King's *Green Grass Running Water*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 7.2 (Summer, 1995): 27-41.
- Dragland, Stan. *Floating Voice: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Literature of Treaty 9*. Toronto: Anansi, 1994.
- Duncan Campbell Scott: The Poet and the Indians*. Videocassette. Dir. James Cullingham. National Film Board of Canada/Tamarack, 1995. 56 mins.
- Flooding Job's Garden*. Videocassette. Dir. Boyce Richardson. Third in a five-part documentary, *As Long as the Rivers Run*. National Film Board of Canada. 1991. 59 min.
- Francis, Daniel. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 1992.
- Glenn, Jack. *Once Upon A River: Special Interest Politics in the Oldman River Dam* [forthcoming, tba].
- Hinnells, John R., Ed. *Penguin Dictionary of Religion*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.
- Hirschfelder, Arlene. *Encyclopedia of Native American Religion*. New York: Facts on File, 1991.
- Hoxie, Frederick E., Ed. *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*. Boston: Houghton, 1996.
- King, Thomas. *A Coyote Columbus Story*. Toronto: Groundwood, 1992.
- . *Green Grass, Running Water*. 1993. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994.
- . *Medicine River*. 1991. Toronto: Penguin, 1995.

- Internet. 09 Sept. 1997. Available
<http://www.bookwire.com/hmr/review/tking34.html>.
- Lamont-Stewart, Linda. "Androgyny as Resistance to Authoritarianism in Two Postmodern Canadian Novels." *Mosaic* 30.3 (1997): 115-30.
- Monet, Don and Skanu'u [Ardythe Wilson]. *Colonialism on Trial: Indigenous Land Rights and the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en Sovereignty Case*. Philadelphia, PA and Gabriola Island, BC: New Society, 1992.
- Morris, Alexander. *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians*. 1880. Toronto: Coles 1979.
- Namias, June. *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier*. Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina P, 1993.
- Newman, Kim. *Wild West Movies, or How the West Was Found, Won, Lost, Lied about, Filmed and Forgotten*. London: Bloomsbury, 1990.
- Nikoforuk, Andrew and Ed Struzik. "Death of a Valley." *Harrowsmith*. March/April 1989: 35-45.
- O'Connor, E. *The Hollywood Indian: Stereotypes of American Natives on Film*. Foreword by Elaine E. Williams. Trenton: New Jersey State Museum, 1980.
- Potlatch*. Videocassette. Dir. Dennis Wheeler. National Film Board of Canada, 1974. 22 mins.
- Powell, Peter J. *Sweet Medicine: The Continuing Role of the Sacred Arrows, the Sun Dance, and the Sacred Buffalo Hat in Northern Cheyenne History*. 2 vols. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1969.
- Radin, Paul. *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology*. 2nd ed. New York: Schocken, 1972.
- Ramsey, Jarold. *Coyote Was Going There: Indian Literature of the Oregon Country*. Seattle: U of Washington Press, 1977.
- Robinson, Harry. *Write It on Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*. Comp. and ed. Wendy Wickwire. Vancouver: Talonbooks/Theytus, 1989.
- Schwartz, Warren E. *The Last Contrary: The Story of Wesley Whiteman (Black Bear)*. Sioux Falls, SD: Centre for Western Studies, 1989.
- Smith, Donald B. *Long Lance: The True Story of an Imposter*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1982.
- Standing Alone*. Videocassette. Dir. Colin Low. National Film Board of Canada, 1982.
- Taylor, Fraser. *Standing Alone: A Contemporary Blackfoot Indian*. Halfmoon Bay, B.C.: Arbutus Bay, 1989.
- Voget, Fred W. *The Shoshoni-Crow Sun Dance*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1984.
- Waldman, Carl. *Atlas of the North American Indian*. Maps and Illus. Molly Braun. New York: Facts on File, 1985.
- Waldram, James B. *As Long as the Rivers Run: Hydroelectric Development and Native Communities in Western Canada*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 1988.
- Washburn, Wilcomb E., ed. *History of Indian-White Relations*. Vol. 4 of *Handbook of North American Indians*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1988.
- Welch, James. *Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indian*. 1994. Rpt. New York: Penguin, 1995.
- Wiget, Andrew, ed. *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. New York: Garland, 1994.

Yoggy, Gary A. "When Television Wore Six guns: Cowboy Heroes on TV." In *Shooting Stars: Heroes and Heroines of Western Film*. Ed. Archie P. McDonald, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987. 219-57.

Ywahoo, Dyani. *Voices of Our Ancestors: Cherokee Teachings from the Wisdom Fire*. Ed. Barbara Du Bois. Boston: Shambhala, 1987.

Works by Thomas King

Books

Truth and Bright Water. Toronto: HarperCollins, forthcoming, 1999.

Coyote's Suit. Toronto: Key Porter, forthcoming, 1999.

Coyote Sings to the Moon. Toronto: Key Porter, 1998.

One Good Story, That One (short stories). Toronto: Harper Collins, 1993.

Green Grass, Running Water (novel). Toronto/New York: Harper Collins/Houghton Mifflin, 1993. Shortlisted for Governor General's Award, 1993. Canadian Authors Award: Fiction, 1994. Broadcast on *Between the Covers*, CBC radio, 1994. Broadcast in German in Germany, ORB/SOR productions, 1995.

A Coyote Columbus Story. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 1992. Shortlisted for the Governor General's Award, 1992.

Medicine River. Toronto: Penguin, Canada, 1990. Winner, Best Novel Award, Writer's Guild of Alberta, 1991. Winner, Josephine Miles Award/Oakland PEN, 1991. Runnerup for the Commonwealth Writers Prize, 1991. *Mestecho Medicine River* (Czech translation). Trans. Miriam Skudlova. Melantrich, 1995. *Medicine River: roman. Terre indienne*. Trans. Hugues Leroy. Paris: Albin Michel, 1997.

All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction. Edited with an introduction. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990.

An Anthology of Short Fiction by Native Writers in Canada. Special issue of *Canadian Fiction Magazine*. Edited with an introduction. 60 (1987).

The Native in Literature: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives. Edited with Helen Hoy and Cheryl Calver. Toronto: ECW Press, 1987.

Film and Radio Drama

"Warriors" (feature film script). Betone Broadcasting, forthcoming 1999.

"Dead Dog Cafe Comedy Hour" (radio drama). Edmonton: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Six episodes, November-December 1996. Seven episodes, March-May 1997. Six episodes, November-December 1997. Seven episodes, September-October 1998. Seven episodes, forthcoming, March-April 1999.

"Simple Sufferings" (television drama). *North of Sixty*. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, November 1996. Nominated for Best Drama over 30 Minutes, Dreamspeakers Festival 1997.

"Borders" (television movie). Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, November 1996.

1996.

"Joe the Painter and the Bow River Massacre" (radio drama). Edmonton: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, July 1996.

"Green Grass, Running Water" (feature film script). New York: Fifth Street Films, 1995.

"The Ties that Bind" (television drama). *North of Sixty*. Episode 42. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1995.

"Traplines" (radio drama). Edmonton: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1994.

"Magpies" (radio drama). Edmonton: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1994.

"Animals" (television drama). *North of Sixty*. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, January 1994. Script-editor, Four Directions Film Series. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993-94.

"Medicine River" (three-hour radio drama). Edmonton: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993. Script rpt. in part in *Private Lives, Public Voices*. Ed. John T. Ramsey. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Medicine River (feature film). Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Medicine River Productions, 1993. Nominated for a Gemini for Best Script, 1994. Winner: Best Screenplay, American Indian Film Festival, San Francisco, 1994.

Bone Game (feature film script). New York: Silverfilms Productions, 1993.

"Borders" (radio drama). Edmonton: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993.

"The One about Coyote Going West" (radio drama). Edmonton: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993.

Articles

"How I Spent My Summer Vacation: History, Literature, and the Cant of Authenticity." In *Landmarks: A Process Reader*. Ed. Roberta Birks and others. Scarborough-Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon, 1998.

"Music." Art Gallery of Ontario audio tape 1995. Rpt. in *Descant* 92/93 (Spring/Summer 1996).

"Shooting the Lone Ranger." *Hungry Mind Review* 34 (Summer 1995). Photographs rpt. *Harper's* 291 (November 1995).

"Native Writers of Canada: A Photographic Portrait of 12 Contemporary Authors." With Greg Staats. *Books in Canada* 23.5 (Summer 1994).

"Native Literature in Canada." *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. Ed. Andrew Wiget. New York: Garland, 1994.

Translation, with Helen Hoy, of "Le Voyage en Europe de l'oncle Timmy" by Louis Jolicoeur. *Voix Parallèles/Parallel Voices*. Ed. Matt Cohen and Andre Carpentier. Kingston/Montreal: Quarry/XYZ, 1993.

"Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial." *World Literature Written in English* 30.2 (Autumn 1990). Rpt. *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*. Ed. Ajay Heble and others. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 1996.

"It is Dangerous to Read Newspapers." *Hungry Mind Review* 19 (Fall 1991).

"Other Stories, Other Voices." *Saturday Magazine*. 31 March 1990.

"Hanta Yo." *Utah Holiday* 9.9 (June 1980).

"A Note on Desert Rock Art." *Journal of American Folklore* 96.367 (January-March 1980).

Fiction

"A Short History of Indians in Canada." *Toronto Life* 31.11 (August 1997). Broadcast on "Gzowski in Conversation." CBC TV, May 1998. Rpt as "A Short History of Indians in America." *Story*, Winter 1999.

"Another Moment in Canadian Indian History." Broadcast on "Between the Covers," CBC radio. May 1998. *Story*, forthcoming.

"The Open Car." *Writing Away: A PEN Travel Book*. Ed. Constance Rooke. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994.

"Noah's Ark." *Descant* 82 (Fall 1993).

Green Grass, Running Water excerpts. *Saturday Night*, March 1993. *Icarus* 9 (Winter 1993). *Voices under One Sky*. Ed. Trish Fox Roman. Toronto: Nelson; Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1994. "Changing Woman, Old Woman." *ViceVersa* 53 (Autumn 1996). "Pasto verde, agua corriente" *ViceVersa* 42 (November 1996). *American Journey: The Native American Experience*. CD-Rom and Online. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1998.

Medicine River excerpts. "Bingo Bigbear and the Tie-and-Choker Bone Game." *Canadian Fiction Magazine* 60 (1987). "South Wing." *Country Estate*, Spring 1990. "Chapter Seven." *Wicazo Sa Review* 6.2 (Fall 1990). "Chapter 6." *Smoke Rising*. Ed. Janet Witalec, Detroit: Visible Ink, 1995. "Maydean Joe." *Native American Literature*. Ed. Gerald Vizenor. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. "Chapter One." *Endless Possibilities*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1998.

"Fire and Rain" *Border Crossings* 11.4 (Fall 1992).

"Borders." *Saturday Night* December 1991. Silver Award, National Magazine Award (1992). Rpt. in *World Literature Today* 66 (Spring 1992). Rpt. in *The Art of Short Fiction*. Ed. Gary Geddes. Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993. Rpt. in *Multiculturalism*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1994. Rpt. in *What's Fair*. Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1994. Rpt. in *Breaking Free*. Ed. John Borovilos. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1995. Rpt. in *Insights: Relationships and Responsibility*. Ed. Ken Roy. Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1995. Rpt. in *Into the Widening World*. Ed. John Loughery. New York: Persea, 1995. Rpt. in *Homeground*. Ed. Kathryn Trueblood and Linda Stovall. Hillsboro, OR: Before Columbus Foundation/Blue Heron, 1996. Rpt. in *Short Stories: Rivers Collegiate Institute*. Toronto: Nelson, 1996. Rpt. in *Transformations*. Ed. Barry Duncan and others. Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996. Rpt. in *Hope* 6 (January-February 1997). Rpt. in *Identity*. USA: Troll, 1997. Rpt. in *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*. 1st Can. ed. Ed. Sylvan Barnet and Reid Gilbert. Don Mills, Ont.: Addison-Wesley, 1997. Rpt. in *Identity Matters: Rhetorics of Difference*. Ed. Lillian Bridwell-Bowles. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.

"Domestic Furies." *Malahat Review* 96 (Fall 1991).

"A Seat in the Garden." *Books in Canada* December 1990 (nominated for a Canadian Magazine Award). Rpt. *Agassiz Review* 2.1 (Spring 1991). Rpt. *Talking Leaves*

- Contemporary Native American Short Stories*. New York: Dell, 1991. Rpt. and translated. *Voix Parallèles/Parallel Voices*. Ed. Matt Cohen and Andre Carpentier. Kingston/Montreal: Quarry/XYZ, 1993. Rpt. in *Hear My Voice*. Addison-Wesley, 1994. Rpt. in *Song of the Turtle*. Ed. Paula Gunn Allen. New York: Ballantine, 1996. Rpt. in *Canadian Short Fiction*. 2nd ed. Ed. W. H. New. Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1997.
- "Traplines." *Prism International* 28.4 (Summer 1990). Rpt. *Best Canadian Short Stories*. Ottawa: Oberon, 1991. Rpt. *Stiller's Pond*. Minneapolis: New Rivers Press, 1991. Rpt. 91: *Best Canadian Stories*. Ed. David Helwig and Maggie Helwig. [Ottawa]: Oberon, 1991. *Something to Declare*. Ed. Christine McClymont and others. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1994. Rpt. in *Stories from Ten Provinces*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 1994. Rpt. in *Fireside Al*. Ed. Alan Maitland. Toronto: Viking, 1994.
- "Little Bombs." *West Magazine* (July/August 1990).
- "The Dog I Wish I Had, I Would Call It Helen." *Malahat Review* 89 (Winter 1989) (nominated for a Journey award). Rpt. *Journey Prize Anthology*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989.
- "The Closer You Get to Canada, the More Things Will Eat Your Horses." *Whetstone* (Spring 1989) (winner of *Whetstone* short fiction contest).
- "One Good Story, That One." *Malahat Review* 82 (Spring 1988) (nominated for a Journey award and a Canadian Magazine Award). Rpt. *Journey Prize Anthology*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988. Rpt. in *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English*. Ed. Margaret Atwood and Robert Weaver. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1995. Rpt. and trans. as "Una Buena Historia, Esa Misma" in *Desde el invierno: Veintitres cuentos canadienses*. Ed. Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1997.
- "Prairie Time." *Western Living* (October 1990).
- "Magpies." *The Last Map is the Heart: An Anthology of Western Canadian Fiction*. Saskatoon: Thistledown, 1989. Rpt. *Canadian Native Literature in English*. Ed. Terry Goldie and Daniel David Moses. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1992.
- "The One About Coyote Going West." *Journal of Wild Culture*, 2.2-3 (Fall 1989). Rpt. *All My Relations*. Ed. Thomas King. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990. Rpt. *Elements of Fiction*. Ed. Robert Scholes and Rosemary Sullivan. 3rd Can. ed. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1994. Rpt. in *Reading Our World*. Ed. Constance Rooke. Ginn/Paramount, 1994. Rpt. in *Making a Difference*. Ed. Smaro Kamboureli. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1996. Rpt. in *Arnold Anthology of Post-Colonial Literatures in English*. Ed. John Thieme. London: Arnold, 1996. Rpt. in *The Writer's Path*. Ed. Constance Rooke and Leon Rooke. Toronto: ITP Nelson, 1998.
- "Simple Sufferings." *Second Macmillan Anthology*. Ed. John Metcalf and Leon Rooke. Toronto: Macmillan, 1989.
- "Totem." *Whetstone* Fall 1988. Rpt. *Polestar Press*, 1991. Rpt. in *Inside Stories III*. Holt Rinehart, 1994.
- "Not Counting the Indian, There Were Six." *Malahat Review* 80 (Fall 1987).

"Joe the Painter and the Deer Island Massacre." *Whetstone*, 1987. Rpt. *Canadian Fiction Magazine* 60 (1987). Rpt. *Modern Stories in English*. Ed. W. H. New and H. J. Rosengarten. 3rd ed. Mississauga: Copp, Clark Pitman, 1991. Rpt. *Glide Path*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 1991.

Poetry

- "The City on the Hill," "Coyote Sees the Prime Minister," "Coyote Goes to Toronto." *Canadian Literature* 124-125 (Spring-Summer 1990). "Coyote Goes to Toronto." Rpt. *Mukwa Geezis: Resource Guide to Aboriginal Literature in Canada*. Ed. Miranda Chitze. n.p.: Wabanoong/ANDPVA, [1996]. "The City on the Hill." Rpt. *Uncommon Wealth*. Ed. Neil Besner and others. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1997.
- "Custer's Last Words," "Another Great Moment in Indian History," "The Truth About the Sioux and Puppies," "How to Entrench Native Rights," "How to buy a Haida Bed," "How to Recognize Authentic Indian Jewelry," "How to Tell Regular Canadians from Real Indians," "A Short History of the Hudson Bay's Company." *Soundings*. Calgary: Circle Five, 1989.
- "Buffalo Poets." *Whetstone* (Spring 1987).
- "My Friend's Father." *Multi-Colored Maize*. Ed. Ron Peat. Auburn, CA: Valley, 1981.
- "The Star Thistles." *Toyon Review* 76 (Spring 1976).

Reviews and Review Articles

- Review of *Write It On Your Heart* by Harry Robinson. *Globe and Mail* 10 February 1990.
- Review of *River Song* by Craig Lesley. *Hungry Mind Review* March 1990.
- Review of *Fool's Crow* by James Welch. *Choice* 1987.
- Review of *A Sender of Words*, ed. Vine Deloria, Jr. *Western Historical Quarterly* 17.1 (1986).
- Review of *Haboo: Native American Stories from Puget Sound*, ed. Hilbert. *Choice* 1985/86.
- Review of *The New Native American Novel: Works in Progress*, ed. Mary Bartlett. *Choice* 1985/86.
- Review of *N. Scott Momaday: The Cultural and Literary Background* by Mathias Schubnell. *Choice* 1985/86.
- Review of *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich. *Western American Literature* Fall 1985.
- Review of *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows* by Paula Gunn Allen. *American Indian Quarterly* Summer 1984. Rpt. in *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 9.4 (Summer 1985).
- Review of *Studies in American Indian Literature*, ed. Paula Gunn Allen. *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 12. 1 (Spring 1985).
- Review of *Shadows of the Indian* by Raymond Stedman. *Western American Literature* 29.2 (Summer 1984).
- Review of *Studies in American Indian Literature*, ed. Paula Gunn Allen and *Three American Literatures*, ed. Houston Baker, Jr. *Western American Literature* 19.2 (Summer 1984).
- Review of *First People, First Voices* by Penny Petrone. *Canadian Book Review Annual* 1984.
- Review of *Long Lance* by Donald Smith. *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 2.2 (Summer 1984).

- Review of *Storyteller* by Leslie Silko. *Western American Literature* 18.1 (May 1982).
- Review of *Now That the Buffalo's Gone* by Alvin Josephy, Jr. *Western American Literature* 18.3 (November 1983).
- Review of *Native Studies: American and Canadian Indians* by John Price. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 6.2 (1984).
- Review of *The American Indian in Short Fiction* by Peter G. Beidler and *An Annotated Bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo Autobiography* by H. David Brumble. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 6.1 (1982).
- Review of *Four American Indian Literary Masters* by Alan Velie. *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 9.4 (Winter 1982).
- Review of *Contemporary Native American Drama: Three Plays* by Hanay Geiogamah. *Western American Literature* 16.2 (August 1981).
- Review of *Hanta Yo* by Ruth B. Hill. *Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 6.3 (Fall 1979).



Windows on the Past

Ann Alma

Under Emily's Sky. Beach Holme \$8.95

Shirlee Smith Matheson

The Gambler's Daughter. Beach Holme \$8.95

Arthur G. Slade

Draugr. Orca \$7.95

Reviewed by Gernot R. Wieland

What was Canada like in the 1930s and 1940s? Did the immigrants bring their history with them, or were they able to slough it off as they sailed up the St. Lawrence stream? Who inhabited those abandoned and dilapidated cottages that dot the Canadian landscape? Who planted those orchards that are gnarled now and no longer bear any fruit? In different ways, the three novels *Draugr*, *The Gambler's Daughter*, and *Under Emily's Sky*, all aimed at an audience of young adults, give their answers and thus open windows on the past.

The star of the three books without doubt is *Draugr*, a novel set in Gimli, Manitoba. The name of the series, Northern Frights, gives a first hint that not all is well in that Canadian settlement populated with descendants of Icelanders. The gloss on the title, "undead" man, ghost, reinforces that impression. When we meet a dog named "Hugin," we know that we are in the middle of an Old Norse saga. It does not take long before the one-eyed owner (shades of Odin) of a bookstore gives us the name of the saga: "You've got Grettir's blood in your

veins." Grettir's Saga is an analogue to the better known Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, with Beowulf standing in for Grettir and Grendel for Glam. It therefore means struggles with the walking dead, savage killings, encounters with superhumanly strong creatures, and their eventual defeat. The only question is: who will take on the mantle of Grettir? Sarah, the fourteen-year-old heroine, or her grandfather? And who will take on the role of Glam, the 'undead' man? Slade weaves a magnificent tale, full of suspense and filled with open and hidden references to Old Norse myths and sagas. He answers the question whether immigrants leave their history behind them with a resounding "no." There had been bad blood between the Asmundsons and the Grotsons in Iceland, and their feud survived emigration to Canada, even survived death: Kar Grotson is the twentieth century draugr that seeks to destroy Sarah Asmundson's grandfather. Even if we have to suspend our disbelief as far as the draugr is concerned, we must nonetheless concur with Slade's implicit claim that the pre-immigration past lies buried within us and can erupt at any time.

If *Draugr* looks at the past with a late twentieth-century perspective, *The Gambler's Daughter* makes no such pretense. It is firmly set in the 1940s and follows the fourteen-year old Loretta's and her younger brother's odyssey from Weasel City to Edmonton to Ferguson and back to Edmonton. Loretta is desperate to put down roots, but her step-father's gambling

activities force sudden resettlements on the family. The reader never finds out what exactly Bean-Trap, Loretta's step-father, does, except that he "traps beans," i.e. separates miners from their hard-earned money in the casinos he sets up. Some, such as Black Mike Michaluk, threaten violence, and then it's time for the family to move. In leaving the reader in the dark, Matheson skilfully mirrors the uncertainty Loretta feels about Bean-Trap's "work." At the same time, however, the book seems to lurch from one location to the next without any clear motivation. While the reader can gain an insight into Loretta's psyche, s/he cannot gain much insight into the plot.

More serious, though, than the opaqueness of the plot are the grammatical lapses of the author. Here are some examples: "Bean-Trap hands Teddy and I some money"; "the secretary looks up and smiles as if she remember [sic] us. How could she forget Teddy and I." True, the story is a first-person narrative and hence the grammar and the diction is that of a fourteen-year old. At the same time, the use of "I" in the object position is a 1970s neologism and does not reflect the language of the 1940s. Moreover, Loretta takes pride in having taught her younger brother how to read and write, and should therefore know better. And finally, the flyleaf informs us that "[a] teacher's guide is . . . available," which means that this book is at least considered for inclusion in primary or high school curricula. As such, it should pay closer attention to correct grammar.

One further jarring note: the names "Bean-Trap," "Bad Mike," as well as the mining and gambling background, and the rough-and-tumble justice meted out by the characters suggest the chaotic goldrush of the 1890s and not the highly organized and efficient war effort of the 1940s. The Wild West and World War Two have been combined in this book in a way that sounds neither historically correct nor

emotionally convincing. This window provides a view of the past "through a glass darkly."

The third book to be considered here, *Under Emily's Sky*, uses the time-honoured device of time travel to introduce the reader to the British Columbia coast of the 1930s. Lee, the book's young heroine, hits her head on a rock on a beach north of Victoria. When she regains consciousness she has travelled back some sixty years in time, gets to meet the West Coast painter Emily Carr, and promptly takes a painting lesson from her. She also explores the beach which looks both familiar and unfamiliar: the rocks, the shoreline, and the views are all the same, but the conifers are older and much bigger, and the fruit trees are still young and bearing fruit. The dilapidated cottage is brand new again, and inhabited by a family. Alma uses dramatic irony to good effect here: neither Lee nor the other characters in the book realizes for a long time that a girl from the 1990s got stranded in the 1930s, and this ignorance provides a certain amount of suspense. Moreover, and adding to the suspense, one question always hovers in the background: how will Lee get back into her own time?

Alma deserves praise for the way in which she connects the 1990s story to the encounter with Emily Carr. The story opens as Lee's alcoholic father decides to leave home, and Lee predictably reacts with burning anger. Lee carries that anger with her to the beach, and even back in time, where she pours it into the painting she makes under Emily Carr's supervision. "The anger that had burned inside her since Dad left was now in the painting instead." Alma clearly believes in the therapeutic effects of art.

Somewhat tenuously connected to the main plot is the story of the 1930s family Lee meets. This is the time of the Depression; the family has left drought-stricken Saskatchewan and is squatting on a

piece of land overlooking the beach. To make ends meet, they cut down some trees and sell them. This is interesting historical background material, but not really integrated into the story. It helps to explain the gnarled fruit trees and collapsed cottages of the 1990s; it does open a window on the past, but it detracts from rather than enhances the encounter with Emily Carr, which, as the title indicates, should be the main focus of the book's time travel.

Whatever the individual weaknesses of these three books, they imaginatively engage young adults with Canada's past and with the past immigrants import from their homelands. In their different ways they stress the importance of history, which is both around and in us. These books raise the possibility that it is not just us looking through these windows at the past, but that the past is also looking at us.

Culture Surfing

Clint Burnham

Be Labour Reading. ECW \$12.00

Nelson Ball

The Concrete Air. Mercury \$12.95

Michael Holmes, ed.

The Last Word: An Insomniac Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Poetry. Insomniac \$16.99

Reviewed by Stephen Ross

Clint Burnham's recent volume, *Be Labour Reading*, represents an approach to language of Joycean playfulness; reading it is much like watching television when someone else has the remote. Drawing heavily on what he calls the "homolinguistic similarity" between words, Burnham juxtaposes images and phrases with the apparent carelessness of casual media surfing. Read the poems more than once, though, and the comparative richness of Burnham's pairings and oppositions becomes apparent.

Rather than simply reproducing the randomness and thoughtlessness of channel surfing (or even of watching one channel continuously for that matter), Burnham manages both to capture and to give significance to the leveling of the tragic and the ridiculous that characterises much of the media- and information-glutted culture in which we live. Burnham's conception of "homolinguistic similarity" is underwritten by a sensitivity to the semantic richness of ordinary words that lends an added dimension to his poems each time they are read.

A prime example of Burnham's use of this technique occurs in the opening poem, "Gorde Hunter":

b.u.m. equipment, coke, 3-in-1 oil
cancer of the mouth
pancreitis
three born premature
scar tissue
hobbled legs
free medical
dental plan
serial killer, pension, it's a wonderful life
(chile, nicaragua)

In this excerpt the sense of watching someone channel-surf through our culture takes on the sinister suggestion of a haunting discrepancy. With the speed of a cable internet connection Burnham takes us from the sanitized world of Wal-Mart product shelves to the often frightening realities of medical treatment and the "universal" healthcare system. Then, just when we begin to get our bearings, he rockets us into a surreal telescope where serial killers, pension plans, and snippets of Hollywood nostalgia are punctuated (though only parenthetically) by the "realities" of a Third World. At their best, Burnham's poems are lucid definitions and ironic critiques of our simulacral culture.

Burnham does not stop at thematic exploration of these issues, though; he also consistently deploys a variety of narrative and structural techniques to enhance his

thematic exploration. Among the most noticeable of these is his use of unclosed parentheses and subjectless or objectless verbs, to convey a sense of unfinished thoughts; they are the poetic transcriptions of cultural attention deficit disorder. Add to these techniques the apparently aimless progression of images and themes that shift in mid-stride and you get a powerful commentary on the consequences and dangers of an obsessive media culture (the separation of the *subject* from its verbs often feels violent and jarring in a manner that suggests more than a simple analogic relationship between linguistics and ontology). By forcing us to scrutinize language and the ways in which it is used, the poems in *Be Labour Reading* draw our attention to the underlying messages emitted by the exoskeletal structure of language.

In contrast to Burnham's political and difficult approach, Nelson Ball's *The Concrete Air* is made up of a selection of epigrammatic poems, the central theme of which is the "uneasy fit" between human culture and the natural world. Drawing effectively on techniques of concrete poetry, Ball insists on the symbiotic interrelationship between words and worlds, revealing the closeness with which language can be made to resemble that which it represents. In poems like "Raindrops" and "Paris," Ball consciously combines form and content to enhance the significance and effect of each; "An Exercise" actually leaves the reader breathless without feeling inconsistent or jerky:

Breath
comes

in rapid
catches

to the
canoeist

shooting
rapids

The repetition of "rapid" works with the positioning of the words on the page to convey a sense of flow that occurs in fits and starts; that the poem looks like a series of rapids only adds to the overall effect, connected as it is to the larger theme of the interconnection between humans and nature, language and reality, words and worlds. The companion pieces "Invocation to the Muse" and "Intent" demonstrate the centrality of this theme to Ball's artistic project as they declare the experimental and ambitious nature of his attempt to strip down language, to make it communicate more than it says by drawing on all its formal features in addition to its discernible content. Ball also acknowledges the potential for conflict between his artistic ambition and his other great theme, the need to move "toward / a restoration of balance," as in "Conflict of Interest":

We fell trees
to feed the pulp and paper mills

then write poems on paper
about trees

still
standing

Ball produces a series of variations on this theme, in some cases narrowing in on the kind of intimate interrelationship we have with the world around us, as in "Clouds": "I breathe in very deeply. / Did that cloud move closer? / Have I inhaled a cloud I didn't see?" The sense of the overwhelmingly intricate and complexly ordered natural world with which we interact even at our most unconscious is further complicated by the speaker's fear that he has unwittingly done something that may damage the natural world around him, a fear which in turn gives rise to the concern that any such witless destruction as the inhalation of a cloud may hurt him just as much: "Would that hurt it or me?"

Yet Ball is not simply concerned with the

microcosmic effects of our interaction with the natural world around us; the poems in *The Concrete Air* do not constitute a self-serving lyrical contemplation of the individual's importance in, and effect on, the cosmos. Rather, in poems like "Accidents," he broadens the scope of his considerations to the point where human agency and understanding are seen as mere components in a system infinitely beyond our comprehension:

There are no accidents
in this world

of intricate
connections

and unpredicted
events—

we simply don't
always know

what's
happening

The anxiety over unwitting destruction of nature evidenced in "Clouds" is answered with the declaration that our failure to understand fully the workings of the cosmos is not to say that those workings are random; human pride in reason and technology is taken down a peg, and we are reminded that we are part of the overall system despite all our attempts to examine it as if from without. The closeness and dialectical interrelationship between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic elements of human existence in the universe are clearest though near the collection's end, in two poems that treat with similar gravity the deaths of a common fly and of 100 people in a plane crash ("The Fly" and "Flight 607, Montreal to Toronto, July 5, 1970"). The positioning of these poems within a couple of pages of each other invites comparison and provides a glimpse into the breadth and sensitivity of Ball's vision.

The Last Word: An Insomniac Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Poetry, edited (with considerably more bravado than necessary) by Michael Holmes, provides a strikingly eclectic contrast to the volumes by Bell and Burnham. This collection of new work by lesser-known poets lives up to its stated aim to "represent the best of the wide range—in terms of style, thematic concern, political and theoretical intent, and voice—of poetry currently being written in Canada." It is a wild and eclectic sampling of a tremendous variety of poetic techniques and concerns that, though it certainly cannot (nor does it attempt to) satisfy every reader all the time, manages to speak to just about every conceivable poetic preference at one time or another.

From Sonja Mills's no-holds-barred "My First S+M Experience" to Robyn Cakebread's quietly powerful "Now I'm Burned" and Ahdri Zhina Mandiela's startling "Dark Diaspora," this collection celebrates newly liberated voices without ignoring more traditional poets.

Unfortunately, the attempts of some of the poets to write about that which they truly know best, the writing process itself, at times slip into self-indulgent self-characterisation, as with Neil Eustache's "or class and race"; however, it must be said that Matthew Remski's meditation on language, "The Pipe Organ" demonstrates the range of talent represented in the volume by undertaking a similar theme with much more subtlety and flair. The focus of many of the poets on language itself is balanced by such political works as Michael Turner's "Orientation #6: The Iron Chink" and Steven Heighton's "The Machine Gunner."

Mixing the innovative concrete poetry of Damian Lopes (who turns "do not readjust your set" into "do not just read your set") and the defamiliarizing techniques of language poet W. Mark Sutherland, with the lyrical "Lily Marlene" by Sina Queyras and the lightly ironic "She Evaporates with

"Drops of Water Flung from her Hair" by Louise Fox, this collection ultimately delivers on its promise to put on display a range of new poetic talent, much of which will figure importantly in Canada's literary landscape.

Placing the Text

Frank Birbalsingh

Novels and the Nation: Essays in Canadian Literature. TSAR Pub \$19.95

Gunilla Florby

The Margin Speaks: A Study of Margaret Laurence and Robert Kroetsch from a Post-Colonial Point of View. Lund U P n.p.

Reviewed by David Creelman

Cultural materialism, new historicism, feminism, and post-colonialism have become powerful and influential critical schools, in no small part, because they have demonstrated that literary texts are shaped within and contribute to the economic, historical, sexual, and political discourses which are the fabric of our culture. In the last fifteen years these new critical practices have served Canadian studies well. As readers of Canadian texts, we no longer expect or accept the notion that our literature has been formed within such monolithic structures as a "garrison mentality." Instead, critics have been exploring the particular discursive systems surrounding specific writers or texts, and the readings which result from such approaches have often been fresh and stimulating. Certainly, Frank Birbalsingh's book, *Novels and the Nation*, develops careful and convincing analyses of a wide variety of Canadian writers. Unfortunately, Gunilla Florby's manuscript confirms that the new critical practises can still be infected by some old-fashioned weaknesses.

Birbalsingh's *Novels and the Nation* assembles eighteen solid essays which focus

primarily on twentieth-century Canadian novels and short fiction. Arranged chronologically, the book opens with essays about Sara Jeannette Duncan and Stephen Leacock and closes with articles exploring the work of Austin Clarke and Michael Ondaatje. Each essay is short and compact, and the style is precise, yet eminently readable. Birbalsingh tends to discuss a limited number of texts by each of the authors, and he then employs a variety of critical positions to examine the writer's specific relationship with the social and cultural discourses of his or her time and place. For example, a kind of broad cultural criticism is adopted to examine the early fiction of Gabrielle Roy and Ringuet. Birbalsingh claims that their novels not only repeatedly develop images of self-destruction, but also echo the deeper trauma of the francophone community and provide "an authentic reproduction of the actual attitudes of francophone Canadians during the first half of this century." A psychoanalytic approach influences his treatment of Frederick Philip Grove. Examining Grove's unhappy life as a Canadian immigrant and his deficient contact with Europe's traditional and cultural influences, Birbalsingh convincingly argues that while Grove is drawn to the angst of the existentialist discourse, his personal "grievances" and "prejudices" ultimately undermine his commitment to "the aesthetic criteria" of that philosophical position. Birbalsingh is equally at home with post-colonial theory, as is evident in his fruitful comparison of Morley Callaghan and Frank Sargeson, who developed eerily similar styles and themes within their Toronto and Auckland settings. Birbalsingh's collection connects a series of writers to their particular moment in history and culture, but the essays are also useful for their frequent references to the literary contexts of each novelist. Canadian texts are frequently linked to key examples of American and British modernism, thus deepening

our understanding of the forces which influence some of our best writers.

Birbalsingh's collection is not, of course, without its flaws. In his search to establish broad cultural contexts and critical frameworks, he sometimes glosses over the particulars of the texts. For example, he has interesting things to say about Mordecai Richler's attitude toward such issues as nationalism, Zionism, and Jewish-Canadian culture, but his analysis of Richler's early fiction is superficial. Similarly, he includes two chapters which provide a broad overview of contemporary South Asian Canadian writers, but these studies sometimes function as quick summaries of the writer's fictions, rather than an analysis of their particular insights and contexts. Such lapses are rare, however, and *Novels and Nations* stands as an insightful, intelligent exploration of Canadian fictions.

Gunilla Florby's *The Margin Speaks: A Study of Margaret Laurence and Robert Kroetsch from a Post-Colonial Point of View* is a less satisfying attempt to explore the cultural contexts which surrounded two of Canada's best novelists. Problems become evident in the introduction when the reader encounters a relatively underdeveloped analysis of the study's central terms and concepts. There is a degree of validity to the main assertion that Canadians lack a stable identity because they inhabit a rather troubled middle-ground between the fading power of the British empire and the growing power of an American neighbour; but the very question of "identity" needs to be interrogated more carefully. Florby claims that a "distinct," "national" identity emerges as writers attend to local culture, explore the margins, and subvert European traditions, but sometimes this returns to a kind of essentialism. As the book unfolds, identity increasingly appears to be the stable product of immediate experience, rather than an evolving construct formed within competing discourses. Florby also

dwells on the affinities which link the decentralizing impulses of post-colonialism with the projects of postmodernism and feminism, but says much less about what distinguishes these critical positions.

Just as some key issues are left as vague connotations in the introduction, so the main body of the study is marred by generalizations. Many of the chapters on Kroetsch's texts begin with promising arguments. The book seems fresh and engaging when Florby asserts that *The Studhorse Man* is a "wickedly ironic disassembling" of the romance, and that *Alibi* is a carefully enacted dramatization of "Derrida's analysis of the problematic of writing and signification." Unfortunately, once these main ideas are developed the rest of the chapters tend to summarize the narratives, repeatedly referring back to the static central point. Indeed, while the analysis of Kroetsch's *The Ledger* and Laurence's African fictions are carefully linked back to the issues of post-colonialism, other observations about the fictions could just as easily be developed within a postmodern reading. Florby's argument that the texts have a distinctly post-colonial view is not always convincingly presented.

Florby's fine discussion of Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* is one chapter which stands out for its lucid analysis. The discussion of Laurence's final and finest novel weaves together a careful account of numerous current readings, with a convincing explanation of the text's post-colonial concerns as they have been reworked through Laurence's feminist lens. Florby traces the national and sexual significance of Morag's personal search for her identity without overstating the case. But the strength of the book's final chapter does not fully compensate for the frustrations experienced by the reader in the earlier sections.

Desire and Will

Paul Bowdring

The Night Season. Killick \$15.95

Robin McGrath

Trouble and Desire. Killick \$11.95

Reviewed by Lawrence Mathews

Both of these books are published by Killick Press of St. John's, and both are written by Newfoundlanders, but there the similarities end. Robin McGrath's *Trouble and Desire* is a first book of short fiction; Paul Bowdring's *The Night Season* is a second novel. *Trouble and Desire* is apprentice-work, the sort of thing that gives regional presses a bad name. *The Night Season* is a sophisticated piece of writing, worthy of comparison with any fiction being published in Canada today.

The main trouble with *Trouble* is that most of its twelve stories exude the odour of raw autobiography: reading them is too much like looking at someone's slightly embellished journal entries or letters to friends. Some meander and others have been forced into the Procrustean bed of conventional short story form—but the reader is never sure whether McGrath is really in artistic control.

A case in point is "The Cockroach Room," in which Amy has an affair with Fazil, a Turkish mathematician teaching in Edmonton. The affair ends when she declines his invitation to live with him in Turkey, a possibility which evokes for her the memory of a visit to a university lab filled with cockroaches. She imagines herself in Turkey "surrounded by swarming, brown, hard-shelled bodies." Nothing has prepared us for this eruption of racism in Amy's mind. The story ends a page later as she wallows in teary self-pity, never giving a thought to the pain she must have inflicted on the innocent Fazil. The third-person narrative voice brings down a cool (and artistically clunky) last-sentence judgment: "She was safe again."

But in terms of character and theme, the ending parallels an O. Henry plot twist. The woman we had been led to empathize with suddenly morphs into a self-absorbed racist. A major thematic issue is raised only on the penultimate page. What, one wonders, is the point?

A similar comment might be made on the cumulative effect of certain features of the collection. McGrath's protagonists go by many names, but with only two or three exceptions seem to be the same person in each story. A rather unpleasant thematic dimension emerges as, again and again, they encounter otherness in various forms, consistently responding in disappointingly negative ways—condescension at best, and often (as with Amy) worse.

Thus the nameless young girl whose father is a doctor in "Mrs. Whitton's War" and a lawyer in "Just Like Home" observes the working-class Newfoundland families with which she comes in contact as though she were taking notes for an anthropology monograph. In "The Other Mother," Sharon has adopted an aboriginal girl who is abducted, raped, and beaten. Sharon believes that this event has mystically connected her to her daughter's biological mother. Though "She did not actually know any native women herself," the final sentence (another clunker) declares, with astonishing presumption, that "Sharon too would always be an Indian . . ."

And then there are men, most enigmatic Other of all (who can figure 'em?). McGrath's characters are really comfortable only in the cloistered world of female siblings ("Threesies") and female friends ("Best Friends")—but they do try. Besides Fazil, there's Tom in "The Parish House," an ex-seminarian who is drawn away from Kit and back into the fold, as the Newfoundland clerical "old boy network" does its sinister thing. (This one ends with the protagonist in tears again.) The narrator's best friend in "Best Friends" has "an

awful showcase husband" marked by ethnicity (in this case, Greek). "The Bone Stands Alone" is one of only two stories in which a relationship survives to the end, but it's early days yet for this couple; in the last bit of dialogue, Susan tells a lie to Stefan, who, one fears, has no clue what is in store.

Paul Bowdring's *The Night Season* is in a different league altogether. It's a suave, professional performance, a novel whose main character is really the city of St. John's—a place of spiritual desolation in this rendering of it, populated by pathetic and comic figures, presided over by a spirit closer to Beckett than anyone else. (Beckett is referred to several times, most wittily in the case of a children's book about a rock in a forest that waits in vain for someone to take it home—"a sort of *Waiting for Godot* for kiddies.")

Bowdring's protagonist, Will Wiseman (both names heavily laden with irony) is a walking cliché: an academic facing a mid-life crisis, he abandons wife, daughter, and job to live by himself in a downtown rented room. He's judgmental, self-regarding, intellectually arrogant. But Bowdring uses Will's wry, often caustic wit, constantly flaunted erudition, and sharp eye for physical and psychological detail to make the world of his novel live. The opening passage of the main part of the narrative is exemplary: "Christmas again, but unlike Irving Berlin I was dreaming of something like Kafka's burrow to escape into until it was over. Live turkeys named after city councillors were on display at the downtown raffle-shop window . . ." A mental landscape that juxtaposes high and popular culture, a social world characterized by absurd detail, a quixotic desire to retreat: this is Will's reality in a nutshell.

The main action (a *misnomer*) runs from just before Christmas to (ironically, again) Epiphany, though with many flashbacks. There's no plot; Will drifts from encounter

to encounter with friends, relatives, and strangers against such bleak backdrops as a perennially deserted "minimalist" convenience and secondhand furniture store, a nameless tavern that looks from the outside "like an aborted Mies van der Rohe," a "Family Restaurant" which seems "like someone's nostalgic hazy recollection rather than a real eating place," a dreary suburb in whose backyards "crouched all manner of abused, broken, and discarded things," which are then catalogued meticulously.

The denizens of this wasteland are legion. Often clothing is an index of character, as with a woman named Kerry, who "looked wrapped or bandaged rather than clothed, her long scarf and ankle-length coat and skirt enfolding some fragile self, cocooning some old sorrow" or Will's brother-in-law, Bill, who "In his black stovepipe pants and suit jacket . . . looked stylishly New Wave, though he had been wearing this type of outfit since the fifties." Will's obsessive interest in bizarre detail manifests itself in his description of the hand of Dona, Bill's partner: "And at the top of the middle finger . . . I was surprised to see a small perfect wart; . . . it had never struck me before what a remarkable resemblance it had to a nipple." For a brief character sketch, consider this take on Will's mother-in-law: "How do you deal with a woman who once confessed that John McCormack used to be one of her *vulgarisms*? At a cold and constant 59, Dorcas, like some greying infant, was still exploring the world with her mouth. . . . There was an almost blithe heartlessness about Dorcas, which kept you on your guard. Sometimes you hardly knew that you'd been stabbed."

And there are others, many others, perhaps a few *too* many. Entertaining as *The Night Season* is, it goes on for too long. At a certain point—perhaps about three-quarters of the way through its 248 pages—one has simply had enough of Will and his

world, and more, unfortunately, becomes somewhat less. But this is, without question, a book about which one can say with confidence: read any page at random and enjoy the work of a writer in complete command of his craft.

Still Need the Revolution

Dionne Brand

Land to Light On. McClelland and Stewart.

\$12.99

Reviewed by Susan Gingell

For some years now I've been overhearing Brand as she talked in her poetry, fiction, and essays first and foremost to those in the Black diaspora. This writing has consistently given me a sharper sense of the various terrains on which she struggles: racism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, classism, sexism, heterosexism. It has also consistently given me political energy for those struggles, given me pleasure too. With *Land to Light On*, however, so powerful a first-person persona does she create, with such obvious grounding in some of the details of her life-story, that I was constantly working not to read the work as autobiographical and to keep in check the growing sense of fear I felt for the creator of such a dispirited voice.

If the book title leads any readers to believe initially that the poems will represent Canada as a land of refuge, the opening sequence, "I have been losing roads," will soon disabuse them of any such notion. Its persona is in no sense taken in; rather she stands exposed "Out here . . . without the relief of the sky or good graces of a door." Still worse, she reports in Caribbean-inflected phrasing, if she finds any peace in this discomfort, "is not peace, / is getting used to harm." The pared syntax here is a disquietingly perfect mirror for the ever more straitened life this woman

repeatedly says she is giving up on. Gripped by the recognition of the larger imaginative truth her words tell, I found little reassurance in reminding myself that Brand's immediate experience might not necessarily stand behind the displacing "you" in the liquid-nitrogen lines:

If the trees don't flower and colour
refuse to limn
when a white man in a red truck on a
rural road
jumps out at you, screaming his exact
hatred
of the world, his faith extravagant and
earnest
and he threatens, something about
your cunt
you do not recover

Having given us essays, stories, and poetry based on her time in Grenada, "that island with an explosive at the beginning of its name"—the hope with which she went, the fierce anger alternating with despair with which she fled the American invasion—can Brand have been unaware of how tempting it is to read as confessional the poems' representation of a disillusioned present: "is here I reach / framed and frozen on a shivered / country road instead of where I thought / I'd be in the blood / red flame of a revolution"? So powerfully evocative of an agonized spirit is the impression she creates that I confess that when her poetic voice laments "My life was supposed to be wider, not so forlorn / and not standing out in this north country bled like maple," fear began to take hold of me, and I lost the sense of separation between author and persona. It was her I feared for as I read of a vision of "a life that I was to finish by making something of it / not regularly made, where I am not this woman / fastened to this ugly and disappointing world." Knowing how she has dedicated her life to leftist struggle and seen the socialist world collapse at the end of the millennium, how could anyone not wonder about

the extent to which Brand herself has known that "The body bleeds only water and fear when you survive the death of your politics." The book's importance, however, lies not in any possible crypto-autobiography but in its exploration of what it means to live beyond the disintegration of everything on which someone has built a life. The picture is not pretty, but its crafting is superb.

Any sense that such a person might find some semblance of uplift in the natural beauties of this country fails before the image of the land as indifferent torturer that Brand enters into the national archive alongside the images of LePan, Birney, Frank Scott, MacEwan and Atwood. Brand's Canada indeed seems to revive the Frygian eco-monster: "this wide country just stretches your life to a thinness / just trying to take it in . . . the airy bay at its head scatters your thoughts like someone going mad from science and birds pulling your hair." This is a land where "ice invades your nostrils in chunks, land fills your throat" and where "scrambling to the Arctic so wilfully" results only in "get[ting] blown into bays and lakes and fissures you have yet to see."

An earlier assessment of possible directions had both denied the desirability of north—"I'm heading to frost, to freezing"—and envisioned dis(-)ease as the likely outcome of going back to the Caribbean: "perhaps returning south heads to fever." Yet that *perhaps* keeps alive the possibility of a more positive journey back, until she makes a kind of imaginative return. Then the seductive vivacity of the West Indian aunts she images for us in "Dialectics" cannot displace the antithetical images of a life lived in poverty. Thus the introduction of Aunt Phyllis, "her mouth sweet on laughter and paradise plums" is countered by alerting readers to Phyllis's daily martyrdom of "a foot that wouldn't / cure" and to the desperation of the various

other women Brand represents. Her writing is most evocative when she foregrounds the woman with three children cannibalizing her beleaguered energies as she goes to their father's workplace on payday to try to claim a share of the paycheck before it disappears in drink. There she finds patriarchy ascendant and materialized in the studied indifference of the guard at the company barricade, the father's having already slipped away, and his fellow workers' mockery as they pass her by: "their laughter here rattling in the can of the truck like uneven stone." Though the persona can find some relief in the knowledge that "I never fell into the heaviness of babies," there is no synthesis to this dialectic of positives and negatives in Caribbean community; there is, finally, only flight: "I wanted to fly into their skins and I wanted to escape them."

Friendship offers no solution to her persona's homeless condition either, despite the early promise built in the iteration and re-iteration of long-standing friendship: "I sit with my old friend at Arani, my old friend." That promise erodes quickly in the context of Brand's reading of the restaurant setting. Arani is all that the restaurant owner has "culled from where he came from," the Indian state of Kerala, converted to commerce. And the friendship founders between patriarchy and feminism: "Between us, there's a boy, his son he hasn't seen, a friendship I'm holding for ransom until he does."

Friendships and even sexually intimate relationships also falter in an environment constituted in "Islands Vanish" in a way that will be familiar to readers of Brand's earlier "Winter Epigrams." This environment is comprised of equal parts of Canadian winter and freezer-burning racism. Brand relocates the "heart of darkness" to Canada's winter roads patrolled by cops with "snow-blue laser" eyes that fix "Three blacks in a car on a road blowing

eighty miles an hour in the wind between a gas station and Chatham" and manifests the darkness's effects in the admission "I coil myself up into a nerve and quarrel with the woman, lover, and the man for landing me in this white hell." Even if the quarrel is resolved for a time, the strain of living in such a hostile environment shows by the time she revisits such relationship in "Through My Imperfect Mouth and Life and Way." What had "looked like the opposite" of grief comes to disappoint too: "I had hoped that she could see me. . . / even if I look like some stone sitting there hoping that I turn to stone."

This latter sequence does, however, begin to create some sense of the possibility of art being a kind of land to light on, when political and personal hopes have been dashed:

I know that I live some
inner life that thinks it's living outside but
isn't and only wakes up when something
knocks
too hard and when something is gone as
if gazing
up the road I miss the bus and wave a
poem at
its shadow. But bus and shadow exist all
the same
and I'll send you more poems even if
they arrive
late.

Admittedly, this sense of possibility is undercut by "Every Chapter of the World," a textualizing of the multiply constituted global crises at the end of the century that also includes a reminder that English is the "tongue of conquest, language of defeat." Yet even here the grounds for despair are so powerfully constructed by Brand's words, that even as I felt a renewed collapsing of that distance between author and persona in the prediction "She may not leave here anything but a prisoner / circling a cell, // cutting the square smaller and smaller and walking into herself," I found reason to

believe that art is at least the beginning of the synthesis that had earlier escaped her persona. That *Land to Light On* won the 1997 Governor General's Award for poetry is testament that even such a discomfiting message as Brand's book brings us has the capacity to insist its way into Canadian minds. And there it can fire the hope of those of us who, like her persona, feel they "still need the revolution / bright as the blaze of the wood stove in the window" to get them through the socially, politically, and economically constructed cold of century's end.

Québec in Translation

Annie Brisset

A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988. U of Toronto P
\$45.00

Monique Proulx

Aurora Montreals. Douglas and McIntyre \$18.95

Lise Bissonnette

Affairs of Art. Anansi \$16.95

Reviewed by Leslie Harlin

Annie Brisset's *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988* is finally available in English. This superb translation by Rosalind Gill and Roger Gannon reads fluidly and beautifully, as befits a work dedicated to this topic. However, this is not simply a discussion of translation practice in Quebec; Brisset attends to the fascinating subject of what was translated in Quebec during the twenty years under consideration and why those works were chosen. In fact, the very word "translation" is a sticky one for the author and provides the basis for one of her more interesting arguments: are the works translated or adapted and how does this question relate to the Québécois need to differentiate from the Other?

Brisset bases her sociocriticism on the

importance of alterity to the liberation ideology of 1968-1988 in Quebec. The question she sets out to answer is how this alterity is manifested in the act of translation in Quebec. In order to delineate one's own culture as unique, one must differentiate the culture from the world at large. Brisset's contention is that the Québécois community—and the theatre community, in particular—over-indulged this desire to differentiate to the point of attempting to establish the Québécois dialect as a unique language. If one accepts such an assumption, the logical conclusion would be that French translations from France are no longer acceptable. Indeed, one would begin to see France as culturally oppressive in much the same way that one sees anglophone Canada as politically and economically oppressive. Herein lies the crux of the argument: alterity is dangerous to the fragile culture of Quebec.

The problem as Brisset sees it is that the attempt to retranslate works into "Québécois" results in adaptations rather than translations. The "translators" transcribe a phonetic language which is not far removed from the phonetics of the French spoken in France, and is not consistent even within the same work or between translators from different parts of Quebec. In addition, Brisset points out that the translators contradict themselves by switching to "standard contemporary educated French" to explain themselves: "[T]he translator speaks in two languages: the language of the 'Québécois' text is often different from the language of commentary on the text."

Translation normally assumes that the translator will attempt to subsume his/her own presence in the text; however, as Brisset shows, the public expected and assumed that the Québécois translator would leave a mark and create a work that would comment on their own position in the world. Hence, we end up with "transla-

tors" knowing no Swedish or Russian "translating" Swedish and Russian texts through the intermediary of the French translations from France. Brisset's most amusing argument looks at Garneau's recreation of *Macbeth* as a celebration of the Quebec nationalist movement through his erasure, as much as possible, of the references to Scotland by name, of the references to the king of England as Scotland's savior, and through his decision not to translate those lines he deemed a "jumble."

Brisset's work is quite interesting and necessary, but is marred by two difficult problems. The most troubling is her tone. The sarcasm is often so harsh that the reader begins to suspect that the author may not always treat her subjects fairly. Thus, in attempting to strengthen her argument with strong language, she weakens it through excess. Marie Cardinal, Michel Tremblay, Michel Garneau, and others are treated to intensely severe vocabulary that compromises the reader's belief in Brisset's objectivity. "Belied," "self-serving," "denounces," "guilty," "bias," "cliché" are words which sprinkle one five-page span of her disdainful treatment of the theatre in Quebec.

Another problem with the work is the inadequate perspective it may leave with its readers. Some of this is obviously unavoidable: the translation appears more than seven years after the original French and could not reflect any changes that have occurred in the decade between 1988 and 1998. In addition, Brisset condemns the theatre in Quebec for its tacit censoring of foreign works, showing in her numerous graphs that foreign works comprise just over half of the plays produced in the twenty-year span. Some perspective could be gained in a comparison of this statistic with statistics from other cultures with nascent theatres. Her argument seems an unfair indictment of a theatrical community that does, in fact, include a good num-

ber of foreign plays. Furthermore, as she admits, she does not include statistics from companies—often more experimental—that did not exist for a significant period of the decades under question. Her more successful argument is that those who proclaim the invisibility of Québécois theatrical works are arguing without adequate basis, particularly given the Québécois nature of the adaptations of the foreign plays that were produced.

The reader can find a more contemporary view of Quebec in Monique Proulx's newly-translated *Aurora Montrealis*. This collection of short stories attempts to portray life in referendum and post-referendum Montreal from the perspectives of as many different types of people as possible: young and old, male and female, rich and poor, Proulx gives them voice. Very few anglophones find their way into the stories, but the author does attempt diversity along racial and ethnic lines. In fact, the first story, "Grey and White," features a latino boy new to Canada.

From that immigrant story, Proulx jumps to "The Passage" and recounts the tale of a young woman losing her childhood in the sleek office buildings of Montreal, giving sex in exchange for a job. In this way, Proulx alternates between contrasting characters: from the latino boy to the young and desperate woman to the middle-aged man in "Playing with a Cat" to the bourgeois woman and her countrified mother in "The Pointless and the Essential," and so on. The author chooses a placement for her stories that emphasizes the contrasting characters and accentuates the attempt to speak for as much of Montreal as possible. In addition, these contrasts and the brevity of the stories—all are only a few pages long—create a frenetic and kinetic organization that reflects the movement of the city with its varied lifestyles and cultures.

The title story is one of the more successful in the collection and is the story that

clearly delineates Proulx's thesis. In "Aurora Montrealis," Laurel is an adolescent boy who endeavors to come to terms with his francophone existence amidst immigrants threatening to destroy a culture he clings to and demeans at the same time. He wants to be a writer and moons in solitude with his red notebook: "The light moves on the virgin paper and, if he looks at it a long time without blinking, fires coloured shadows that look like aurora borealis." He has thus found the title of his book, as has his creator. *Aurora Montrealis* is the title "because Montreal is a city that never stops changing . . . that adds so many new faces that we always lose the one we finally thought we knew." In the end, the universality of life's difficulties and the kindness of immigrants leave Laurel in utter confusion. Proulx works with this confusion and the changing faces of Montreal to form an organizational tool for her disparate stories.

Whereas that form works fairly well for the author, another organizational aspect in the work can be tiresome. Each of the stories attempts to incorporate some sort of twist in the end, but these surprises merely become predictable and stale. Proulx's attempts to shock fall flat: the prostitute who turns out to be a little girl curling up with a teddy bear is treated with such lack of subtlety that the reader is hard-pressed to care about her. Similarly, the obscene phone caller who finishes with a call to his mother does not shock so much as make one exasperated at the writer's love of cliché. In "Baby," we follow the narrator on her walk toward a meeting place. The reader surmises very quickly that the narrator is on her way to visit a baby's grave and the surprise falls short. This trip to the gravesite is surely modeled on Hugo's "Demain, dès l'aube. . .," yet lacks any of the poem's powerful emotion or subtle mounting of tension. In fact, Proulx's idea of imagining different lives for the baby is well-done and makes the author's penchant

for attempted shock all the more unfortunate.

The reader consistently longs for subtlety and ideas to work through; the author frequently fails to deliver. In "Oui or no," Eliane's affair with an anglophone is clearly a mirroring of the anglophone and francophone lack of mutual understanding during the referendum debates. The reader wonders why Proulx needs to state the obvious as her conclusion: "Should a metaphorical relationship be seen between Eliane's disappointment in love and the ideological disappointment of the small country [Quebec]?" Well yes, but we already knew that, didn't we?

Aurora Montrealis is a workable translation by Matt Cohen. Translation difficulties that bring attention to the translator are infrequent. Unfortunately, one stumbles across frequent poor English: characters were "woken up" and they "snuck" around. In addition, one character has lovers who are younger than "her." These and other English mistakes arise from spoken English and would be legitimate in a narrative of spoken English, but are glaring in *Aurora Montrealis*.

Lise Bissonnette's *Affairs of Art*, on the other hand, is fluidly translated by Sheila Fischman. This work is an elaborately constructed mystery with a surprise ending that works: Bissonnette leaves the reader thinking about character interactions and aspirations. Much of the novel is an elaborate flashback that takes the reader from art critic François Dubeau's funeral into the text of a stolen letter. Therein lies the mystery: who stole the letter?

At the funeral, Bissonnette skilfully slips into mourners' and witnesses' focalizations in order to reveal the confusion and fear of those invited to his apartment after the service for a reading of a letter that promises to reveal secrets. In this way, we intimate motives for those in attendance who knew that Dubeau had time enough to write a devas-

tating truth while dying from an unnamed disease the reader recognizes as AIDS.

After the theft, Bissonnette slides into the text of the letter and we become the privileged readers of an autobiographical confession that creates a sympathetic character out of the Dubeau previously seen through the eyes of others as a roguish scamp. The Dubeau seen by others is a façade created by the man in order to move up in his professional circles. The letter traces his movements from his first understanding of the usefulness of imposture through the perfection of his persona. Dubeau intends this confessional letter to be a reckoning of the truth for all of those affected by his less-than-honest self-caricature.

Affairs of Art is a well-constructed and often subtly humorous look at the importance of truth for one man in the process of dying. The reader also sees how the world of the living is dependent upon sustaining deceit. Finding the thief requires finding the person whose own imposture is dependent upon Dubeau's created persona.

A Gift of Prophecy

Anne Carson

Autobiography of Red. Alfred A. Knopf \$29.95

Reviewed by Jed Rasula

Subtitled "A Novel in Verse," this book recalls in its form the maverick legacy of the novel as "total poetic genre" as envisioned by the German Romantics. Historically, the novel is a genre arising in the seams between other genres, accenting the faultlines within and between them: a genre born to contest other genres. Because most novels forego this legacy, it has lately become a fetching prospect for poets (Lyn Hejinian's *Oxata*, for example). In the Canadian context, there is a rich precedence for the book-as-concept in the work of Nichol, McCaffery, Dewdney, and Bök,

to name a few. *Autobiography of Red* is more than a narrative of a hundred and twenty pages; it includes six other elements which ostensibly present and deliberate on the ancient Greek poet Stesichoros, whose surviving fragments Carson has patched together, like Victor Frankenstein, into the monster Geryon. These six genre-expanding supplements to the story are not paraphernalia, but incubators of the uncanny atmosphere in which the story is germinated. The twenty one numbered syllogisms of Appendix C, which immediately precede the narrative proper, induce a narcosis of logic as narrative threshold: "If Stesichoros lies either we will know at once that he is lying or we will be fooled because now that we are in reverse the whole landscape looks inside out." In Hesiod's *Theogony* the Muses appear to the poet shepherd and declare him incapable of detecting whether the visions they inspire are true or false. This vitalizing equivocation—traditionally the legacy of the poets (and source of Plato's opprobrium)—is transported here into the novel. It might be more accurate to say that Carson, a professor of classics and a poet, has imported a powerful pharmacopia into the blandly compliant medium of the contemporary "novel." Ezra Pound thought of the literary event as news that stays news; the "novel" means *news*; Anne Carson renews Pound's pledge with an ambitextuous, genre-blending work which is novel in the best sense of bearing real news. The news in question here is, simply, itself. Every compelling work of literature is autotelic in the best sense (or "intransitive," to use the term favored by Blanchot, Foucault, Barthes). That *Autobiography of Red* seems so delectably itself, one of a kind, is not surprising coming from the author of *Plainwater* and *Glass, Irony and God and Eros the Bittersweet*. These works show Carson disposed to think of each composition demanding its own form. The result has

been idiosyncratic intensity and variety. *Autobiography of Red* lacks the variety, consisting largely of a sustained narrative of forty-seven sections composed in alternating long and short lines, but this "lack" introduces yet another element of variety into Carson's audacious oeuvre.

A nearly eventless narrative, this is a *fin de siècle Bildungsroman* of ennui and sexual perplexity, a textual brocade suffused with red. The tale conjures from Stesichoros's fragments the tale (transposed to the present) of Geryon's passage from boyhood to young manhood. He is a photographer with a secret (a full set of wings tucked away under his clothes), obsessed with volcanoes and pathologically enamored of an older boy named Herakles. In the concluding "interview" (a format Carson favors), Stesichoros says "it is red that I like and there is a link between geology and character." The terms are instructive: this is a poem about the unwarranted intensities that arise from drab circumstance and the fleeting threshold of sociability bestowed by accident and coincidence. Carson has an assured way of passing from flatness of affect (as if taking a cue from Jameson's theory of postmodernism) to angular eruptions of (modernist) epiphany. Geryon's grandmother, for instance, reports an encounter with Virginia Woolf, who asks her "Why are you alone in this huge blank garden / like a piece of electricity?" Geryon bears his own solitude everywhere like a piece of stifled voltage, only gradually coming to the realizing that "We are amazing beings . . . We are neighbors of fire." There is also a finely discriminated irony in Carson's poem. Erotically incendiary ochre Geryon meets a scholar in Buenos Aires named Lazer (whose mouth is like a nipple) studying "the erotics of doubt."

Certain modernist writers—Mary Butts, Laura Riding, Robert Graves, Herman Broch—possessed a beguiling ability to make antiquity seem modern. Carson has

a unique ability to blend ancient and contemporary, retaining discordance as connective link. Few scholars possess her ability to rekindle the philological debris of antiquity with any imaginative force: Guy Davenport—who prefaced an earlier Carson book, and who wrote a magical story around the surviving fragments of Heraclitus—and Stanley Lombardo, translator of Empedocles and Parmenides. Anne Carson has the knack of a clairvoyant in this respect, as if any broken off clause in ancient Greek spoke to her like Geryon's mother's roses, "standing straight and pure on the stalk, gripping the dark like prophets / and howling colossal intimacies / from the back of their fused throats." *Autobiography of Red* is a gift of prophecy.

George Grant

William Christian, editor

George Grant: Selected Letters. University of Toronto Press \$50 cl/\$24.95 pb

Arthur Davis, editor

George Grant and the Subversion of Modernity: Art, Philosophy, Politics, Religion and Education. University of Toronto Press \$60 cl/\$21.95 pa

Reviewed by Barry Cooper

William Christian has done a great deal to bring the life and the writings of George Grant before the public. Readers of his fine biography can now read at least part of the primary materials on which it was based. For those who are particularly devoted to Grant, however, this may be a mixed blessing because of the glimpse they afford of a writer unprotected by the rhetorical polish for which he was so famous. The extent of his correspondence with his mother is remarkable enough, and one wonders what she may have said in response. Grampa Parkin told young George he was expected to work for king and country, but Grant rejected all things military, starting with

cadets at Upper Canada College. His famous conversion to Christianity came shortly after he was persuaded to join the merchant navy and was rejected by the navy as unsuitable. As with the letters to his mother, it would take a skilled psychologist to determine the significance (if any) of these things.

One can say, however, that the chief attribute of his political opinions was a deep and long-lasting anti-Americanism. In 1946, for example, he criticized Churchill's famous iron curtain speech and he did so on transparently pro-Soviet grounds. During the 1940s and 1950s he maintained the preposterous view that there was a moral and political equivalence between the government of the United States and Soviet totalitarianism. Likewise, his support for Prime Minister Diefenbaker seems to have been grounded in his by now instructive anti-Americanism and his intuitive hatred of nuclear weapons. Those who still think of Grant as a "Red Tory" will have to explain again wherein Grant's "Toryism" lies.

On the purely technical side, the editor makes some astonishing errors (for example p. 57 fn. 4) and shows a regrettable parochialism in his imperfect acquaintance with such luminaries as Ted Byfield and Ralph Hedlin. He does, however, correctly identify the author of this review.

The essays collected by Arthur Davis illustrate the mixed blessing to which I adverted above. It begins with Grant's essay on Céline, which was then followed by two interesting and somewhat opposed commentaries. Gerald Owen asked, "Why did George Grant love Céline?" and tried (unsuccessfully in my view) to excuse Grant's judgment on literary grounds. Ed Andrew, described in the letters as having an "amazing shaped head" as a child, did not excuse his uncle so easily. Céline the literary artist, Andrew shows beyond question, was as much a racist as Céline the

pamphleteer. Besides, being an artist is no excuse—no more than being a “philosopher” excused Heidegger. Neither Owen nor Andrew link Grant’s love for Céline to his view that Céline’s flight from “the American and Russian empires in 1944–5” was akin to Grant’s anxieties about “a world where two grotesque empires accumulate nuclear weapons,” though the sentiments are expressed on successive pages. That is, Grant’s love for Céline was little more than an expression of his identification with his plight as a refugee from militant left- and right-Hegelians, armed to the teeth and keen on imposing their own versions of Kojève’s universal and homogeneous state. Whether or not one finds in this attitude the confusion of theory and practice, it is not particularly comforting.

Ronnie Beiner points out that in his rhetorically powerful writings on Nietzsche, Grant hardly engages the texts. Grant’s discussion of this “arch-supporter of technological mastery,” Beiner says, is not so much philosophy or political science as “cultural polemics.” The editor provides a more sympathetic reading of Grant’s inconsistencies and changes. “What may look like an about-face,” he writes, “I want to argue, is a result of two different but complementary goals in a consistent position.” In contrast to Arthur Davis’ attempt to save Grant from himself, Don Forbes presents a judicious, balanced and scholarly account of “George Grant and Leo Strauss.” Leah Bradshaw tackles one of the most controversial aspects of Grant’s later work, on the debate over abortion. She points out two things of great significance: first, in arguing his position Grant seems to have accepted some very modern, rights-based assumptions. Second, it is not the question of the ontology of a fetus that is at issue in the abortion debate but the fact that fetuses are invisible: they are not in the world, though they are human and this, Bradshaw indicates with Arendtian understatement,

is “their great disadvantage” compared, for example, to the aged and infirm.

Sheila Grant’s account of her husband’s use of Luther’s Thesis 21 is one of the clearest accounts of the articulation of his Christian faith one can find. In this respect it contrasts with Larry Schmidt’s valiant (but to me unconvincing) attempt to explain Grant’s relationship to Simone Weil, who may well be (as Grant liked to claim) a modern saint, but that status does not add to the clarity of her thought. Nor in my view does Schmidt deal adequately with what Grant saw as the “gnostic” element in Weil’s discourse.

These two books add to a growing collection of critical editions of Grant’s writing, interpretative monographs, and collections of essays. At the very least they are eloquent testimony to Grant’s eloquence. There is, nevertheless, still reason to doubt whether Grant’s persuasiveness will find an echo beyond the Loyalist heartland of our country.

Bodies Turned To Words

G. Thomas Couser

Recovering Bodies: Illness, Disability, and Life Writing. U of Wisconsin P \$55.00/\$24.95

Edmund B. O’Reilly

Sobering Tales: Narratives of Alcoholism and Recovery. U of Massachusetts P \$50.00/\$16.95

Reviewed by Melanie Kolbeins

“When the body takes a turn for the worse, the mind often turns towards words,” G. Thomas Couser writes in *Recovering Bodies*, which reviews in respective chapters a variety of autobiographical forms of writing (about) AIDS, deafness, paralysis, and breast cancer. Challenging the idea that the books are “sub or extra-literary,” Couser asks their writers, and readers, to consider formal effects: how texts “may favor or frustrate certain kinds of plots, generic patterns, and points of view.”

Recovering Bodies' goal is to critique stigma as an effect of language. Heroic or gothic scripts, such as Oliver Sacks', or Callahan's satire, Couser writes, do not destigmatize paralysis. "Conversion narratives," "whether orthodox Christian or alternative New Age, tend to perpetuate the mystification and moralization of illness" such as AIDS, resulting "in what Erving Goffman has called 'spoiled identity': a social death. By contrast, Emmanuel Dreuilhe's *Mortal Embrace* is anti-colonial, Couser argues, and it makes AIDS "'only' a war (not a divine judgment)." A critique of battle metaphors, influenced by Susan Sontag, appears in his first chapter on medical discourse. Language that presumes inability, and focuses on cure, instead of healing, fails patients, Couser writes. He praises Audre Lorde's active, literary fight with cancer and stigma. He also admires collaborative texts that "achieve composure" and acceptance rather than "sometimes misleading" closure. One example is Butler and Rosenblum's shared diary *Cancer in Two Voices*. Similarly, self-written works such as Hannah Merker and Bernard Bragg's avoid stigma as well as the paternalism of some audist transcriptions, according to Couser, and teach audist readers that they need to learn new ways to listen.

Recovering Bodies' focus on critical work as political encourages questioning of its language and concepts. The chapter on breast cancer, for example, could be more conscious of its power, although Couser acknowledges differing reasons for and ways of reading. He also notes that what impels the writing often impedes it. He cautions against establishing bodily experiences as identities yet *Recovering Bodies* imagines the "typical" or "representative," and sometimes overlooks these identities' intersections, a problem that Nancy Mairs, who introduces *Recovering Bodies*, writes of autobiographically elsewhere. Moreover, including deafness in a discussion of bodily

"dysfunction," potentially reinforces audism and a view of the body as machine that Couser urges readers to unlearn, but it also allows that view to be questioned.

Particularly concerned that the books not be dismissed as victim testimony, Couser favours response over identification, which "risks overemphasizing certain kinds of differences and reifying those in counterproductive ways." *Recovering Bodies'* interpretive overview legitimizes the books it reviews, and supports authors whose goal is to destigmatize. The destigmatizing possibilities of the particular, and identification, remain with its readers.

Based on Edmund O'Reilly's 1988 dissertation, *Sobering Tales* brings AA principles, anthropology, and narrative and autobiography theory to a play, novels, autobiographies, and Alcoholics Anonymous as a practice. Endnotes include social theories of drinking, AA's history, the Twelve Steps, and O'Reilly's questionnaire.

An independent scholar, folklorist, and AA participant, O'Reilly admits to "an underlying, scarcely whispered hope that something in this volume might one day help someone along in the difficult process of getting out from under an addiction." "Some knowledge of the source," he writes, "is vital to the judicious evaluation of any personal narrative." "'Don't compare,' newcomers to A.A. are told, 'Identify,'" he quotes.

Part One questions Nietzsche's interpretation of Dionysus, which reads alcohol as a medium of transcendence. Pentheus' pride parallels the alcoholic's "disease of authority" which, in O'Reilly's reading of *The Bacchae*, includes the "illusion of control" over self and nature.

"Rehabelliteration" implicitly links alcoholism to images of swigging and swaggering images of masculinity. John Berryman's *Recovery* is "seduced by stereotypes" and the "complex imagery and rhetoric of the Dionysian." Frederick Exley's *Message in the*

Bottle, he argues, chooses the extreme and isolated over the ordinary work of recovery, while Donald Newlove's *Those Drinking Days* transcends alcoholism's logic by testifying to its graphic effects and AA's efficacy, "marking himself as representative and therefore, for the moment at least, exemplary."

"Some Americana"'s discussion of Whitman's "Franklin Evans" and Jack London's *John Barleycorn* connects prejudice, alcoholism, and temperance literature. Unfortunately, it draws on the tales' language in a way that obscures its position of response while a quotation from Kermod and a footnote elsewhere mentioning the critic suggest O'Reilly's sympathies. I had to rely on "a communicative equivalent of trust," a code of reception, when reading this chapter.

Part Two's chapters on intention, reception, meaning, and value analyze AA stories as shaped autobiographical legends, "not inconsistent with historical truth." AA substitutes the "binary logic" of the alcoholic with triangular structures such as the Serenity Prayer. A "new concept of success emerges based on the fellowship of complementarity rather than symmetrical competition." O'Reilly observes an "egalitarian distribution of narrative rights" and member diversity within AA, which offers redevelopment of social skills and memory, and the benefit of "hearing an analog story." He questions the belief that AA is homogeneous or that each group shares a common identification with founder Bill W's beliefs.

Five AA testimonies, called qualifications, end *Sobering Tales*. Uncensored, they support O'Reilly's view that they are not simply conversion stories and prevent idealization of the speakers. They demonstrate the internal tensions of necessary "fictions of concord," and the common themes of alcoholism. The fifth echoes the words of a character in Berryman's *Recovery*, but *Sobering Tales* does not ana-

lyze the particular qualifications' language and world-views, however negatively some speakers construct others. That "the idea of the living speaker continues to inform the text" situates qualifications as part of a healing process. My first response was frustration that this seemed to preclude critique of prejudice in some. I was forced to recognize that, while they are fixed to an extent in print, their speakers have already moved.

Both *Sobering Tales* and *Recovering Bodies* seek to embody a ethical, socially relevant, accessible criticism of popular reading, narrative forms and subjectivity. What their authors share with those they write about is a reliance on readers. In writing about narratives' role in determining how some bodies and others are approached, both are reminders of the vulnerability, and ability, of many critical readers.

Theorizing the World Through Story

Julie Cruikshank

The Social Life of Stories. UBC Press \$75.00

Reviewed by Blanca Chester

Current research in storytelling and oral tradition suggests that social contexts and cultural knowledge cannot be separated from the ways that stories are told, or from the narratives themselves. The different ways in which a story can construct representations of reality are intimately linked to the cultural worldviews out of which particular narratives arise. Stories, through their varied and various texts, interpret lived experience. The title of Julie Cruikshank's new book *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* gestures towards this concrete conceptualization of stories as reflexive narrative texts. Each of the essays in this book focuses on distinctive aspects of a

Yukon reality, and Cruikshank tries to make the connection between lived reality and storied reality explicit to those of us who might still separate story as "fiction" from reality as "fact."

To show how stories provide meaningful ways of interpreting the world, Cruikshank links her discussion of Yukon storytelling with ideas about orality and storytelling from Western theorists like Mikhail Bakhtin, Harold Innis, and Walter Benjamin. Instead of using the writings of these theorists as interpretive frameworks for Native contexts, however, she juxtaposes their work with her own findings about narrative process in the Yukon. Cruikshank illustrates through practice how widely different theories can be employed to highlight culturally specific aspects of narrative production. She points out, for example, that Innis argued that oral tradition and the vitality of oral tradition prevent the concentration of power. She then shows how the dynamics of orality and literacy that Innis initially described continue in the narrative traditions, and lives, of indigenous peoples in the North today.

Writing works to subsume other narrative traditions, and finally "domesticates" and "suppresses" the power of the oral. The integration of "Traditional Ecological Knowledge," or TEK, and other paradigms of Native knowledge into mainstream discourse provide an example of the continued appropriation and distortion of Native knowledge. TEK has been used, Cruikshank suggests, to stereotype Native peoples yet again, and to subsume Native knowledge into state power and mainstream hegemonic discourse.

Cruikshank reveals how the arbitrary tests of authenticity used by proponents of TEK result in two convergent stereotypes, one linking hunters with harmony, and the other conflating norms with behaviour. These stereotypes, of course, are widely

used by environmental movements and by government resource management planners to further their own agendas.

Cruikshank clearly shows how Native knowledge is still being defined in Western terms, and how we sometimes delude ourselves into thinking that the Native "voice" is making itself heard on its own terms.

By situating storytelling firmly within the construction of Yukon epistemology, Cruikshank shows how the discourse of narrative is "deeply embedded in social organization." In the various chapters, Cruikshank draws on writings from a wide variety of discourses to make connections between oral tradition, material culture, and environmental concerns. In "Imperfect Translations," she illustrates how cultural artifacts can act as storytelling aids, bringing past history into present contexts. Objects "tell" a story. They function as narrative texts and connect things with words, revealing connections between material culture and oral tradition. Reference seems to have wholly different connotations within such a conceptualization of words and stories, and the power that stories have to shape reality.

In the chapter titled "Claiming Legitimacy" Cruikshank emphasizes that the discussion of prophecy narratives, regardless of how or where they are situated, has remained largely grounded in the discussion of Old Testament prophecy. Consequently, discussion of Native interpretations of their own prophetic narratives has remained limited by a framework that highlights what "we" perceive as important. The content of these discussions, Cruikshank shows, does not necessarily reveal how Native peoples themselves would interpret or conceptualize prophecy within their own lives. Stories of prophecy, her research suggests, are another indication of the vitality of oral tradition. The narratives about prophets are understood as "commonsense explanations" of the

world, and they suggest the continued ability of narrative knowledge to incorporate the new into the old, of using traditional oral stories to make sense of current lived experience. As Cruikshank consistently illustrates, stories are a form of epistemology, and they continue to theorize new realities among Yukon peoples.

The power of the narratives that Cruikshank describes lies in their lived experience. Telling the same story in different ways, using different versions, including, now, English versions of stories traditionally told in a Native language, conveys the multiplicity of meanings inherent in a single story. As the narratives shift to reflect changing historical and social circumstances, they document what Cruikshank describes as a relationship between peoples. *The Social Life of Stories* is a book that belongs on the shelf of everyone interested in developing that relationship as part of an ongoing dialogue between worldviews.

Pictures, Life, Opinion

Sara Jeannette Duncan

The Imperialist. Tecumseh \$12.95

Basil King

In the Garden of Charity. Tecumseh \$21.95

Marilyn I. Davis, ed.

Stories Subversive: Through the Field with Gloves Off. Short Fiction by Nellie L. McClung. U of Ottawa P \$21.00

Richard A. Davies, ed.

The Haliburton Bi-centenary Chaplet. Gaspereau \$19.95

Reviewed by Klay Dyer

One observation that can be made with confidence about Tecumseh Press's new Canadian Critical Edition series is that this is a project clearly being built upon a foundation of familiar names and comfortable titles. Nothing impudent in the decision to

reissue Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*; no bold canon-busting stroke in expanding to include Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. Under less sure guidance such selections might prompt a raised brow (do we really need another edition of either book?) but, as general editors of the CCE, John Moss and Gerald Lynch have neatly skirted the most obvious pitfalls associated with such choices; by no means flawless in either design or implementation, there is much to be proud of in the scope, rigour, and production values of the CCE editions. The addition to the catalogue of Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Imperialist*, edited by Thomas E. Tausky, provides a valuable study of both the strengths and potential weaknesses of this new series.

While technology has guaranteed a stellar production quality to this reissue, Tausky, a critic eminently familiar with Duncan's life and writing, has not been quite so successful in utilizing the Norton-esque format of this series to the fullest advantage of a novel that Duncan thought offered an accurate "picture of life and opinion" in small-town, turn-of-the-century Ontario. Following the incorporation of a meticulous textual appendix and well-organized set of explanatory notes, Tausky prudently dedicates most of a "Backgrounds and Contexts" section to full-text reprints of Duncan's own letters pertaining to the novel as well as an assortment of contemporary and not always laudatory reviews. Less satisfying, though, is the mishandling in this section of excerpts from two books (Carl Berger's *The Sense of Power* and Carole Gerson's *A Purer Taste*) that speak directly to many of the key cultural tensions raised in the novel. Granting even the strictures of reprint permissions, the brevity of these extracts will render them of little use in all but the most basic undergraduate survey course.

The penultimate section, "Critical

Interpretations," suffers from an even more pronounced and troubling unevenness. Opening strongly with a series of reprinted critical essays, including well-known discussions by Clara Thomas (on social mythologies), Peter Allen (narrative uncertainty), and Ajay Heble (Duncan and the imperial idea), the section is rounded out, quite curiously, with five "new" essays commissioned specifically for this edition: one each by Terrence L. Craig (on imperialism and morality), Frank Davey (narrative politics), Teresa Hubel (erasure of the working class), Elisabeth Köster (romantic heroines), and Tausky himself (audience). Solid though unspectacular in their reconsiderations of Duncan's novel, this commissioned quintet prompts more a questioning of editorial process than of critical acuity. Why the departure in this volume from the more rigorous CCE practice of reprinting only previously published works? And why requisition contributions at all when vetted essays by such critics as Gerson (in lieu of the excerpt perhaps), Misao Dean, and Carrie MacMillan are noted in the bibliography to the volume but not included here? As Tausky himself observes in his preface, "the past twenty years . . . has seen the publication of over two dozen essays" on *The Imperialist*: surely one or two more of these were suitable for inclusion here. Alternatively, why not replace these commissioned pieces with reprints of some of Duncan's more eclectic writing, her "Saunterings" from *The Week*, for instance, or, better still, her too frequently overlooked editorials and book reviews from *The Indian Daily News*. Her reflections on literary realism or her irony-tinged comments on Graeme Mercer Adam and Ethelwyn Wetherald's *An Algonquin Maiden* would prove especially valuable to scholars and students alike.

So would some attention to the very (read, far too) selective and generally mismanaged bibliography that concludes the

volume. One representative and particularly glaring blunder: the aforementioned critique of Adam and Wetherald is referenced to Tausky's own volume of Duncan's selected journalism rather than to its original publication in the pages of *The Week*. Enough said. Major and minor reservations about this volume aside, the CCE series should prove a welcome addition to many course syllabi.

Basil King's *In the Garden of Charity* (1903) is, like *The Imperialist*, the only book in its author's impressive body of writing (twenty-two novels, seven books on religion and philosophy, a handful of short fictions, and two screenplays) to draw primarily on a Canadian landscape. Set in Nova Scotia (King was born on Prince Edward Island) the novel explores the life of Charity Pennland, wife of a bigamous local man whose death moves her to resolve to help his other wife raise their child. Like Duncan's novel, this book has been reissued by Tecumseh Press, albeit as part of their more general catalogue. It is never a good sign when the cover of a reissue boasts an incorrect title: King wrote *In the Garden of Charity* not *The Garden of Charity*. Similar irritants abound in this volume. Despite an engaging, though on occasion too precious, introduction by John Coldwell Adams, an adequate set of "Notes of [sic] the Text" (another pesky preposition), a balanced selection of reviews, and a detailed bibliography, this book is forced to bear a double burden. With its less-than-careful preparation and high retail price, it seems destined to lose the battle for syllabus space against the more affordable and better-known New Canadian Library titles from the same period.

One anecdote that Adams recounts in his introduction is of an evening in 1921 when King and fellow Prince Edward Islander Lucy Maud Montgomery were seated together at a dinner held for Nellie McClung.

Both King and McClung gave after-dinner speeches, which occasioned Montgomery to note, with marked displeasure, that "Nellie . . . made a speech full of obvious platitudes and amusing little stories which made everyone laugh and deluded us into thinking it was a quite fine thing—until we began to think it over." To encourage a "thinking over" of McClung's stories is the overt aim of *Stories Subversive: Through the Field with Gloves Off*, an anthology of thirteen representative stories selected primarily from two of McClung's four books of short fiction: *The Black Creek Stopping-House* (1912) and *All We Like Sheep* (1921).

Released as volume twenty in the University of Ottawa Press's Canadian Short Story Library, *Stories Subversive* suffers from none of the problems hampering the King reissue; this is a well-designed and carefully constructed book. More importantly, it provides a broad enough range of stories to serve as a useful introduction to (or reminder of) an aspect of McClung's life and writing that is often ignored. Although editor Marilyn I. Davis's claim that McClung can at times rival Leacock as a humorist is debatable, there are well-controlled ironies deployed in a number of the stronger stories collected here, notably "The Live Wire" and "Banking in London." On other occasions, McClung's penchant for overwriting is painfully apparent, especially in her search for the happy endings that she considered to be "nearer to the truth" of life than "error and sorrow and failure." Such determined optimism weighs heavily upon a story like "The Neutral Fuse," which begins as an almost Sinclair Ross-like evocation of one woman's losing battle against the prairie winds before dissipating into a lengthy, narrative-numbing example of what Davis calls McClung's "consciousness-raising" fiction. Ironically, McClung is in the most control of her prose in those stories in which her female protagonists struggle hopelessly under the crush-

ing weight of "winter-killed" lives, social injustices, and isolation. Overcoming a tetchy opening section in which Davis seems determined to distribute blame for the paucity of critical commentary on McClung's stories, the introduction to *Stories Subversive* provides the solid biographical and sociocultural contexts necessary to begin what I tend to agree will be a timely and useful reappraisal of these stories.

Gloves of another sort come off in *The Haliburton Bi-centenary Chaplet*, a collection of essays drawn from papers presented at the 1996 Thomas Raddall Symposium. This is a book, editor Richard A. Davies promises, that will serve as a reminder of the "two views of" that grandest of provincial Tories "competing for hegemony today": the perspective offered by those supposedly dedicated, as Ruth Panofsky states in her contribution, to "revisit[ing] his work in light of such contemporary concerns as misogyny or racism" and the view of those critics apparently content to reflect with the utmost respect and diligence upon the subtleties of individual works and archival resources. Not surprisingly, both sides of this (imagined? constructed?) binary show themselves in these essays to be capable of both insightful, elegant readings and moments of pure bombast. While I admit to finding George Elliott Clarke's "incendiary" and freewheeling essay on Haliburton's "eccentric devotion to neo-feudal social ideals, his advocacy of slavery, and his noxious racial caricatures" to be the most engaging and engaged essay in the collection, I find it, by equal distinction, the most frustrating. The certainty with which Clarke equates Haliburton's views with those of his most (in)famous creation, Sam Slick, or with which he declares his subject "English Canada's grand, definitive writer of the nineteenth century" calls to mind not a few instances of Slick's own "soft sawder."

While some pleasant surprises do surface

in this collection, notably essays by Gérard C. Boudreau and Naomi Griffiths on Haliburton's relationship with the Acadians and Gwendolyn Davies on Haliburton's Windsor, the lasting impression is one of a certain staginess to the whole affair, an ethos of theatricality from which these papers seem to emerge. Although this pitting of oppositional approaches is not without potential to stimulate discussion or to inspire controversy and debate, this volume ultimately fails to deliver the exactness of thought or elegance of prose that such provocations demand. Too many of these essays fail to negotiate gracefully the translation from stage to page. While Panofsky's "confession" that she has "always felt ill at ease with *The Clockmaker* series" might work well in oral presentation, it seems trite and out of place in an essay that promises a discerning reconsideration of Haliburton's "denigration of women." Similarly, Allen Penney's carefully detailed architectural interpretation of Haliburton's house, Clifton Grove, could easily have delivered its critical punch in half the length. Finally, given both Tausky and Davies's decisions to include their own essays in their respective volumes (the former, in fact, includes two), I move that a moratorium be declared on editor self-selection. To bend the words of Addison slightly, the role of the editor is to direct the storm not add to it.



The Soul of the World

Roger Dunsmore

Earth's Mind: Essays in Native Literature. U of New Mexico P \$17.95

Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird, Eds.

Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings of North America. W.W. Norton \$35.00

Reviewed by Catherine Rainwater

The thirteen essays included in Dunsmore's volume are original, poetic and instructive. Dunsmore sets out to explain to his audience some of the differences between Native and Western peoples' ways of thinking, but in the process he achieves much more. Dunsmore's writing is lyrical and mind-expanding. He not only explains what it means to have a mind attuned to the earth; for some readers, his essays might also become the first step toward learning how to hear the subtle voices of the rocks, the trees, and the stars.

Each of these essays insists in its own unique way that the universe is vaster than any single human being's, or any particular culture's conception of it. Dunsmore cultivates humility in his readers (especially his Eurocentric readers), while finding successful ways of bridging the gap between Western and Native world views. In his essay, "Fusion," for example, the author undermines the Eurocentric tendency to read indigenous peoples' descriptions of the world as naive. When Kalahari Bushmen report that the stars say, "Tssik" and "Tsa," we must not respond with condescending disregard, but we must go out and sleep under the stars until we transcend our learned deafness. When Native people speak of the Star People, the Tree People, or the Animal People, again we should not assume their philosophical naiveté concerning categories of being, but attempt to shake off the "gargantuan self-importance of modern man" that blinds us

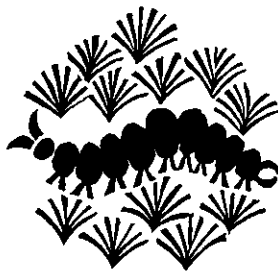
to the many life forms with whom we share the planet. This deliberate war against our own ignorance is the only way to acquire a mind of earth.

Throughout this fascinating book, Dunsmore explores and illuminates for the reader a variety of writings by Native people including Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, Nicholas Black Elk, and Chief Joseph. All readers—from those for whom Dunsmore's book is their first acquaintance with Native writings, to those who have read extensively in the area—will learn from this book and, even more significantly given Dunsmore's aim, will come across insights so perfectly articulated that even familiar ideas seem freshly renewed.

Reinventing the Enemy's Language is likewise a difficult book to put down once we have taken it up. Editors Harjo and Bird have assembled an impressive collection of works by eighty-seven Native women writers, some well-known and some published here for the first time. The volume includes poetry, fiction, prayers, memoir, and personal narrative by writers representing an array of indigenous cultures from over fifty nations. Though none of the writers comes from natively English-speaking groups, many of them (like Harjo herself) have spoken and written only English—the “enemy's language”—throughout their lives. The editors believe that to speak in any language is to choose power over powerlessness, and in putting together this anthology, they have selected voices that seem to them to “reinvent” the English language, to “decolonize” and “transform literary expression.” All of the writers represented have, according to the editors, “directly experienced being Indian in their everyday lives.”

This collection of writings contains much to please a variety of readers. The works are organized thematically to suggest “the cycle of creation” from birth, through struggle and transformation, to death. After the

introduction by Harjo and Bird and an invocation by Navajo author, Grace Boyne, Gloria Bird has the first word with “In Chimayo,” and Harjo the last with “Perhaps the World Ends Here.” In between are selections by widely known authors such as Silko, Louise Erdrich, and Paula Gunn Allen (some of these reprinted from other sources) as well as pieces by newcomers. Some of the authors have published before, primarily in other fields. The autobiographical statements that precede each writer's contribution are frequently works of art themselves and greatly reward the reader's attention. Overall, this volume affords an excellent opportunity to learn much from Native women writers about how they see the world and how they have known it to see them. More importantly, we may better understand how writing can open our eyes to see beyond mundane appearances to the soul of the world, to a world transformed and improved by a revolutionary vision. As one contributor, Inés Hernández-Avila, writes, “To be revolutionary is to be original, to know where we came from, to validate what is ours and help it to flourish, the best of what is ours, of our beginnings, our principles, and to leave behind what no longer serves us.” If this is truth, then certainly Harjo and Bird's anthology is an intensely “revolutionary” statement from and about Native women.



Plain Talk and New Idioms

Kathryn T. Flannery

The Emperor's New Clothes: Literature, Literacy, and the Ideology of Style. U Pittsburgh P \$19.95

Eckhard Breitingner, ed.

Defining New Idioms and Alternative Forms of Expression. Editions Rodopi US\$93.50/US\$28.00

Reviewed by Glenn Deer

What are the political motives that have compelled teachers and critics to privilege a "plain" or "natural" writing style? Why have popular and scholarly arbiters of style persisted in using terms such as *clarity* or *sincerity*, while the models offered in English composition textbooks, such as excerpts from the prose of Francis Bacon, are loaded with contradictions, especially when restored to their complicated historical contexts. While literary critics, writing teachers, and popular stylisticians have praised the virtues of the idealized clothing of the plain style, Kathryn T. Flannery has sceptically pointed to the underlying ideology.

Flannery's study of the ideology of style is thoroughly researched and provides brilliant deconstructions of the ways in which "style talk" has evolved and been placed in the service of national political interests in England and the United States. She demonstrates an agile mastery of the history of English Renaissance literary politics, nineteenth and twentieth-century education history, and contemporary composition theory and cultural studies.

She introduces her literary genealogy of style by analyzing the reductive effects of three instances of "style talk": T.S. Eliot's BBC radio talks which canonized the Renaissance prose of Richard Hooker and Francis Bacon; the promotion of a "hygienic moral style" in essay anthologies and rhetorics edited by Donald Hall, Wayne Booth, and Marshall Gregory; and the current movement for the reform of legal language into plainer discourse.

Flannery argues that all three instances show the curtailment of discursive complexity and a dehistoricizing of language. Such efforts to simplify language, however, are never simply innocent, and the persistent attempt to homogenize style "derives from a narrow, primarily Western, primarily white, primarily upper-middle class, primarily male canon."

Flannery describes the principal five chapters of her book as "Geertzian post-holes, geologic samples that serve to disrupt the linear histories of prose style and of institutional practice," and her archaeology of language and ideology is marked by a rigorous attention to the contradictions in the cultural uses of style.

In Chapter 1 she examines the complex ideological forces that conspired to popularize Robert Gunning's readability techniques in the 1940s and 1950s. Business writers who learned to write from Gunning's 1952 *The Technique of Clear Writing* were offered decontextualized snippets of prose from writers like Francis Bacon, Thomas Paine, and Adam Smith. The wrenching of texts out of their historical and political contexts and the attempt to isolate some stylistically objective essence or energy is also seen in Brian Vicker's readings of Richard Hooker's style. Gunning, Rudolph Flesch, and recent calls for compositional reform by E.D. Hirsch are implicated in a powerful ideological network of efficiency that attempts to expand educational access but does so in a manner that compels the writer to "contribute to the social stability and order".

In chapters 2 and 3 Flannery continues her careful material history and surveys sample English and American university curricula and examinations. She succinctly considers the printing histories of popular and scholarly editions of Hooker and Bacon, and shows how their works were deployed as prose models in the service of liberal cultural ideology. Chapter 3 considers the

pedagogy of F.D. Maurice, Alexander Bain, John Curton Collins, and Fred Newton Scott, placing them historically in the contradictory institutionalization of English that oscillates between enabling and controlling students.

The fourth chapter is a detailed discussion of the contexts for the reception of Hooker's *Laws* while Chapter 5 returns to the contemporary battleground of the literacy crisis and the "National Prose Problem," and considers the problems in both the content-centered approach of E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* and the stylistic ludism of Richard Lanham's *Literacy and the Survival of Humanism*: neither position is satisfying to Flannery who seeks to face the complexity of style and ideology squarely, without offering a quick fix in the form of yet another pedagogy of simplification. Flannery does not here frame an alternative pedagogy, but her final footnote tantalizes us with hinted postmodern sympathies with the political metacriticism of Terry Eagleton, Patricia Donahue and Ellen Quandahl, and David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. I found it peculiar, however, that such important pedagogical alternatives were not incorporated into the concluding chapter or even included in the "Postscript: Classroom Dialogue."

In contrast with Flannery's history of the plain speech movements is the celebration of polyphony in *Defining New Idioms and Alternative Forms of Expression*. Edited by Eckhard Breitinger, who teaches African studies and cultural communication at the University of Bayreuth in Germany, this collection features twenty-six papers presented at the 1992 conference of the Association for the Study of the New Literatures in English. The polyphonic tone and experiments with idiom are foregrounded in the opening mixture of Breitinger's scholarly polemic that forcefully challenges Anglocentric disciplinary canons in English studies, Australian writer

Geoff Goodfellow's ironic poem on his foreigner's experience of the German university, and the angry and impassioned keynote speech of Don Mattera that tries to cut through the intellectualisms of the academy.

The first thematically grouped section of papers attempts to rediscover "the idiom of orality," with strong scholarly contributions from Peter Marsden and Emilio Jorge Rodriguez respectively on Maori and Caribbean poetry, Abiola Odejide and Detlev Gohrbandt on Nigerian writing, and Thomas Brückner on African literature.

The subsequent three sections, titled "How Newness Comes into the World," "Defining Women Authors' Perspectives," and "Performance Traditions and Media Experimentalism" each begin with a personal reflective work by an artist actively involved in creating a new idiom—the poetry of Olive Senior, the former editor of *Jamaica Journal* who now lives in Canada, the memoir of artistic growth by Jewish Australian dramatist Darrelyn Gunzberg, and the taking-it-to-the-streets account of Geoff Goodfellow who has performed his own brand of *agit prop* poetry for thousands of construction workers in Australia since 1990. These middle sections of the collection also feature papers on Salman Rushdie by Swenta Steinig and Klaus Börner, on Anglo-Asian writers by Silvia Mergenthal, "African Women and Feminist Theory" by Nalova Lyonga, and a fabulatory look into the feminist mirror of a poetic alter ego by Canadian novelist and trickster Robert Kroetsch, "The Poetics of Rita Kleinhart." Section four contains papers on Australian theatre by Katherine Newey, Ugandan theatre by Rose Mbowa, New Zealand film by Gordon Collier, the Canadian National Film Board by Eugene Walz. The last section of the collection, "Mothertongues and Mastertongues," is prefaced by excerpts from David Dabydeen's poem, "Turner" and features

such linguistically focused papers as David Tiomajou's "Language and Languages in Cameroon: A Diachronic View" and Mikhail Gromov's "The Linguistic Situation and the Rise of Anglophone Literature in Tanzania."

The international scope of this conference collection and the diversity of discourses displayed here is an impressive orchestration of diversity. Breiting's collection is an invaluable record of the performances of the poets, dramatists, novelists, linguists, film historians, and literary theorists who enacted the new idioms professed by the conference's title.

Speaking Bodies

Arthur W. Frank

The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics.

U Chicago P \$19.95

Cathy Caruth

Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History. Johns Hopkins UP \$14.95

Reviewed by Judy Z. Segal

In recent years, the relation of medicine and narrative has been explored by a number of authors. Howard Brody (*Stories of Sickness*) has written of "medicine as storytelling" and "storytelling as medicine," taking as one point of departure this comment by Oliver Sacks: "Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed continually and unconsciously by, through, and in us . . ." Arthur Kleinman (*The Illness Narratives*) has focussed scholarly and clinical attention on the experience of suffering. Kathryn Montgomery Hunter (*Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge*) has written about narrative transformation—from patient's history to doctor's story. Anne Hunsaker Hawkins (*Reconstructing Illness: Studies in Pathography*) has written about the genre of the illness autobiography. A generally held

view is that illness interrupts the life story with a new story of an uncertain (or worse, certain) ending; thus illness may render a person a "narrative wreck" (Ronald Dworkin). As a construct, narrative crosses disciplinary boundaries and moves fairly easily between theory and clinical practice. In end-stage care, for example, physicians and ethicists use a metaphor of art to talk about life's "final chapter," or about the coherence between a life's last "scene"—the death scene—and the life as a whole. Now patients are widely known to be "storied."

Arthur Frank has, it seems, both the academic credentials (he has worked as a medical sociologist) and the experience (he has had a heart attack and cancer) to write a compelling book about illness narratives. *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* gathers a great deal of insight on illness and narrative and it republishes the powerful thoughts of well known illness narrators (Gilda Radner, Nancy Mairs, and Anatole Broyard are all quoted liberally); moreover, the book does this work in order to make some points that many readers will find helpful. Frank argues, for example, that "the ethical questions for members of the remission society are not adjudications of health care conflicts but *how to live a good life while being ill*." Frank says his "project in clinical ethics is to move ethicists and practitioners in the direction of thinking *with stories*." His book, however, disappoints.

The first problem with *The Wounded Storyteller* is that Frank has not successfully identified an audience for it. Frank's stated theoretical framework and his citations would indicate that he wants to situate himself among scholarly authors he names in medical humanities (for example, Kleinman, Hunter, Hawkins) and in critical theory (for example, Lacan, Giddens, Foucault); yet the book cannot really be intended for an audience in search of any depth of scholarship. While Frank, for

example, repeatedly uses the term "post-modern" to describe the project of contemporary medicine and contemporary patienthood, he allows "postmodern" to mean whatever he wants it to mean. (An endnote says his usage "is informed less by academic debates than by popular usage.") And while Frank claims access to contemporary critical theory, he quite misuses some of its important terms.

"Deconstruction," he says, is what happens when "a big mystery becomes a series of little puzzles." A second problem compounds the first. Wishing, apparently, to make a contribution to theory in illness narratives, Frank offers an elaborate framework for his commentary:

In earlier writing I have proposed four general problems of embodiment; . . . Each body problem is a problem of *action*. . . . The ways that a body-self responds to each problem are presented as a continuum or range of possible responses; thus four problems yield four continua. . . . Within the matrix of these four continua, I generate four ideal typical bodies The language I will use to talk about bodies thus consists of these four problems of action, the four continua of responses to these problems, and the four ideal typical bodies. (29)

The problem is that the framework threatens to outstrip the commentary. (In discussions with graduate students to whom I have assigned the book for seminar presentation, I have learned that Frank's framework can act as a decoy, diverting readers from its more interesting substance.) To his credit, Frank does not attempt to make the "really real" (a phrase he borrows from William James) fit his several categories. Instead he allows entries in minor categories loosely to inform a discussion of his most significant category. In Frank's scheme, there are three kinds of illness narrative: the Restitution Narrative, the Chaos Narrative, and the Quest Narrative.

In Frank's account of three kinds of ill-

ness narrative lies a third problem of the book: it is a set up. The Restitution Narrative (which Frank summarizes as "Yesterday I was healthy, today I'm sick, but tomorrow I'll be healthy again") is a narrative delusion: the seriously ill or chronically ill person will not, Frank explains, simply be restored to a previous healthy condition. The Chaos Narrative is no more satisfying. It is the story we tell when we are unable to tell a story; it is the "*anti-narrative* of time without sequence, telling without mediation, and speaking about oneself without being fully able to reflect on oneself." Only the Quest Narrative, which "meet[s] suffering head on," which "accept[s] illness and seek[s] to use it," is the good story. While Frank says he does not wish to prescribe a single kind of illness narrative, as the suffering must compose their own stories, there is no doubt that the person who can compose the Quest Narrative is the one who suffers best. The Quest Narrative is the moral and ethical story; it is the testimony of a witness to suffering. By the time Frank has described his three types of narrative, he has given himself, under the heading of Testimony, license to preach: "The body's story requires a character, but who the character is is only created in the telling of the story. The character who is a communicative body must bear witness; witness requires voice as its medium and voice finds its responsibility in witnessing. . . ." The book as sermon leaves me wondering again about its audience.

"Narrative" is also a keyword in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, but the book is part of a different tradition from that of *The Wounded Storyteller* and part of a different set of texts. Its more key keyword is "trauma." Caruth wishes to propose, she says, that it is "in the equally widespread and bewildering encounter with trauma—both in its occurrence and in the attempt to understand it—that we can begin to recognize

the possibility of a history that is no longer straightforwardly referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference).” Traumatic experiences are experiences “not of wholly possessed, fully grasped, or completely remembered events,” but rather of events “partially unassimilated or ‘missed.’” Traumatic events return repetitively and over time, because, Caruth says, the subject has not fully experienced their survival.

Caruth’s special concern is the relation between experience and representation, and she moves, to make her case, among the writings of Freud, de Man, and Lacan, especially—and Resnais and Dumas, authors of *Hiroshima mon amour*. I find the structure of her monograph, like her prose style, lacks discipline. Caruth’s unusual and worthwhile project deserves a better rendering. While I am loath to be one of those people who quotes tortured prose to reveal mischievous acts of postmodern writing, I wish strongly to object to sentences like this (from the chapter on *Hiroshima mon amour*):

And this inscription of the Japanese event into the history of the French—the inevitable self-referential reversal of the act of understanding, founded in the erasure of death—is also associated, in the dialogue, with a kind of moral betrayal within the act of sight, with, indeed, the filming of Hiroshima, which the French woman, as an actress, has come to do: . . . (29)

The back cover of *Unclaimed Experience* praises its author for her “wide-ranging discussion,” and quotes J. Hillis Miller saying that each of the book’s chapters is a “classic essay on its topic.” I, however, find the book unsatisfying for the very reasons for which it is praised—for its roaming focus and its failure to sustain engaging discussion of the topics it raises. Interestingly, what Caruth has marginalized in her thirty-three pages of notes constitutes some of the best explanatory and con-

nective material of a book whose main text, at 112 pages, is not that much longer than its collection of notes.

I can’t help noticing that the subtitles of both *The Wounded Storyteller* and *Unclaimed Experience* are lists. Frank’s *Body, Illness, and Ethics* mirrors Caruth’s *Trauma, Narrative, and History*. The subtitles betray an ambivalence of purpose in the studies. Both books, I think, need better stories to tie their terms together.

Playing With the Margins

Brad Fraser

Poor Superman. NeWest \$13.95

Judith Thompson

Sled. Playwrights Canada \$12.95

Sharon Pollock

Fair Liberty’s Call. Coach House \$12.95

Reviewed by Terry Goldie

My title is a somewhat oblique reference to Robert Wallace’s excellent study of Canadian theatre, *Producing Marginality*. This might seem strange given that with a few possible exceptions, such as George F. Walker, these three are as close to canonical as Canadian playwrights get. But as a colleague pointed out to me a few days ago, the genre of drama is one margin which has not become trendy in literary circles. There might now be courses in gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation but dramatic literature is as far from the core of the average English department curriculum as it was twenty-five years ago.

Which was approximately when I first encountered Sharon Pollock. Her play, *Walsh*, was among the first I saw which represented that new critical nationalism as playwrights such as Carol Bolt, James Reaney and Rick Salutin turned Canadian history on its head and showed us where we went wrong and where we could go. Since then she has been a constant feisty presence

in Canadian theatre, at the centre of many a blow-up. Her plays have ranged from the autobiographical searching of *Doc to Blood Relations*, an exploration of the sexual tension and familial confusion behind the great dark American myth of Lizzie Borden. Given that many of her contemporaries have either moved to other genres or other endeavours, she is arguably as close to our dramatist laureate as you are likely to find.

This position is reflected in the little biography given for Brad Fraser, which attests that he was given his start by Pollock when he was still in high school. From the first, however, he was clearly pursuing his own edge. Reviews referred to his "openly gay subject matter" and the author photo for the present text shows a young man with a shaved head and moustache, in a white tanktop. The picture says, "I'm gay and what are you going to do about it?"

Fraser was an almost immediate success. His plays and he himself seemed to love the tensions of the margin and yet they had all the more mainstream acclaim because of it. The various productions of *Unidentified Human Remains and the Nature of Love* and the subsequent film by Denys Arcand established him as a major figure. Fraser always made a point of emphasizing the homophobia which erupted around his productions and in the preface to the present text he recalls the problems *Poor Superman* had in Cincinnati. But with this animosity goes celebrity status, as suggested by the note in his biography that he is developing a screenplay for Walt Disney Productions (Disney?).

And Judith Thompson. If Pollock represents the mainstream and Fraser the success of the minority, what is Judith Thompson? A married woman with many children, her life seems to follow the paradigm of the fifties, down to and including her generic WASP name. Her plays have a significant amount of violence but otherwise the subject matter seems bracing but traditional:

mental illness, immigration, marriage, etc. This is hardly Fraser's territory of the dominatrix, of gay waiters and vaguely bisexual women.

But such descriptions can be deceiving, in both ways. Fraser makes an ardent claim for the unconventionality of *Poor Superman* in his preface: "This work is not structured like more conventional forms of theatre and cannot be acted like other plays. There is very little time to build into a particular emotional or intellectual state." Well, perhaps. But I have seen this play on stage, the only one of these three I have experienced in performance, and it seemed to me very conventional. David, a gay artist, gets a job as a waiter and has an affair with the apparently heterosexual owner. Problems ensue. Even the representation of AIDS, the death of David's roommate, is quite familiar: Camille yet again.

This is not to say *Poor Superman* is a bad play. I think it works, onstage and in print. As Fraser claims, he has a very good sense of young urban dialogue, and most of his characters are quite believable. The lover's wife seems the homophobe from central casting, but David has resonance. He is similar to the Greg Kinnear character in the film *As Good As It Gets* and that comparison provides an apt example of what Fraser can do that the film didn't: show, without telling, what drives an artist, and what drives a gay artist.

But how can one compare this bland unconventionality to the vital, immense, spectacular insanity that Thompson puts on stage? There is no other contemporary playwright that I have read who equals her. She is what Sam Shepard could be if he really were Sam Shepard. The level of turmoil is almost frightening, as people reach into what the Actors Studio used to refer to as "the guts." In all of her plays it is very difficult to make sense of some of the tensions. In *Sled*, there are strange coincidences, lost relatives, unlikely explanations

and many appearances by ghosts. Annie, the very strange lounge singer who speaks in Irish, seems like Jane Siberry as written by Samuel Beckett. Her macho policeman husband, Jack, is like Sipowicz from *NYPD Blue*. He is really trying to understand Annie but could Sipowicz understand Siberry?

All of my analogies seem extremely inadequate, because *Sled* goes so far beyond parallels. The published script includes an analysis by Ann Wilson as an afterword and while the interpretation works, its feminist assumptions seem too easy. The women in the play are certainly bashed by patriarchy, often literally, but so are the men, especially Jack. I would love to see Jack performed, as his character just burns the page. I have never seen such a compelling representation of a hypermasculine guy who lives by his penis but knows his life is only of value if he can find how to deal with the absolute feminine. This is the caveman as described by a feminist who understands him. I must admit that when *Sled* was produced one reason I didn't get there was because the reviews were so hesitant. I wish now I hadn't read them.

So I was fascinated by *Sled* and certainly highly entertained by *Poor Superman*. I wish I could find something similar to say about *Fair Liberty's Call*, but the play seems just as tired as the title. The conflict between rebels and loyalists in the American Revolution could rise above the material, but it doesn't. In the early seventies such revisionist representations of Canadian history seemed of value in themselves but those days are past. When at the end the cross-dressing soldier known as Eddie and Wullie, the ex-slave, seem ready to go off together, it is just too cute. All that disruption of gender and race so nicely resolved.

Fraser's last play, *Martin Yesterday*, had a mixed reception, but Fraser will continue and probably will continue to succeed. Perhaps Sharon Pollock has too much of

the past in her present work but it is a past to be proud of. Pollock's *Blood Relations* continues to be one of the few Canadian plays which has intellectual depth, enormous energy and numerous professional and amateur productions. But Judith Thompson takes the margins of human possibility and stretches them through language and image until she reaches an almost unimaginable scope. The fact that her choice of genre probably means she will never have the status of an Atwood or Ondaatje is just too depressing to contemplate.

Probabilities of Life

François Gravel

Ostend. Cormorant \$18.95

Matt Cohen

Last Seen. Knopf \$28.95

Reviewed by Ulrich Teucher

We live our lives as if eternity lay straight ahead, talking about goals and ideas with much authority. However, the death of a close relative shocks us into an insight of how little control we have, what we missed saying, and how difficult it can be to let go. These are the defining themes in both *Ostend* and *Last Seen*. In *Ostend*, it is the death of his heroes and, finally, that of his father that mark the development of Jean-François Kelly, the main character and thinly disguised voice of the author. In *Last Seen* it is Alec who struggles with the fatal prognosis and subsequent death of his brother Harold from cancer. We know from Cohen's interview with Pamela Wallin on CBC that his book is highly autobiographical.

While Cohen allows Alec to enter into a dream world (or is it?) where his brother returns to life, Gravel begins his book with the wonderful dreams of adolescence and young adulthood. *Ostend's* young Jean-François spends his childhood years in a home where death is a constant theme of

conversation. His father, an insurance agent, makes a living out of calculating the probabilities of mortality. His mother, a nurse in an emergency ward, views death as a failure, "one of those small failures that accumulate and give life its texture." While the parents review the latest deaths, Jean-François simulates accidents with his model cars on the kitchen table.

The deaths of J. F. Kennedy and, subsequently, of his assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, however, overwhelm the explanatory attempts of both parents. Oswald's televised murder in close-up, his twisted face, mouth wide open, inspire Jean-François and friends Pierre-Paul and Jacques to hold regular impersonation contests. The assassin's immediate, albeit posthumous, fame, provides first meaning for the jealous boys: why not die young, at the peak of one's glory? A spectacular assassination might ensure that one would not be forgotten. But one should not die without first having enjoyed sex. This proves rather difficult: the friends abandon a visit at the local brothel; cousin Carole does not find Jean-François' proposition for a little sex before his suicide seductive; and his friend, a 'sorceress' who makes rings out of bones, prefers poetry.

Finally, while frying sausages at Expo 67, Jean-François meets Joyceline. A follower of Peace, Maharishi and the Beatles, she teaches him how to merge with the universe during sex but dumps him when he confesses a predilection for the Rolling Stones. Nevertheless, Jean-François, now an adolescent, is reconciled with life and eternity lies straight ahead. What should he do with it? The music of Léo Ferré ("Comme à Ostende") who wonders whether living one's life is worth the bother, and Jacques Brel, who teaches his listeners to loathe the bourgeois and the Flemish, provides the background for a rebellion against the "dictatorship of the norm." Among its highly suspect concepts are marriage, buying new cars every year,

and moving to the suburbs ("Ludicrous!").

As the reader suspects, the friends will embrace these hated bourgeois practices one after another. The deaths of their heroes Che Guevara, Jimi Hendrix, Salvador Allende, Mao, and John Lennon shatter the idealism not only of Jean-François and his friends but also of a large part of a generation that grew up during the sixties and seventies in the West. The potential of the student revolt; the power of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll; the unity of the Left; and the faith that support can be found in the music and words of Brel, Brassens and Lennon all turn out to be illusions.

However, it is the death of Jean-François' father (ironically much earlier than his calculations had predicted), that affects Jean-François most deeply and makes him understand that "we can prepare for the death of someone close to us, but never for his absence."

This is also Alec's experience, in Matt Cohen's *Last Seen*, whose brother Harold dies from cancer. As cancer narratives often do, the opening sets the mood with a close-up of Harold's life with cancer. Next, the book revisits the healthy past and the relationship between the two brothers. This past, is now, however, read and rewritten in the light of the present: Harold's earlier discomfort is now reinterpreted as a premonition of a terrible diagnosis: lung cancer, which has metastasized to the bone.

As the disease progresses, Harold turns blind and moves in and out of consciousness. Unable to relieve his brother's pain, the helpless Alec sits by his side and holds his hand or tries to massage Harold. Meanwhile the outside world retreats, revealing itself as strange and unknown. The brothers find very little to say. Harold struggles furiously for meaning ("Why Me?") against the "unreason" of dying. One day, after Harold's death, Alec finds himself in a bar, "Club Elvis," striking up a conversation with a man who looks very much

like his deceased brother. To Alec's surprise (and that of the reader) the man indeed turns out to be Harold. While imitation Elvies sing against time and re-live the history of rock and roll on stage, Cohen writes against time, letting Alec and Harold (re)live a relationship they had never explored.

The chronology of a cancer narrative now turns into a complex narrative in which memory and fiction interweave. Alec's reminiscences (about his youth; their father; episodes from work; an affair with Harold's companion Francine; meeting his wife) are interspersed with conversations with a reborn and vibrant Harold. The two share impressions from their childhood, especially their reminiscences of their (deceased) father and his temper. These memories are interrupted by glimpses from Alec's "real life" difficulties communicating his feelings to his wife and children. In the end, Cohen's unsettling novel shows, however, how helpless we are in the face of death.

Women in the North

Lyn Hancock

Winging It in the North. Oolichan \$19.95

Victoria Jason

Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak. Turnstone \$19.95

Reviewed by Sherrill Grace

For some years now I have been looking for women who go North and live to write about it because Northern adventure writing always seems dominated by men. Whether they go North as explorers, anthropologists, missionaries, ethnographers, filmmakers, or artists, these men all publish books about themselves and the peoples they met: Franklin, Ross, Back, Stefansson, Jenness, de Poncins, Flaherty, de Cocola, Mowat, Lopez, Wiebe, and Only are some of the most famous and familiar. But where are the women?

A closer look reveals that many women

have gone to the Canadian North and, like the men, they always write about it, or film, paint, and explore it. Martha Black was a Yukon pioneer, author, and politician; Nell Shipman filmed the North in "Back to God's Country"; Dorothy Knight, whose story is told in "Lutiapik," was a nurse in Lake Harbour; Judith Currelly travels the North as bush pilot and painter, and Aritha van Herk has set three of her novels in the North. Much rarer amongst women is the explorer/adventurer who hikes, canoes or kayaks, sleds, and camps her way across the taiga, tundra, ice and waters of the North. However, such women do exist, and it is time we knew more about them.

The earliest example I know is Mina Benson Hubbard, who describes her exploits in "A Woman's Way Through Labrador" (1908). Lyn Hancock and Victoria Jason are the two most recent examples. Hancock is a photo-journalist with 14 books and many awards to her credit; Victoria Jason is a Winnipeg grandmother and formidable kayaker. What these women share, apart from courage, stamina, skill, and a sense of humour, is a deep passion for the northern landscape, animals, and people. In these two books, Hancock and Jason give us very different narratives written for different reasons, but they both offer a woman's perspective on the North and on northern adventure.

"Winging It in the North" comprises a series of vignettes, gathered over 30 years, which are loosely organized around topics such as food, sleeping arrangements, Inuit carving, attempts to reach the North Pole, or the visit of a Vancouver friend. The result resembles a scatter of snapshots with snippets of fact or description of events to anchor Hancock's brief experiences in the wilderness. There is little of Lyn Hancock in these vignettes, but that is consistent with their purpose: these are tourist travel-writing pieces intended for magazines, newspapers, and this popular book. The

tone is light, the subjects relatively safe and entertaining, and everything always turns out well. The photograph inserts are similarly up-beat; even the one of Hancock camping during a storm in Pangnirtung conveys a certain cheerful abandon.

The most interesting aspects of "Winging It" are the interjections of Hancock's friend Ivy and the scenes of Inuit carving the Sedna story in a marble quarry north of Cape Dorset. Ivy, through her excerpted diary entries, adds a fresher, more critical perspective to Hancock's bland prose. Seen through her eyes, the North seems more solid and interesting because more ambiguous. It is Ivy who comments sardonically that "this seemingly macho land" holds plenty of scope for women. The scene of carving at Andrew Gordon Bay is memorable for several reasons—the monumental Sedna myth being carved there, the passion of the Inuit artists doing the work, and the sheer challenge of working with marble under such remote conditions.

Victoria Jason's adventures, recounted in "Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak," are more focussed and challenging. Although not a gifted writer, Jason conveys an authenticity and immediacy missing from Hancock's narrative. "Kabloona" is autobiography in the raw, and Jason emerges as a woman of integrity, determination, and personal strength by overcoming one obstacle after another. If she was not a feminist before these adventures, she seems to have become one in the process of experiencing and writing about them.

The story begins in June 1991 when Jason, a novice kayaker, convinces Don Starkell to allow her to accompany him north up the west coast of Hudson Bay. Their goal is the Northwest Passage, but the trip ends later that summer after extreme inter-personal tension and some terrifying conditions. Despite their incompatibility, Starkell and Jason resume their expedition at Repulse Bay in the summer of 1992 and continue

north and west. Relations between them deteriorate; Jason collapses with edema; Starkell continues, but has to be rescued a few weeks later. The next phase in Jason's story begins in June 1993 and this time, she insists, she is going on her own terms, alone, from west to east. From her starting point at Fort Providence on the Mackenzie River, all goes well, and she reaches Paulatuk before autumn. In 1994, Jason paddles from Paulatuk to Gjoa, along a mere 1,500 miles of Arctic coast, thus completing the journey begun in 1991.

There is a remarkable contrast between the two phases of Jason's narrative, and the difference addresses issues of gender, sexist constructions of identity, and the dominant discourse of adventure in the far North. No doubt Starkell has his version of events, but the fact remains that she completed the journey alone. Moreover, phase two has a relaxed quality and a warmth of observation absent from phase one. Jason provides historical and geographical information along the way and describes the people she met with respect and affection, but the presence that comes most to life in her narrative is the land itself.

Although there is much in both of these books for the theorist of autobiography, or for those interested in northern adventure, especially by women, only Jason really captures the unique and dangerous beauty of the North, and she manages this by describing its impact upon her and her intimate response to it. While Hancock went North expressly to write about it, Jason went North to be there, even if she did, finally, need to put that being there in words.



Bodies at Home

Loree Harrell

Body Speaking Words. Anvil Press \$10.95

Jean Rysstad

Home Fires. Harbourn \$16.95

Reviewed by Catherine Nelson-McDermott

Either these two books are nothing alike, or they are very alike. Both deal extensively with women's experiences of their selves and their bodies within contemporary North American society; however, the narrative approaches differ markedly, as do the finished products.

Let me admit right from the start that I don't see the purpose in producing a "novel" (surely more accurately called, at 90 pages, a novella?) over 72 hours, as Loree Harrell did in order to become the winner of the 1995 3-Day Novel Writing Contest. The whole thing rather smacks of the night-before university paper, but then I'm an editor at heart. That said, *Body Speaking Words* is an engaging example of its kind, exploring themes of writing and story through a painstaking depiction of the writing process which is interwoven with a sub-plot (main plot?) about writing and the bonds between women, inside and outside of the family. Broadly speaking, the work is post-modernist in style, depending upon thematic association, rather than a well-constructed plot, and some aspects seem unnecessary. The narrator's bi-curious attraction to her writing mate seems unfocussed at best and prurient at worst; this section, while it makes an attempt to present writing as an expression of the body, based perhaps in desire, certainly is not developed in any real sense; and I completely fail to see the humour in "hairy back" stories which objectify and dismiss male bodies. Both sub-plots seem attempts at working currently popular "transgressivenesses" into the text without adequate development (a failing perhaps understandable in the genre).

Harrell's poetic prose, however, is quite seductive, and, along with the "diary" written by the narrator's grandmother, carries the work. Her depiction of the relationship, based in a shared love of written expression, which develops between the narrator and grandmother, is particularly strong. On the whole, this is a fairly entertaining quick read, and I would like to see what the Harrell can create when she is given time for revision and development.

Jean Rysstad's *Home Fires* is a series of loosely linked stories set on British Columbia's north coast. The text focusses on mothers and children, families, fear, love, desire, the longing for communication, and the trials involved in human interactions. The carefully crafted descriptive passages don't draw attention to themselves as artifacts of writing; they are spare and forceful. They are also realist, rather than post-modern, in style and tone. One woman, Fran, narrates the majority of the stories, which focus on her own family and the world around them. The other stories seem those of people in the community at large. The Fran stories are the most fully realized. Some, such as "Plus Minus Interesting," which speculates about memory and False Memory Syndrome, are strangely disturbing and thought-provoking. I did find the text's (deliberately?) ambiguous representations of such problematic cultural artifacts as FMS and *American Psycho* a little troublesome, in that they made it difficult for me to read along with the narrator; suspension of disbelief wavered for a moment, and I wondered if Rysstad was being deliberately and unnecessarily provocative, rather than letting the narrative progress naturally. Other such jarring moments are noticeable, especially in "Mean," which does not quite pull off the Southern-Gothic style presented through the voice of the child, and "Fool Such As I." I enjoyed reading this book, as much for its recognizable presentation of small-town life on the West Coast as for its craftsmanship.

Transforming Words

Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, eds.

Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America. U Wisconsin P
£40.50/20.00

Katharine Bitney

Singing Bone. The Muses' Company \$12.95

Reviewed by Laurie Aikman

Terry Eagleton offers the following description of classical rhetoric in his book *Literary Theory*: "Rhetoric wanted to find out the most effective ways of pleading, persuading and debating, and rhetoricians studied such devices in other people's language in order to use them more productively in their own. It was, as we would say today, a 'creative' as well as a 'critical' activity: the word 'rhetoric' covers both the practice of effective discourse and the science of it." Eagleton's words provide a useful context within which to understand some of the relationships between a collection of poems by a Manitoba poet, and an anthology of essays on American environmental rhetoric. These two texts explore the links between language and transformation by demonstrating both the power of words to effect change, and the powerful changes we may be able to effect simply by probing our use of words.

Green Culture is an impressive example of what rhetorical criticism can accomplish in both academic and practical contexts. The collection of eleven essays contains insightful analyses of a wide range of environmental discourses in American culture, including nature writing, public policy-making, nineteenth-century painting, anti-environmentalist publications, and radical ecological polemics. In spite of their diversity, the studies in this collection are remarkably consistent in their level of scholarship, and in the thoroughness of their critiques. Most of them have thought-provoking social and political implications.

Scott Slovic, for example, suggests that the historical roots of contemporary nature writing are to be found in eighteenth-century religious sermons, and uses psychological theories to examine the efficacy of different rhetorical modes of persuasion. In "Beyond the Realm of Reason," Robert L. Brown and Carl G. Herndl approach the logical fallacies of a particular anti-environmentalist publication not from the point of view of scientific refutation, but in an effort to understand the purposes of community-building and identity-formation that are served by the discursive strategies of marginalized groups. Their study is suggestive of ways that one might begin to bridge the communication gap between groups with different belief systems, by attempting to understand the motivations behind such ideological stances.

Indeed, some of the most relevant essays in the anthology examine rhetoric in its most contentious context: the efforts of different interest groups to influence environmental policy. These case studies offer some inspiring examples of the ways in which a heightened awareness of rhetorical practices can transform human interactions and environmental decisions. Although the areas of study and their practical implications are diverse, the contributors to this anthology share a conviction that is eloquently expressed by Slovic in his essay "Epistemology and Politics in American Nature Writing": "As writers, scholars, and teachers, many of us share [nature writer Richard] Nelson's sense of the need to use language to 'strive toward a different kind of conscience.' In times of straitened environmental conditions . . . every human utterance about the relationship between human beings and nature bears a potentially political implication." *Green Culture* should prove to be of enormous interest to all those literary students and scholars, not merely in the field of eco-criticism, who seek to explore the broader

relevance of their academic work.

With Katharine Bitney's *Singing Bone*, we move from the realm of critical activity to that of creative work, although once again Eagleton reminds us that there can be a critical dimension to creative writing as well: "You may want to stage your own signifying practices to enrich, combat, modify or transform the effects which others' practices produce." While it may be misleading to characterize Bitney's collection primarily as a political work, her profoundly woman-oriented perspective often subverts or rewrites patriarchal narratives. The book's epigraph is a short, untitled, and evocative stanza that describes the kind of feminist archaeology and reclamation in which Bitney seems to be engaged:

If I build a poem out of bones . . .
Will I choose the armbone of an ancestor
and who should she be Was she buried in
a coffin
was she tossed excarnate on a midden
heap
and should I write on that bone my life
story.

The poems of *Singing Bone* are divided into four sections: *Mother of Dreams*, *Bone Flute*, *The Risk*, and *Around the Women's Fire*. *Mother of Dreams* is a series of mostly prose poems on the subject of sleep and dreams, many of which probe the complex relationships between body and soul, between dreaming and sleeping as physiological phenomena and as spiritual experiences. *Bone Flute* introduces the principal image of the collection, the singing bone of a reimagined biblical creation story. The bone flute is fashioned by God from one of Adam's ribs (the odd one left over after the creation of Eve). God gives the flute to Eve, and it becomes a symbol of her creative powers, and a source of contention between her and Adam. This image weaves in and out of several poems, subtly different each time. With *The Risk*, the collection spirals once more around questions of mat-

ter and spirit, of bodies and particles, of death and birth and rebirth. In "This is a Fight," the unborn child is "just plankton seeing the future deep in the heaving sea," while "The Dance" links images of reincarnation, snakes, and the Mardi Gras carnival dances. *Around the Women's Fire* moves deeply into the realm of storytelling and myth, and deals more directly with questions of religion and spirituality, such as the dualistic fallacies of gnosticism, or the savagery of patriarchal sacrifice and war. The primeval merges with the contemporary in poems like "The Operating Table," which equates surgery with sacrifice, or "Around the Women's Fire," which recounts a conversation between women in a café.

Singing Bone evokes a transformational poetics. Like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, most of the poems in this collection deal with processes of change and transformation. The cycles of sleeping and waking, of death and rebirth, are akin to the recycling of matter or the movement of air and particles in our bodies. In Bitney's vision, not even stones are static: "even stone changes even stone was once something else: a dinosaur, a tree, lava, sand, you name it." Myths are transformed or rewritten over time but can be reclaimed through a kind of poetic archaeology. Many of the poems in *Singing Bone* address the reader directly, implicating her or him in this process of remembering and recreating reality: "Listen to me Get up and seize the morning . . . today's song should zing." If *Green Culture* examines the ways in which a critical analysis of environmental rhetoric can suggest new possibilities for communication and social change, *Singing Bone* reminds us that the creative use of language can itself offer new ways of seeing and imagining our relationship with the world.



Storying Northern History

James Houston

The Ice Master: A Novel of the Arctic. McClelland & Stewart \$29.99

Eric Walters

Trapped in Ice. Viking \$19.99

Robert Kroetsch

The Man From the Creeks. Random House \$32.00
Sherrill Grace

Is it by accident or design that so many Canadian novelists write about the North? The North has long held a fascination for popular novelists, from Robert Ballantyne, the nineteenth-century author of boys' adventure stories, to Gilbert Parker, John Buchan, Robert Service, Yves Thériault and Farley Mowat, and, increasingly for major writers like Gabrielle Roy, Rudy Wiebe, Mordecai Richler, and Aritha van Herk. Northern settings and subjects are varied and evocative, of course, but whatever the specific reasons there has recently been a marked increase in books about the North. If Robert Kroetsch was right when he said that the fictions make us real, then the writers of *northern*s are clearly insisting that the North and its history are essential to Canadian reality.

This emphasis on northern history characterizes each of the novels I am considering. Not only is each set in the North, but each also uses historical facts, figures, and events as the basis for a fiction that rewrites northern history. James Houston's *The Ice Master* is set on Blacklead Island, a nineteenth-century whaling station in Cumberland Sound off Baffin Island, and gives a fictionalized account of one of the last century's most bloody and lucrative businesses. Eric Walters's *Trapped in Ice*, a novel for children aged 10 and above, recounts an actual expedition by the famous Canadian sea captain Robert Bartlett, whose ship, the *Karluk*, became trapped in the ice of the western Arctic

Ocean and sank. It was just one of the casualties of the 1913 Canadian Arctic Expedition headed by Vilhjalmur Stefansson. As one might expect from Robert Kroetsch, *The Man from the Creeks* takes this interest in history and pushes it one step further, for this novel is not only an account of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898-99 but also a re-telling of one of its most famous fictionalizations. These three historiographic fictions range from a traditional historical romance (Houston) to a children's novel combining history with some interesting metafictional turns (Walters) to a clever postmodern revision of the *fictional* record.

The Ice Master is, to my mind, the least interesting and accomplished of these novels; it is certainly not experimental in any way. Houston has drawn upon his own experience of the eastern Arctic, coupled with his research on the whaling industry, to concoct a tale of rival whaling captains, one a New England veteran, the other a Newfie ice master and accidental whaler, in their competition for oil, Inuit bed-partners, and control over the crews, white and Inuit alike. The Newfie ice master wins in the end by getting the sexiest Inuk girl, the most oil, and returning safely to riches and a nice white wife. Along the way, Houston describes the dangerous hunt for whales and the rendering process, the visible reminders of which can still be seen on Blacklead or the Kekertons.

Presumably Houston intended *The Ice Master* to address, if not explore, the catastrophic results of whaling and the equally profound consequences of cultural encounter between Inuit and white. Unfortunately, however, this novel offers little of substance on either subject. The best to be said for Houston's portrayal of cultural encounter is that the older captain's Inuk son rejects him, preferring the North, with his Inuit relations, to the *civilization* offered by his blood father. Otherwise, there is no comment upon the

sexual predations of the men, which are presented as delights, and the primitive joys of whaling and life with women who are represented as taking orders and living for sex are celebrated. Even the slaughter of the whales is mitigated toward the end of the story when the whalers spy a cow and calf which are allowed to escape—the ships are full of oil anyway. With thin characterization, weak dialogue, a predictable plot, and dollops of titillation, this is not historical romance at its best.

Trapped in Ice is another matter. While definitely written for children and narrated by a child, it is a novel with many rewards for the adult reader as well. The historical facts are reasonably well known: Stefansson took his expedition to the western Arctic on the *Karluk*, under the command of Bob Bartlett, the man who had helped Robert Peary reach the Pole, but Stefansson left the ship during the early stages of wintering in the ice to conduct his explorations, and he never returned. Four other men abandoned the ship, against Bartlett's orders, and they perished. Walters presents his story from the perspective of those who stay with the captain and live to tell the tale. In fact, Walters chooses what might at first seem like an unlikely narrator in a 13-year old girl, and *Trapped in Ice* is her first-person account.

Helen, an inveterate story-teller, is aboard the *Karluk* with her brother and their mother, who was hired as a seamstress. Like every arctic traveller, Helen keeps a diary so she can tell the story of her adventures. The hero of her story, however, is the crusty Captain Bartlett, whom Helen adores, partly because he is wise and brave, but also because he plays Mozart on a phonograph in his cabin—something we know the real Bartlett did. At the end of the adventure, when they are rescued (again, true to history, due to Bartlett's arctic skills), and at the end of our story, Bartlett tells Helen what she must do with her diary and her

experiences: "Ya got at least one more story in ya. Ya just lived an adventure An' this story is . . . the story of your life." Then, in a delightful turn, Walters ends the novel with the sentence that began the tale—Helen's opening line. We are deftly brought full circle in what we discover is a post-modern historiographic children's novel.

Trapped in Ice is a magical narrative, beautifully crafted and expertly written to create and sustain a believable 13-year old's perspective. Walters neatly avoids overt criticism of Stefansson, who actually was criticised for his behaviour, and manages to present the realities of the ordeal faced by Bartlett and his group of survivors honestly. He resists sugar-coating the facts and, thereby, underestimating Helen or her readers. And yet, because Helen has a child's optimism and wonder, we see the expedition, the loss of the *Karluk*, a polar bear attack, imminent starvation, and the near deaths of everyone as an adventure with a happy ending—the inevitable arctic ending: a story.

In *The Man from the Creeks*, we have historiographic metafiction from the hands of a master. On the surface, Kroetsch's novel is about the rush for gold in the Yukon between 1897 and 1899. All the requisite facts, dates, place names, and colourful characters are present: Soapy Smith shows up, on cue, in Skagway; we climb the Chilkat Pass with the other cheechakos, wait at Bennett Lake for the ice to go out, travel the Yukon River, brave Miles Canyon, where we are almost stopped by Sam Steele of the NWMP, and arrive in Dawson City before heading out to the "creeks" to "moil for gold." We meet Alex Pantages and Diamond Tooth Gerty in Dawson, and we hear the competing discovery claims of George Carmack, Kate Carmack, Skookum Jim, and Robert Henderson. However, the facts are the merest beginning. Kroetsch is panning for narrative gold, and few events in Canadian history have been more studied,

fictionalized, dramatized, sung and lied about than the Klondike.

This version of events is told by one Peek, now aged 114, who was a boy when his mother, known only as Lou, decided to take him North to the Klondike. This retrospective narrative is reminiscent of Thomas Berger's *Little Big Man*, Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Englishman's Boy*, or Kroetsch's own *Badlands*, but there is a difference: Peek is re-telling the story of a story; he is, he assures us, correcting all those poets who are "bluffers and prevaricators" and ignore the facts. He is telling the truth behind the fiction in a fiction woven from so-called historical truths. The motherlode within the novel, of course, is Robert Service's famous poem, which gives Kroetsch his title, characters, and plot: "The Shooting of Dan McGrew."

Unfortunately, I cannot say more without giving the story away and spoiling the fun. Suffice it to say that Peek celebrates the centenary of the Klondike by telling us the *real* story about Lou, McGrew, and the "man from the creeks." The central figure of this story and the certain object (or subject) of everyone's affection is Lou, and if you thought you knew her from Service's poem, let alone from caricatures of the women who went to the Klondike that are constructed by sexist or prurient accounts of the Gold Rush, then think again. Kroetsch/Peek, the devoted son, has created a woman far more complex and interesting than Joyce's Molly. My advice is that you brush up on your Service, pour yourself a good cup of whiskey (this is not a dry book!), and settle into a comfortable chair before a fire to read *The Man from the Creeks*. You'll find pure narrative gold and discover a Klondike you never dreamed of before you're through.

Four Québec Novel(la)s

Suzanne Jacob; Luise von Flotow, trans.
Maude. Guernica \$12.00

Concetta Principe
Stained Glass. Guernica \$12.00

Carole David; Daniel Sloate, trans.
Impala. Guernica \$12.00

T. F. Rigelhof
Badass on a Softail. Goose Lane \$17.95
Reviewed by Dean J. Irvine

Suzanne Jacob's novella *Maude* might just carry more in translation *than* the title of Tennyson's long poem, *Maud*: the madness of Jacob's two central figures, Maude and Bruno, is symptomatically spasmodic. There are no specific allusions, no epigraphs, no geohistorical setting to suggest any link between Jacob and Tennyson. Rather, the peculiar representation of madness in Maude begs comparison with the Victorian poem. Tennyson's *Maud* is contemporary with the short-lived school of Spasmodic poetry (in mid-nineteenth-century Britain), which was characterized by its intense pathologies and apparent formlessness; in brief, the Spasmodics attempted a kind of psychological and formal imitation of madness. The same could be said to describe the subject and form of Jacob's novella. While the fragmentation of narrative and stream-of-consciousness technique in *Maude* is historically and aesthetically closer, for instance, to Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, the Spasmodic antecedent is still illuminating, though ultimately limited. With a prose style that tends toward painterly abstraction, *Maude* is, in its aesthetic vision, not at all Victorian but Post-Impressionist.

Jacob's inquiry into the conditions of Bruno's and Maude's madness emerges early in the novella: "The anxiety: are he and Maude crazy, mad? The word mad. She is mad, he is mad." Squatters, living in an abandoned house without windows and

painted blue inside and out, Bruno and Maude live on the edge of town and, symbolically, on the edge of madness. Maude is a painter with blue hair, but it is Bruno who paints the house blue; he who sells her paintings and lives off the profits; he who invites a group of anarchistic "party" members to the house. Later, Maude's previously introjected behaviour erupts into a sudden assault upon one of the women, Paule, whom Maude attacks on the dance floor of a club. Ultimately, however, *Maude* is less concerned with rising action than with intense psychological motivations and moments. ("You want to finish off an event" the narrator relates, "but the event has already escaped you forever through its transformations.") The identity of the "party" members is revealed only through elliptical and enigmatic dialogue; their madness tends toward discussion and recollection of violent acts (with which they tauntingly provoke Maude and which triggers her repressed tendency to violence). Although these figures are not as psychologically developed as Maude and Bruno, Jacob constructs them all less as characters than as what Robbe-Grillet called presences. All may be figurations of madness in different degrees; even Laurence, the neighbour to whom Bruno sells Maude's paintings, admits to her own psychological instability (presumably, this is why she is attracted to the paintings). Jacob's *Maude* does not resolve questions of madness but rather continually destabilizes the word mad, presenting multiple portraits of madness and their spasmodic transformations.

Concetta Principe's *Stained Glass* poses both questions of madness, and, in this novella, questions of faith. In the beginning, these questions take the form of a catechism: "Why Catholic?"

"Because I like to watch sunlight through the stained glass windows of the church."

Excuses really, because who becomes Catholic in the last decade of the twentieth century?

Unless it's a miracle.

Stained Glass follows the growth and decay of a woman named X, an artist and anorexic, whose love for Christophe, a poet and heroin addict, becomes her destructive obsession. Their symbolic appellations "the sign for and the name of Christ himself"—are *doppelgängers*, ciphers of death. The novella is narrated under the sign of death: "I, the newborn, am already dead, even as I write of the woman you and I will one day be." The narrating I is miraculously born of the death of X and Christophe's "seven-week fetus" miscarried three years earlier: "I am a miracle: seed of the Holy Spirit grown in the womb of her consciousness." So the I is an avatar of Christ as well: the miracle birth, the death, and the resurrection—though not after three days, but after three years. But why Catholic?

Becoming Catholic during the greatest apostasy of the church in time to witness Armageddon when paradise falls to earth: the reign of peace which is the end of wars in the wake of global death. What are miracles good for?

Perhaps the need for miracles of Catholicism is inspired by the madness of the fin de millennium Joycean nightmare of history from which we are trying to wake: but, as the narrator asks, catechistically, "Was there a miracle?"

The agonized love story in *Stained Glass* recalls that of the finest Canadian novella of our time, namely, Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*. In both novellas we find the narrative of decadence (moral, psychological, and spiritual decline), the historical backdrop of war (World War II for Smart; the Gulf War, Bosnia, Israel, Rwanda for Principe), the Messianic child, the female martyr, and the meditation on what Joyce (in *Ulysses*) called the "Word known to all men"—*love*. To illustrate my intertextual point, consider this statement from Principe: "This is the story of the book of a book of a labyrinth of

books. *By Grand Central Station* was Smart's first book; and *Stained Glass* is Principe's first as well. We can only have faith that Principe (unlike Smart) will sustain her writerly gift and continue to write everyday and imaginary miracles for a fallen, decaying world in which, as the author says in her acknowledgements, "faith is a matter of time."

Like *Stained Glass*, Carole David's short novel, *Impala*, is set in Montréal. The story of an abandoned child—daughter of Costentina Franconero, a lounge singer, and Roberto Guilani, an ex-boxer and later her agent—*Impala* is the scrapbook narrative Louisa reconstructs from a box of newspaper clippings and letters and stories. Divided into three parts, *Impala* presents the three figures whose various stories enable Louisa to piece together her Italian-Canadian genealogy: the first is the story of Angelina, Louisa's great-aunt; the second the story of her mother as "Connie Francis," singer; the third the story of her father as "Angelo Bisanti," contractor. Angelina's story begins with a telephone call to report the suicide of Louisa's mother in prison and ends with Costentina's last leave from prison and farewell performance, her version of the story of her singing career and life with Louisa and Roberto. Angelina's story itself mirrors that of both Louisa and Costentina: she is abandoned by her parents and by the father of her child. Angelina becomes a surrogate mother to Louisa, a role that fills the gap created when Angelina gave her own baby up for adoption. Angelina is compelled to take this maternal role, as Costentina's story reveals, for although Costentina avoids losing Louisa to abortion and later to adoption despite Roberto's wishes she too ends up abandoning her own child, though unwillingly, at the moment she confesses to a murder which her husband actually commits. In prison, Connie Francis, singer, reverts to Costentina

Franconero; but her imprisonment entails not only the loss of her maternal identity but also another source of self, that is, the loss of her voice. Roberto's story is one of *post facto* rationalization and reconciliation—as Angelo Bisanti; but his absence from Louisa's childhood and betrayal of her mother can neither be filled nor made amends by telling his version. Louisa's anger at Roberto drives her to take on the role of her father, as murderer, and of her mother as prisoner: her story, like her mother's, is a prison narrative. Louisa's story is at once a loss (of freedom) and a reclamation (of voice): it is the re-living and re-telling of the mother's story in the daughter's voice.

After reading the three Guernica novels, all by women, T. F. Rigelhof's novel *Badass on a Softail* demands a cultural shift, a metaphoric grinding of the gears. Where Principe engenders a miracle child to narrate her novella for a modern age, Rigelhof looks inward to an inner child to narrate his novel for a New Age. Sometimes our ailing (badass) hero David Hoffer's conscience, sometimes his subconscious, sometimes his flashbacks, sometimes his astral body, Rigelhof's narrator plays on and on like a classic rock radio station, mixing lyrics into a kind of pop cultural medley from the sixties and seventies. Rigelhof dubs this narrating voice over the news to create a two-track story about biker and video producer David Hoffer and his next-door neighbours in the Laurentians, the Solar Temple cult.

With requisite irony, Rigelhof re-inscribes the clichés that might have led a less aware author to merely reproduce the pop cultural signs of New Age mysticism, classic rock, and journalism. In this sense, Rigelhof's two-track narrative is always an ironic counter-inscription of cultural clichés. *Badass on a Softail* penetrates popular, sensationalized representations of biker and New Age cultures in the news

media and reveals the economic exchanges and social relations that constitute such cultural formations. In their press release Rigelhof's publisher describes *Badass* as a "black satire," and I would agree insofar as the dark, satiric irony with which the author continually renders cultural clichés and with which he ultimately ends the novel subverts our culturally conditioned expectations and urges us to alter our readings of popular culture(s).

Hard & Soft Boiled

Mark Anthony Jarman

Salvage King Ya! Anvil \$16.95

Paul Stuewe

This Dark Embrace. Mercury \$15.95

Reviewed by Tamas Dobozsy

Together, these novels offer a case study in diametrically opposite aesthetic principles. Jarman presents a lyrical runaway of a text, while Stuewe serves up a straightforward plot-driven detective story. Where Jarman moves in ever widening and diminishing spirals from the geographical hub (a patrimonial junkyard) of his (anti-) hero, Drinkwater, Stuewe moves from beginning to end in a line only crooked for a few flashbacks into McDumont's past. Where Jarman offers a visionary grammar, such as, "I got them and I hope they're goners meeting designer death in busted cranium where visions of creole zeppelins float and yaw past my leg in all sorts of blood," Stuewe isn't afraid of verging on cliché: "Odd how Margot did make him feel callow—he'd been around but he'd never met anyone like this before. He felt completely tongue-tied." Where Jarman innovates a millennial picaresque—a frenzied mix of language derived from pop music, high art, commercials and street slang—Stuewe recycles the hard-boiled detective writing of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammet,

delivering an antique narrative full of the jargon and stereotypes we expect from 1930s, 40s and 50s fiction in the genre.

Side by side, I couldn't imagine two books displaying more stylistic diversity; yet, they both function superbly within the parameters they set out for themselves. Jarman sparkles with a lyrical intensity rarely if ever encountered in Canadian literature; and Drinkwater's hilarious escapades on the farm team circuit of the NHL—as well as the insanity of *Shirt is Blue* and his airplane, and *Neon with the Elvis*

Impersonator in Thailand—recognize the comic element that propels the picaresque. Stuewe deftly avoids any rambling or descriptive paragraphs, as well as inconsequential side plots, that would retard the pace of his plot. We know what awaits us at the end of *This Dark Embrace*, but not exactly how we'll get there, and Stuewe keeps the suspense at just the right pitch.

The citizenship of McDumont adds an extra flavour to an otherwise stock set of characters; his observations on social realism and the reality of poverty likewise keep the novel from turning too quickly into the fairy-tale we expect from the ending.

Jarman writes a novel where you linger over every page; Stuewe writes a novel where you can't turn the pages fast enough.

Jarman's novel will certainly interest academics working in the picaresque, pop culture or postmodern realism. Stuewe's appeal seems targeted more towards readers of pulp fiction; it sticks too closely to the formula to indulge in the irony necessary to make for a full-blown encounter with antique detective fiction; but one senses that this wasn't his program, anyhow. What both these novels *do* investigate is cultural difference, between Canada as home and memory and America as commodity and violence. Drinkwater feeds on America, tearing through its urban and non-urban spaces, his windshield a source for the various perspectives that keep him

from having to define the limits of his space; meanwhile, McDumont exploits his status as outsider to worm his way between the cracks in Hollywood's social hierarchy. Drinkwater collapses under the weight of all his options; McDumont gets the golden apple. Only one of them returns home.

Understanding Crusz

Chelva Kanaganayakam

Dark Antonyms and Paradise: The Poetry of Rienzi Crusz. TSAR \$15.95

Rienzi Crusz

Insurgent Rain: Selected Poems 1974-1996. TSAR \$15.95

Cyril Dabydeen, editor

Another Way to Dance: Contemporary Asian Poetry from Canada and the United States. TSAR \$19.95

Reviewed by Scott Gordon

There is an interesting premise behind *Dark Antonyms and Paradise*, Chelva Kanaganayakam's look at the poetry of Rienzi Crusz: somewhere in the midst of the polemical and political debate that surrounds post-colonial literature "there is a middle ground" where Crusz's poetry—a rare breed of verse that incorporates the traditional and the modern and is influenced just as much by the 'centre' as it is by the 'margin'—can be appreciated to its fullest potential. Of course, finding this middle ground is no easy task. Post-colonial theory and criticism was born of an understandable frustration with the sometimes domineering and one-sided colonial-British approaches to literature, but often the opposition to these 'old school' practices is so vehement that the alternative critical practices end up being just as one-sided and blind to nuance. With this in mind, Kanaganayakam cautiously blends traditional as well as more contemporary approaches to the study of literature in an

attempt to address the wide range of themes found in Crusz's poetry.

Over the years various labels—multicultural, ethnic, post-colonial, and so on—have hampered interpretations of Crusz's poetry. Within these labels themes like migrancy, identity and marginality were seen as paramount to understanding the poetry while virtually everything else was only of secondary importance. Kanaganayakam does not deny that there is some validity to the labels; he acknowledges, in fact, that various labels "came into being for perfectly legitimate reasons" and that Crusz might have even "unconsciously courted [them] by writing a certain kind of poem." The difference between his approach and that of many others, however, is that he does not let his acknowledgment of these labels get in the way of seeing things that might lie outside their parameters.

In Kanaganayakam's study, Crusz's post-colonial identity is the starting point rather than the end result. This position allows him to consider Crusz's work not only in the context of other post-colonial writers like Walcott and Naipaul, but also in contrast with writers from a broader spectrum of English literature like Keats, Blake, Whitman, Yeats and Larkin. Rather than focusing on which authors or which tradition might have had more effect upon Crusz's poetry, Kanaganayakam is content to explore how the influences all play off one another in Crusz's poetry. One of the more interesting passages of the book explores the interplay between Crusz's Christian beliefs and his diasporic identity: "Here the contemporary experience of migration fuses with the Biblical and the personal becomes the universal." For Crusz, these two themes are of equal importance and Kanaganayakam does not let external political forces privilege one at the expense of the other.

The way Kanaganayakam sees it, adopting this different approach is necessary because

Crusz's poetry is unlike the work of most other poets, especially those who share the multicultural or post-colonial labels. On the surface Crusz's work fits very comfortably into the post-colonial or 'immigrant' stream of Canadian literature. Beneath the surface, however, his poems are about more than his 'otherness' and, eschewing as they do "the experimental in favour of the lyrical and the traditional," their structure and rhythm are often more reminiscent of the literature he studied in the course of his colonial education than anything else. Crusz's refusal or inability to align himself with one side or another has resulted in his work being largely overlooked by both the Canadian literary establishment as well as the radical critics and theorists who populate the margins. He has slipped through the critical and academic cracks: he "cannot claim to be part of the centre; and he cannot, with any degree of sincerity, position himself as an 'other'."

While Kanaganayakam's point is an important one and not just as it relates to Crusz—there are a number of post-colonial writers who would benefit from such an approach—ultimately, it is not as forceful as a study of this kind should be. For one thing, he is far too nice. Not limiting himself to the traditional approaches to literature nor to post-colonial theory is a good start but it has got to be followed up with a bit more aggressiveness than

Kanaganayakam manages. In and amongst post-colonialism's politics and polemics a critic can't hope to make his case gently. Of Arun Mukherjee, for instance, an aggressive and passionate critic whose articles advocate a radical approach to the study of post-colonial literature, Kanaganayakam writes: "Her stance is an important one, and a perfectly reasonable one, but it has had the effect of framing and foregrounding Crusz's work along mainly political lines." Unfortunately, Kanaganayakam is not going to free Crusz from this or any other

frame by being so conciliatory.

Kanaganayakam could have also strengthened his argument considerably had he avoided pitting Crusz against successful novelists like M.G. Vassanji and Rohinton Mistry. Acceptance in the Canadian literary scene means something very different for poets than it does for novelists. Poets are seldom widely read and those few volumes that do end up getting noticed are usually by writers like Margaret Atwood who have gained greater fame through their novels than their poetry. Even the inevitable comparisons between Michael Ondaatje and Crusz are problematic at best and must be approached with caution. Contrasting their writing is not out of line—both, after all, are Sri Lankan Burghers who immigrated to Canada around the same time. But to say that "in relation to his compatriot Michael Ondaatje, Crusz remains a relatively marginalized poet whose work has not received the recognition it deserves" without qualifying the statement is unfair and misleading. While Ondaatje enjoyed success as a poet—two Governor General's Awards for poetry attest to that—he did not become an "institution," as Cyril Dabydeen calls him, until he began writing novels and winning awards for fiction. In many ways it is unfair to gauge the success of any Canadian poet (that is, someone who limits himself to writing poetry) against the phenomenon that is Ondaatje.

The complexities of Crusz's situation would have been clearer had his work been considered in the context of other poets rather than poet-novelists. A more effective comparison, for instance, than those to Mistry or Ondaatje, might have been one that considered Crusz's work in contrast with that of Dionne Brand. While it is true that she does not limit herself strictly to poetry, if her recent GG Award is any indication, much of her success as a writer has so far come through her poetry. Bringing Brand into the picture would have made

Kanaganayakam's argument a little sharper and given it greater resonance; Brand's success in Canada as a poet who celebrates her 'otherness' is far more relevant to Crusz than the bestseller list success enjoyed by a novelist like Mistry.

The writing in *Dark Antonyms* and *Paradise* could have also done with a little tightening up. It is often repetitive and sometimes feels like it is being stretched out, perhaps in the mistaken belief that a lengthy study of Crusz might make up for the critical neglect of his work. The chapter that looks at Crusz's children's stories is particularly tedious, relying as it does on plot summaries of unpublished manuscripts that add little to the overall thesis.

A much better showcase of Kanaganayakam's talents is *Insurgent Rain*, a volume of Rienzi Crusz's selected poems. Kanaganayakam's introduction is essentially the same argument he makes in *Dark Antonyms*, but boiled down to fourteen pages and without the redundancies that mar the longer study. This tighter argument is made stronger by virtue of the fact that it is accompanied by a large sampling of Crusz's poetry that Kanaganayakam has arranged thematically, rather than chronologically. His introduction and the thematically arranged poetry work in tandem to piece together the complex, multi-dimensional poet that Kanaganayakam so desperately wants us to see.

It is also interesting to consider Kanaganayakam's theories regarding Crusz's marginalization in Cyril Dabydeen's most recent anthology, *Another Way to Dance*. Although Crusz and his thirty-nine fellow poets of the Asian diaspora explore a wide range of themes in this collection, those that are most prominent are the same ones that have supposedly imprisoned Crusz for so many years: migration, identity, ideas of home, etc. Reading this anthology it is easy to see why critics and academics have focused on certain themes—the fact is, they do recur

and are often the source of inspiration—but it is also apparent how unfair and limiting this one-dimensional perspective can be for Crusz and a number of his fellow poets.

As with any poetry review, it is only fair to give the poet himself the last word:

Junction. The road forks
like a wishbone:
I choose neither, refuse
the destinies in separate highways.
And so I go for the crotch
of no-man's land,
the immediate centre that seems to
belong
to no man, and every man.

Identity and Difference

AnaLouise Keating

Women Reading, Women Writing: Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde. Temple U P US\$18.95

Richard F. Fleck, Ed.

Critical Perspectives on Native American Fiction. Passeggiata P US\$26.00/US\$14.00

Reviewed by Catherine Rainwater

Keating treats works by three self-proclaimed lesbian writers from different ethnic minorities within United States society. Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo-Lakota-Lebanese), Gloria Anzaldúa (Mexican-American), and Audre Lorde (African-American) live and write from within "conflicting . . . sets of personal, political, and professional worlds." According to Keating, whose own personal identification with her subjects becomes overly worshipful at times, the writings of Allen, Anzaldúa and Lorde "employ transformational identity politics" that potentially alter readers' notions of themselves as they track the authors' own self-inventive aesthetic practices.

Drawing upon a variety of poststructuralist critical strategies, Keating demonstrates how Allen reinterprets and revises Native

American cultural and spiritual practices within a contemporary feminist matrix; how Anzaldúa negotiates political and personal struggles (as a lesbian *chicana*) in ways that shape her transformational art; and how Lorde draws upon West African beliefs and mores to construct her own aesthetic of self-invention. All three authors incorporate and variously reinvent mythic female figures from their respective (Puebloan, Mexican, and African) cultures. Keating argues persuasively for the deliberate design behind these writers' strategies for challenging and changing readers' modes of envisioning self. Unfortunately for this reviewer, Keating's efforts in her final chapter to convince us of her own transformation under the seductive power of these texts seem like an immature "little sister's" adoring tribute. Nevertheless, the book is worth reading and contains some valuable lessons about how to participate in and respond to fiction by three important contemporary authors.

Fleck's collection of essays on Native American fiction has, curiously, been reprinted in 1997 after only four years in circulation. Like the first printing in 1993, this edition contains twenty-four essays on six major Native American writers: D'Arcy McNickle, N. Scott Momaday, Gerald Vizenor, James Welch, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Louise Erdrich. Eight of the twenty-four essays are original contributions to the (1993) collection, while the others have appeared previously in a variety of books and journals. Reprinted are essays by William Bevis, Simon Ortiz, James Ruppert, Priscilla Oaks, Charles Larson, Lawrence Evers, Linda Hogan, Louis Owens, Alan R. Velie, Cecilia Sims, Kathleen Sands, A. LaVonne Ruoff, Kenneth Lincoln, Paula Gunn Allen, and Karl Kroeber. Original contributions include essays by Janet St. Clair, George Saito, Emmanuel Nelson, Kenneth Roemer, the late William Oandasan, Benjamin and

Catherine Warner Bennani, Valerie Harvey, and Gretchen Bataille. The first, Janet St. Clair's "Fighting for Her Life: The Mixed-Blood Woman's Insistence Upon Selfhood," traces patterns in the lives of mixed-blood female characters for whom obstacles to full "selfhood" include society's denial of their "voice, story, history, and place." Next, in "A Japanese Perspective on Native American Fiction," George Saito reports upon the state of Native American studies in Japan, and Emmanuel Nelson ("Fourth World Fictions: A Comparative Commentary on James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* and Mudrooroo Narogin's *Wild Cat Falling*") calls for more global, comparative studies of aboriginal art from all over the world. In such art, no matter how disparate the locales of origin, Nelson sees many traits in common. To illustrate his point, he briefly compares Welch's novel to one by an Australian aboriginal writer. In "Ancient Children at Play—Lyric, Petroglyphic, and Ceremonial," Kenneth Roemer investigates modes of ludic expression in Momaday's most recent novel, *The Ancient Child*. William Oandasan dialogues with Simon J. Ortiz and Paula Gunn Allen on the nature of Tayo's healing in Silko's *Ceremony*; in "A Familiar Love Component of Love in *Ceremony*," he argues that Silko actually emphasizes Tayo's masculinity more than previous critics have noted. The essay co-authored by the Bennanis, "No Ceremony for Men in the Sun: Sexuality, Personhood, and Nationhood in Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*, and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*," endorses Nelson's point about the need for comparative studies; the authors review parallels between Silko's novel and a work by a Palestinian author that communicates similar spiritual themes. A useful explanation of Silko's references to sandpainting is provided by Valerie Harvey in "Navajo Sandpainting in *Ceremony*" and, finally, Gretchen Bataille traces Erdrich's use in

The Beet Queen of the American, particularly the Southern, grotesque tradition. She explains how recognizing this feature of Erdrich's writing—drawn of course from Western literary tradition rather than American Indian—helps us to understand better both Native and non-Native characters in Erdrich's novel.

Fleck's volume of essays also contains an introductory section outlining the major themes of the six American Indian writers who are the subject of study, as well as a brief, only marginally useful selected bibliography of works by and about these authors. (The "works about" material is scanty and it strikes this reviewer as rather eccentrically selected.) However, the essays that Fleck has selected for publication, both the older, previously printed ones and those composed for first-time inclusion in the volume, are in varying degrees useful for scholars and students alike.

Life-writing Practices

Yvonne M. Klein, ed.

Beyond the Home Front: Women's Autobiographical Writing of the Two World Wars. New York U Press US\$17.95

Elspeth Cameron and

Janice Dickinson, eds.

Great Dames. U of T Press \$50.00/\$19.95

Daniel L. Bratton

Thirty-Two Short Views of Mazo de la Roche: A Biographical Essay. ECW Press \$14.95

Reviewed by Joy Henley

Beyond the Home Front is a collection of powerful first-person narratives that challenge conventional wisdom concerning the role of women in the two world wars. This remarkable array of women's autobiographical writings takes deadly aim at the still popular mythology that women benefitted, practically and politically, from the First World War. Editor Yvonne Klein

makes clear in her introduction that the tenacity of this idea, and its disavowal, is the motivating force behind the book:

Few events of this century have been so mythologized as the Great War. Disillusion, the lost generation, the slaughter of the innocents, the deaths of the best and the brightest, all have entered the common consciousness as the truth about that conflict. Along with this collective nostalgia for innocence lost exists another, more sinister, idea which the labors of scholars have been unable to dislodge from the popular memory—that on the whole, women benefitted from the war at the expense of men . . . seventy-odd years after the Great War, my students tell me confidently every year that the war was a good thing for women: it got them the vote and jobs.

The writing Klein has assembled in this collection convincingly and eloquently refutes this idea.

The book is divided into two parts: "The Great War" and "The Second World War" (A number of women participated in and write from their experience of both wars). The second section of the book follows some of the women whose accounts of the First World War are contained in the first section and these accounts illustrate the profound changes that had taken place in the way war was constructed. In her introduction Klein maps the many ways in which the war and woman's suffrage both supported and contested each other and then shows how, between the first and second world wars "military thinking about women underwent a profound revision." "For the Allies, at least, the preservation of the sanctity of womanhood had been an expressed war aim, a means of drawing lines in the Great War." Yet, even before the end of the first war it became "clear that the bodies at the greatest risk in this conflict were male, not female." The Second World War saw the conflict move into the heart of

the domestic realm. No longer was the death toll highest among those in the military. Whereas civilian deaths during the First World War rested at about twenty percent of the total deaths, Klein tells us that "in Europe during the years 1939-45, civilian casualties outnumbered military deaths by a wide margin, perhaps as much as three to one." The narratives in *Beyond the Home Front* trace by anecdote and questioning reflection, the transformation of "woman" from "sacred, protected icon to target" and document the effect of this ideological change on the lives of ordinary women throughout the Western world.

The voices heard in this collection come from Britain, France, Austria, Germany, Borneo, Canada, and America. Women who worked in the French Resistance, women who lived through the camps of Auschwitz and Ravensbrück, middle-class Austrian housewives, Black military nurses working in the field in Europe, upper-class women who went to work behind the front lines, lesbian and straight women who took an active part in defense, Japanese-Canadian women who were interned and whose mothers died at Nagasaki and women who were part of the Nazi machine: all have their say. The result is a poignant, bitter, brave, bewildered, and terribly sad journey into the hearts and minds of women on all sides of the conflict.

Many of these authors and the stories they tell (more than a few are taken from journals or memoirs the women put together for their families) are not widely known, but their writing proves equal to the challenge of being grouped with the work of Gertrude Stein, Christa Wolf, and Sylvia Pankhurst. The collection stretches conventional knowledge to include a much wider understanding of not just the place of women in the wars but of the historical moment itself. It demonstrates that the overwhelming experience for women was one of loss not gain. In the process it also

dispels any easy assumptions regarding the superior moral capacity of women or alternatively, their relative lack of courage when compared to men.

In the first section, "The Great War," incredible stories of bravery and daring settle easily beside tales that describe the precise colour, taste and texture of "leather" jelly and the makeshift ingredients, including sawdust, that went into the baking of bread. One of the more fantastic stories tells of a Siberian woman, Yasha Bachkarova, who served in the Russian army beside her husband, continued to fight after he was killed, and when male soldiers began deserting in droves, campaigned for and raised her own army of women warriors: The Women's Death Battalion. Her story is told by an English woman, Florence Farmborough, who served as a nurse in Moscow, and at the front in Poland, Austria and Romania. When the revolution began, Farmborough fled from Russia to Siberia and then to the States. The two women met on the steamship journey from Siberia to America and talked about what they had learned.

A number of these accounts were written after the war in an attempt by the women to come to terms with and assess the meaning of their experiences. Many of these women became life-long pacifists; others among them, such as Frau Anna Fest, a German concentration camp guard, seems never to have acknowledged the evil to which she contributed. In both wars highly politicized, competent women struggled with ordinary emotions such as mother-guilt and the knowledge that in walking their own path they might have short-changed their children. Hannah Mitchell was one of these women. She came from a "desperately poor family" and received no formal education, yet "through a combination of talent and perseverance went on to become a leader of the Suffrage and Labour movements in the north of England and a

member of the Manchester City council." She was an outspoken and politically active critic of the war, but her story reaches behind her public face to explore the more private and intimate consequences the war had on her life. In an excerpt from her autobiography ("found among her papers after her death and published posthumously in 1968") she describes how difficult it was for her in 1914, when her son was sixteen, to stand back and allow him to make his own decision about whether to enlist. Mitchell, who, besides feeling almost paralyzed with fear for her son, also felt she could not "bear to live if I knew he had killed another woman's son." She was profoundly relieved and proud when her son resisted the many pressures to enlist and went off, as a conscientious objector, to work in the countryside. However, far from being untouched by the war, he "returned home, no longer the happy young man he had been but under the shadow of the war much as if he had been in active service." This theme, the recognition of the pervasive nature of the war experience, runs throughout all of these writings. No one in the Western world escaped the war's debilitating and far-reaching influence.

In Elspeth Cameron's and Janice Dickinson's *Great Dames* the focus moves from autobiography to biography. This book offers an exciting "collection of biographical sketches, memoirs, and essays about late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Canadian women from all walks of life." The mandate for this project was to give voice to women who were "not obvious candidates for biography." The result is a satisfying and significant contribution to writing the lives of Canadian women. In the introduction the editors situate *Great Dames* firmly within literary history when they rightly describe it as the contemporary version of Mary Quayle Innis's *The Clear Spirit* (1966). Their careful detailing of the differences between the two books and

their contextualization of the attitudes and beliefs that inform these differences provide a short history of the changes feminist theory has brought to life-writing practices.

The recognition that biography no longer presupposes fame highlights one of the central concerns of feminist historiography and literary theory over the past three decades; that the writing of a history of women demands an account of the lives of all women, not just those who stood out as exceptions or because of privilege. Thus feminist scholarship has been and continues to be "interested in examining . . . the 'dailiness' of (ordinary) women's lives." Another significant difference in the assumptions behind Innis's book and *Great Dames* is the latter's expressed acknowledgment that biography is not an objective chronicle of a person's life, but rather a dialogue between author and subject; what a subject says about her own life is not to be understood as fact but must be "read within a relationship that includes writer, text, and reader." *Great Dames* offers an inside glimpse of the movements, events and experiences that made up the (extra)ordinary dailiness of the lives of the women it portrays.

By comparison, Daniel Bratton's *Thirty-Two Short Views of Mazo de la Roche* is valuable more for what it reveals about the process of writing biography than for any new or significantly unique contribution to de la Roche scholarship. The book is structured as a loose assemblage of twenty-seven separate entries: an eclectic mix of literary criticism, analytical inquiry, excerpts from the diary Bratton kept while researching the book, archival photographs depicting Mazo de la Roche and the people and places of importance in her life and interviews with her friends and acquaintances. It ends with a startling (in the context of this book) and very funny talk given by Timothy Findley at a Leacock symposium held at the University of Ottawa in 1985, poking fun at

the world of Canadian Literature and the writing of biography. Findley spuriously establishes 'evidence' (which he chides the Canadian literary community for not "caring to think about") that suggests he is the grandson of Stephen Leacock, the result of a previously unknown relationship between Leacock and Mazo de la Roche.

In effect, this ending gives Findley the last word, and it left me amused but somewhat confused as to Bratton's intentions. This is because, throughout the book, the peculiar mix of an almost dogmatic attention given to historical details and establishing influences, combined with a propensity for casual conjecture in Bratton's critical analy-

sis of de la Roche's work, makes it tempting, at times, to read the essay as a tongue-in-cheek parody of current biographical scholarship. It is strange that Bratton, in spite of his innovative approach to the form, has not escaped traditional biographic conventions. His biography, although described on its back cover as "a multifaceted, postmodern narrative," in fact, ironically, re-enacts that well-rehearsed trope of the "portrait of an artist" so familiar to twentieth-century Western audiences. It presents readers with a picture of a tormented, eccentric, but ultimately successful writer who sacrifices everything for her work.



The Vanished Beothuk

Ingeborg Marshall

A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk.

McGill-Queen's U P \$45.00

Reviewed by Jennifer S.H. Brown

This remarkable book is a labour of devotion and intensive research. Ingeborg Marshall has worked on the Beothuk for over two decades, drawing upon an amazing range of sources, and the result will surely stand for years to come as the definitive work on the subject.

The first fifteen chapters reconstruct Beothuk history from earliest sixteenth-century European contacts to the demise of the last known members of the group in the early 1800s. The next thirteen chapters, under the heading, *Ethnography*, encompass the efforts of Marshall and many others to reconstruct Beothuk prehistory, population, subsistence, material culture, world view, and language, using all the tools of archaeology, ethnology, and linguistics that can assist interpretation of the often discouragingly scant evidence. Surviving word lists, for example, record fewer than 400 words of the language. Marshall supports a probable Algonquian affiliation but notes that the Beothuk language seems so distinctive that it must have begun to diverge from its Algonquian neighbours well over 2000 years ago.

The Beothuk have long been known superficially to Canadians; this book will satisfy readers' curiosity on all matters that may intrigue them. The original "Red Indians" were known as such because of their generous use of red ochre or other red clays to cover not only their bodies but their skin clothing and other possessions. The colour probably had associations with life and power, but Marshall adds that the ferrous oxides in the ochre helped to preserve and waterproof leather items by countering bacterial damage. The distinctive Beothuk

canoes with their peaked midpoints, and the mamateeks (dwellings) remarked upon by visitors receive detailed and well illustrated accounts of their construction and their varying forms and functions.

Also striking is the information on Beothuk storehouses in which large amounts of dried and smoked meat were kept—a pattern contrasting with the food customs of mainland subarctic hunters. The meat came mainly from caribou, harvested during their fall migrations across the Exploits River which nearly bisects Newfoundland across what was once a Beothuk heartland. Early observers described the fences, up to sixty kilometres long, which the Beothuk built along the river to direct the caribou to ideal hunting sites—an activity clearly requiring leadership and cooperative labour. Other key resources included seals, sea birds (notably the flightless Great Auk) and their eggs, and salmon and other fish.

Beginning in the 1500s, European codfishers increasingly impinged on Beothuk summer campsites on beaches near river mouths. The groups had nothing in common except an interest in using the shore and its resources; and when the Beothuk seized opportunities to harvest iron tools, nails, and other items during the intruders' absences, tensions grew. By the time that some English became interested in trading for furs, sporadic conflicts had engendered fear and suspicion on both sides, and most of the rare exchanges occurred as "silent trade"; goods left by one party were looked over by the other which took what it desired, leaving other items in return. The lack of trade progress over three hundred years was epitomized in 1808, when a painting showing "Indians and Europeans in a group" exchanging furs for blankets, hatchets, and so on, was commissioned in England and deposited at a likely site with various gifts, in hopes the Beothuk would open trade as the picture invited. The offerings drew no visitors.

Meanwhile, other English activities, especially in the 1700s, had increasingly damaged the Beothuk resource base. Lacking trade partners, English "furriers" themselves became trappers, encroaching on a small population which, even at first contact, may have numbered 1600 at most. In about 1708, commercial salmon fishing began to devastate another Beothuk staple; by the early 1800s, the English faced precipitous declines in their own catches. A similar pattern developed in the late 1700s, as the Beothuk were cut off from their supplies of offshore island seabirds whose eggs they hard-boiled, dried or powdered for future use.

The Beothuk response was retreat and avoidance except for occasional retaliations against English attacks and abuse. More than any other Native group, they maintained their own material culture in the face of the newcomers. Few European items interested them: furriers' traps were reshaped into arrow points or other small tools; sails might cover mamateeks; fishnets were unwoven for ropes; axes helped build bigger caribou fences. The Beothuk showed strong aversion to guns, sometimes destroying those they took in raids. Marshall found only one instance of Beothuk being served alcohol, by John Guy in 1612, and the woman Demasduit, captive for a year among the English in 1819, disliked it when offered.

Avoidance reduced Beothuk casualties from warfare and disease; their isolation spared them from the worst of the epidemics that came among their neighbours. Hostility with outsiders became endemic, however, and was mitigated too late by the humanitarian impulses that some English expressed by the late 1700s. Every death resulting from English attack loomed larger as the people's numbers and food resources shrank; and in the last surviving encampments, the desperate and undernourished relatives of the best known survivor,

Shanawdithit (d. 1829), probably succumbed mainly to tuberculosis, as did Shanawdithit herself. The Beothuk were spared the incursions of fur traders, missionaries, and Indian agents; but on the other side of the coin, no European commercial, religious, or political institution acquired a vested interest in their economy, salvation, or survival.

The text contains a few typos, and some repetition arises from the author's debatable decision to separate "history" from "ethnography;" but in a work of this size, some redundancy helps keep readers on track. Reproductions of some historical maps and plates are too small for their writing to be decipherable. To judge by the winter conditions in the last decades of Beothuk survival, the growing severity of the climate in that period is a variable deserving attention. But overall, this is a wonderful book, readable and absorbing for those who read it straight through, and encyclopedic for those wishing a comprehensive reference work on a little understood Canadian Aboriginal people.

Environmental Sensibilities

A.F. Moritz

Mahoning. Brick Books \$11.95

Soraya Erian

Ariadne's Thread (Poems and Drawings). Childe Thursday \$12

Neile Graham

Spells for Clear Vision. Brick Books \$11.95

Vivian Marple

I Mention the Garden for Clarity. Quarry Press \$14.95

Karen MacCormack

Marine Snow. ECW Press \$12

Reviewed by Stefan Haag

The Mahoning River originates in Ohio and joins the Beaver River, a tributary of the Allegheny, in Pennsylvania. In the

opening section of eleven poems, Moritz describes "another Egypt, of another river / . . . / a more violent desperation, mightier tombs", namely the Mahoning River next to which he grew up. While the recurring image of rust is used to indicate decay and desperation, it also emerges in the poet's mind as "iron escaping its alloys, returning its oxygen", thus as an image of redemption. Similarly, the desperation of the other Egypt paradoxically provides the hope and courage to leave but above all to experience anew with rejuvenated eyes and ears.

Moritz's poems are very synaesthetic; he is a poet who sees and hears and smells and is able to translate his impressions into beautifully communicative images: "Lightning flashed out again, again, each second / throughout the northern sky all night, lashing the swamps / and hillsides of burnt, broken trunks smoking under the rain. / Wind ruffled the fires, spread a smell of sodden ash". And, where there is lightning, thunder is not far behind; we feel the poet's heart beat: "You felt your heart beat: the thunder / pounded on their breasts all night, obscuring the heartbeats / of animals and men." Before coming back to the Mahoning in the last section, Moritz sketches the development of a painter from the cradle to the grave in 15 miniatures. In the last poem of this section, "The Faithful One," the painter finally is at peace with his surroundings and with himself, "no more of this blinded noise, no need / to make people turn to me no need / of horror". His lifelong struggle ends in death, but also in art that brings something new to the world: "Absorbing love, / the heart of each thing, floating, free, even pain, / pain unto death, / unto suicide. A new art".

Among the epigraphs to Moritz's volume of finely crafted poetry, we find a phrase from Vergil's *Aeneid*: ". . . which earth has given and human hands have made . . ." Overall, this phrase fits the mood of Moritz's poems like the proverbial glove. In

the last section, Moritz follows the Mahoning's flow in impressionistic portraits of landmarks that stand out in his memory, thereby confirming and putting into practice Vergil's epigraph. What Moritz has achieved in this volume is a nature poetry that is sensitive to the environment without, however, giving up a human perspective in his evocation of humankind's ancient history. Not that this human history is ever seen in competition with nature; rather, it complements it and clarifies it for our human eyes and ears to understand.

In *Ariadne's Thread*, Soraya Erian evokes mythical and fantastic images to give a voice to "the hidden and unknown, the real and frightening" (back cover). Divided into seven sections that describe a mythical or ritual development or journey, this volume nonetheless seems uneven, not the least because at times certain techniques are too much in the foreground. For instance, section one, entitled "Fable," overemphasizes in my view a Tolkien-like approach where trees, earthworms and birds talk, if not to each other, then to the speaker. In other sections, the mystery of characters seems blown out of proportion. Overall, the mixture of myth and fantasy Erian presents in *Ariadne's Thread* does not succeed because some images seem to be forced on the reader rather than developing on their own in the reader's mind. For a volume so overtly concerned with mysteries, one would have wished a little more mystery in its approach towards the individual word, image and even poem.

When reading Neile Graham's *Spells for Clear Vision*, one feels in the presence of a poet who has the rare talent of integrating private experiences (or public ones filtered through the personal eye) with powerful language. Graham displays an extraordinary gentleness in the way she points to the sensory implications of words. In the first poem of her volume, for instance, she

describes a gift from her mother. What looks at first like an ordinary "chunk of glass" with a "hint at vision" gains in significance: "We were out in a herring skiff / admiring bioluminescence trailing // from paddles and dip nets. . . / Stars above and below!" writes her mother in a letter. Graham intensifies this lyrical moment further by broadening the sensual impact of her images: "I told her I'd steal those words // to trade for what I cannot see / in the city except a hint that rides / in with winds from the Sound, a rumour // that brings the ocean here". Another aspect of Graham's volume is its extraordinary ability to evoke the concreteness of a region. At one point she says, "Take me away from the abstract—/ if you talk about the earth / I want to sense the grit of soil / under my nails". This concreteness is especially pronounced in the third section of the book that evokes the islands of the Pacific Rim.

The colours of the cover of Vivian Marple's *I Mention the Garden for Clarity* leave a strong first impression. "Virtue" here is an understatement; "assault" would be a better way of capturing these colours in language. Diana Pura's "Still Life in Moonlight" is tinted in pink and light green that clash in the middle of the picture. The effect is memorable but not positively so. Indeed, I think the black and white rendering of the same image later in the book works much better (curiously, one of the images is inverted) to introduce the collection: a doll laid out with some vegetables and fruit announces what is to come in the poems, namely, poems that explore the speaker's relations with gardens and with the people she associates with gardens. Once one begins reading the poems and leaves the atrocious cover behind, one finds a careful and highly varied poetry that uses a number of different forms for different purposes. Especially noteworthy are those prose poems that use stream of consciousness which are easy to follow despite the

absence of punctuation. Here one feels that the poet is in control of the language.

Karen Mac Cormack's *Marine Snow* is a remarkable achievement: suppressing lyrical "I," Mac Cormack uses a voice that makes it possible for her to describe realities meticulously and without emotion getting in the way of reflections and descriptions. Here lies the crux, however, because this voice seems too detached to fascinate anything but the reader's intellect. The resulting poetry is dry and lifeless, but intellectually very stimulating. This is most apparent in the prose poems where Mac Cormack strings together words, displaying an idiosyncratic infatuation with the run-on sentence. A paragraph like the following is very hard to follow: one feels that something important is being said but at the same time one hesitates to spend much time deciphering it because of the disinterested tone: "the pain's just here through lodge allusion back of throat progressively extends paved or not the eyes see first what's taken in lower lip remove what wasn't there is a formula grown accustomed to". At times, Mac Cormack does use the lyrical "I." However, she only does so in the context of an assumed power relationship between the "I" and "you": "If I surrenders to you we are both powerless and unadjusted" which seems to miss the point entirely: devaluing the lyrical "I" has less to do with power than with not providing a point of entry or even interest to the reader.



That Fin-de-Siècle Feeling

Susan J. Navarette

The Shape of Fear: Horror and the Fin de Siècle Culture of Decadence. UP of Kentucky US \$37.50

Vanessa R. Schwartz

Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris. U of California P \$35.00

Reviewed by Wilhelm Emilsson

These two books are examples of how scholarly interest in the end of the nineteenth-century has increased dramatically as we move closer to the end of the twentieth. This interest is not surprising, for the parallels between the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle* and our own are striking. Lady Bracknell's line from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, "We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces," seems even more relevant today than it was when the play opened in 1895. In both periods, an obsession with style is conjoined with the uncomfortable feeling that behind the world's dizzying play of surfaces there may be nothing—except more play. Artists and thinkers of both times are haunted by a paradoxical sense of ennui and excitement. The end of the nineteenth century saw the beginning of cultural trends that are still gathering momentum: philosophers revalued all values, aesthetes and decadents pushed artistic and moral boundaries, feminists attacked patriarchy, mass culture threatened to topple high art from its pedestal, and cracks appeared in the structure of scientific orthodoxies. Earlier in the century, Darwin had woken the Victorians from their intellectual slumber by changing the very concept of nature. Stability, it turned out, was not quite natural. Darwin pictured life as an endless evolution going nowhere in particular. The only thing that was certain at the end of the nineteenth century was that nothing was certain, as ancient absolutes were being replaced by modern paradigms of relativity.

How do people react to the flux of modernity? Some look with Kurtz into its dark, hollow heart and gasp: "The horror! The horror!" Others unite with the shoppers of the world and, with varying degrees of subtlety, celebrate the great spectacle of life. In *The Shape of Fear*, Susan J. Navarette explores the first option. In *Spectacular Realities*, Vanessa R. Schwartz examines the second. Navarette focuses on a wide range of *fin-de-siècle* horror fiction, and rather than dismissing the genre as trivial, shows how it has its origins in some of the central tendencies of nineteenth century thought, especially the degenerative prophecies of Victorian science. The pursuit of science is an enormously complex activity, and one could argue that Navarette overemphasizes its pessimistic aspects. The late nineteenth century is, after all, the time of a widespread belief in the omnipotence of science and technology. There is, however, no denying the influence of the darker currents she chooses to discuss. One of the characteristics of the period was the way the belief in progress was haunted by fears of regress. Turn-of-the-century intellectuals were obsessed by the entropic forces that threatened their civilization: Cesare Lombroso argued that crime was a throwback to primeval behaviour, and his disciple Max Nordau detected signs of cultural decay in every corner. Furthermore, the second law of thermodynamics led to speculations about the ultimate "heat death" of the universe. In *The Shape of Fear*, Navarette shows how both the form and content of *fin-de-siècle* horror fiction reflects these anxieties. She examines classics such as Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, as well as texts by largely ignored authors like Walter de la Mare, Vernon Lee, and Arthur Machen. The best thing about Navarette's work is the way she combines the sociological orientation of cultural studies with a nuanced aesthetic sensibility.

She has what some cultural critics seem to lack, a genuine appreciation of literature as literature. Her book is a good example of how the aesthetic and the sociological approaches can complement each other.

However, Navarette's love of texts actually leads to some of the stylistic problems in her study. Her sentences are filled with bits of quotations which tend to interrupt the flow of her writing. More paraphrases would have been a definite improvement. Her prose is overripe, resonating with clever echoes of great nineteenth-century stylists from Poe to Pater. This approach is in keeping with her subject matter, of course, but sometimes her points get lost in the folds of gargantuan paragraphs. These flaws lessen, but do not ruin, the effect of her book. Anyone interested in horror fiction, and the relation between late-Victorian literature and science will find much of interest in *The Shape of Fear*.

Berating the entertainment business has been a favourite pastime of intellectuals for a long time. In *Spectacular Realities*, Schwartz abstains from this rather petty habit. She does not accept the standard view of the urban crowd as an alienated horde drifting in a wasteland of cheap thrills. Instead, her detailed examination of fin-de-siècle Paris shows how mass culture helped give shape to the experience of urban dwellers and bring together different classes in an enjoyment of the spectacle of city life. She is quick to point out that she is not claiming that individuals of various backgrounds experienced the city in identical ways. Rather she offers her book as a corrective to overly gloomy and hostile views of life in a capitalist economy. (Foucault's wonderfully paranoid theory of the panopticon and Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* are two influential views which she calls into question.)

Schwartz's account begins with a look at the kaleidoscopic life on the *grands boulevards* of Paris. As one of her sources puts it:

"Paris did not merely host exhibitions, it had become one." Schwartz analyses the various processes whereby reality was sensationalized and spectacularized by newspapers, wax museums, panoramas, dioramas, and film. A macabre expression of this process is the way Parisians flocked to the Morgue to view corpses that had been fished out of the Seine. The result was to turn Parisian men and women of all classes into *flâneurs*. Until now, *flânerie* has been theorized as a prime example of the privileged male gaze, but Schwartz argues convincingly that the process of relating to reality by consuming it as a spectacle is a fitting way of describing the peculiarity of the urban experience for both genders. In her book, Schwartz avoids the pitfalls of either a naive celebration of, or a cranky attack on, mass culture. The strength of her work is that it offers far more concrete analysis and less arbitrary judgements than we usually see in discussions of popular culture.

Icelandic Voices

Mike Olito

Atli's Tale. Turnstone \$16.95

Daisy L. Neijmann

The Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters: The Contribution of Icelandic-Canadian Writers to Canadian Literature. Carleton UP n.p.

Reviewed by Wilhelm Emilsson

Atli's Tale, by Winnipeg writer and visual artist Mike Olito, features a depressed, unemployed Icelandic-Canadian who by day wanders aimlessly through the grim streets of Newcastle, England and by night has recurrent nightmares about a giant, sperm-spouting worm. Then our man Atli meets a fellow Canadian, Rose the art student, whose passion in life is to photograph penises, his included. They fall in love. This may sound like a skit from *Monty Python*

or the *Kids in the Hall*, but the author is not interested in the comic potential of this material. He insists on being earnest. The hero of his novel is on a mythic quest to discover himself and his relation to the past, the present, and the future. "Atli" is an Icelandic name, and the novel opens with a very promising reference to Viking mythology, but for the most part the story's frequent allusions to well-worn mythic patterns are a bit too predictable.

The most original, and bravest, aspect of *Atli's Tale* is Olito's decision to make his hero's tragic flaw something as ungla-morous as clinical depression. The author's attempt to present the crippling effects of a mental disorder is much more engaging than his talk of past life experiences, cosmic correspondences, and other paranormal goings-on. However, the main problem with this novel is not its content, but its style. For instance, when Atli's and Rose's relationship starts to go sour their goldfish dies! Too often the author's use of symbolism is heavy-handed, the dialogue wooden, and the prose flat. Towards the end, though, the story does start to flow better.

Atli's Tale is Olito's first novel, and the text would have benefited greatly from the help of a sympathetic editor. Readers who are deeply interested in Jungian psychology, especially the collective unconscious, will find *Atli's Tale* of some interest, but it cannot be recommended to connoisseurs of style or those who are either immune or allergic to the charms of mysticism. It should be noted, however, that the ending of the story does have a certain melancholy power.

The Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters is essential reading for anyone studying the contribution of Icelandic-Canadians to Canadian literature. In order to understand this contribution it is necessary to know a fair amount about the rich literary heritage the Icelanders brought with them from their home country, and in the first part of

her book Neijmann does an excellent job of providing this background. Her handling of the scholarship, Icelandic as well as international, is impressive; her choice of quotations is generally sound; and her decision to include the original Icelandic with the translations will be appreciated by those who speak the language. The only thing I miss in this part of her discussion is a reference to a crucial expression of Icelandic homesickness, "Stökur," by the great Icelandic Romantic Jónas Hallgrímsson. The speaker lives "in agony abroad," and the opening stanza of his lament can be translated as follows:

No one cries over an Icelander
All alone—dead.
When everything is said and done,
The turf will kiss the corpse.

An analysis of the alienation, melancholy, and gritty fatalism of Hallgrímsson's poem would have provided a valuable insight into one of Neijmann's central topics: the sensibility of displaced Icelandic writers.

After introducing the literary background of the Icelanders, Neijmann chronicles the harsh saga of their settlement in the new world during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Not only did the Icelanders have to fight diseases and a strange new terrain that, in many ways, was just as difficult as the land they had left behind, but no sooner had they settled than their small community was divided by bitter internal conflicts. Paradoxically, the Icelanders' penchant for endless, self-destructive arguing kept the immigrants so focused on themselves that they managed to preserve their language and culture much longer than is common among most immigrant groups.

In the third part of her book, Neijmann discusses the literature, written in Icelandic, by this first generation of settlers, the so-called West Icelanders. Even the best of these writers are complete unknowns to most Canadian scholars. An example of

two outstanding West Icelandic authors who certainly deserve more attention are Stephan G. Stephansson, who combines his hard-earned understanding of the immigration experience with a modern articulation of the saga ethos of self-reliance, and Káinn, a witty, hard-living gravedigger, whose poetry is as sharp as a bayonet.

Neijmann analyzes the inevitable shift from Icelandic to English in the context of another intriguing writer, Laura Goodman Salverson, who was the first novelist to introduce the Canadian reading public to an insider's view of immigrant life. The credit for this is often given to Frederick Philip Grove, but Neijmann points out that Salverson's novel *The Viking Heart* (1923) predates his series of pioneer novels. (An Icelandic scholar, Guðrún B. Guðsteinsdóttir, has recently discovered an even earlier novel about immigration life by a West Icelander, but she notes that the book probably merits obscurity!) Neijmann's sensitive reading of Salverson's texts and championing of her work is a timely addition to Canadian literary history.

Neijmann's valuable addition to Canadian studies continues in the forth part of her work in which she offers fine interpretations of the best-known Icelandic-Canadian writers: David Arnason, Kristjana Gunnars, and W.D. Valgardson. Drawing on the background material from the previous sections, she places these authors in the literary and cultural context that is crucial for an understanding of their work. However, the fact that Neijmann arranges this part of her book thematically results in some repetition. A different ordering of the material would have eliminated the slight awkwardness that this produces.

In the concluding section of *The Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters*, the tone changes drastically from calm analysis to a surprisingly bitter polemic against the effects of multiculturalism on Icelandic-Canadian

literature. Neijmann is not against multiculturalism per se, but she argues against what she feels are its shallow and disempowering effects on non-Anglo-Canadian writers. She warns that while ethnic writers are encouraged by the literary establishment to write about their own background, this often has the effect of marginalizing them even further, for they unwittingly write themselves into "ethnic ghettos." She concludes that this has been the case with Arnason, Gunnars, and Valgardson and suggests that in order to break out of their literary ghetto they have now turned away from an exploration of their Icelandic heritage to write about topics that fit better into the Canadian mainstream. If this is correct, it is certainly a curious development in a time when meaningful cultural exchange is supposed to be at its peak. While some readers may disagree with this bleak view of multiculturalism, the thesis that the ideal of the cultural mosaic may lead to conformity rather than diversity is certainly worth a second thought. However, the main value of Neijmann's book lies in its detailed information about Icelandic-Canadian literature, and it is likely to renew interest in the resonance of the Icelandic voice in Canadian literature.

Analyse et perte

Ginette Pelland

Hosanna et les duchesses. Étiologie de l'homosexualité masculine de Freud à Tremblay. la Pleine Lune. n.p.

Jean Marc Dalpé

Lucky Lady. Boréal et Prise de parole. n.p.

Reviewed by André Levasseur

De l'analyse. . .

Prenant comme postulat les théories de la sexualité et, plus particulièrement, celles freudiennes et lacaniennes de l'homosexualité, Ginette Pelland se propose de mon-

trer comment deux fictions québécoises des années soixante-dix correspondent au développement psychogénétique qu'attribue la psychanalyse à l'homosexuel et au travesti. Ainsi, après une revue des propositions sur la fixation du désir et de l'objet sexuels et une explication du célèbre cas Schreber (un psychotique paranoïaque), l'auteure prend en exemple deux des personnages les plus flamboyants de l'œuvre de Michel Tremblay, Hosanna (alias Claude Lemieux) et la duchesse de Langeais (alias Édouard), afin de «faire ressortir à quel point le discours de la fiction rejoint là [...] celui de la théorie pour ce qui est de la monstration de l'homosexualité masculine.»

Avec un langage très simple et misant sur une facture conceptuelle claire—ce qui n'est pas à négliger compte tenu de la terminologie très spécialisée de la psychanalyse—, Pelland trace un tableau fort éloquent des rapports parents-enfants dans la formation de l'identité homosexuelle. Quoique avec certaines (plusieurs) redondances, l'auteure explique Freud et Lacan avec une connaissance et une aisance hors pair. Avec les deux premiers chapitres plus particulièrement, elle collige les nombreux concepts liés au développement de l'identité sexuelle, en général, et de la «perversion», en particulier, qu'elles soient hétéro- ou homosexuelles.

Cette emphase mise sur les travaux de Freud et Lacan constitue à la fois le point fort et le point faible de l'ouvrage. Non pas que Freud ou Lacan soient à mettre au rancart, mais une recherche approfondie devrait à tout le moins considérer plus sérieusement les travaux qui ont été réalisés depuis: beaucoup d'encre a coulé depuis les travaux des deux pères de la psychanalyse; des doutes ont surgi, mais aussi des réaffirmations. D'abord, on ne retrouve nulle mention des remises en question (légitimes) des gais eux-mêmes. De plus, l'auteure s'empresse de régler de façon lapidaire la question féministe aussitôt

soulevée: «En introduisant la notion de phallus comme symbole du rapport au manque, Lacan a réussi pour une bonne part à surmonter les impasses interprétatives reliées, d'un côté, à la notion d'une envie du pénis chez la femme, gauchement mise de l'avant par Freud et, d'un autre côté, aux concepts de masculin et de féminin, avec leur pendant actif-passif, qui risquent de faire basculer le questionnement dans une optique explicative essentialiste à laquelle n'échappent pas bien des aspects du discours féministe américain.» À cela il faut ajouter le fait que ce n'est pas la première fois que la psychanalyse sert de base théorique pour élucider l'inconscient des textes ou celui des personnages de Tremblay et que ces références font également défaut ici.

Aussi la question du lectorat auquel est destiné cet ouvrage se pose-t-elle. Tant les spécialistes de la psychanalyse que ceux de l'œuvre de Tremblay ne trouveront guère de quoi nourrir leur réflexion. Par contre, celui qui chercherait un brillant exposé faisant le point des théories sexuelles de Freud et de Lacan et qui s'intéresserait à la question sans savoir où commencer dans la multitude des écrits livrés par ces derniers y trouverait son compte.

Il paraît aussi important, puisque l'auteure s'intéresse à «une perspective interdisciplinaire, alliant philosophie, psychanalyse et littérature» (donc qui devrait remettre en cause les a priori des manifestations humaines) de s'interroger sur l'hypothèse qui sous-tend toute l'argumentation et touche l'actualité et la justesse des théories psychanalytiques par le biais de textes contemporains. Quoique la démonstration soit irréprochable et bien menée, il faudrait peut-être poser la question différemment, à tout le moins faire mention des autres manières dont la question a déjà été traitée. Il y aurait lieu aussi de se demander si cette communauté de pensée entre la psychanalyse de la première moitié

du siècle et la fiction de la deuxième moitié indique tellement une adéquation entre la théorie et la création, ou si elle ne signifie pas plutôt l'omniprésence et la prégnance d'un discours. De la perte . . .

Un des matériaux de recherche les plus importants de la psychanalyse est sans contredit l'exploration de la parole et du langage. Or la parole, accès à la connaissance, peut faire souvent défaut et l'on pourrait penser que la communication se perd, que la poésie ne se crée plus. Ce n'est véritablement pas le cas de la pièce de théâtre de Jean Marc Dalpé. «Le théâtre, art de paroles» ne sonne pas comme un lieu commun, une rengaine éculée avec la pièce *Lucky Lady*: art de la parole, soit, mais théâtre d'une parole avortée, des phrases rarement terminées, coupées, hachurées par une barre oblique, une parole qui ne franchit plus les lèvres, un souffle qui s'arrête. Une cassure se crée dans l'idée difficilement exprimée: le vocabulaire fait défaut. Des mots qu'on ne trouvera pas ou qu'on répètera, faute de synonymes: «j'me sens chanceuse d'avoir la chance.»

L'histoire se résume finalement à peu de choses. D'ailleurs, celle-ci semble de moindre importance. Les personnages le sont. La gamme de personnages qui nous est présentée n'est pas sans rappeler l'univers de Tremblay: des personnages pauvres, délinquants pour certains, sans grande instruction, mais des personnages qui vivent. Ils (et elles, surtout) vivent une désespérance, un désenchantement face à leurs profonds désirs: désillusions de se réhabiliter pour le prisonnier, désillusion de la mère qui ne fait pas confiance au père, désillusion de la chanteuse qui se sent trahie par l'agent . . .

Cependant, les personnages ont cette force de vivre, une force brute, ce qui leur fait tout miser sur un cheval: *Lucky Lady*. Et malgré le désespoir, malgré le pessimisme, ils gagneront. «J'ai pas fucké», dira un des personnages à la toute fin. Non,

il n'a finalement pas «fucké» l'enjeu, mais, à un certain point, il traduit l'esprit de la pièce: «tout est fucké». «Fuckés» sont les êtres de cet univers. «Fuckée» est l'intrigue, car elle se termine par un «happy ending». «Fucké» est le langage car il est pauvre, presque inexistant, truffé de raccourcis faciles—un langage déficient pour certains, mais un langage qui atteint une poésie certaine. Malgré leur incapacité langagière, malgré leur difficulté à exprimer clairement ce qu'ils ressentent ou ce qu'ils pensent—«J'veux dire . . . c'que j'veux dire c'est . . . c'est que tu l'prends» —, les personnages réussissent, de peine et de misère, mais pour notre grand plaisir, à nous communiquer une poésie, un bien-être qui, sans contredit, fait diversion à notre univers parfois aride.

Avec Dalpé, on apprécie des personnages à la fois complexes et simples, en somme pleins de vie. Une étude comme celle de Pelland pose des questions: les personnages de la duchesse et d'Hosanna resteront-ils dans notre mémoire comme des névrosés, ou faudrait-il s'en souvenir en tant que personnages très forts et, certes, problématiques, mais témoins de la nature humaine?

Jewishness and Memory

Norman Ravvin

A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity, and Memory. McGill-Queens UP \$44.95/\$15.99

Elizabeth Greene, ed.

We Who Can Fly: Poems, Essays and Memories in Honour of Adele Wiseman. Cormorant \$19.95

Reviewed by Batia Boe Stolar

In his collection of essays, *A House of Words*, Norman Ravvin discusses the role that history, particularly the Holocaust, and memory play in Canadian and American Jewish identity and writing. For Ravvin, the meeting point between contemporary “North American” Jewish writ-

ing and the historical past is a "portal" that "marks the meeting place between our narratives and the history that haunts them; it represents the point of confrontation between traditional manners of thought and radical ones." Using what he refers to as an "eclectic" approach, Ravvin explores the "points of confluence between the contemporary world and the past [which] reveal each writer's way of contending with continuity and loss, with identity and assimilation." Ravvin's *bricoleur* approach frames his study within on-going debates within Jewish literature and criticism generally, and offers interesting perspectives within Holocaust studies in particular. Ravvin's study further points to, but does not directly explore, another current critical concern, the differentiation between Canadian and American Jewish writing and experience, and its location within such current critical discourses as multiculturalism and postcolonialism.

In four sections, which are not divided across national lines but rather focus on thematic concerns, Ravvin reconsiders canonical post-war "North American Jewish" texts and explores the impact that the Holocaust plays in the literary consciousness of its authors. He considers why, when "writing about the Holocaust, Eli Mandel, Leonard Cohen, and Mordecai Richler place themselves under a single and fundamental constraint: they will not directly represent it." Instead, Ravvin argues, "their work examines how the Holocaust is *lived* by those who have survived, as well as by those who were born in comparatively peaceful times, far away from the mass graves and killing sites of Europe." Ravvin focuses on Mandel's "unusual juxtaposition of prairie landscape and Jewish culture," Cohen's use of Hitler as a literary and pop signifier and Richler's pitting the passive victim against the active, or vengeful, victim/hero roles, before moving on to discuss the legacy of a history of

ghosts. Within this latter context that Ravvin examines Philip Roth's symbolic "literary patrimony" and "obsession with struggles—both literary and familial—between sons and father figures," which points to the "concern with the language of one's ancestors, as a revealing characteristic of their identity." And, as Chava Rosenfarb's literary testimony as a Holocaust survivor illustrates, Ravvin argues, experiences themselves become the very ghosts that inform such concerns.

Finally, Ravvin considers the Jewish writers' response to American apocalyptic narratives, and suggests that "Jewish writers often counter apocalyptic narratives by presenting novelistic worlds that do not resolve," but encompass a "mosaic" or "hybridized" form that "mix genres, as well as contemporary with historical concerns" and produce an entry into "an already existing dialogue rather than present any final scenes of instruction." He considers assimilation narratives and personas of Nathanael West, whose "curious mixture of cultural decay and yearning after the divine" is, for Ravvin, symbolic, and Saul Bellow, whose "question of responsibility" points to another "possibility of an ethical alternative to apocalyptic narratives." This question, in turn, leads Ravvin to analyze the "tangled issues of responsibility among bystanders and collaborators during the Holocaust," which he examines by discussing the controversy of Paul de Man's "wartime writings" and Jacques Derrida's response to de Man. Ravvin's essays offer an interesting reconsideration of canonical texts within a critical framework that seeks to "address the way in which each author contends with identity and memory, with continuity and loss."

Concerns with the effects of the Holocaust on contemporary Canadian Jewish identity and memory are also relevant to Elizabeth Greene's *We Who Can Fly*, a tribute to Adele Wiseman. The book

clearly establishes Wiseman's self-representation as a Jewish Canadian (later older) female writer, which marginalized her in the marketplace. Greene states that almost all of Wiseman's "central characters are Jewish and exemplify Jewish values, such as the importance of family and children within the family. . . . [And,] inextricable from her determination to be a Jewish writer is her decision to write about anti-Semitism, whether it occurs in Winnipeg or Toronto, or as part of Canadian policy in Ottawa, or in its most violent and terrible forms, in pogroms and in the Holocaust." Within this context, Wiseman's biographical work, *Old Woman at Play* (1978)—from which evolved the "doll shows," a tribute to her own mother's artistry of doll-making as a form of cultural and historical storytelling—is especially significant. Equally important is the relationship between Wiseman and her own daughter, Tamara Stone, who is also an artist. Stone's contribution to Greene's collection emphasizes the struggle and vision of her mother's artistic career, and the continuation of this matrilineal artistic legacy.

Greene edits a number of poems, critical essays and memoirs, which introduce readers to Wiseman's literary contributions, particularly to her lesser known short-fiction and poetry, but also to the impact and influence that her literary persona has had in the Canadian literary community, particularly in her capacity as Writer-In-Residence at various universities, including Concordia and Windsor, and, most significantly, as Director of the Writing Programmes at Banff. For readers who are familiar with Wiseman's works, which include *The Sacrifice*, winner of the Governor General's Award for Fiction in 1958, *Crackpot* (1974), and *Memoirs of a Book Molesting Childhood and Other Essays* (1987), *We Who Can Fly* offers seminal critical essays, particularly Michael Greenstein's feminist and post-colonialist

reading of *Crackpot* and Greene's investigation of the influence of Wiseman's poetry on her last short story/novella, "Goon of the Moon and the Expendables." Reena Zeidman's reading of Biblical and Midrashic interpretation in *The Sacrifice* and Kenneth Sherman's "*Crackpot*: A Lurianic Myth" also further Wiseman criticism. Of critical interest, as well, are Lenore Langs' discussion of Adele Wiseman's unconventional poetry, Gabriella Morisco's interview with Adele Wiseman regarding her own writing and "feminism," Rachel Wyatt's recollection of her adaptation of *Crackpot* for the stage, and an excerpt from the Margaret Laurence-Adele Wiseman correspondence. *We Who Can Fly* also provides historical, biographical and bibliographical materials.

The portrait of Adele Wiseman is largely informed by the various recollections of other writers and poets—Caroline Adderson, Ven Begamudré, Colin Bernhardt, Stella Body, Mary Cameron, Don Coles, Mary Lou Dickinson, Sylvia Fraser, Steven Heighton, Ingrid MacDonald and Joyce Marshall—who, in spite of their diverse literary styles and personalities, unanimously concede that each was positively influenced and encouraged by Wiseman's direct approach to and uncanny understanding of their works. Gary Geddes' recollection of a "literary exchange" to China by a Canadian delegation, the "gang of seven," which included himself and Wiseman, similarly conveys Wiseman's unconventionality, strength and willingness to share her own cultural and literary experiences with all members of "the tribe," a term that Dickinson recalls Wiseman used to refer to fellow literary artists. Greene's interview with Arlene Lampert, "one of Adele Wiseman's best friends," and the various poems about and for Wiseman by such poets as Lenore Langs, Seymour Mayne, Anne Michaels, Katherine Quinsey, Kate Rogers, Kenneth

Sherman and Lois Smedick, offer testimonies to the unconditional giving that characterizes Wiseman. Finally, Wiseman's own, previously unpublished, poems and lesser-known "Goon of the Moon and the Expendables" convey the range and artistry of Wiseman's literary accomplishments. These various portraits and memoirs depict the influence, courage, devotion, and legacy of one often ignored Jewish Canadian female literary artist.

Generation in a Coma

Russell Smith

Noise. Porcupine's Quill \$18.95

Douglas Coupland

Girlfriend in a Coma. Harper Collins \$27.00

Reviewed by Kegan Doyle

"Life," according to Frank Zappa, "is high school with more money." For many, high school is where life's script gets written and performed; everything after is a re-run. Two recent novels by young (ish) Canadians deal with characters trying to cope in a world that often seems to them like a big high-school.

Russell Smith's *Noise*, the follow-up to his critically-acclaimed debut *How Insensitive* (1994), relates the adventures of James Rainer Willing as he confronts the bright lights and big noise of Toronto. A (somewhat) gifted violinist and aspiring intellectual, James has, like many a young man from the provinces before him, been corrupted by the city. He writes laughably pretentious restaurant reviews, hangs out at cafés with names like Splat, attends readings by execrable performance-poets and generally dissipates into the city's rarefied stratosphere. Broke, frazzled, and almost brain-dead, he catches a break when he is assigned by *Glitter*, an American fashion magazine, to do a piece on Canadian poet Ludwing Boben. Boben is a washed-up

dandruffy Farley Mowat-esque figure, who, through the unfathomable caprice of Manhattan's fashion god, has become the Next Big Thing. As he writes the article, James encounters a variety of misfits and scenesters. One of them is Nicola, a sexy, shallow young photographer with whom James has a disastrous fling. Although the article James eventually publishes is drivel, it causes a stir. Ironically, it ends up giving him the cachet that allows him to do what he really wants to, namely, produce a serious column on classical music.

Throughout, Toronto's relentless noise threatens to destroy James' life, but it also energizes it.

One of Smith's aims in this fast-moving, often entertaining book is to satirize Toronto (a Toronto for which he also clearly shows an affection). The city comes across as maniacally trendy, a place teeming with *poseurs*. But Smith's satire is rarely caustic. It lacks bite. He often resorts to cliché and stereotype: an Australian talks about throwing "shrimp on the barbie;" James is frightened when he looks through a window and thinks he sees a monster, which turns out to be a woman wearing a green facial treatment. This is the stuff of sitcoms, not Swift. At other times, he doesn't seem to have the idiom down. Take, for instance, a conversation Willing overhears between two graduate students:

"I really don't think that after Foucault," said the bearded guy loudly, as if addressing a conference, "you can think that the body even *exists*, I mean we don't even have a self any more—" "Wait a minute," said the pale woman. "My body doesn't exist?" "We can no longer afford to think so." And he downed his beer conclusively.

A few moments later an irritated James "accidentally" steps on the man's foot. The man grimaces—he really does have a body after all! None of this is very funny. The woman's question is predictable. The step

on the foot is too self-satisfied, as are a lot of James, quips and one-liners. Finally, the bearded man is too much of a caricature. There are no doubt many hundreds of pretentious graduate students in Toronto, but they are more ingeniously pretentious than this. Satire needs subtlety.

The most successful part of the novel is James' brief return home to Munich, Ontario, where he has a short romance with a friend from high-school. Here we see what James is fleeing: the bland realities of much middle-class existence—faux-Tudor pubs in shopping malls, seemingly people-less subdivisions with names like Woodcrest Heights. Here we see what makes the noise of Toronto so appealing.

The characters in Douglas Coupland's *Girlfriend in a Coma* also hail from a suburb, West Vancouver. As the novel begins, it is 1979, and two high-school sweethearts, Karen and Richard, are, in the snow on Grouse Mountain, making love for the first time. That evening the seventeen-year-old Karen falls into a coma. Nine months later she gives birth to Megan. Eighteen years later she awakes. Her daughter has grown up and her friends have grown prematurely old. Some tried to leave—to Europe, to Las Vegas—to find themselves, to have careers. But they eventually came back, to join the others who stayed to get married and raise children. Nobody has found meaning in life after high-school. But, by 1997, they have found money—working in Vancouver's burgeoning film industry.

The coma, a phenomenon that is, as Coupland says, "more modern than plastics and tv," is a potentially wonderful device with which to explore issues of change, both cultural and personal. But Coupland doesn't know what to do with Karen once she awakes. He doesn't show how the resurrection makes her friends reflect on their own lives. Nor does he show convincingly how the world has changed since 1979. (People, Coupland intimates, have become

much more nihilistic and career-oriented since those halcyon days of the late seventies. The late seventies!?) Most disappointingly, he does not show in any detail or depth what it is to be Karen, post-coma. This could have been fascinating. What is it like to be a seventeen-year-old in a thirty-four-year-old's body? What is it like to, suddenly, at seventeen, have a sixteen-year-old daughter and a worn-out, thirty-four-year-old boyfriend? Not sure what to do with her character, Coupland simply pushes her aside and, like a Hollywood screenwriter who has run out of ideas, starts to kill people; in fact, he kills everybody in the world (except for Karen and her friends), in what is the most boring apocalypse ever written. The novel ends when the ghost of Jared, a high school football star and friend of Karen and company who died of leukemia, appears. He promises to restore the world if his friends commit themselves to leading a wonderful life:

In your old lives you had nothing to live for. Now you do. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Go clear the land for a new culture—bring your axes, scythes, and guns.

This is a finale so mawkish and contrived that it would make even Steven Spielberg cringe. Coupland excels at conveying the spiritual and emotional lethargy of those who have learned about life from ABC, but he is no philosopher and his answers to big questions are about as deep as the lyrics of a Supertramp song.

Both these writers can turn the odd nifty phrase and have some flair for observing the pack. But, as it stands now, both suffer from an affliction that is common to teenagers around the world and that may prevent them from maturing into serious artists: they have nothing much to say. We will have to wait for their next novels to see if there can be life after high-school.

A Publisher's Letters

Sam Solecki, ed.

Imagining Canadian Literature: The Selected Letters of Jack McClelland. Key Porter Books
\$26.95

Reviewed by Janet B. Friskney

Imagining Canadian Literature: The Selected Letters of Jack McClelland is a welcome addition to the scanty collection of works available about Canadian book publishing. Comprised of approximately 170 letters either authored or received by McClelland between 1949 and 1982, the volume offers a revealing look at one of the most significant Canadian publishers of the mid-twentieth century. Even so, this collection provides only an introduction to the vast resource represented by the McClelland and Stewart (M&S) archives held at McMaster University. The limitations of space ensure that this volume is one of partially-revealed stories.

Solecki, has divided the letters into four chronological periods. Each section opens with a brief introduction in which the editor sets out basic contextual information about M&S for the period in question. The volume is rounded out with a preface by McClelland and a general introduction by the editor. In the latter, Solecki argues that since McClelland "wrote no books and has so far not completed his memoirs, his letters are the most revealing testament to his career and influence." That statement is borne out by the letters that follow. Through them the reader is privy to the publisher's delight with, and concerns over, specific titles and his enthusiasm for, and frustrations with, particular authors. While the letters collectively reveal that McClelland was committed to responding to and accommodating the wishes of his authors as best he could, they also make clear that his patience had limits. When his patience was exhausted he was capable of

composing and delivering a vivid and unexpurgated piece of prose that left little doubt about his feelings on a matter.

In terms of the information that might be drawn from it, the volume will hold greatest appeal for those engaged by an interest in Canadian literature and its history. As the title of the book implies, Solecki's selection focuses on McClelland as a publisher of Canadian writers of literary prose and poetry. Major Canadian literary figures, such as Margaret Atwood, Earle Birney, Leonard Cohen, Margaret Laurence, and Mordecai Richler, are highlighted. Writers of non-fiction, political memoirs and popular fiction, by contrast, are represented only to a small degree. Solecki also places a certain amount of emphasis, both in his section introductions and through his choice of letters, on several M&S series, such as the Canadian Centenary Series, the Carleton Library, and, particularly, the New Canadian Library.

One might speculate that Solecki's bias as a literary scholar is what leads him to privilege editorial concerns and the personal relationship between authors and publisher over other publishing issues. In an introductory note on Pierre Berton, the editor regrets that, though "there are more files devoted to Berton and his books than to any other M&S author, the letters are disappointing because they deal primarily with matters of design, contracts, promotion and royalties." Arguably discussion of such matters is fodder for scholars of the history of the book. Moreover, in the McClelland letter to Berton which follows, one might have hoped to see a note addressing the historiographical significance of Michael Bliss's advice to the author, given that it speaks to the debate among Canadian historians at that time about the relative merits of political and social history.

Solecki and his publisher might reject such criticisms, however, as too narrowly

academic. As the editor states in the "Editorial Note," his objective was not to produce a scholarly edition. Structured to appeal to a more general readership, the scholarly apparatus present in the book has been kept to a minimum. Cuts to the letters have not been indicated in the text while notes, for the most part, are confined to identifying individuals mentioned in the letters. On a few occasions identifications have not been established, which is puzzling given that McClelland presumably could have been consulted. Other flaws marring the volume are several errors of dating and the apparent misordering of one of the letters from Phyllis Webb. Finally, if one accepts the premise that this title has been prepared for a broader readership, then one might question Solecki's use of several specialized literary terms without clarification and his presumption of his readers' knowledge of concepts such as those of a Canadian literary canon and a modern Canadian literature. However one classifies the volume, it is to be hoped that one of its effects will be to encourage researchers to use the letters collected in it and to pursue those that remain unpublished in the M&S archives.

Canadian Myth-Making

Catharine Parr Traill

The Backwoods of Canada. Carleton UP n.p.

Norman Knowles

Inventing the Loyalists. U Toronto P \$18.95

Reviewed by T.B. Vincent

Traill's book (originally, London 1836) is the eleventh title to emerge from the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts. Edited by Michael Peterman, it reflects the high level of professional scholarship for which this series is noted. The text is the product of a careful collation of early published versions and the supporting notes are thorough; the

bibliographical and textual information is marked by the same care and thoroughness. The editor's Preface and Introduction are written in an amiable and intimate style befitting the tone of the work itself. For the most part, the information presented here is biographical and historical. Peterman also reviews the book's original reception and briefly surveys the views offered by more recent critical commentary. Taken together, the supporting materials provide a valuable context for appreciating the text. If anything is missing, it is Peterman's own thoughts on the significance and value of the work. His is clearly engaged in the text, but he seems reluctant to offer his views on what makes the work important more than 150 years after its first publication.

By contrast, Knowles's book is structured around a transparent thesis, so much so that its origin as a scholarly dissertation is at times a bit too obvious. A revisionist history, the book argues that "scholars have imposed a unity and coherence that obscure the diverse set of interests and motivations that have shaped the Loyalist tradition over the decades." For Knowles, "the re-invention of tradition [is] a complex process of social and cultural negotiation by which different groups, interests, and generations compete with each other over the context, meaning, and uses of the past." Accordingly, he argues: "The Loyalist tradition was not inherited, but was continually re-invented by groups seeking to create usable pasts that spoke to contemporary circumstances and concerns." The study traces the changing perceptions of the Loyalist migration and settlement from the late 18th century to the First World War. It focuses almost exclusively on Ontario society, and suffers somewhat from the presumption that parochial Ontario views may be read as national perspectives. On the whole, however, it is an interesting and convincing study of an influential element in the social and political development of Ontario.

What, for Canadian literature readers, is the value of linking these two books? Certainly, both are concerned with the "story" of settlement, but perhaps more important, together they demonstrate the uses and abuses of myth-making in the process of cultural identification. Both books deal with the projection of imaginative constructs that elevate particular human experience in such a way that it reveals an inherent, mythic quality beneath a mundane reality, a commonplace experience. But the intentions and results are quite different. Traill works to create a construct where insight and experience are shared and the process of myth-making functions inclusively, where you join her in her exploration of backwoods-life imaginatively if not literally. Knowles describes a process which explicitly functions in an exclusive manner, a set of imaginative projections designed for the most part as an instrument of exclusion.

In his Preface, Peterman confesses: "During classes in the [Trent] University Library I could look out on the fast-flowing Otonabee, the river that Moodie described so enthusiastically. The work exercised a curious power over me, a hold that I had trouble accounting for not only to the students . . . but also to myself." The connection between the river out-the-window and the river in-the-book plays tricks on our sense of time and place when we allow our imaginations to link personal and projected experience, the literal and the literary. They become two anchors in a world of enlarged consciousness and meaning, a position of understanding to which we (as teachers) would like to invite our students, but are all too frequently unsuccessful. Moodie and Traill are important because they are successful. Their imaginative constructs elevate "Canadian pioneer experience" to a mythic level, not because they are romantic, ideal or heroic in depiction, but because they articulate elements of that experience

which continue to this day in ordinary lives, unrecognized amid changed circumstance. The constructs, the mythologies they wove, become points of reference revealing to consciousness elements of continuity and universality in human experience here in this place. Perhaps the most obvious point of connection is the presence of the natural world. While we may currently fear its retreat, the natural world that engaged Traill's curiosity and passion is still with us and the experience of human consciousness confronting and exploring that world is still open to us. In addition, we have the record of Traill's experience which adds a shared dimension to our own. Because of writers like Traill, we are not condemned to the present, but stand amid the collective, inherited, shared experiences of living in this land.

Knowles's study is a detailed record of a process of myth-making designed to effect a pattern of social and ideological exclusion. He presents a disturbing story of how a small number of narrow-minded men, driven by a divisive nationalism, hijacked a moment of historical experience and invested it so thoroughly with their partisan views that it was devalued as a positive element in appreciating the nature of early Canadian settlement. For Knowles, the history of Ontario Loyalists amounts to an ongoing series of deliberate distortions aimed at promoting the ideological and class concerns of a self-interested minority. Knowles's book would suggest that such is the nature of tradition (or myth), a continuous process of redefinition to suit present needs. In this type of imaginative world, nothing endures, nothing can be trusted, everything is shaped by the impulse of the moment and fraught with ulterior motive. In such a world, there is no history, no literature, only various form of propaganda. Perhaps it is time to re-read Orwell.

Poésie québécoise et canadienne-anglaise

France Tremblay

Souffle d'eau. Vermillon n.p.

Pierre DesRuisseaux

Contre-taille : Poèmes choisis de vingt-cinq auteurs canadiens-anglais. Triptyque n.p.

Compte rendu de R. Matilde Mésavage

On entre dans le deuxième recueil de France Tremblay, *Souffle d'eau*, par une triple porte, le titre étant celui de la première partie aussi bien que celui du poème inaugural. En plus, le poème éponyme reprend ce syntagme nominal trois fois, ce qui semble faire fusionner la forme et le fond, la respiration complète consistant en trois parties (inspiration, rétention, expiration). Poète et peintre de Charlevoix, France Tremblay reste peintre avec sa plume, ses poèmes débordant d'images. Le dégel de la rivière se métaphorise en création poétique :

Je gonfle du souffle d'eau

Je frôle les rochers aux fils verts

Ligotée aux êtres de bois

Qui guettent les ombres

Et les plumes au passage

Je m'humilie devant la mer

Correspondance dissimulée devant les flots

Le poète, bateau ivre, participe de la rivière, de l'unité dans la multiplicité. En effet, tout le recueil respire au rythme de l'eau qui met en scène l'inspiration poétique venant de la nuit des temps :

De mes anciennes vies m'est revenue la
poésie

M'enivrer de perles porteuses de vie

La rime et l'allitération créent une atmosphère magique. Et plus loin :

Je suis née pour écrire

Pouvoir pénétrer au cœur des images

A la recherche des mots

Pour exprimer la différence

Entre regarder et voir vraiment.

La voyance, attribut par excellence du poète, lie le fragment au tout, la vague devenant inséparable de la mer :

Et toujours la présence de l'eau en moi [. . .]

Seul le poète

Peut tout dévoiler sans le dire

Mes regards pénètrent la terre

Je suis la mouvance dans le vent qui me
fend

Sur le miroir d'un sable refoulé par mes
mains

Érotisation de la rivière qui devient femme, liquéfaction de la femme devenant rivière, les poèmes de France Tremblay ont aussi leur dose de souffrance et de peines d'amour. Mais l'amour pour un être de chair semble finalement dépassé. La transition commence à se faire dans la deuxième partie du recueil, "L'autre rive," qui met en scène la recherche d'une réalité autre. « Je monte l'escalier de minuit / En frimas de poésie. » Les êtres de chair disparaissent lorsqu'on en a le plus besoin, mais l'invisible perdure : « La rivière / Déesse douce et belle / Aquarelle. » La création artistique liée à la nappe phréatique de l'univers permet au poète de réaliser sa délivrance en rencontrant son âme soeur :

Je suis née pour elle

Dans sa bonté d'être ma jumelle

A m'ouvrir tout vrai son âme

Prête à mourir pour elle

Pour ne pas la dire

La vivre

La re-vivre

Poésie

Souffle d'eau nous invite à participer au silence et à l'immobilité de la méditation qui nous conduit au cœur de la poésie. France Tremblay nous y mène avec sensibilité et intelligence.

Pierre DesRuisseaux s'est proposé une tâche ardue : la traduction de la poésie. Le

volume contient une préface du poète canadien, Louis Dudek, un des auteurs choisis, suivie d'un avant-propos et d'une introduction du traducteur. Comme son choix de poèmes se base sur « une sorte d'affirmation de la modernité qui anime nos littératures réciproques, » le recueil ne contient que des textes écrits depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Quant au choix de poètes, le traducteur s'est plu à « laisser aller toute [sa] subjectivité. . . »

Dans l'introduction, DesRuisseaux affirme que « l'univers poétique canadien exprime avant tout des réalités concrètes associées à l'espace. » (Le lecteur notera que le terme "canadien" se réfère principalement à la poésie d'expression anglaise, tandis que *l'autre solitude* s'intitule "poésie québécoise".) Si un certain nombre de poèmes, en fait, semble répondre à cette observation, tel que "David," il y en a suffisamment qui mettent en oeuvre une sensibilité intimiste qui pourrait remettre en question cette affirmation. A titre d'exemple, qui pourrait ne pas voir une certaine parenté entre "Voici une photographie de moi" de Margaret Atwood et "Il y a certainement quelqu'un" du recueil *Le Tombeau des Rois* d'Anne Hébert? Ou bien entre "Le Pensionnat" de Joan Crate et certaines strophes du poème "Monde irrémédiablement désert" de Saint-Denis Garneau?

Les vingt-cinq poètes sont présentés par ordre alphabétique plutôt que par ordre chronologique. Un paragraphe trop lapidaire indiquant la provenance du poète, aussi bien que certaines de ses activités et ses oeuvres, précède chaque groupe de poèmes. Comme le paragraphe introductif n'occupe, pour la plupart, qu'un quart de la page, on aurait apprécié une présentation des poèmes choisis, comprenant, peut-être, la situation du texte ainsi que quelques phrases analytiques telles qu'on trouve dans de nombreuses anthologies de poésie québécoise. On aurait voulu connaître, par exemple, les circonstances du poème de

Brenda Riches, ou celles de Earle Birney. De plus, une petite photo de chaque poète aurait été la bienvenue.

La traduction de la poésie est un projet intimidant qui, selon certains, devrait être réservée aux poètes seuls. On pense aux traductions de Baudelaire ou celles de Mallarmé. Nous avons donc de la chance qu'un poète ait entrepris ce travail. Il est évident que les vers non rimés et irréguliers de la poésie moderne posent moins de problèmes, et DesRuisseaux a, pour la plupart, la main heureuse. Par conséquent, il est d'autant plus regrettable qu'un bilingue n'ait pas révisé sa traduction afin de corriger les fautes et les contresens. Par exemple, dans le poème "How poetry works," de Colombo, "By stage whispers" devient "En murmurant sur la scène" au lieu de "en aparté", ou bien "By touching bottoms" se transforme de façon surprenante en "En appuyant sur des boutons", au lieu de "En allant au fond" (par exemple). Il y a aussi "puissant" pour "heady" au lieu de "capiteux" ou "grisant", "bifurqué" pour "curved", "couvertures" pour "sheets". "I cursed myself" devient "je m'en voulais" au lieu de "je me maudissais", "consciousness" devient "l'inconscience" et "goodnight" devient "bonsoir" au lieu de "bonne nuit". Pourtant, le contresens le plus choquant paraît dans le poème "David", où le narrateur, ayant précipité son copain mourant dans le vide, a peur de tomber sur le cadavre : "I remember / Only the pounding fear I would stumble on It" devient "Je ne me souviens que de la peur battante sur laquelle j'allais me buter." Cette phrase défigure le moment le plus dramatique du poème. La strophe suivante continue le contresens.

Quoi qu'il en soit, les poèmes présentés méritent d'être connus par le monde francophone, et on ne peut qu'espérer que les anthologies bilingues à venir surmonteront mieux les difficultés de la traduction poétique.

The Ice-White Eye

Jane Urquhart

The Underpainter. McClelland and Stewart \$29.99

Reviewed by Marlene Goldman

When Jane Urquhart spoke about the creation of her soon-to-be published novel at a reading at the University of Toronto in 1997, she expressed a sense of wonder. At one point, she confessed to the audience, "When I was a few chapters into the first draft of this novel, it became apparent that I would be telling the story from a man's perspective. But not just any man—this was an American." Evidently, she herself was taken aback and a bit awed by the challenges she had set for herself.

Readers familiar with Urquhart's work will be equally impressed by the risks that she has taken in her latest novel. For the first time, she has written the entire story from a man's perspective; it is also the first time that she has restricted the perspective to a single individual. The novel has clearly launched her in important new directions.

Following the lead of innovative writers such as Ford Madox Ford, Urquhart places the story in the hands of an unsavoury and potentially unreliable narrator, the eighty-three-year-old painter, Austin Fraser. The novel opens in 1977, with the reclusive Austin living in his "great cold barn of a house" in his native Rochester, New York. Austin is overcome with memories because he has just learned about the death of his former model and mistress, Sara Pengelly. Austin shared fifteen years of his life with Sara, but, owing to his fears of intimacy, was never able to love her.

Within the antiseptic walls of his minimalist abode, Austin entertains his ghosts and labours over a series of paintings titled "The Erasures," which rely on the age-old technique of underpainting (a process in which preliminary layers of paint are carefully obscured by the addition of secondary

layers of paint and glazes, so that the original subject matter is obscured). The novel constitutes a record of his memories, which he translates into images and embeds in his paintings. He crams his canvas and, by extension, the novel, with the broken shards of his past; then, ever so slowly, he begins the process of obscuration.

The spiritual disease that paralyzes Austin and prevents him from revealing himself and forming close and lasting attachments, has long fascinated Urquhart. In her first novel *The Whirlpool* (1986), a similarly reclusive young poet named Patrick tells Fleda, the woman who loves him, that he cannot stand to be close to her. "Learn this," Patrick says, "I don't want to be this close to you. Not now, not ever." This same fear of proximity plagues Austin; he, too, cannot bear the thought of disappearing into others. Whereas Patrick recognizes that he is ill, Austin rationalizes his neurosis and parades it as an aesthetic principle—the necessary distance between subject and object without which vision and art would cease to exist. For Austin, distance and coldness are essential to his vocation. As he observes, it is only "the ice-white dot in the middle of the pupil which makes the eye live."

In his reminiscences, Austin explains where he learned his credo, and recalls the Greenwich Village art scene of the 1920s and 30s. A pupil of the famous artist Robert Henri and friend of the celebrated painter Rockwell Kent, Austin is initially receptive to their antithetical approaches. Rockwell, who believes in plunging into life, advises Austin to do the same. As he says, "Women are like forests. . . . You can't just enter them, you must let them enter you as well." By contrast, Austin's teacher, Robert Henri, warns him to keep his distance from the world. Henri maintains that the artist "owns, controls and is therefore free to manipulate any subject—animate or inanimate—any subject that has, however casu-

ally, caught his attention." In the end, Henri wins the battle for Austin's soul. At the age of eighteen, when Austin travels to his father's lakeside summer property in Canada, the northern landscape near Thunder Bay captures his fancy, as does the body of Sara Pengelly, but he keeps his distance from both. Although certain stylistic features signal a significant departure for Urquhart, the novel's account of the reification of both the Canadian landscape and the female body is a familiar theme in Canadian literature. Works ranging from Atwood's *Surfacing* to Susan Swan's *The Biggest Modern Woman of the World* all raise similar prickly concerns about the "ugly American," Canada's relation to the United States, and the disquieting parallels between Canada's identity and women's identity in society. Austin's attitude toward Canada and Sara specifically recalls Northrop Frye's observation that, after the Northwest Passage failed to materialize, Canada became a "colony in the mercantilist sense, treated by others less like a society than as a place to look for things." As Frye explains, "a feature of Canadian life that has been noted by writers from Susanna Moodie onward is the paradox of vast empty spaces and lack of privacy, with no defences against the prying or avaricious eye." Austin, whose success as an artist stems from the fact that his paintings appealed to wealthy New Yorkers who "loved wilderness landscapes" and "wanted Sara's fair skin," is, in many ways, a familiar plundering imperialist.

The novel explores familiar binary oppositions between American and Canadian, stasis and motion, and art and craft, to name only a few. Early on, we are told that Austin's father works as a clerk in George Eastman's factory; yet, his lively mother, who revels in the cycles of weather and nature, despises cameras because they "stop things" and "obliterate" everything outside the frame. Austin takes after his father; in

1920, when he first glimpses Sara holding a broom, he imagines "the sharp edge of a graphite pencil capturing the motion, the gesture. Freezing it."

Throughout his life, Austin subjects not just Sara, but everyone he meets to this same withering imperialist gaze. During his meetings with George Kearns, the sensitive young Canadian artist who runs China Hall (a shop in Davenport) and paints on china, Austin pontificates about the difference between craft and "real art." George, a poor Canadian craftsman, serves as foil for his snobbish American friend. Whereas Austin celebrates modernism, George recognizes that valuable traditions and ways of life are in the process of disappearing; he mourns the fact that before the war there were two worlds of art—the world of high art and the world of craftsmanship; after the war, there is only one world of art, Austin's.

Ironically, although Austin asserts his superiority over the lower-class Canadians whom he befriends, he would be at a loss without access to the vivid and gripping stories of their lives, which he uses as fodder for his art. Entire paintings are devoted to George's youthful and ill-fated romances, first with Vivian Lacey (a heartless girl in Davenport) and, later, with Augusta Moffat (a shell-shocked nurse addicted to morphine). Whereas his Canadian friends throw themselves into relationships, life, and war, and are broken in the process, Austin chooses to preserve himself. In the end, he remains aloof and monstrously intact. Although, on occasion, the novel seems desperately chilly and readers may tire of listening to the narrator anatomize his failings as a human being for the umpteenth time, I suspect that even these irritating aspects are part of a larger trap laid for the reader. At one point or another, the reader will find herself either empathizing with the narrator or remaining a voyeur. Whether the reader feels compassion or sits in judgement, unmoved by

the narrator's loss, the novel performs its task of exposure: after peering into Austin Fraser's ghost-filled canvases and staring into the ice-white dot of his eye/I, readers depart from the novel knowing whether they are as emotionally barren as Urquhart's master underpainter.

Les tribulations de la critique québécoise

Josée Vincent

Les tribulations du livre québécois en France (1959-1985). Nuit Blanche Editeur \$22

Lucie-Marie Magnan et Christian Morin

Lectures du postmodernisme dans le roman québécois. Nuit Blanche Editeur \$23.95

Reviewed by André Lamontagne

A des moments précis de l'histoire des études littéraires, certains concepts connaissent un essor fulgurant tout comme certaines perspectives semblent soudainement s'imposer au discours critique.

Retraduites dans le champ québécois, ces orientations témoignent-elles d'une convergence de savoirs ou d'un effet de mode? C'est la question qui se pose à la lecture de deux monographies récemment parues.

L'ouvrage de Josée Vincent se situe à la conjonction des recherches sur l'édition et des travaux sur l'institution littéraire. Son objet se révèle toutefois inédit, car si des critiques ont exploré les échanges entre le Canada et la France ainsi que la postérité des écrivains québécois outre-Atlantique, aucune étude ne s'était intéressée spécifiquement à la fortune en France de livres édités au Québec, et encore moins sous l'angle de la diffusion subventionnée.

L'historiographie du phénomène que nous propose Vincent s'ouvre sur les années 50, période creuse pour les éditeurs québécois qui, après le faste de la guerre, subissent un recul et se voient contraints d'élargir leur marché vers la France et de

solliciter l'aide financière de l'Etat.

L'auteure rappelle les jalons dans le développement d'une politique du livre : projets gouvernementaux, fondation du Conseil supérieur du livre, ententes culturelles franco-québécoises, naissance des centres culturels et premières participations à des foires internationales. Les chapitres suivants se concentrent sur trois tentatives de diffusion collective subventionnées. Tout d'abord, l'expérience parisienne du Centre de diffusion canadien-français (1967-74), dont sont analysés dans le détail le fonctionnement, les acteurs, les catalogues, le chiffre d'affaires, et dont l'échec illustre le conflit entre les lois du marché français et l'image de la littérature nationale que cherchent à véhiculer les éditeurs québécois. La réplique du gouvernement fédéral ("Livres du Canada—Books from Canada"), entreprise généreuse sur le plan financier mais nullement gratuite sur le plan politique, produira des résultats désastreux (un taux de retour des livres de 95%), encore une fois imputables à la prégnance de l'idéologie. La dernière tentative, entre 1978 et 1985, verra la Librairie du Québec dégénérer en boutique d'artisanat et démontrera hors de tout doute que l'exploitation de la nationalité ne peut assurer la rentabilité et l'implantation permanente du livre québécois en France. Au terme de l'analyse, Josée Vincent conclut que la vente des droits et la coédition demeurent les seules issues possibles pour les éditeurs québécois.

L'étude accuse certaines faiblesses, ou plutôt certaines limitations qu'impose le cadre d'une thèse de maîtrise. Ainsi, l'auteure reconnaît l'intérêt qu'aurait présenté la prise en considération d'une série de tentatives privées importantes, la consultation des fonds d'archives du Conseil supérieur du livre et des centres de diffusion ou encore une analyse de type synchrone. Ces précautions rhétoriques ne sauraient faire oublier qu'il y a un pas à

franchir de la thèse à l'ouvrage savant, et que c'est à l'éditeur de s'assurer d'un remaniement adéquat. Ceci dit, *Les Tribulations du livre québécois en France* dresse un bilan de la diffusion subventionnée qui constitue un apport important *bourdieusienne* du marché des biens symboliques. L'ouvrage met également en lumière les liens idéologiques entre les gouvernements et le Conseil supérieur du livre, dont les dirigeants (Hébert, Patenaude, Hurtubise) sont des éditeurs aux tendances fédéralistes plus qu'avouées. Enfin, les documents figurant en annexe contiennent une mine de renseignements pour qui s'intéresse à la composition des catalogues offerts à Paris et dans les expositions internationales ou à la lettre juridico-commerciale des politiques québécoises du livre.

Je ne reviendrai pas ici sur la consécration trop rapide du postmodernisme, l'emploi parfois abusif du terme ou à l'inverse son utilisation distancée, sinon pour dire que dans le pullulement des discours qui s'écrivent sur le sujet, l'essai de Magnant et Morin possède l'honnêteté de ses limites : marqué du sceau de la vulgarisation, il cherche à expliquer certaines oeuvres québécoises représentatives du postmodernisme et les concepts associés à ce mouvement pour le bénéfice d'un lectorat de niveau collégial.

La première partie de l'ouvrage met en relation les composantes du récit et les axes du postmodernisme jugés les plus pertinents par rapport au contexte littéraire québécois (autoreprésentation; intertextualité et autotextualité; savoirs en question; identité en mutation). Elle s'organise en chapitres qui portent respectivement sur l'organisation narrative, la narration, les personnages, l'espace, le temps et les jeux de langage. Si l'analyse se veut sommaire, elle n'en détaille pas moins avec beaucoup d'efficacité les différentes formes d'autoreprésentation et les fonctions de l'intertextualité. Les propositions d'exercices

apparaissent stimulantes. On soulignera également le souci constant d'inscrire les différentes composantes du récit (par exemple, le temps et l'espace) dans une perspective thématique. La volonté de généraliser pose toutefois problème. D'une part, plusieurs affirmations font l'économie d'une démonstration soutenue : à en croire les critiques, les personnages du roman postmoderne québécois seraient campés de manière assez traditionnelle et leur physique serait rarement décrit en détail, tandis que le sujet ne s'engagerait pas consciemment dans une quête dont il est l'objet. D'autre part, l'insistance sur le motif de la quête, dans une certaine mesure, grève l'analyse. Si l'identité se révèle un thème-fétiche de la postmodernité, comme le montre la discussion du *Souffle de l'har-mattan*, de *Guanahani* et autres romans, il est hasardeux de faire de la quête initiatique un critère taxinomique. La faible représentativité du corpus et le traitement rapide des oeuvres n'autorisent pas la tentative de synthèse thématique, qui culmine dans une pétition de principe : "Bref qui dit postmodernisme dit quête d'identité sur fond de parcours initiatique."

Après un lexique utile et une courte bibliographie critique, l'étude fait place à des "Propositions de pistes de lecture" qui ont le mérite de légitimer des auteurs non canoniques : Ying Cheng, Christian Mistral et Louis Lefebvre, pour ne nommer que ceux-là. Les éléments d'analyse sont pertinents, encore qu'ils trahissent parfois les défauts précédemment signalés : peut-on affirmer que *Le couteau sur la table* se situe à la frontière du postmodernisme parce qu'il est "difficile de déterminer si le protagoniste s'y engage vraiment dans une quête initiatique"? Sur le plan théorique, *Lectures du postmodernisme dans le roman québécois* cite plusieurs références incontournables, mais pourrait être mieux informée : les considérations d'ordre narratologique, parfois confuses, s'arri-

ment au modèle de Paul Larivaille et à la sémantique narrative de Greimas (curieusement présentée comme désuète), alors que la distinction entre modernisme et postmodernisme est par trop sommaire. Bref, tout se passe comme si l'urgence didactique de comprendre un courant littéraire actuel et complexe coexistait difficilement avec la lecture plurielle du postmodernisme québécois à laquelle nous invitait pourtant le titre de l'ouvrage de Magant et Morin.

Lives of Girls

Anna Zurzolo

Bread, Wine and Angels. Turnstone P \$17.95

Sally Ireland

Fox's Nose. Cormorant \$19.95

Reviewed by Julie Beddoes

These first novels are both memoirs of childhood and early adolescence. Both are attractive and admirable in many ways but, in the end, unsatisfactory except as works in progress.

Julie, in Ireland's book, was born in Canada but her Russian family's life in British Columbia is haunted and hampered by their experiences in Leningrad during the siege of 1941-42. The family is an exotic mixture of bohemians though it has an anchor in a farm named Fox's Nose after the country property they once owned in Russia. The novel starts with Julie's first sexual experience at the farm; she discovers her grandmother's diary of the siege and excerpts from the diary are juxtaposed with episodes in her life in Vancouver. Her unhappy, eccentric relatives are not much help to her as she has to learn to handle her hostile schoolmates, her spiteful best friend and the friend's even nastier brother.

The friend's family are Germans and the wartime enmity recorded in the diaries is paralleled with conflicts a generation later.

The novel ends with a series of resolutions: Julie's father dies, leaving his mistress pregnant, and she reconciles with her friend before going to live with her ballerina mother in England. The paralleling of past and present, the grandfather who does nasty things in the woodshed, the unconvincing reconciliation, the disposal of difficult characters and the birth of a child are obvious devices. In a more richly-written book, or one with a more complex structure and character development, they might have been less obtrusive. As it is, the novel is a somewhat shapeless series of events and explanations with little sense of surprise and no buildup of suspense. The writing too is often irritating with gratuitous lapses into purple prose. It may be important that her father's mistress lends Julie a scarf (compare and contrast with mother's neglect) but the description of it as "achingly soft" is a distracting cliché.

Occasional references suggest that the memoir, set in the seventies, is written by a much older woman than fourteen-year-old Julie. The passages of comment and interpretation are not obviously the thoughts of either the adolescent or the adult. This lack of subtlety in the writing, along with a shapeless story and unattractive characters, means that the book offers neither the conventional rewards of situations one cares about nor the rarer ones of aesthetic pleasure. *Fox's Nose* suggests, however, that its author's imagination is capable of offering readers a great deal once problems of technique are overcome.

Bread, Wine and Angels too is a somewhat shapeless string of anecdotes which end in the storyteller's departure for another country, this time from southern Italy to emigrate to Winnipeg. The unnamed narrator is the youngest of a brood of children left with aunt and grandmother while the parents go to make a life in Canada. The family is poor, in both its branches, but the Canadian branch eventually prospers

enough to send for the Italian family. Again the problem of what to do with a character whose needs hinder other people's mobility is solved with a death and this event represents the girl's coming of age and also the closest the book comes to a climactic point.

It takes a long time to get there. We see the village change a little as postwar recovery means that stoves, cars and other comforts gradually enter the villagers' lives, and the parents' lives in Winnipeg gradually improve. All the same, the narrative and its characters, despite the exuberance of the writing, seem stuck in one spot. Phrases, sentences, folksy sayings are repeated and repeated; anecdotes take a long time to tell, interrupted by passages of moralizing, often justifying the storyteller and her family who are presented as unfairly marginalized by the villagers, especially the schoolmaster and the priest.

The storyteller's grandfather had once defied the church and his descendants are not baptised. The women in the family dare to question the traditional folk wisdom that justifies the absolute power of the men in the village. However, these refusals of traditional authority are not allowed to go too far and the book is mostly a nostalgic

elegy for happier, simpler times. (Nino Ricci has looked at a similar community with a much sharper eye.) Most chapters are named after comestibles—latte, funghi, biscotti, vinegar, and so on.

Each is prefaced with a recipe; how long will the fashion for recipes in novels last? What I looked for as I read, apart from wishing that someone had cut the manuscript to about half its length before printing, was some sense of the storyteller's situation at the time of the telling. The informal, chatty tone suggests we are to imagine we are hearing a story told to a close friend or relative but there is no sense of the discourse's relationship to the story: of where the storyteller is, of whom she is talking to and when, and, as in Ireland's novel, of how much of the commentary on events comes from the presumably adult memoirist and how much was in the mind of the child at the time.

In both books, this lack of self-reflexivity suggests that we read them for the qualities that traditional suspension-of-disbelief realist fiction can offer. In providing this suspension, these books are dress rehearsals, not the finished, accomplished performance.



PRAIRIE FIRE

1999 Writing Contests

\$3,000 in Prizes

Bliss Carman Poetry Award

Deadline September 30, 1999

up to 3 poems per entry

totalling no more than a maximum of 150 lines in all

Short Fiction

Deadline October 31, 1999

one story per entry, minimum 1,500 words,

maximum 15,000 words

Personal Journalism

Deadline November 30, 1999

one article per entry, maximum 5,000 words

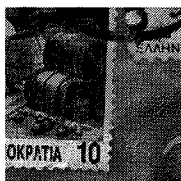
for full contest details, send a SASE to: *Prairie Fire*,
423 - 100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1H3 or visit www.mbwriter.mb.ca

Runner-Up, Best Journal Design 1998 CELJ International Competition

t h e I n t e r a r t s P r o j e c t

Establishing Frameworks

1



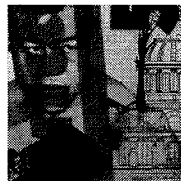
Cultural Agendas

2

The Interarts Project (Mosaic, 1998, Vol. 31, Nos. 1-4) answers many timely questions about the cultural significance of changing relationships between the arts. Featuring 36 original essays, with illustrations and citations of current research, these special issues will serve as an invaluable text for teachers and scholars in the restructured university of the 21st century.

Representing Women

3



4

Challenging the Mainstream

Start a new subscription to *Mosaic* in 1999 and receive all four issues of *The Interarts Project* for 50% off the cover price!

Individuals ☐ 1-year \$30 ☐ 2-years \$52

Students ☐ 1-year \$20 (enclose copy of student i.d.)

Institutions ☐ 1-year \$45 ☐ 2-years \$80

The Interarts Project (4 issues):

☐ \$29 with subscription ☐ \$59 without subscription

The Interarts Project (single issues):

☐ \$7.50 with subscription ☐ \$14.95 without subscription

Please specify which issue(s): _____

Canadians pay in \$CDN, GST included; outside Canada, pay in \$US; outside N. America, add \$5 US/yr for subscriptions, \$3 US/copy for single issue

☐ Check enclosed, payable to *Mosaic*

Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Exp. date _____

Acct. no. _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

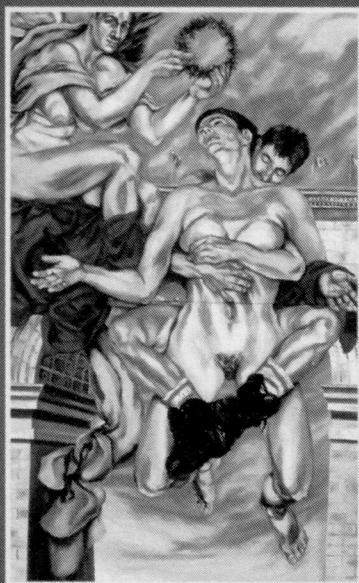
E-mail _____

Mosaic

a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature

208 Tier Bldg., University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T 2N2
Ph: 204-474-9763; Fax: 204-474-7584
e-mail: mosaic_journal@umanitoba.ca
www.umanitoba.ca/publications/mosaic

Essays on Canadian Writing



PARALITERARY SCANDALS IN CANADA

*First-class writing
about Canadian writing.*

ESSAYS ON CANADIAN WRITING

2120 Queen St. East, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario M4E 1E2

(416) 694-3348, FAX (416) 698-9906

www.ecw.ca e-mail: cyril@musica.mcgill.ca

Annual subscriptions \$20 (3 issues), libraries \$40

ARIEL

A REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LITERATURE



Edited by Victor J. Ramraj

A quarterly devoted to the study of literatures in English around the world, *ARIEL* has subscribers and readers in more than fifty countries.

"ARIEL today is at the forefront of the exciting new work being done on the literary and theoretical consequences of colonialism and the postcolonial condition." Linda Hutcheon, University of Toronto

Recent Special Issues

- Postindependence Voices in South Asian Writings (January 1998) \$15.00
- Postcolonial Children's Literature (January 1997) \$15.00
- Samuel Selvon: Memorial Tribute (April 1996) \$10.00
- Writing the New South Africa (January 1996) \$12.00
- Postcolonialism and Its Discontents (January & July 1995) \$18.00
- Contemporary North American Native Writings (January 1994) \$12.00
- New Voices in Caribbean Literature (January 1993) \$12.00
- Commonwealth Drama (January 1992) \$12.00
- Literature of Travel (October 1990) \$12.00
- Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism (October 1989) \$15.00
- Nadine Gordimer (October 1988) \$10.00

Recent issues include articles on:

Chinua Achebe • Paula Gunn Allen • Mulk Raj Anand • Margaret Atwood • Paul Bowles • Dionne Brand • Erna Brodber • Hugh Brody • Frances Brooke • Roy Campbell • Canadian Ethnic Anthologies • Bruce Chatwin • George Elliott Clarke • Michelle Cliff • Joseph Conrad • Isabella V. Crawford • Beatrice Culleton • David Dabydeen • Anita Desai • Marian Engel • Timothy Findley • Roy Fisher • Janet Frame • Eduardo Galeano • Allen Ginsberg • Goan Novels • Nadine Gordimer • Wilson Harris • Samuel Hearne • Jewish-Canadian poetry • Rudyard Kipling • C. J. Koch • Hanif Kureishi • Sonny Ladoo • George Lamming • Doris Lessing • Roger Mais • David Malouf • Lee Maracle • Kamala Markandaya • Daphne Marlatt • Pauline Melville • V. S. Naipaul • Ngugi wa Thiong'o • Michael Ondaatje • Rexford Orotola • Philippine Writing in English • Caryl Phillips • Jean Rhys • Salman Rushdie • George Ryga • Olive Senior • Leslie Marmon Silko • Sistren Theatre (Jamaica) • Wole Soyinka • Gayatri C. Spivak • Randolph Stow • Graham Swift • Mary TallMountain • Ned Thomas • Derek Walcott • Welsh Poetry • Albert Wendt • Zoë Wicomb

Individual \$23.00 Student \$15.00 Institution \$33.00

(Any one special issue is available at half the cover price with a one-year subscription)

ARIEL, Department of English, University of Calgary, Calgary NW, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4
(403) 220-4657 FAX (403) 289-1123 E-MAIL ariel@ucalgary.ca
Web Site: <http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~ariel/>

Essays

Blanca Chester is a Ph.D. candidate in the Programme of Comparative Literature at the University of British Columbia. She has taught a number of courses in Native literature at Simon Fraser University and is currently completing her dissertation on Native American and First Nations literatures. She has also worked extensively with the ethnographer, Dr. Wendy Wickwire, on translating the oral texts of Okanagan storyteller, Harry Robinson, into print.

Margery Fee teaches First Nations, Canadian and Postcolonial literatures at the University of British Columbia and is currently conducting research on minority public intellectuals and English as a discipline in Canada.

Jane Flick teaches in the English Department at the University of British Columbia. She is the author, with Celia Millward, of *Handbook for Writers* (1998) and co-editor, with Herbert Rosengarten, of *The Broadview Reader* (1998).

Marlene Goldman teaches Canadian literature and women's writing at the University of Toronto. Her book *Paths of Desire: Images of Exploration in and Mapping in Canadian Women's Writing* was published by the University of Toronto Press.

Florence Stratton teaches in the Department of English at the University of Regina. Her main areas of interest are African literature and Canadian literature. She is the author of *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* (1994).

Herb Wyle is a sessional lecturer at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He has published numerous articles on contemporary Canadian literature and is currently writing a book on contemporary Canadian historical novels.

Poems

Tony Cosier lives in Nepean, ON., **Robert Kroetsch** and **Hannah Main van der Kamp** in Victoria, B.C., **Carole Langille** in Lunenburg, and **Leonard Neufeldt** in West Lafayette, IN. **Susan Mc Caslin** teaches at Douglas College, **Stephen Bett** at Langara College and **Peter Dale Scott** at the University of California, Berkeley.

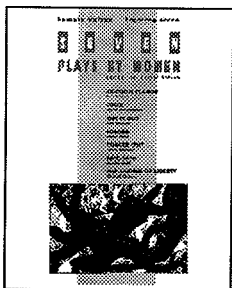
Reviews

L. Aikman, **Blanca Chester**, **Glenn Deer**, **Tamas Dobozy**, **Kegan Doyle**, **Wilhelm Emilsson**, **Sherrill Grace**, **Stefan Haag**, **Joy Henley**, **André Lamontagne**, **André Levasseur**, **Catherine Nelson-McDermott**, **Judy Z. Segal**, **Ulrich Teucher**, and **Gernot Wieland** all teach/study at UBC. **Susan Gingell** teaches at the University of Saskatchewan, **Jennifer S.H. Brown** at the University of Winnipeg, **Barry Cooper** and **Melanie Kolbeins** at the University of Calgary, **Klay Dyer** at the University of Ottawa, **Janet B. Friskney** at Carleton, **Terry Goldie** at York, **Marlene Goldman** at the University of Toronto, **Scott Gordon** at the University of New Brunswick, **Lawrence Mathews** and **Batia Boe Stolar** at Memorial, **R. Matilde Mésavage** at Rollins College (Winter Park, FL), **Jed Rasula** and **Stephen Ross** at Queen's, **Catherine Rainwater** at St. Edward's University (Austin, TX), and **T.B. Vincent** at Royal Military College, Kingston. **Dean J. Irvine** lives in Montréal, and **Julie Beddoes** in Toronto.

Playwrights Canada Press

AURORA METRO PUBLICATIONS

A list of collections introducing some of Europe's finest playwrights, many in translation for the first time!



Female Voices – Fighting Lives: Seven Plays by Women

A bumper collection of drama and criticism from women writers and theatre practitioners. It includes chapters on the current work and achievement of women in theatre – feminism and aesthetics – the status of women in theatre – director training for women.

0-95158-771-4 • \$15.95

Six Plays by Black and Asian Women Writers

Plays for stage, radio and television. Comedic, poetic, historical and magical writing combined with social and spiritual themes make this an exciting collection

0-95158-772-2 • \$16.95

NICK HERN BOOKS

This distinguished list includes some of England's most exciting contemporary playwrights, as well as a many of the world's most enduring theatre classics.

Shakespeare

by Harley Granville Baker

The classic guide to Shakespeare's major plays, in pocket format volumes for use in study or the rehearsal room. "A deep and penetrating intelligence illuminates his observations, and they remain permanently relevant." – Peter Brook

prefaces to:

Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Cymbeline, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, King Lear, Love's Labour Lost, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer's Night Dream, Othello, Romeo and Juliet

\$11.95 each

And plays by Chekhov, Jonson, Molière, Aristophanes, Ibsen, Dryden, Marlowe and more! As well as books of criticism, biography, history and theatre practice.

For a complete list of our Canadian, American and British titles request a 1999 trade catalogue from our office!

54 Wolseley Street, Toronto,
Ontario, M5T 1A5

tel: (416) 703-0201, fax: (416) 703-0059
e-mail: orders@puc.ca

Or visit our website! www.puc.ca