

Calling Out the McLean Boys

George Bowering's *Shoot* and the Autobiography of British Columbia History

Where historians try to come to grips with a period which has left surviving eyewitnesses, two quite different concepts of history clash, or, in the best of cases, supplement each other: the scholarly and the existential, archive and personal memory. For everyone is a historian of his or her own consciously lived lifetime *inasmuch as he or she comes to terms with it in the mind*.
—Hobsbawm, 4–5, emphasis added.

When I was a boy in the Okanagan Valley I looked around a lot. Never knew what I was looking for. . . . I was scared of McLeans from the rumours I had heard, and I kept an eye out for them. Kenny McLean wasn't in my school anymore. I started to wonder whether he was a ghost that came and sat in my classroom for part of a winter.
—George Bowering, "Parashoot!: Diary of a Novel," 166.

The Autobiographical I/Eye

About one-third of the way into his 1994 novel *Shoot*, George Bowering tells us that "all through my childhood and whatever it is that comes later, I spent a lot of time alone in the [Okanagan] Valley and especially the hills" (105). The scene he goes on to describe is important, but overtly it has nothing to do with shooting or with "The Wild McLean Boys" (42). In this scene an adult Bowering remembers playing in a shale slide as a boy and uncovering bones and a human skull. This uncovering reveals that someone was here before him, that he is not really alone, that this valley exists in time as well as space, that it has layers of time/space—an archeology. He is/was an eye-witness to that evidence.

When I ask myself why I respond so keenly to *Shoot*, it is Bowering's autobiographical voice I return to, his voice and his uncovering of bones. As Bowering calls Canadian history to account by calling out the McLean Boys,

it is *his* voice and story I attend to, his autobiographical I/eye that guides me into my own feelings about the history and landscape of British Columbia and about the three McLean brothers—Allan, Charlie, and Archie—and their tough young companion, Alex Hare. This first-person voice makes a claim on my attention that a third-person voice would not because I know that Bowering did grow up in the BC interior and is, therefore, speaking from personal experience. Rightly or wrongly, that personal experience, his right to say “I,” and my expectation that he will tell me about something he has actually experienced lend an urgency and an authority to his narrative that, as a reader, I have learned to accept and trust. Before reading *Shoot*, I knew next to nothing about the McLean Gang, but Bowering’s “I” leads me to think he will tell me the truth. Such is the power of that autobiographical “I.”¹

According to Bowering, these four young men were, indeed, bad news—violent, resentful, ignorant, destructive. They robbed and assaulted people, destroyed property, broke out of the Kamloops jail, and finally



Allen McLean



Charlie McLean

committed an extremely violent murder of an unarmed man who tried to talk them into surrendering before they went too far. All four were “half-breeds” (in the terminology of the day): half Scots or French and half Indian, Shuswap to be precise. Lacking in education, property of their own, steady employment, or a recognized place in 1870s British Columbia society, they chose to terrorize that society in Kamloops and the Nicola Valley. And yet, in *Shoot* Bowering makes me care about the “Boys”; he asks me to understand and sympathize with them; he presents me with a larger picture than one shoot-out, one murder, or one theft; he urges me to shift some of the blame for what happened in the winter of 1879 to other people and forces me to acknowledge a host of lived complexities; he insists that hanging the “Boys” was barbarous, political revenge far in excess of anything they did singly or together. By calling out the history of the McLean Boys, George (like Conrad’s Marlow) makes me *see* a heart of darkness in the BC interior of the 1870s.



Archie McLean



Alex Hare

But how does he do this without lecturing me? How does he elicit my sympathy without embellishing or suppressing the ugly facts or asking me to accept the notion that boys will be boys? What and whose story is he telling in *Shoot*? For some answers to these questions, I have turned to literary theory, history, cartography, and archives. I have also drawn upon my personal knowledge of the Cariboo and, thus, on aspects of my own autobiographical response to place and text. I have tried, in short, to combine what Hobsbawm calls the scholarly and the existential. For the scholarly—or, at least, for my theoretical—approach to this text, I have drawn upon the concepts of contact zone and transculturation developed by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* and upon recent theory in autobiography studies, most importantly the work of Paul John Eakin, Leigh Gilmore, and Philippe Lejeune. For the existential (as Hobsbawm calls it), I turn to Bowering's comments in "Parashoot!" his personal "diary" of this novel and to my own reading of BC texts and landscape. What these scholarly and existential approaches tell me is what I so often sense when I reflect upon BC history and what I see represented in *Shoot*—that BC is not so much *post*-colonial as a contact zone of on-going colonization and, potentially, of transculturation, whether I am looking at Vancouver, in the south-west corner of the province (as Bowering does in *Burning Water*, for example), or at the central interior area known as the Cariboo, where *Shoot* takes place.²

Describing the phenomenon of transculturation in *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt explains that a "contact zone," the site par excellence of transculturation, is "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish on-going relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (6). Moreover, she explicitly distinguishes the concept of contact zone from that of colonial frontier. The latter, more familiar term implies not only a hierarchy of colonizer (European and political centre of power) over colonized (non-European and marginal) but, more importantly, a one-way process of influence in which the colonizer remains immune from any contact with the colonized. The actual experience of a contact zone, according to Pratt, is two-way, uncontrollable, and mutually informing.³ For Pratt—I would argue, for Bowering in *Shoot*—the contact zone foregrounds, situates, and facilitates transculturation: that process of "interactive, improvisational" (Pratt 7) colonial encounter in which relations between colonized and colonizer threaten to transform both parties (to some degree) unless the racial, ethnic, linguistic, legal, political, and territorial boundaries and hier-

archies that protect the colonizer from contamination are reasserted. On one level, of course, the actual racial mixing—the miscegenation producing “half-breeds”—that created the McLean brothers makes them biological contact zones and sites of transculturation that the white authorities of the day felt obliged to repudiate. Bowering’s task is to unearth them from the shale/history of their time/space, and allow them (and those who tried to contain them) to bear witness to an actual process of transculturation that the dominant culture (in BC, in Canada, in history books) still tries to deny.

To address this phenomenon of transculturation, Bowering adopts an autobiographical position: he confesses his personal interest in the Valley (*Shoot* 105) and in the story hidden in its hills. By making his personal stake in the story clear—from boyhood he has been haunted by the absence of the McLeans, while sensing their influence all around him—he authorizes himself to tell their story, to show how, as Eakin might phrase it, their/his/our lives become stories *through* relations of self with other in the contact zone of transculturation. In other words, by telling their story, Bowering tells (aspects of) his own; by recreating the McLeans as fictional selves, he can also recreate himself. In *Autobiographics*, Leigh Gilmore approaches the problem of “making selves” (Eakin) from a different angle than does Eakin, but her conclusion is remarkably similar. Gilmore defines “autobiographics” as the practice of articulating and thereby producing an identity that emerges from interruptions in the apparently seamless continuity of self-representation; it emerges from the resistance to and contradiction of conventional, externally imposed definitions of identity (42). Thus, in his autobiographics of George Bowering and the McLeans, Bowering produces fragmentary, multiple (and often contradictory) perspectives on a past that has not only shaped himself and the region known as the Cariboo, but also has conditioned through settlement, development, laws, maps, and history that larger contact zone of transculturation we call British Columbia.

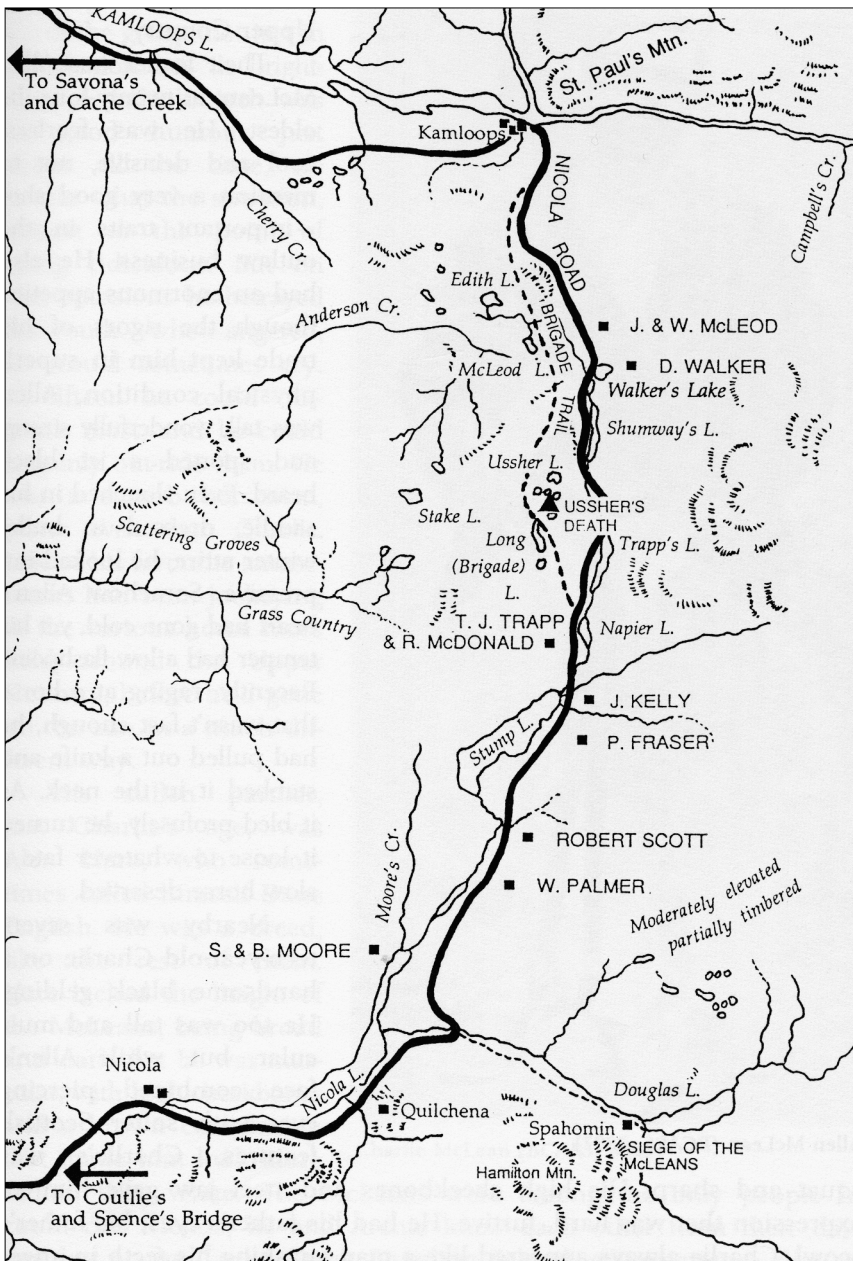
Indeed, why stop at the BC border? *Shoot* is exemplary of many Canadian (and only Canadian?) texts that use an autobiographical sextant to map similar contact zones and to locate similar sites of transculturation—*Kiss of the Fur Queen*, for example, or *A Discovery of Strangers* to name just two (see Grace 189–90, 253–60). As with these novels, I find it less useful to think of *Shoot* as a postmodern, metafictional, or even a historical novel than to think of it as a hybrid text, a mongrel novel, a mixture of true story and legend (“slu-hai-yum or s-chip-tak-wi-la,” 44).⁴ It mixes autobiography, I/eye-witness testimony, history lesson, legend, myth, western tall-tale, and

regional realism, all of which are sedimented in layers of time and place, with an almost impossible ethical intention of making *us* (by which I mean the majority of his readers who will be white, middle-class, Euro-Canadians) recognize our own autobiographical position in a contact zone where we too face Hobsbawm's "existential" challenge to transculturation and our responsibility for "personal memory" in a shared past (4–5).

Shooting History as Geography

Shoot is about the so-called McLean Gang who terrorized the country around Kamloops in the late 1870s, stole a black stallion from a rancher named Palmer, vowed revenge on another man named Mara for seducing and dishonouring (Allan calls it rape) their kid sister Annie, murdered the local lawman called Johnny Ussher, who was leading a posse to reclaim the stolen horse—murdered and then pulverized him and then boasted about it—raided every farm and ranch they passed for booze, weapons and ammunition, and finally fetched up, circa 9 December 1879 at the reserve of Chief Chillitnetza (Allan McLean's father-in-law) hoping to raise an army of Indian warriors to drive the whites off Indian land. The chief said no. The Gang was trapped in a log cabin on the reserve by a large posse of white men determined to bring them in dead or alive, but preferably alive. The posse laid siege to the cabin for several days, slowly starving the Gang into submission. When the Gang surrendered, they were shackled, stripped (notably of their boots), and taken to Kamloops for their first hearing on 15 December. Ten days later, after a rough trip through the worst winter the region had seen, the Gang was delivered to the penitentiary in New Westminster on Christmas day 1879.

The landscape of *Shoot* will not be found on contemporary maps in tourist guidebooks. Nowhere in such books are the McLeans or their disgraceful, violent acts mentioned; even the key place names associated with the story are missing or emptied of their story. But the traces are there if you look closely. In one map you can find Cache Creek, Ashcroft, in tiny print a place called Hat Creek, and to the southeast, the Okanagan Valley, where young George Bowering spent so much time alone. A more detailed map of the country between Merritt and Kamloops would show Nicola, at the southern end of the Nicola Valley; to the east Quilchena and Douglas Lake; and, to the north, Mara Lake, just south of Shuswap Lake. But the sedimented layers of history only surface fully in Mel Rothenburger's special map for *The Wild McLeans* (facing page). Here, readers have all the 1870s



Reproduced with permission of Mel Rothenburger from *The Wild McLeans* 87

geography needed to place the story of the Gang and *Shoot*: places named for nineteenth-century white settlers and ranchers on the final posse—McLeod, Walker, Shumway, Ussher, Trapp, McDonald, Kelly, Fraser, Scott, and Palmer; and places identified with the McLeans, such as Spahomin, home of Allan's father-in-law and wife, and the spot where the siege took place.

Bowering insists that the McLeans were written out of BC history, and judging from the official record that is true.⁵ But if you look hard enough you can find a few traces. There are a few popular accounts by descendants of the McLeans such as Mel Rothenburger; there are also accounts by Spinks, Macpherson, and Paterson in such books as *Tales of the British Columbia Frontier*, *Outlaws of Western Canada*, and *Outlaws of the Canadian West*. The history goes something like this: In 1834 a young Scot from Tobermory came to the so-called frontier to work for the Hudson's Bay Company. His name was Donald McLean (1805–64); he had dark red hair, a fierce temper, a profound dislike for Indians, and a very cruel streak.⁶ He worked at several HBC forts from Colville below the line to Babine and St. James to the north. By 1855, he had become Chief Trader of the HBC fort at Kamloops, a position he held until 1861. When he retired from the Company, he was given land at Hat Creek, where he created, with the help of his Indian wife, Sophie Grant, a successful ranch and roadhouse.

In 1864, McLean was executed at Soda Creek during the Chilcotin Uprising, by an Indian seeking revenge for atrocities McLean had committed against the Indians. McLean's death left Sophie a widow with two daughters and three sons to raise. One of the daughters was Annie, who fourteen years later would be raped and made pregnant by John Mara; the three sons were Allan, Charlie, and Archie, who in the winter of 1879 were 23, 17, and 14 years respectively. Five years after McLean was shot, Sophie McLean was pushed off her Hat Creek ranch and left with a meagre pension on which to support her family. She did the best she could under the circumstances, and, according to Bowering, she always reminded her boys that they were McLeans. But they were something *other* than pure McLean; they were also Indian, and in the eyes of 1870s BC they were "halfbreeds"—lesser breeds without the law.

Although all these facts, the bare bones of the story, are present in *Shoot*, Bowering does not tell the story in chronological sequence, nor does he use a single narrator or a stable narrative focalization to control the telling. The facts, documentation, accurate names of people and places, quotations from newspapers and court records, and rehearsal of events are interwoven with Bowering's autobiographical reflections. This narrative mix is further complicated by dizzying shifts in time from the present of his story-telling to the past of 1879, to the still earlier past of Donald McLean's life, to Bowering's memory of Kenny McLean, a classmate who became a hero in World War II, to the intense "presents" of the December shoot-out and of

the moments in 1881 just before the hangings, to the distant past of native oral history and myth. The narrative circles. It begins in New Westminister penitentiary with the Warden's wife, Mary Anne Moresby, who sings for the boys, and it returns to her singing at the end. In between, we have plenty of time to try to understand what made the McLean Boys and their side-kick Alex Hare into the "wild" or the "evil" McLean Gang.

Bowering gives us several narrative voices, and no recognizable pattern or cue that I can find signals when we will be presented with which voice and storyteller. These voices include native Elders discussing the affairs of men; two ancient native groups arguing over how geese whistle; three mythic brothers explaining the origins of the world; the Gang members and other characters from history (at least, their voices are the ones George Bowering creates); Bowering's friends (three of whom are mentioned in the dedication); and, significantly, a nameless chronicler, who can give us the history not there in the official history books. This chronicler (a colloquial, third-person narrator) carries an important focalizing and ethical burden within the larger narrative framework of the story. He does all the conventional things a reader expects from such a presence; he also disappears behind or merges with a still more personal voice that I identify as "George Bowering." As a conventional chronicler, he fills in missing history and provides facts, temporal perspective, a crucial textual matrix for all the other voices, and several degrees of interiority. This interiority creates an illusion of subjectivity for the characters, whose thoughts, feelings, and perceptions no one can actually have access to but that readers accept as produced by the pact they agree to when reading a novel. To mention a pact, however, by which I mean that tacit agreement or unwritten contract I sign with a writer to believe what he or she tells me, brings another pact immediately to mind—that far more demanding and ostensibly overt pact I enter into when I read a work that claims to be autobiographical.⁷ To enter into what Philippe Lejeune calls an autobiographical pact is to believe that the author and the narrator are one and the same and are, therefore, telling the truth about a *real* life.

Much has been said about the truth claims of autobiography, so I will not rehearse the analyses here. But I want to stress the degree to which Bowering merges chronicler and autobiographer in *Shoot* and the impact on this reader (and, I think, on most other readers) of this merger. The history proper of the McLeans begins, not in the opening paragraphs of the book, but a bit further on when we read (and *hear*, for this is the voice of oral

history, of storytelling) that “Archie McLean was fifteen years old, he figured, and he was sitting in a jail cell, waiting to get hanged. . . . He was famous” (2). As a reader, I will come to recognize and trust this chronicling voice as the thread I can hold on to in the shifting registers of the telling. However, another very similar voice surfaces repeatedly throughout the telling (as in the passage, for example, that appears at the beginning of this essay [105]) until it slips out from behind the chronicler’s voice to get the last words:

Archie’s eyes looked at nothing, at the chopped hair in front of him, at the hoof-prints of the horses in the snow, looked out of the photograph in the tray. I see them in the dark. You see them. The squinting eyes of little Archie McLean. (297)

With this careful and, through the course of the text, gradual, cumulative slide into the autobiographer’s “I” that directly addresses the reader’s “you,” Bowering intensifies his claim to be taken at his personal word for the truth of this story and, by virtue of this personal commitment, for his still larger ethical appeal to my conscience and emotions. Again, in Hobsbawm’s formulation (with which I preface this study), Bowering makes himself “a historian of his . . . own consciously lived lifetime” by “com[ing] to terms with it in the mind.” And that mind, in this final passage from *Shoot*, is Bowering’s mind’s I/eye or, at least, what I accept as the identity of this I/eye with the name on the title page: George Bowering. While this is by no means the only way in which Bowering combines “archive and personal memory” (Hobsbawm) to make me care about the McLeans, it is central to building my trust in the storyteller’s testimony to the complexity of the boys’ transcultural condition and the injustice of their fate.

Almost the only female voice we hear is Mrs Moresby’s, and her voice and perspective carry enormous moral weight.⁸ Clearly, she feels concern and compassion for these boys. The eldest, Allan, with an infant son of his own, is about her age; the others are boys, not much more than children in her eyes. So when I ask myself *why* I care about this book and *how* Bowering makes me see some of the complex multiplicities surrounding the McLean Boys and feel some sadness and regret, if not shame and guilt, for their fates, I realize that the female voice and perspective (like that autobiographical voice) are also crucial. But it is not just the female voices we hear that count (Mary Anne’s, Martha the provincial educator’s wife’s, Jane Palmer’s). There are two extremely important women whose voices we do not hear, whose stories Bowering relates indirectly through the men, whose pain, betrayal, pride, and role in *history* we must imagine from the feelings of their men folk and the blank spaces in the story.

These women are Sophie Grant and Annie McLean. Bowering may not have felt able to give them voices of their own (although he does dedicate *Bowering's B.C.* to Sophie Grant); or he may have strategically withheld their voices. Whatever the reason, by not including the female narrative voices, Bowering both stresses their silencing and provokes my empathy. He leaves me wanting to know more. What happened to Sophie? How did she fight back against her eviction from Hat Creek? What did she feel about her husband? What did she think of the way the law treated her three sons, or did she believe they got what they deserved? And Annie? She was only a teenager when she worked for John Mara and was taken advantage of. Did she try to resist this man? How was she treated by the Kamloops community, who apparently knew that Mara was the father of her child (see *Bowering's B.C.*, 190–92)? How did her mother and her mother's people see her? What became of her and the child? What does she have to say to this *history* that silences her in its combined racism and sexism? Surely she too would have questions: Why did Mara go on to make money, receive high position in government, have a lake named for him, and make it into the history books? He was married when he seduced or raped Annie, so how did he get away with it? By making me see Annie exclusively through the lovelorn eyes of Alex Hare and the male perspective of her brothers, Bowering reminds me of how she was most probably constructed in late 1870s BC society—as fair game, a beautiful plaything to be discarded when used.⁹

Returning the Gaze

Bowering makes me see and care in many other ways. He does not represent all the white settlers as violent and bad; they too have their human weaknesses, misgivings, and fears. And he does not whitewash the Gang; he allows us to see them behave with drunken violence and act with raw aggression, just as much as he allows us to see the aggression perpetrated against them. Although the novel moves in circles as it digs deeper into the shale of history, the narrative ends where it began—at the end of the story and on the surface of the record, with the two trials that actually took place and were covered by the newspapers, and in the New Westminster penitentiary, where the Gang was taken on Christmas day 1879, was photographed, and finally hanged on 31 January 1881.

This closing emphasis on the public record and the jail is a powerful reminder of the system that contextualizes the McLean Gang, a system that has been called out at many points during the narrative but is revealed in its

full social and symbolic power in the courts, prison, and media. That system was imperialist; it gave legitimacy to an aggressive internal colonization. It is and was a system that attempted to control the cultural encounters between Indian and non-Indian, between ruling class and lesser breeds, and between men and women in a “contact zone” (Pratt 6–7). That system shaped British Columbian and Canadian identity; it was forced upon an already inhabited place for economic and political gain. Moreover, until very recently, only the winners got to write the history books, map the terrain, report in the media, act in the courts, create the novels, and supply the photos of the archives. (Do photographs exist of Sophie or Annie?)

Finally, Bowering makes me see and care by speaking in his own voice, by re-writing history with compassion and anger, by placing himself in that landscape as an accidental boy archeologist who grows into a committed I/eye-witness. By speaking directly to me from his own autobiographical position, he asks me to look with him into the “squinting eyes of little Archie McLean,” to return Archie’s gaze and, thereby, acknowledge him as a fellow human being. Bowering invites me to meet him on that ground of personal memory supplemented, as Hobsbawm puts it, by the archive. He encourages me to become, like him, a historian of my “own consciously lived lifetime” by “com[ing] to terms with it in the mind.” To do that in my mind, I must connect *Shoot* with what I see as its companion BC stories—*The Double Hook*, *Tay John*, and more recently *Slash* and *Sisters of Grass*, all novels of “transculturation” in a “contact zone” (Pratt 6).¹⁰ To do that in my heart, I must travel through the Cariboo landscape with new eyes and with the desire to understand.

Shoot, like its subject, is appropriately hybrid. It is a half-breed text, an archeological romance. It is dialogical, if not fully polyphonic (and it may be that too). It is a regional novel in which the Nicola Valley Interior becomes a chronotopic stage for enacting BC identities. It is also a novel with a history—personal and archival. By stepping outside *Shoot* to “Parashoot! Diary of a Novel,” we can read George telling us that, when he was a boy—

I knew that the James gang and the Daltons were buried deep in history. But I kept my eyes out for the McLeans. I kept my eyes open for McLeans whether they were a gang of gunslingers on the vengeance trail, or peaceful men living out their lives in the hayfields, or ghosts. I did not believe in ghosts [he tells us], but I believed in God. Still, if there was a God, there was a book about him, and in that book there were a lot of stories about things that can happen even if they are hard to believe. You have to want to believe such things, I had somehow learned.

I still want to believe some things that are hard to believe. There are no grave-stones for the Wild McLeans, so you had to wonder whether they were dead, or whether they had ever lived. The field where they were buried no longer exists. Who would hang a fifteen-year-old boy? (167)

Who would? Well, possibly those who refuse to put *all* the McLeans in the history books or on the maps. Or those who deny that *transculturation* happens in a contact zone. Or those who reject the very idea that 1870s British Columbia, not to say the Nicola Valley, was a contact zone. By calling out the McLean Boys in the autobiographer's voice, Bowering does not so much lay to rest the ghosts of his personal and our collective pasts, as bring them back to life so we can believe in them, as he does, through the personal archive of a consciously lived life.

NOTES

- 1 The claims to truth and authority made by biographers and autobiographers have been extensively debated and theorized by scholars of auto/biography. Smith and Watson sum up the issues well when they say that "autobiographical narration is so written that it cannot be read as either factual truth or simple facts" (13); for further analysis of these claims see Egan, Gilmore, and Lejeune.
- 2 Critical and theoretical debates about postcolonialism in general and in the Canadian context, like those about postmodernism, have been and continue to be fierce; for a recent consideration of the Canadian content, see Moss. I do not wish to enter these debates here, but I do want to note that Pratt's concepts of "contact zone" and "transculturation" are especially useful. Her theories owe much to the broader field of postcolonial theory to which she contributes in *Imperial Eyes*.
- 3 One of the most fascinating descriptions of transculturation in a contact zone within the Canadian context is Gontran de Poncins' autobiographical book *Kabloona*. De Poncins describes his gradual indigenization as a consequence of his life with the Inuit, even as he describes their assimilation and transformation by the non-Inuit, European culture that he represents. I have discussed this book and a number of similar texts in "Canada and the Autobiography of North."
- 4 This article was first presented as a paper on a panel at the 2001 interdisciplinary B.C. Studies conference, *Beyond Hope*, at the University College of the Cariboo in Kamloops. My thanks to the organizers for the opportunity to explore B.C. history and geography in the context of literature. I distinguish *Shoot* from postmodernist, metafictional, or historical novels by pointing to the apolitical stance of much postmodern fiction, the ethical neutrality and aesthetic abstraction of most metafiction, and the romance plots and characterization of many historical novels, especially those involving family sagas and male heroes who die young. In another study, I might compare *Shoot* with Kroetsch's *The Studhorse Man*, with Vanderhaeghe's *The Englishman's Boy*, or with the novels of Calvino, Eco, and Marquèz, or even with Bowering's *Burning Water* to explore these distinctions.

- 5 The following historians make no mention of, or only the merest passing reference to, Donald McLean and his sons: Barman, Begg, Howey, Kerr, Loo, Morice, Ormsby, Shewchuk, and Skelton. The *Encyclopedia of British Columbia* (see Francis) has entries on Donald McLean, the McLean Gang, and Mara (1840–1920), who is described as an “Overlander” turned successful Kamloops businessman and Conservative MP; nothing links Mara with the McLeans. For an analysis of the newspaper coverage of the Gang and attitudes of the day, see Keranen.
- 6 For facts and dates, see Rothenburger’s *The Wild McLeans*. McLean was supposed to have been buried near where he fell at Soda Creek, but his grave has never been found.
- 7 In *The Autobiographical Pact* (19–21), Lejeune describes the necessary acceptance of identity between the name on the title page and the first-person narrator in the text; as readers, we trust that the author and the narrator are one; as a consequence, we trust that we are being told the truth.
- 8 Bowering invents a conversation between two contemporaries of the McLeans, Robert and Martha. He has the pompous, authoritarian husband defend the impending execution of the Gang, while his wife protests that they are boys, children even, close in age to their own daughter (*Shoot* 260–62).
- 9 On the treatment of “country wives” by many HBC men, see Van Kirk, Brown, and Thompson.
- 10 *Tay John* is specifically invoked by Bowering (*Shoot*, 30–31).

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