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Editorial

Auditing, Counting, and Tracking CanLit

Laura Moss

One of my son's favourite books when he was little was a picture book called *Counting on Frank*. The protagonist is a boy who loves to count. For example, he counts how many years it would take to fill a room with peas if he were to knock fifteen of them off the dinner table every night. Lately, I feel like I have been spending a lot of time counting peas. It is not so much that I love to count but that I am constantly being asked, or feeling compelled, to do so. Some days I spend more time in Excel and on Google Analytics than I do in Word. I have even begun to think in terms of tables, spreadsheets, and pie charts. This is quite a cognitive shift for someone who barely scraped through an undergrad statistics course.

In the last few months in particular I have been bombarded by the demand for numbers. Statistics are being used by, with, for, and against us. With Margery Fee and Donna Chin, I contributed to the impact section of *Canadian Literature*'s triennial SSHRC application (monitoring numbers of submissions, rejections, referees, subscriptions, and assessing web traffic, as well as the most accessed articles and reviews via EBSCO and ProQuest). I also used Google Analytics to track the number, behaviour, and location of visitors for our web-based teaching resource *CanLit Guides*. I produced an annual report for my department, a numeric snapshot of my research output and funding for an external departmental review, and filled out a SSHRC CV for two Insight Grant applications I was part of. I also ranked candidates on the job search committee I chaired and had to report to the university on the demographics of the applicant pool. I submitted grades for the classes I was teaching. Like many others, I read the annual *Maclean's Magazine* University

Rankings and noted my department's fluctuating place on the World University Rankings. Further, I served on the board of directors for Canadian Women in the Literary Arts (CWILA) and helped manage the now-annual count of reviews. In March, as part of the CWILA Research Network at UBC, I participated in a panel entitled "CWILA and the Challenge of Counting for Race" with my colleague Mary Chapman and author Madeleine Thien (who shared her powerful and provocative "Seventeen Thoughts on the Question of Numbers"). Last week, alongside 59 other academics working in groups of three or four, I applied to job share the position of President/Vice Chancellor of the University of Alberta as a communal gesture to protest the disparities between administrative salaries and those of faculty members and adjuncts in this time of "austerity measures."[1] The other day, I read Rachel Rose's brilliant poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at CanLit." For better and for worse, audit culture has hit Canadian literary studies.

Why is the turn to numbers noteworthy? The diverse sets of data I mention here illustrate the paradox at the intersection of audit and literary cultures. On the one hand, as part of the increasing corporatization of everything in these neoliberal times, people turn to numbers for proof of productivity and the *value* that can be monitored and measured annually. Anthropologist Cris Shore writes about how audit culture has transformed the university from "a place of higher learning into the modern idea of the university as a corporate enterprise whose primary concern is with market share, servicing the needs of commerce, maximizing economic return and investment, and gaining competitive advantage in the Global Knowledge Economy" (282). How does your research support the GKE or the GDP? The organizing work of institutional management and the quantification of labour in this budget model of education is often couched in the rhetoric of transparency, benchmarks, and global standards. With the system being driven along market lines, students and parents, as well as taxpayers and donors, become consumers seeking quality assurance.[2] However, corporate measurements of productivity often leave gaps around invisible labour.[3] Some numbers are more valued than others. Still others are not noted at all. Shore draws on Michael Power's argument that since the 1990s, Britain has been an "audit society" when he writes that an "audit society is one where people are interpolated as *auditees*" (281). The same can be said for Canada. I think that this suggests an initial answer to Thien's question of "Why are people so afraid of numbers? Why are people so threatened by another way of looking?" (n. pag.). It is frightening to be hailed: "Hey you! I am tracking

you!" because it is often followed by "you have to guess why." In higher education, as in much contemporary society, we are being asked by various accountants to count so that we are accountable, but we always know that we might be asked to account for gaps if we account to those who discount our work or at least make us recount how we need to re-count our numbers for repeated proof of our accountability. A question persists: what counts for whom and why?

On the other hand, people have turned to statistics to strategically bolster support for issues of social justice and as ammunition for important cultural work. If information is power, there is a will to count. Recently, numbers have been used to provide evidence for arguments about disparities that have previously been dismissed as anecdotal.[4] The more precise the measurement, the stronger the argument. People turn to numbers to rationalize the need for action. I dare say, they are instrumental to doing so. As Thien explains, "counting is one way of comparing one set of incidents against another. Counting can be seen as another way of telling a story" (n. pag.). When backed by statistics, adjectives like *undeniable*, *irrefutable*, and *incontrovertible* often prevail in narrating that story as they are tellingly placed before nouns like *injustice* and *inequality*. In my last editorial, I called for better metrics about graduate student placement for this very reason. The Dalhousie University professor who led the group applications for the University of Alberta presidency, Kathy Cawsey, made a similar call for better cross-Canada comparative data on salaries in the fight against administrative bloating. The guiding principle behind such calls for statistics is that such numbers might potentially lead to the greater accountability of the university to its employees and constituents, and even, ideally, of the state to its citizens. Accountability should flow both ways. I don't see this so much as subversion from within audit culture as harnessing the tools at hand to try to rattle its foundations and to put information to the good use of another way of telling a story.

Computer-generated numerical tracking also gives us new kinds of information and tells us stories to which we might not have previously had access. Statistics are being used to measure trends and behaviours, enabled by new technologies. Sometimes this is market driven and sometimes this is driven by a desire for further knowledge qua knowledge. I am thinking here of what Franco Moretti calls the "*specific forms of knowledge*" that come out of the "distant reading" of graphs, maps, and trees (1). But, as Moretti notes, there are limitations to seeking the internal shape of a cycle and the "hidden tempo" of a period, a text, or an event. He writes that "quantitative research

provides a type of data which is ideally independent of interpretations . . . and that is of course also its limit: it provides *data*, not interpretation" (9). Here too, then, as with strategic counting, there is always the question of who is tracking what and to what end? We need to ask, how do we quantify responsibly? What are the risks of misinterpreting the numbers?

When might counting be both informative and potentially damaging? The SSHRC application I just helped to fill out is one place. As we were applying for the funding the journal requires to function, there was much at stake in this audit. There was also much to be learned about internal operations. In attempting to measure impact, an extraordinarily difficult task for a journal in the Humanities, we had to dig into the numbers that were available and try to read them productively. Some interesting stories emerged that tell us quite a bit about invisible labour, reading practices, and contemporary Canadian literary studies. A journal relies a great deal on work that remains anonymous and counts for little in academic reporting but which is essential to the production and dissemination of the publication.[5] Here are some of the numbers we reported: our office consists of one editor and seven associate editors who work in two languages at three universities, as well as two full-time staff members and up to six undergraduate and graduate students. The editorial board consists of 36 specialists from six countries who read between one and six articles a year. Peer-evaluation reports by 226 referees were written on articles submitted to the journal.[6] Between 1 May 2012 and 30 April 2014, we received 206 submissions and published 55 articles (by 11 graduate students, 7 postdocs, 7 assistant professors, 16 associates, 13 full professors, and 11 sessional instructors or freelance writers or librarians). In 2012 and 2013, we reviewed a total of 634 books and averaged parity on the number of reviews of books written by male authors and female authors, although female reviewers outnumbered male reviewers almost 2 to 1. Likely because most Canadian readers access the journal via the web through library subscription services, most of our print subscribers come from outside Canada (64%) and almost all of them (95%) are institutional. Between 2012 and 2014, 70% of the 452, 278 visitors to canlit.ca accessed the website from within Canada. In 2013 alone, canlit.ca had visitors from 198 countries. The website had an average of 758 visitors a day or 18,112 a month in 2013-14. Our Facebook page has 323 likes and our Twitter account has 2,900 followers. According to EBSCO, one of our aggregators, in 2012, there were 193,506 downloads of our articles. The top article was downloaded 24,796 times, while the tenth article was downloaded 627 times.

We use information technology developed for business optimization for our non-commercial purposes as well. Google Analytics has allowed us to drill down into the behaviour of our visitors. The information is irrelevant to SSHRC and says very little about our quantifiable impact but it tells us as researchers and editors a good deal about contemporary interests in the field. The reviews that were most often read online were about *The Book of Negroes*, *Three Day Road*, *In Search of April Raintree* (critical edition), *No Great Mischief*, and *Traplines*. Over three years, the most consistently accessed special issues were, #91 (on Timothy Findley), #124-25 (Native Writers and Canadian Writers) and #161-62 (on Thomas King). The special issues on Asian Canadian writing and diasporic writing were also accessed more often than almost any other issues, except the recent one on poetics (#210/211). The most often visited *CanLit Poets* pages are ones on Wangshu Dai, Patrick Lane, Daniel David Moses, David Solway, and David Zieroth. There are some links between these poets and the names plugged into the author searches where we find that Patrick Lane is most often sought, followed by Daniel David Moses, Cyril Dabydeen, Tom Wayman, Robert Kroetsch, Adam Dickinson, Uma Parameswaran, Rita Wong, Afra Kavanagh, and Marie Noëlle Ng. We can see in the title search drilldown that readers have looked most often for articles on *Three Day Road*; various works by Alice Munro (post-Nobel announcement), as well as Mavis Gallant and Farley Mowat (after their deaths); *The Wars*; *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*; *No Great Mischief*; *Jpod*; and *The Stone Angel*. These results suggest to me that there is an incredibly strong interest in writing by Indigenous writers and Asian Canadian writers, that the work of male writers is being critically engaged more often than that of female writers, that our readers come with a diversity of interests, and that some older canonical texts are still being read (and likely taught).

We have also turned to various forms of counting for information about the *CanLit Guides* (CLG).[7] In the fall of 2012, a few months after we first launched the open access online teaching guides, doctoral student Mike Borkent and I visited six undergraduate classrooms. We taught a unit from the guides and conducted surveys of the students after each class. The CLG team then held two follow-up focus groups with 20 keen students to figure out how exactly they were engaging with the resources. Such a survey, is of course, a form of counting. The information garnered from the focus groups changed how we looked at our own work. We enumerated responses and were surprised at how popular the practical / skills / writing pages were

(especially the close readings section—where we walk the reader through a line-by-line reading and subsequent close reading of Eve Tihanyi's poem "Blind Man"). Learning from the focus groups, we are adapting our content to include more hands-on activities that engage directly with the journal. Such changes rely on what Karen Correia Da Silva, as a member of the CLG team who worked on the surveys, views as the "feedback loop" possible in the digital humanities.

Besides consulting students for feedback on the guides, we also turned to Google Analytics tools for user statistics to try to gauge the project's success. In the year after its launch, *CanLit Guides* had 18,701 visitors from 121 countries who looked at almost 75,000 pages. Unsurprisingly, the most traffic came from Canada (14,705) and the US (1,335). The top ten traffic sources rounded out with many visits from India (340) and the UK (337), followed by Poland (251), Germany (260), then Australia, Spain, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. We can tell that a reader in Bolivia spent 21 minutes on the site and a reader in Cuba visited 20 pages in 44 minutes. We can see how many people checked in from Wollongong, Westport, and Warsaw, and know how long they stayed (and I admit that such surveillance is creepy). Proving that the international visitors were not necessarily just nostalgic Anglo-Canadians abroad, the top 8 languages to which their browsers are set are American and British English, Mandarin from China, Polish, German, French, Spanish, and Taiwanese Chinese. We know that in 2012 people stayed on the site for an average of 4:30 minutes (or 2:14 for new users and 9:18 minutes for return users). We also know that 661 people read more than 20 pages of the guide in those early months. Judging from the dates when visit numbers spike, we suspect that some people used the guides in their classes. Finally, we know that the six most visited sections were, in this order, about *The Jade Peony*, the close reading section, Duncan Campbell Scott's sonnet "The Onondaga Madonna," E. Pauline Johnson's bio-note, the history of nationalism in the 1960s and 70s, and the gender overview.

What do we learn from these numbers about the guides and the journal? First, we have a global readership and audience. We are not just writing for Canadians, for classrooms, or even for those who speak English as a first language. This has implications for Canadian studies and the international study of CanLit, particularly given Canadian government cuts to international Canadian Studies programs. We know that *Canadian Literature* is being read carefully in Canada, Poland, Germany, India, and many dozens of other locations. We have learned that our readers are not necessarily

students and teachers in local classrooms but scholars and interested readers around the world.

Second, we were struck by the popularity of some pages over others. We love *The Jade Peony*, but were also surprised to see just how popular it is with our visitors. Thousands of people have visited that case study. When we started the project, we surveyed instructors on the works they taught most and we also considered which works had received coverage in the journal. Now, perhaps we'll consider a special issue on the work of Wayson Choy and think about how to better integrate our two special issues on Asian Canadian writing (#163 and #199) into the guides. The counting we have done on the guides and the journal will likely have an impact on future directions of both. In turn, perhaps in the future the guides and the research published in the journal might have an impact on what instructors choose to teach in their CanLit classrooms.

When Cynthia Sugars and I created our anthology, *Canadian Literature in English: Texts and Contexts*, our publisher sought feedback from 49 experts (seven readers per chapter). We worked with their comments, advice, and suggestions. Since publication, however, although we know how many copies have been sold (we get royalty statements that give us those numbers), we don't know which sections in each volume are most taught or most read. Because we can't do a Google Analytics visit breakdown for a paper book, we don't know which ones are most often accessed. And yet Google Analytics data itself is limited as it would be unable to tell us which selections are most appreciated by students and which ones work best for teachers. The data cannot tell us that a story has had a profound impact on a student, as I have been told after teaching both Thien's "Simple Recipes" and Alistair MacLeod's "The Boat."

There is little doubt that numbers are being used against us in the humanities as our worth is measured out in the coffee spoons of audit culture. While we need to remain skeptical about the motivations behind the burgeoning number of requests for accountability, I want to guard against being too skeptical about the potential of counting. Numbers can also be used strategically and they can lead us to important stories. There is a potential problem, though, when numbers stand in for the story. We should also be aware of the kinds of stories that might be overlooked in larger trendspotting. I hold on to the value of studying something that might not be "statistically significant," but that might still be absolutely socially or creatively relevant. An article can have great impact if it really changes

the way a dozen people think about an issue. I am not convinced that an article with 3,000 downloads will have more lasting impact than one with 50 downloads. While I am curious as to what many people think, I am wary of having research driven by majority interest or by appealing to audit culture. Further, as literary researchers, we need to recognize that we might not all be fully equipped for all manner of interpretation. This is where what Danielle Fuller calls "collaborative interdisciplinary work" is necessary (75). We either need to collaborate with those properly trained in quantitative analysis or we need to learn new methodologies ourselves, indeed as some digital humanities scholars have done. If we decolonize quantitative methodologies and open numbers to a variety of interpretations, I suspect that we can productively engage in meaningful qualitative thinking. What makes numbers meaningful for a literary scholar is how we interpret them, how we use them to make plausible narratives and to support ideas. It is really how we read and speak them. Tracking CanLit, either by choice or by necessity, can help connect reading practices with literary production and elucidate how texts are valued and circulated. It does not, however, finish the story. We need to count our peas, but we also need to eat them if we want to grow resilient in action and imagination.

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NOTES

1 None of the groups to apply got an interview but together the 60 academics sparked international discussion of increasing disparities between the salaries of administrators and adjuncts (including media articles in Canada, Australia, Britain, and even a forum in the *New York Times*).

2 In his comments on a draft of this editorial, Brendan McCormack usefully responded: "It's not just a question of how your research supports GKE or GDP, but whether your curricula and pedagogy can maintain market share. In discussing our most recent teaching evaluations, a colleague and I noted how closely both the metrics of evaluation and the substantive feedback from students rehearse the rhetoric of an Amazon.com product/purchase review. The central question implied isn't 'how much did you learn' or 'have you become a better critical thinker,' but 'would you buy this course again?'"

3 Communication management is an excellent example of invisible labour. Look into the emailbox of an associate professor at, say, UBC and you might find 648 email messages sitting in her inbox or 2,208 messages accrued in one year concerning the editing of a journal or 4,266 messages about serving on the board of a national literary organization over a couple of years or 4,488 messages about various research projects over the past decade. You might find 848 messages about writing letters of reference, 1,819 messages about graduate students in her department, 486 messages about her first year class from last term, and 571 in a file somewhat terrifyingly marked Misc. Admin. Look into another academic emailbox and the numbers will be higher in some areas and lower in others.

4 This is the guiding principle behind CWILA but it extends to many areas of social justice, broadly defined. Recently, grade five students at Shorewood Hills Elementary in Madison, Wisconsin counted over 600 Lego sets looking at gender and cultural diversity. They looked at Lego figurines and found that 75% were "boys," 12% were "girls," 5% animals, 8% aliens. They noted too that in older "classic" sets, 58% were male and 42% were female. They also noted a lack of racial diversity when they found that 94.3% of the figures were those they classified as "European." After they tracked the disparities, the children wrote to the Lego Company and demanded more balanced gender and racial representation. (see www.WhatItIsIsBeautiful.com).

5 In her excellent article on "Editing as Carework," Sarah Blackwood notes that "[i]t will be difficult to articulate the editorial labor I put into *Avidly* within the structure of the standardized tenure file, which is interested mainly in my voice, heard singly and forcefully within the strictures of liberal individualist understandings of authorship. I think this conundrum of how to frame editorial work is also true for even those endeavors more 'inside' the academy: peer-reviewed journals, edited collections of essays. Excellent editing erases itself: it's mending the dress so well that the fit is perfect, and the holes are invisible."

6 It is notable that in this culture of "just say no," we tend to have to ask two or three people for every one acceptance of a request to serve as a referee and even more to write a review. For some articles the number goes as high as a dozen before we find a qualified reviewer willing to serve.

7 Karen Correia Da Silva and I gave a preliminary version of the *CanLit Guides* data I present here in "Metacriticism, Digital Humanities, and Teaching *Canadian Literature* to Digital Natives (Part One)" at the Association of Canadian Quebec Languages (ACQL) Conference, University of Victoria, June 2013.

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Brian Cullen

GO

The ocean is and there you are to meet you.
Gulf. God comma

for this feeling of grace and somewhat loss
whence remembrance, tears

—sent out to meet the earth, words taken
were taken.

They are not mistaken to think themselves were waves.

The moment you left you. Slow time
feels like a wet suit.

Jody Mason

"Rebel Woman," "Little Woman," and the Eclectic Print Culture of Protest in *The Woman Worker*, 1926-1929

The cultural material in interwar periodicals of protest is a vital site of information regarding the complex history of Canada's early-twentieth-century "woman question." It also has much to tell us about the tangled history of the welfare state in Canada and its relation to women's discourses of reform, which might seem surprising, given that the magazine of interest here, *The Woman Worker*, was published between 1926 and 1929 by an affiliate of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC).[1] Yet, as later Communist periodicals such as *Masses* (1932-1934) and the *Daily Clarion* (1936-1939) attest, the CPC and its affiliates made significant contributions to nascent ideas about the welfare state in modern Canada. This is particularly true of the periods during which the CPC was engaged in "united" and "Popular Front" initiatives, through the 1920s and during the latter half of the 1930s, for example.[2] Nonetheless, what Dennis Guest calls the "largely unrecorded history of attempts to introduce 'citizen participation' into policy making and administration" (85) that is embodied in early- and mid-twentieth-century periodicals of protest (particularly those on the far left) has not played much part in shaping narratives of the development of the welfare state in Canada.[3] Less visible still is the role of women, and particularly working-class and immigrant women, in this ephemeral history of "citizen participation." Important groundwork has been laid: studies in labour history, such as Margaret Hobbs' and Joan Sangster's invaluable 1999 survey of *The Woman Worker*, have mined early- and mid-twentieth-century periodicals of protest for their political arguments and as sources for social history, and literary critics have begun the work of analyzing the literary content of and

the role played by women editors and writers within these publications.[4] This essay will build on this historical and literary scholarship to examine how the cultural material in the pages of *The Woman Worker* plays a crucial role in its performance of protest. Yet the object of social and political change is not constant in *The Woman Worker*, a fact that can be attributed to the political and cultural eclecticism of its creators and readers and that testifies to the diversity of the conceptions of "woman" that the periodical was engaging. A contradictory iconography and discourse of womanhood, and hence of political change, runs through the periodical's poetry and fiction: if what one reader calls the "rebel woman" gestures obviously to *The Woman Worker*'s Communist affiliations, its support of equal-rights feminism, and its fraught negotiations with a masculinist tradition of workers' verse, a figure I characterize as the "little woman" suggests its equally frequent recourse to the ideologies of parliamentary reform and maternal feminism, as well as its use and revision of the Anglo-American novel of social reform.

The Woman Worker and Its Contexts

Labour historians have long appreciated the value of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century protest press, and their work is a wonderful resource for understanding its contents. By the 1920s, the leftist periodical press was a central part of creative and political culture in Canada. The first major leftist periodical in Canada was the weekly newspaper of the Nine-Hour Movement, the *Ontario Workman* (1872-1875), which featured a fair quantity of creative writing. Leftist periodicals subsequently developed in tandem with the growth of trade unionism and political radicalism in Canada. According to F. W. Watt, by the 1920s, these periodicals "emerged not merely from the dissident minority among the working classes, but from the respectable middle-class intellectuals who had earlier remained aloof " (467). Literary and cultural scholars in Canada have, for many years, acknowledged the importance of the mid-twentieth-century "little-magazine" movement, but only recently have scholars interested in the cultural history of protest begun to examine periodicals that an earlier generation of scholars deemed unliterary and thus outside the movement. While foundational essays such as Ruth I. McKenzie's "Proletarian Literature in Canada" (1939) and Watt's "The Literature of Protest" (1965) mapped out literary histories of protest in Canada that brought previously occluded periodicals into literary-critical view, these scholars also clearly felt ambivalent about the aesthetic qualities of the "horatory chants and indignant diatribes" they were recuperating

(Watt 471-72). Contemporary critics such as James Doyle, Caren Irr, Dean Irvine, and Candida Rifkind reject the aesthetic cringe of McKenzie and Watt, and find historical *and* cultural interest in the interwar leftist periodical press in Canada, particularly the press of the troubled 1930s and publications such as *Masses* and *New Frontier* (1934-1936). Irvine and Rifkind follow trends in the new modernist studies and cultural studies (for instance, in the work of Michael Denning and Cary Nelson) and seek to validate Canada's early-twentieth-century protest press by incorporating its experiments into the modernist fold. Indeed, in his history of women's participation in Canada's modernist "little magazine" movement, Irvine insists on the inclusion of interwar leftist publications such as *The Woman Worker*, claiming that despite its origins in the CPC newspaper *The Worker* (1922-1936), its "typical little magazine format" renders it an example of a category that he modifies to include "those non-commercial literary, arts, and cultural-interest magazines whose editors facilitated and participated in the construction of a magazine culture for their contributors and readers—but not, primarily, for profit" (195, 16). As I seek to demonstrate, however, the narrative of literary modernism's arrival in Canada does not fully explain the literary, aesthetic, and political eclecticism of a periodical like *The Woman Worker*.

Left of such well-known progressive periodicals as the *Canadian Forum* (1920-2000), numerous serial publications flourished in the 1920s; *The Woman Worker* was one of them. *The Woman Worker* was published by the Toronto-based Canadian Federation of Women's Labor Leagues (CFWLL). Although Women's Labor Leagues in Canada predate the First World War, these groups assumed a new organizational structure in the wake of the creation of the CPC in 1921.[5] At the urging of the International Women's Secretariat of the Communist International (Comintern), the CPC set up a Women's Department in 1924 and began to demonstrate a new "measure of sympathy for women's particular oppression" (Sangster 27-32). This Department strove to centralize the scattered WLL movement under the Toronto-based CFWLL—a not inconsiderable task, given the mixed heritage of the movement in British WLLs and the Finnish "sewing circles" attached to the prewar Social Democratic Party of Canada, and considering the ethnic diversity and regionally specific political priorities of these groups (Hobbs and Sangster 8-9; Sangster 45-52). Florence Custance was the national secretary of the CFWLL, and she became editor of *The Woman Worker* when it was launched as an organizational tool from an office at 211 Milverton Blvd. in Toronto in 1926.[6] Modest in appearance but professionally

printed by the Sutherland Printshop in Toronto, devoid of colour save the muted green front and back cover, small in stature (just shy of twenty-four centimetres tall and sixteen centimetres wide), and almost entirely without images, the sixteen-page *Woman Worker* was antithetical in every way to the large-format, mass-circulation magazines with glossy paper and full-page illustrations that became so popular in the first decades of the twentieth century.[7] It did, however, share a ten-cent price tag with its mass-market peers, such as *Canadian Home Journal* (1896-1958). *The Woman Worker* attempted to reach readers who were bombarded by the visual pleasures of such periodicals as *Canadian Home Journal*, *Mayfair* (1927-1961), and *Chatelaine* (1928-). It is not surprising that some League members, such as the women who attended a 1926 miners' picnic in Blairmore, Alberta, compared it unfavourably to its more colourful counterparts.[8]

As a leftist periodical published by and for women, *The Woman Worker* represents a significant first in Canadian history: its contemporaries on the left—*Holos Robitnytsi* (1922-1924) and *Robitnysia* (1924-1937), which were published by the Women's Section of the United Labor-Farmer Temple Association—were edited by men, and more general attempts in the socialist periodical press to include women's voices or to address their specific concerns were generally confined to "women's columns" (Hobbs and Sangster 8). *The Woman Worker* began as such a column in 1924—"The Working Women's Section" of the CPC paper *The Worker*. If this initial effort in many ways anticipates the politicized character of its progeny, later women's columns in CPC publications, such as the "With Our Women" column that ran during the 1930s in *The Worker* (later called the *Daily Clarion* [1936-1939]), worries less about women as wage-earners and political activists and more about their identities as homemakers who might be seeking recipes, housekeeping advice, and dressmaking patterns. Columns such as "With Our Women" spoke to working-class women by adapting but not fundamentally challenging the conception of women in new forms of mass media, such as mass-circulation magazines and movies. For example, in the 5 February 1936 issue of *The Worker*, the editor of "With Our Women," Anne Smith, offers the column's typical fare: a pattern for a suit "to brighten up the wardrobe," a recipe for potato soup, and tips for removing white rings on wooden furniture (4). Somewhat ironically, Beatrice Ferneyhough's contribution to this column on 16 May 1936 laments the lack of a socialist magazine for working-class, Canadian women who must content themselves with the "nauseous gushings" of mass-market

magazines (6); that Ferneyhough does not refer directly to the example set by *The Woman Worker* in the 1920s speaks to the marginal place that the CFWLL and its organ retained in the organizational memory of the CPC.

The Woman Worker demonstrates an entirely different conception of its female reader than one finds in either the mass-market women's magazines of the period or the women's columns of the leftist press. Custance made this clear in the first issue (July 1926), with her declaration that the periodical would "not contain fashions and patterns, and we are leaving recipes for cooking to the cook book" ("Success" 33). Like the WLLs themselves, which often formed book discussion groups and organized lectures, *The Woman Worker* took as its mission the education of its readers. Moreover, like Maurice Spector, the editor of the CPC paper *The Worker*, Custance was "prepared to acknowledge the promotion of literary culture as part of the paper's responsibilities," following the priority granted to the arts in post-revolutionary Russia, where a "dogmatic party line" concerning artistic production had not yet been drawn (Doyle 62-63). In each monthly issue, readers of *The Woman Worker* were treated to editorials by Custance; brief articles on labour and political topics; a short story, poem, or book review; and regular, frequently reader-authored features such as "Our Labor Leagues at Work," "Our Educational Page," "Notes and Happenings," "Questions We Are Asked," "Our Letter Box," and "Shop and Factory Life." Despite the fact that *The Woman Worker* declared itself, on the final page of every issue, in the service of "all working women, whether they work in the factory, at home, or in office," the Leagues themselves, where most of the periodical's readers were generated, "never brought in substantial numbers of wage-earning women" (Hobbs and Sangster 10). It is therefore striking that Custance chose not to repeat or adapt for working-class women the messages of the rapidly proliferating mass-circulation magazines that were aimed at North American housewives; rather, she offered a political alternative that emphasized above all else the importance of unionization to working-class women and their families.

"Rebel Woman" and "Little Woman"

Basic to the cultural politics of *The Woman Worker* is the division in early feminist thought that historians identify as the split between equal-rights feminism and maternal (or social) feminism. If the first "held that women were entitled by right of their common humanity to equal rights with men," the latter, which emerged from the late-nineteenth-century North

American reform movement, "held that women were fundamentally different from men, and thus deserved access to specific rights (such as the vote) because they had by nature and by training 'maternal' virtues such as compassion, self-control, nurturance, compromise, and moral purity" (Dean 59). As Misao Dean points out, this difference was not particularly visible in Canada's first wave of feminism (because equal-rights feminism was associated with US-American republicanism and because of other conservative influences in English-Canadian thought) (119, n. 4); however, analysis of *The Woman Worker* demonstrates that equal-rights arguments strongly influenced WLL discourse. For example, references to the new forms of political, economic, and social equality of Russian women (the legalization of abortion, the acceptance of civil marriage, an amended family law code that established women's equal status in marriage) are abundant in the pages of *The Woman Worker*.[9] Somewhat paradoxically, these exaltations of equal rights are often articulated alongside the maternal-feminist arguments that the middle-class counterparts of the WLLs—the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Young Women's Christian Association, and the National Council of Women—embraced.

Two figures who, in various guises, populate the pages of the periodical, illustrate perfectly the contradiction between equal-rights feminism and its maternal counterpart: the first, the "rebel woman," is militant, unabashed in her demands for revolutionary change, a proponent of equal rights for men and women, and is almost never characterized as a mother; the second, a figure I call the "little woman," is a suffering mother who either struggles to make ends meet on her husband's wage or is forced into "wage slavery," suffers from poor health due to poverty and frequent childbirth, and requires protection by the state. These two figures demonstrate the ambivalent and sometimes contradictory feminist politics of *The Woman Worker*—a politics that must be understood in relation to several key related contexts: the "peripheral status of the woman question within the Party" (Sangster 52); the diverse membership and relative local autonomy of the WLLs; and the "united front" strategy of the periodical, which frequently led to collaboration with middle-class women's reform organizations (44-45). Although Custance was a staunch Communist supporter and important party member, not all of the local leagues or their members reflected her radical political commitments, and there remained, throughout the existence of the League, "some tension between the firm Communist leadership provided by the Women's Department and a more politically eclectic

membership" (Hobbs and Sangster 9). For example, the ethnic diversity of the Leagues—there were Anglo-Canadian, Jewish, Finnish, and Ukrainian groups, among others—reflected the many traditions of leftist organizing that were activated under the name of the CFWLL, all of which brought their own views to bear on the "woman question."

I take the phrase "rebel woman" from the April 1928 issue of *The Woman Worker*, in which Custance reminds readers that she is seeking an image for the cover page. She notes that "our Rebel Woman" sent in a submission that "shows a working woman dressed as a soldier—with gun in hand—ready for action." Custance's response is playful and approbatory: "But since we are not allowed to send pictures which depict violence through the mail, we shall be compelled to keep the picture in storage for the time being. It is far too good to be destroyed" ("This Would Kill" 5).[10] Literally invisible to readers but evoked with a paradoxical mixture of humour and menace, the "rebel woman" was a militant, revolutionary figure who could not circulate easily in 1920s Canada; nevertheless, she had a crucial function in the periodical. The CPC and the CFWLL viewed *The Woman Worker* as an "important counterweight" to the influence of the capitalist press, and particularly those mass-circulation magazines aimed at housewives (Hobbs and Sangster 10); the "rebel woman" was perhaps the heaviest stone in this counterweight.

The figure of the "rebel woman" is particularly visible in the poetry that appeared in the pages of *The Woman Worker*. The ubiquity of this figure in the periodical's poetry is not surprising, given the function poetry assumed in other leftist periodicals from the 1920s. Analyzing literary and cultural material in the CPC's periodicals *The Worker* and *Young Worker* (1924-1936), Doyle observes that contributors in the 1920s "seemed to find poetry more suitable than fiction to the expression of the positive aspects of the revolutionary struggle" (72). Indeed, poetry appears more commonly than fiction in the pages of *The Woman Worker*, particularly after May 1927, when a new column, "Shop and Factory Life," largely displaced short fiction with "true" tales from shop and factory floors. As in many Canadian socialist periodicals from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, creative content was often reprinted from US-American and British sources; moreover, "Canadian Communist writers in the 1920s . . . continued, like their radical predecessors, to owe more to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century British, Canadian, and US traditions than to the Russian Revolution and its aesthetic reverberations," largely because socialists in Canada had little access to the aesthetic debates of post-revolutionary Russia until the 1930s (Doyle 63-64).

Nonetheless, contributors to *The Woman Worker* had a rich "revolutionary chorus" of leftist songs and ballads from which to draw poetic inspiration.[11] One note in this chorus that seems especially important in the making of the "rebel woman" is US-American labour activist Joe Hill's "The Rebel Girl" (1911), which was a key text in the interwar, leftist repertoire of song. Hill was a popular songwriter for the Industrial Workers of the World, and "The Rebel Girl" announces the importance of women to revolutionary action:

> That's the Rebel Girl, that's the Rebel Girl!
> To the working class she's a precious pearl.
> She brings courage, pride and joy
> To the fighting Rebel Boy;
> We've had girls before, but we need some more
> In the Industrial Workers of the World,
> For it's great to fight for freedom
> With a Rebel Girl. (293)

While Hill's "Rebel Girl" becomes a *woman* in *The Woman Worker*'s invisible icon, this insistence is not followed through in the periodical's poetry, which often leaves the rebel figure deliberately unmarked in terms of gender, a fact that suggests the discomfort with which WLL members attempted to adopt the leftist "revolutionary chorus" as their own.

"A Rebel," reprinted in *The Woman Worker* (January 1927) from the Glasgow *Forward (*"sent in by a reader of *The Woman Worker")*, offers a particularly good example of the optimistic, militant verse in the periodical that urged women to revolutionary action. Using the ballad stanza, which has deep roots in folk culture and masculine, working-class traditions of song, "A Rebel" exploits the well-known rhythm of alternating iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter in order to render familiar the exhortation of its speaker, who urges his or her silent auditor to action:

> The time is ripe for action, Bill,
> Let's stand together, true,
> And move to take the wealth we make,
> Shall we—me and you? (13)

The speaker of "A Rebel" may offer a verbal corollary to the image submitted to *The Woman Worker* by "our Rebel Woman," but the speaker's gender is unclear, which may be the reason the poem was reprinted in *The Woman Worker*, where its ambiguity strongly suggests a woman speaker apostrophizing her meek mate. The ballad form of "A Rebel," however, was a staple of popular workers' verse for centuries in western Europe and North America, and the poem's gender ambiguity cannot eclipse the strong

male tradition it exists within. Transposing the ballad to Canadian contexts, versifiers such as T. Phillips Thompson (in his 1892 *Labor Reform Songster*) and, somewhat later, Dawn Fraser (whose pre-war ballads were collected in *Songs of Siberia and Rhymes of the Road*, probably published around 1919) were important figures in Canada's late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century tradition of workers' poetry. This was a resolutely male tradition, despite the presence of some female voices, such as that of Marie Joussaye.[12]

Other poems sent to the periodical by readers from the WLLs complement the revolutionary optimism of "A Rebel." "A May Day Tribute" (May 1928), for example, critiques the doctrine of Christian meekness and figures the inexorable coming of the revolution, again in the familiar rhythm of iambic tetrameter and with a dramatic nod to the international left in its concluding line:

> It comes—O mighty, onward, surging force—
> No earthly power can stay thy course
> From that inevitable meeting place
> Of uprising workers of every race—
> All barriers shall be swept away
> Or thrown aside to rot—decay
> With Victory at last we'll Hail
> THE WORKERS' INTERNATIONALE! (7-8)

The author of this poem, identified only as "M.C.," contributed other strident verse to *The Woman Worker*, such as "Courage" (September 1928), which insists on collective action through the first-person plural: "Till the tyrant is down and lies crushed at our feet" (8). The employment of the first-person plural as a metonym for the international left is a strategy common to the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century male tradition of workers' verse. The production of poems such as "A Rebel," "A May Day Tribute," and "Courage" in the pages of a periodical destined for women readers widens this collective "we" to include women, but the poems do not specifically apostrophize them. Contributors to *The Woman Worker* were clearly hesitant to employ verse as a form of protest specific to women's experiences, probably because of the weight of the male tradition of workers' poetry and song. Moreover, this tradition was amplified in its masculinism during what Ian McKay calls Canadian socialism's "second formation" (1917-1935), when a "tough-minded military language" and iconography permeated the leftist press (94).

However, the ballad form was turned occasionally to more explicitly feminist ends in the pages of *The Woman Worker*. "Prostitutes" a ballad submitted

by "A Reader" and published on the same page as "A Rebel," lambastes the hypocrisy that calls her trade prostitution but allows other evils to flourish:

> Your preachers preach a lie for gain,
> Your statesmen war for loot,
> But only I in all the world
> Am called a prostitute. (13)

Given the frequent attention devoted in *The Woman Worker* to the exploitation of young working "girls" and the dangers of the "white slave trade" and prostitution generally, this ballad, which speaks in the voice of a prostitute who wants to know why she should not "live on their wealth / As price of their desire?" is remarkable. Further evidence of the fact that "Prostitutes" is pushing the limits of the speakable is the author's means of self-identification; like many contributors to *The Woman Worker*, "A Reader" prefers to remain anonymous.

Of course, the gender ambiguity of initials makes it impossible to know if poems such as "Courage" were actually authored by female readers. Indeed, the most frequent contributor of poetry to *The Woman Worker* was a man who did not belong to a local WLL—Robert Whitaker, the well-known British-American socialist, writer, and Baptist minister from La Crescenta, California. Unlike many of the contributions to *The Woman Worker*, Whitaker's work is signed with his full name and his place of residence. Only one of Whitaker's eight poems echoes the discourse of the "Rebel Woman": like "Prostitutes," "The First Stone" (February 1929) employs a first-person, female speaker who condemns the hypocrisy of those male clerics and lawyers who "sell" their "brains" but condemn her work as illegal (8). Almost all of Whitaker's other poems rely on male speakers and the figure of universal brotherhood in order to communicate a desire for worldwide socialism. Whitaker's dominant presence in *The Woman Worker* suggests its editor's desire to connect the publication to a more international socialist community, the editor's and perhaps readers' identification of the male voice with verse as a form of protest, and the possibility that the periodical had difficulty attracting poetic contributions from Canadian WLL members. Indeed, the regular column "Our Labor Leagues at Work" never cites the writing of fiction and poetry as one of the regular undertakings of the local WLLs.

The "rebel woman," despite her powerful presence in *The Woman Worker*, was not alone. The most immediate evidence of this fact is the cover image, which first appeared on the July-August 1928 issue. Although Custance obviously preferred the "rebel woman," she chose WLL member Aileen

Hautamaki's considerably tamer submission, which features a short-haired woman holding a book—symbolizing "KNOWLEDGE"—in her right hand, and a flaming torch—representative of "ENLIGHTENMENT"—in her left hand ("Readers–Please Take Notice" 10). This woman is reminiscent of the ancient figure of "Lady Justice," who is often depicted holding a sword in her right hand and the scales of justice in her left. There is nothing weak about Hautamaki's woman, but she is a far cry from her gun-toting counterpart. Custance's compromise speaks to her desire to communicate with a broad spectrum of women—it is significant that the upheld book is not identified—as well as her intention to stay within the limits of legality. This tamer icon of womanhood was accompanied *within* the pages of the periodical by the "little woman"— a figure who constantly shadows her rebellious counterpart. The epithet comes from A. D. A.'s story "Modern Values Struggle" (December 1926), which follows the travails of a "little woman," a "poor little victim" of child labour who moves from the factories of England to an unnamed Canadian city where the prospects for a young, working-class family are dim indeed. The figure of the "little woman" is consistent in *The Woman Worker*: as in this story, she is hardworking, morally respectable, and thrifty but physically exhausted from excessive—often waged—labour. Indeed, her entry into waged labour is invariably the catalyst for greater troubles; the waged work of married women and mothers, in particular, is construed as harmful to family life and "an unfortunate burden, not a right" (Hobbs and Sangster 39). In keeping with this message regarding the need to safeguard women as mothers or as potential mothers, the final page of each issue of *The Woman Worker* (until June 1928) announces the periodical's commitment to the "protection of womanhood," the "care of motherhood," and "co-operation in place of competition."

While the "Rebel Woman" is prominent in the poetry published in *The Woman Worker*, the "little woman" more often finds her home in its short fiction. As was the case with the poetry of protest in the 1920s, leftist writers of short fiction in Canada, lacking access to cultural debates from Soviet Russia, tended to look to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century US-American and British models for inspiration (Doyle 63-64). The variegated strains of the nineteenth-century, Anglo-American print culture of social reform exercised considerable influence on contributors to *The Woman Worker*. Narratives of reform were strongly identified with Anglo-American writing throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and had the added advantage of already being associated with women's

writing, even if they were likely tainted, in the eyes of some WLLers, by their frequently overt Christian mission. In their portrayal of endangered working women, many of the stories in *The Woman Worker* owe a debt to narratives of social reform such as Harold Begbie's *A London Girl* (1925), which was positively reviewed in the second issue (August 1926) as a novel that encourages the reader to revile "those who set themselves to destroy the lives and beautiful bodies of young girls" (10). Other stories, such as the anonymously authored "The Story of Ellen Kenealey (A True Story from Life)" (July 1926), depend on the didactic melodrama of some reform narratives in order to lend urgency and appeal to their messages concerning the dangers of working life for women in cities. In "The Story of Ellen Kenealey," the eponymous protagonist is out of work, unmarried, aging, and utterly alone. Ellen's private worries are communicated via an internally focalized narrator: "Who was there to give her shelter or assistance when her last cent was gone? No one. What would she be in the eyes of the law? A vagrant"(12). Desperate, Ellen commits suicide by swallowing carbolic acid.

Yet the short fiction published in *The Woman Worker* was not all sensational formula and didactic narrative intervention: in their daring foray into social realism and analyses of structural ills, they are striking examples of the realist fiction that was beginning to emerge in 1920s Canada. Contributors of short stories were, like Jessie Georgina Sime, writing a new Canadian fiction of working-class women's urban experiences. As Carole Gerson contends, these experiences were, with a few exceptions, invisible in Canadian writing prior to the First World War (*A Purer Taste* 140). Much earlier than in Canada, according to Amanda Claybaugh, British and US-American reform narratives expanded the domain of artistic representation to include such previously invisible experiences, places, and persons as "poverty, drunkenness, and disease; prisons, factories, slums, and madhouses; prostitutes, laborers, servants, and slaves" (6). Such a widened view was clearly valued by contributors to *The Woman Worker*. A. D. A., for example, lauds Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) in the April 1927 issue for its realistic portrayal of the "lives of industrial workers" ("Mary Barton" 10). A Victorian novel of social reform with a decidedly nineteenth-century interventionist narrative style, *Mary Barton* is also a pioneering example of realism for its topographical accuracy; its evocation of the texture of daily, working-class life; and its attention to the "regional specificity" of the Lancashire dialect (Foster xii). A comparable realism that employs Canadian settings and idiomatic language appears in *The Woman Worker*

in stories such as "A Price for Bread" (February 1927), "Something Wrong Somewhere" (March 1927), "The Spectre Named—Poverty" (May 1928), and "Compliments of the Season" (December 1928). These portray the everyday trials of working-class women without heavy-handed intervention from the narrator and without resorting to the improbable, sensational, or idealistic resolutions typical of the romance tendencies of many nineteenth-century reform narratives, particularly as these flowed from the pens of Canadian women writers such as Agnes Maule Machar.[13]

Often the stories in *The Women Worker* are detached narrations of the everyday troubles of working women; at other times, recalling the intrusive narrative didacticism of the earlier novel of reform, the narrators are distinctly interventionist, appraising structural problems underlying workplace misery, offering direct political commentary on the injustices the stories depict, and calling for legislative change. However, the didactic stories in *The Woman Worker* reject the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century emphasis on noblesse oblige and voluntary middle-class benevolence that is so often at the centre of what Claybaugh calls "one of the most common scenes in reformist writing: the investigative visit" (7).[14] For example, despite its invocation of the suffering "little woman," A. D. A.'s "Modern Values Struggle" (December 1926) does not, like so many of the reform narratives that precede it, call in a middle-class savior; instead, the protagonist abandons her ungrateful family for work on a western farm and a relationship of "comradeship" with one of the farm's male labourers. More commonly, the stories supplant the resolution proffered by a benevolent employer with calls for an active, interventionist state. In A. D. A.'s short story "The Shack Builder" (September 1926), a working-class housewife, Mary, is left without any means of support when her husband unexpectedly dies and she is denied Mothers' Allowance because of her ownership of a meagre "shack." The same author's "A Modern Virgin" (January 1927) is a story that warns the reader of the sexual danger inherent in domestic work and advocates legislative solutions to the predatory tendencies of male employers. A. D. A.'s contributions to "Shop and Factory Life," a column that contained "true tales" from the world of waged work, similarly promote government and legislative reform as a means of protecting women. In the June 1927 column, for example, the author tells the story of "Esther," a recent Polish immigrant whose employers systematically underpay her. A. D. A. helps Esther file a complaint at the Minimum Wage Board and, although the author recognizes that unionization is a surer means of protection, she shows

readers how to navigate the legal bodies that are ostensibly meant to guarantee certain standards in the workplace ("Shop and Factory Life" 5-7). It is in such advocacy of protective measures that one finds *The Woman Worker* engaged in the project of beckoning forth a strong welfare state.[15]

In some cases, contributors of prose merged the "little woman" with her more militant counterpart, and stories like this are powerful demonstrations of the competing ideologies that shaped *The Woman Worker*. A. D. A.'s "We Visit the Mountain" (October 1926) offers an account of a woman (the first-person narrator) canvassing her neighbourhood in Ontario on behalf of a labour candidate. After encountering various disappointing types, the narrator finally meets the woman she calls "my rebel woman" (9-10). This "rebel" immediately declares that, unlike those who precede her, she will cast her vote for "the man who can help the workers" (10). She finishes her denunciation of capitalist oppression with a flourish:

> In Russia the workers were compelled to take drastic action. I tell you, that is what will happen in Canada one of these days, and it may not be so very far off. Do not misunderstand me. I love Canada. I am not unpatriotic. I have heard that you people in the Labor Movement want to destroy our country, that you have no use for it. (10-11)

The narrator receives this speech with enthusiasm; this "real rebel," she affirms, "was figuring things out pretty correctly" (11). The narrator then hastens to offer one correction: "we in the Labor Movement liked Canada so much that we wanted Canada for the only useful people, the workers and the farmers, the producers of life's necessities" (11). Other elements in the story echo this apparent coexistence of the discourses of revolutionary socialism and parliamentary legality: while the narrator champions the "courageous" Agnes Macphail (Canada's first woman MP and a member of the Progressive Party), she concludes with a militant apostrophe that urges women readers to remove "the chains of bondage" and to turn their "mountain of ignorance" into a "seething volcano of working class activity and consciousness" (11). "We Visit the Mountain" thus merges the periodical's familiar language of state protection with a didactic call for class struggle that anticipates the politics and aesthetics of the socialist realism that emerged out of Soviet Russia in the early 1930s.

It is important to emphasize that the protective legislation and social welfare measures advocated through the "little woman" were treated in the pages of *The Woman Worker* as short-term compromises that would precede the working-class rule gestured to in the figure of the "Rebel Woman." Yet

understanding CPC-affiliated organizations such as the WLLs of the 1920s as historical exceptions rather than as contributors to a discourse of state reform that was ultimately absorbed in the postwar "passive revolution" does these groups and their political and cultural labours a historical disservice.[16] Feminist literary and labour historians in Canada have for several decades emphasized the contributions of white, middle-class women to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century discourses of reform[17]; less well-known is the fact that ostensibly radical women's groups in this same period were employing literary discourse drawn from a diverse leftist-progressive spectrum as a means of articulating ideas that ultimately influenced welfare-state thinking. In so doing, these women were also rewriting the *fin de siècle* narrative of noblesse oblige and attempting to write the new forms of realism that so dramatically altered Canadian fiction in the modern period. Moreover, this analysis of the cultural material in *The Woman Worker* offers evidence of the fact that equal-rights feminism did, albeit hesitantly, find articulation in interwar Canada; inspired by examples of women's emancipation in post-revolutionary Russia that were trickling into the Canadian Communist press in this period, creative contributors to *The Woman Worker* attempted to voice equal-rights arguments, but their dependence on masculinist traditions of workers' poetry made this undertaking a fraught one. Lacking ideological and ethnic homogeneity and struggling to assert a message rooted in class and gender identification, the diverse women of Canada's WLLs nonetheless left a significant creative print culture of dissent that reminds us of the politically eclectic heritage of the welfare state, the convoluted emergence of women's leftist writing via nineteenth-century forms, and of the contested nature of the "woman question" in 1920s Canada.

NOTES

1 This article cites the extant copy of *The Woman Worker* that is housed at the National Library in Ottawa. Margaret Hobbs' and Joan Sangster's study of *The Woman Worker*, which reprints the first issue of the periodical in its entirety, may be downloaded from the website of Athabasca University Press.

2 Prior to the "crisis" between 1928 and 1931 in the CPC, which was provoked by the Trotskyist-Stalinist split, the party pursued open collaboration with diverse elements of the labour movement, even the conservative Trades and Labor Congress (Angus 131-43, 199-200).

3 The role of the political left, particularly social democrats, vis-à-vis the development of the welfare state has been well documented, but the ways in which leftist organizations

employed periodicals as a means of calling the welfare state into being require further examination. This is especially true of Communist periodicals because CPC organizations have not often been considered in relation to the history of the welfare state or of social democracy in Canada (McKay 74).

4 For the work of literary critics, see, for example: Doyle, Irr, Irvine, Rifkind, and Rimstead.

5 The CPC initially operated through a legal front, the Workers Party of Canada, but, as the result of a Comintern directive in 1924, began identifying itself as the Communist Party of Canada (Angus 91-102).

6 For further discussion of the circumstances motivating the formation of the periodical, see Hobbs and Sangster, 7-13. As the editorial of the October 1928 issue tells us, the October-December 1928 issues of *The Woman Worker* were edited by the Toronto WLL because Custance was seriously ill ("Important Notice" 3-4). Custance's "Important Notice" in the January 1929 issue indicates that she was editing once again in the new year (14), but this was short-lived: the last issue of the periodical appeared in April of 1929, and Custance died in July of that same year (Hobbs and Sangster 12).

7 In the first issue, Custance relates that *The Woman Worker* first existed as a "feeble" mimeographed publication; she is clearly proud of the professionally printed magazine that appeared in 1926 ("Success" 32). The first issue boasts a dark green cover of cardstock with black type; all subsequent issues bear a lighter green cover of thinner, slightly glossier paper.

8 See Mary North's letter in the October 1926 issue. Although, according to the October 1927 issue, WLLs continued to multiply during the 1920s (ten in 1924 and thirty-seven in 1927) ("Federation News" 15), attracting readers was a constant challenge. If one estimates that each League represented ten subscribers, the circulation of the periodical probably never exceeded five hundred copies per month, given that the leagues continued to grow after 1927. The left-leaning *Canadian Forum* had approximately 1,900 subscribers in 1929 and the mass-circulation women's magazine *Chatelaine* boasted 180,000 subscribers by 1933 (Djwa 8; Bruusgaard; des Rivières, Gerson, and Saint-Jacques 248-51).

9 Many articles in *The Woman Worker* are reports on contemporary life in Soviet Russia, and all of them mention women's emancipation. See, for one example among many: Beatrice Green, "Women's Freedom in Soviet Russia" (January 1927).

10 In referring to the laws that controlled the content of printed matter that circulated through the post, Custance is alluding to regulations that imposed real limits on the expression of socialist thought in this period. In the April 1927 "Notes and Happenings" section, Custance decries the fact that the Customs Department had banned the importation of the socialist periodical *New Masses* from the United States ("War Is Declared" 5).

11 I take the concept of "revolutionary chorus" from Cary Nelson's study of the poetry of the US-American left, *Revolutionary Memory*.

12 Joussaye is perhaps best known for her poem "Only a Working Girl," which appeared in her first book *The Songs That Quinte Sang* (1895). See Gerson, "Marie Joussaye's 'Labor's Greeting.'"

13 For a discussion of the novel of social reform in nineteenth-century Canada, see Gerson, *A Purer Taste* and *Canadian Women in Print*, Vipond, and Watt.

14 Gerson discusses the role of noblesse oblige (the belief that employers could be relied upon to institute reforms in order to improve the lives of their employees) in the work of both Machar and Joussaye in chapter 8 of *Canadian Women in Print*. See also Watt (461) and Vipond (40-41).

15 Hobbs and Sangster observe that, despite the ultimate preference in *The Woman Worker* for worker-driven unionization, government benevolence was frequently accepted

as a short-term solution (77). Indeed, the pages of *The Woman Worker* are filled with editorials, articles, short fiction, and letters that urge the state to adopt and enforce labour laws and social welfare measures such as minimum wages, mothers' allowances, old-age pensions, workmen's compensation (even for women working in the home!), and unemployment insurance.

16 The term "passive revolution" comes from the work of Antonio Gramsci, who employs it to describe modern welfare-state formation in his essay "Americanism and Fordism" (in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*).

17 See, for example, Bacchi, Devereux, Fiamengo, Gerson (*Canadian Women in Print*), Mitchinson, and Valverde.

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Michael Prior

an eye, earth

his mind has an eye, buried in the earth
before he was born, so it can see only the dark
and the loamy movements of earthworms
and beetles and other things, whose smallness
and slowness do not frighten him,
which is part of the reason the eye is buried
in the dirt, where day and night and solstice
are whittled away to nothing by the granules
of stone, the decaying twigs, the roots (whose
smallest fingers brush his eye in the search for water,
as if to say, we're sorry, but someday you might
see something whole again), though he is not worried:
if you ask him about his mind, the eye,
or where it's buried, he'll turn with the pair
of pale sentries that guard his face, and stare
through your skull, as if it were a tunnel
leading back to where he began, saying
that at least he knows what his eye sees

Michael Ross and
Lorraine York

Imperial Commerce and the Canadian Muse

The Hudson's Bay Company's Poetic Advertising Campaign of 1966-1972

In July of 1965, Barbara Kilvert, the Executive Assistant of Public Relations with the Hudson's Bay Company, kicked off an unusual advertising campaign by buying a poem from Al Purdy. She had come across a review of *Cariboo Horses* in the May issue of *Time* magazine, and, in her words, "decided I should make contact." As she later reminisced, "This was the beginning of it all." "It all" referred to a promotional venture inaugurated by Purdy's "Arctic Rhododendrons"—a series of ads featuring "new poems by Canadian poets, with layout design handled by young artists" (Kilvert, Annotation, Purdy Review). Over the next six years, the advertisements appeared in such respected periodicals as *Quarry, The Tamarack Review*, *Canadian Literature*, *The Malahat Review*, *Cité Libre*, and *Liberté*. Participants in the ad campaign made for an impressive roster of writers, including, besides Purdy, Margaret Atwood, Earle Birney, Louis Dudek, Joan Finnegan, Phyllis Gotlieb, Ralph Gustafson, D. G. Jones, Gustave Lamarche, Gwendolyn MacEwen, John Newlove, Alden Nowlan, Michael Ondaatje, Fernand Ouellette, P. K. Page, Jean-Guy Pilon, James Reaney, A. J. M. Smith, Raymond Souster, and Miriam Waddington.

Focussing on HBC's use of original works by Canadian poets in three of these journals—*Quarry*, *Tamarack*, and *Canadian Literature*—(See Appendix), this essay assesses the consequences of recontextualizing poems within a commercial frame of reference. Some of those consequences, as we will argue, were positive. Others, however, were troubling; poetic meaning could irresistibly be drawn into the orbit of HBC's commercial objectives. We will also demonstrate that, while in some respects the campaign

represented a divergence from HBC's customary promotional practices, in other ways it was complicit both with the company's advertised self-image as the corporate embodiment of the nation it served, and with the historic imperialist agenda that this corporate image did not advertise. Although the poems purchased were unpublished but not expressly commissioned for the campaign, and although the authors were given no directions as to preferred subject or tendency, many of the works used aligned with that nation-building agenda. As we will suggest, this was not a coincidence; HBC's commercial nationalism intersected with the growing spirit of cultural nationalism during this decade—a spirit that many of these poets shared.

This apparent meeting of minds needs to be read against a generally contentious historical relationship between poetry and advertising. Frequently the very idea of any affinity between the two modes of discourse has been flatly denied, and even those who recognize such an affinity have often taken a dim view of it. The semanticist S. I. Hayakawa acknowledges that both modes "strive to give meaning and overtones to the innumerable data of everyday experience, they both attempt to make the objects of experience symbolic of something beyond themselves" (204). However, he adds "If we speak separately of what are ordinarily called poetry and advertising, let us speak of the former as *disinterested poetry*, the latter as *venal poetry*, the word *venal* being used in the sense of being available for hire" (206, emphasis original). In short, Hayakawa concedes poetic status to advertising only with stringent reservations; the word "venal" implies the dominance of the utilitarian over the freely creative.

Such pronouncements suggest that poetry, once delivered into the clutches of commercialism, will inevitably suffer degradation—a critique reminiscent of Frankfurt-School cultural theory, as espoused by influential exponents such as Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse. Such axiomatic suspicion of the relationship between art and commerce often finds its way into popular discussions of poetry and advertising. A 2000 *Harper's Magazine* article by John Jeremiah Sullivan wittily entitled "The Death of the Hired Poem" examines the consequences of smuggling a piece of what Hayakawa would call disinterested poetry into the realm of available-for-hire venality. Sullivan discusses the use of a familiar Robert Frost poem, "The Road Not Taken," in a television advertising campaign by Monster.com, an internet employment agency. By brutally abridging Frost's poem, the Monster.com commercial turns it into a clichéd advocacy of stalwart individualism. As Sullivan explains:

> Out went the second stanza, in which the qualifying note is introduced: "the passing there / Had worn them really about the same." Out went the wishful resignation . . . of "I doubted if I should ever come back." Out, most brazenly, went the first two lines of the last stanza, in which the speaker imagines himself as an old gasbag, turning the wavering and randomness of his life into a tale of courage and foresight. Scraped clean of irony, the abridged text that Monster.com's "cast of characters" recites is an uncomplicated paean to heroic individualism, just the sort of thing the speaker's old, sighing self might come up with in one of his less honest moments. (Paragraph 7)

Using his Frost example as a springboard, Sullivan argues that advertising capitalizes on poetic texts by forcing them into a Procrustean bed, homogenizing complexities and ironies into the banality of platitude for the sake of an easy, instant appeal to consumer susceptibilities. (It should be noted that none of the poems used in HBC's ad campaign were mutilated in this fashion; all were reproduced intact, with the exception of an excerpt from Gwendolyn MacEwen's *Terror and Erebus*.) The social theorist Andrew Wernick sees promotional culture in comparable terms as a voraciously parasitical force: "[T]hrough the ties which have developed between advertising, commercial media, and mass entertainment, the intertext of product promotion has become absorbed into an even wider promotional complex founded on the commodification, and transformation into advertising, of (produced) culture itself" (95).

Such hard-and-fast negative assumptions about the damaging relationship between art and promotion tend to oversimplify the actual workings of both promotional culture and poetry, and do not provide an adequate basis for assessing the HBC advertising campaign. One theorist who has attempted to counter such programmatic negativity is Jennifer Wicke, in her 1988 book *Advertising Fictions*. Wicke views advertising as "a language and a literature in its own right" (3). She maintains that "[b]oth literature and advertising are composite, heterogeneous language practices, which need to be read off each other to gauge their respective outlines" (14). More recently, the political theorist Jane Bennett has taken the case further; she argues that advertising, rather than ipso facto implicating the consumer in commodity fetishism, permits a wider range of possible responses, including what she daringly calls "an enchanted materialism" (118). "Although pleasure can entail stupidity, passivity, and, eventually, moral indifference," she acknowledges, "I contend that it can also enliven, energize, and, under the right circumstances, support ethical generosity" (128). Indeed, the sort of pleasurable openness Bennett envisions as a feasible response to advertising

closely resembles the sensual and intellectual engagement to be gained from the reading of poetry. Rather than relegating all advertising to the role of always-already venal exploiter of art, we propose, following Bennett's lead, to consider HBC's "poetic" campaign as potentially energizing, while still highlighting its corporate and imperialist designs.

The sort of complexity we have in mind emerges if we view HBC's poetic venture against the backdrop of earlier company promotional practices, which blended nationalist fervour with settler-invader ideology. Kilvert, for her part, envisioned the initiative as a departure from earlier strategies: "We are most anxious," she wrote to a young Margaret Atwood, "to produce a new series of ads; this time avoiding the 'Company history' bit and, instead, choosing a copy subject more closely related to the interests of this rather specialized readership, namely, poetry" (Kilvert, Letter to Margaret Atwood). Kilvert's "Company history bit" refers to HBC's long-standing approach to enhancing its public image through identifying itself with the nation and with the exploration and development of the West and the North. The flagship vehicle for such self-promotion, *The Beaver Magazine*, owned by the company until 1994, evolved over time from an in-house publication to an extramurally circulated magazine. Although it did not normally feature works of poetry in its pages, it did foreground subjects of potential interest to nationalistically minded Canadian poets. (Margaret Atwood, responding to Kilvert's invitation to contribute to the campaign, opens her letter by declaring that "I . . . think the idea . . . an excellent one" and adds, parenthetically, "I admire *The Beaver*, too" (Atwood, Letter to Barbara Kilvert, 4 Jan. 1966). As Joan Sangster notes, already by 1943, "*The Beaver* had long been a deliberate public relations effort on the part of the HBC to align its commercial image with positive interpretations of Canadian nation-building" (2). Specifically, it rationalized the Company's historic trading relations with Indigenous people as an instance of benevolent outreach to grateful subjects of empire. Peter Geller, author of several studies of HBC's promotional initiatives, argues that in "*The Beaver* magazine, as in the HBC's public relations project in general, stereotypical and simplified images of peoples and places served to present a particular vision of the company and its activities" (183).

That imperialist project, aimed at publicizing the company's positive role in nation-building, gained urgency in the late 1950s and the 60s as the company came under fire for its role in the relocation of Inuit communities (Tester and Kulchyski 108-09). HBC's attempts at damage control took the form of a series of self-congratulatory print ads, placed in journals such

as *The Tamarack Review*, featuring extracts from the diaries of Company traders like James Isham ("These Natives are Very Loving and fond of their Children . . ."), fulsome testimonials by writers such as Ernest Thompson Seton ("The Hudson's Bay Company has always been the guardian angel of the north"), and so forth. Prominent motifs included HBC's role in exploration and "discovery" of "wilderness" areas, bringing the "fruits of civilization" to Indigenous inhabitants, building peaceful relations between "warring tribes," and celebrating the North as a snowy *tabula rasa* ripe for development. In the years immediately preceding Kilvert's poetry initiative, HBC ran a series of ads eulogizing Company agent-explorers of the past several centuries, each ad underscored with the slogan, "Great Men—past and present—build a great Company" ("Samuel Hearne").

As the phrase "past and present" suggests, HBC plumed itself on continuity of service over a remarkably extended period of time. The Company, of course, had its origins as a commercial arm of a steadily expanding British Empire, to whose North American outreach it contributed heavily. In "Art, Advertising, and the Legacy of Empire," Jeffrey Auerbach draws attention to the "long history of commodifying the British Empire, from the imperial displays at the Great Exhibition [of 1851], to the famous Pears' Soap advertisements of the late-nineteenth century, to the Empire Marketing Board of the 1920s" (16).[1] He cites Thomas Richards' observation that commodities were "convenient vehicle[s] for expanding the Empire's sphere of influence" (16). The Hudson's Bay Company exemplified this time-honoured symbiosis between imperialism and commodification; it was a commercial empire upon which the sun of exchange value never set.

There were several compelling reasons why Kilvert considered it appropriate to depart from HBC's long-established set of promotional practices. To begin with, the venture had an appealingly public-spirited aura. In the interest of "selling" her novel idea to Atwood, Kilvert assured her that all parties to the venture would benefit: "I think the space would be used to the best possible advantage for the Company, for the periodical involved, and also for those poets in Canada who, unfortunately, still find it difficult at times to publish new works and realize financial gain from their undertakings" (Kilvert, Letter to Margaret Atwood).

The "financial gain" in question was fifty dollars for each poem used—a modest amount even by standards of the time, but not negligible, as the poets' eager responses suggest. Within four days of receiving Kilvert's invitation, Atwood submitted seven poems for her perusal, commenting:

"[I]t is encouraging to see a Canadian company doing something that ought to be done"—presumably, supporting the arts (Atwood, Letter to Barbara Kilvert). In a more candidly financial vein, Phyllis Gotlieb wrote, "For my part, as a card-carrying customer of long standing, the amount of money you paid for my poem and the promptness with which you paid it are the best advertisement you could ever hope to produce for the Hudson's Bay Co.!" (Kilvert, "Comments on Poetry Advertising Series"). John Newlove concurs: "I must say that Hudson's Bay is quicker about making a decision and in paying for it, and more generous in payment, than any literary outfit I've run across so far" (Newlove, Letter to Barbara Kilvert).[2]

But the poets' enthusiasm for the project was not solely based on financial considerations. A number of their responses dwelled on the aesthetic values of the advertisements. Miriam Waddington declared, "Your idea and way of using Canadian poems is really brilliant—whoever thought of it—I'm very glad that Hudson's Bay had such an original and attractive notion and then put it into practice" (Kilvert, "Comments on Poetry Advertising Series"). D. G. Jones professed himself "quite impressed by the series—by the combination of words and graphic images—and I've wondered if some day the company might consider publishing a selection of the best among them" (Kilvert, "Comments on Poetry Advertising Series").

The surge in cultural nationalism in the 1960s would also have been a major cause for the poets' enthusiasm. By mid-decade, the Pearson government, led by its finance minister Walter Gordon, was taking steps to limit foreign ownership of Canadian cultural industries (television, radio, newspapers, magazines), a move that the Watkins Report, commissioned by Gordon, seconded in 1968. As a result, the Canada Development Corporation was formed in 1971 to promote Canadian ownership of private-sector companies (only to be dismantled by the Mulroney government in 1986, as part of that government's privatization agenda). Telefilm Canada was created in 1967, to support Canadian film production, and the Canada Council began to receive monies from the federal government in the same year. In short, as Sarah Corse writes, "by the 1960s, Canadian mobilization against British and especially American cultural domination was in full swing. . . . Pan-Canadian nationalism reached its zenith in the period of the late 1960s and 1970s" (52)—exactly the period in which Barbara Kilvert's new advertising initiative took flight. Add to this the resurgence of Quebec nationalism in the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution, and Kilvert was assured of a welcoming response from poets in both official languages. Gustave Lamarche wrote

to Kilvert congratulating the HBC "for the initiative they have displayed in desiring to make known the poets of Canada," while his compatriot Marcel Bélanger's appreciation was more focused on Québécois cultural visibility: "I congratulate you on your enterprise and I hope it will contribute to the knowledge of Quebec poetry in the English speaking world" (Kilvert, "Comments on Poetry Advertising Series").

Although, as these poets recognized, the campaign was in some ways a groundbreaking initiative, we still need to ask how radical a departure it actually represented. In fact, the imperialist motifs we have identified in earlier HBC promotional culture persist in more oblique guise in some of the "poetic" ads. John Newlove's "The Hitchhiker," for example, even while evoking the symbolic title character's existential wandering, replicates the earlier "Company history" theme of exploring the vast Canadian terrain from sea to sea:

> …there you stood on
> the road in the wind,
> the cold wind going
> through you and you
> going through the country
> to no end, only
> to turn again at one sea
> and begin it again… (back cover)

Newlove's "cold wind" also touches on another frequent motif in earlier HBC publicity: the harshness of the climatic conditions to be braved in the Cold Nation. Other contributing poets also dwell on this theme of the inhospitable North. Alden Nowlan's cattle in "Midnight of the First Snow"

> lift up their heads
> with a little stir of wonder,
> then go back to grazing,
> getting every blade within reach
> before taking
> another sleepy step in the darkness. (back cover)

Like the venturesome human subjects populating earlier HBC series, Nowlan's animals are shown stepping into a dark, frigid unknown.

As in those older ads, contact with Canadian nature in other HBC poems can also provide vatic glimpses like Nowlan's "stir of wonder." In A. J. M. Smith's "The Birches," the quintessentially northern trees "seem to be flashing / a message" when their leaves rustle in the breeze (back cover), but that message is an ambiguous one: "What do they say?" the speaker wonders,

"or seem to?" The message of the land is similarly emphatic yet intangible in Purdy's "Arctic Rhododendrons." The "vivid blue-purple / and white foam zig zagging / from flower to flower" are too elusive to be pinned down, yet the blossoms represent something as momentous as a secularized "Stations of the Cross." The speaker's vision of the flowers marks an epiphanic moment of discovery: "—and no one has seen them here / but the loud river / and the land itself" (back cover). Although we are not made privy to the ethnographical musings of Company "pioneers" like Governor George Simpson or James Isham in these ads, the pioneering compulsion to decipher the orphic hieroglyphs of the continent persists.

This desire to read the landscape symbolically often takes the form, in these poems, of mythologizing the local—a frequent strategy of cultural-nationalist poets of the 60s. In Souster's Toronto-specific "Ward's Island," for example, the flight of "two mallards with wing-stroke / of patience, strength of all continent-crossers" becomes an augury of the onset of Canadian winter and ultimately of death: "leaving summer / which had hardly been / inevitably over" (71). Other poems attempt even more explicitly than Souster's to transmute natural phenomena into pieces of local mythology. James Reaney, the mythologizer of the local par excellence, evokes the natural scene "Near Tobermory, Ontario" by personifying earth, air, and water as mythological sister-spirits "Urtha," "Pale Blue Airy," and "Watty Blue," all held in suspension by the fourth sister, "Light" (back cover). The "enchantment" of the land, and of specific places within it, calls to mind what Bennett identifies as one of the characteristic pleasures of advertising. In the context of HBC promotional history, however, there still clings to such "enchantment" a lingering aura of white European "taming" of an alien realm.

Nowhere in the new series of ads is this imperialist taming more conspicuous than in Gustave Lamarche's "Kateri Tekakwitha," a poem paying homage to the seventeenth-century Iroquois saint. Here we have a narrative that dovetails neatly with HBC's historic colonizing initiatives, in particular their abetting of missionary work with Indigenous people. Initially Kateri, like the speakers of poems by Purdy, Smith, and Reaney, finds divinity in objects in the natural world: "Kateri adorait des dieux de feuillage" (Kateri worshipped gods of the foliage). For Lamarche's Kateri, however, these gods of the natural scene prove inadequate because unresponsive: "Ils étaient beaux mais ne répondaient pas" (They were beautiful but did not answer). Frustrated by their silence, Kateri eventually lapses into a state of melancholy. Her sadness is remedied only when she is told ("Un jour lui fut dit") that the things she

loves in nature—grasses, waters, the flight of birds—are not themselves God, but "simplement le signe partout que Dieu t'aime" (simply the omnipresent sign that God loves you). Thus instructed, the girl promptly dies "du parfum de Dieu sur son sein" (the perfume of God on her breast) (back cover). Lamarche, an ordained priest, is somewhat coyly evasive (lui fut dit) about who may have enlightened Kateri, but his readers could easily decode the reference to Jesuit missionaries in New France. In classic colonialist fashion, Lamarche's poem deprives Kateri's natural religion of any sense of divine reciprocity, blithely running roughshod over the centuries-old Indigenous sense of communion with a vividly responsive environment.

In earlier HBC advertising, too, the mission of "enlightenment" had been carried out by male authority figures, typically identified as "great men." Peter Geller, in his study of *The Beaver*'s representation of the North, recounts how a 1935 photograph of three men—an HBC district manager, an Army officer, and a bishop—was captioned, "This issue[,] our news pictures lead off with 'The Crown, the Company and the Church, the three great powers in the Northwest Territories'" (181). Earlier ads featured a gallery of white male physiognomies and testimonies: Samuel Hearne, James Isham, Henry Kelsey, William Stewart, Anthony Henday, Sir John Ross, Governor John Nixon, to name just a handful. In Kilvert's new series the impression of male predominance is markedly less distinct; we encounter the voices of Gwendolyn MacEwen, Joan Finnegan, Phyllis Gotlieb, Margaret Atwood, and Miriam Waddington. This is hardly surprising; the late 60s saw the rise of second-wave feminism, and Kilvert's interest lay in giving HBC publicity a stronger sense of the *au fait*.

At the same time, the ads (and the poets featured) project an even stronger sense of racial uniformity than did previous campaigns. For example, the sequence of ads that the Company ran in 1956-57, entitled "Songs of the Eskimo," did at least include the voices, even if translated and coopted for commercial purposes, of Tatilgäk (Bathurst Inlet), Kingmerut (Ellis River), and Igpakuhak (Victoria Land) (HBC, Songs of the Eskimo). Kilvert's series, for all that it broke some new ground, did little to mitigate the Company's long-standing tendency, in Geller's words, to rest "the humanity of Natives… on the representations offered by non-Natives" (169), a tendency of which Lamarche's poem is a signal example.

What did make Kilvert's campaign diverge strikingly from what had gone before was its novel emphasis on the inward, the personal, and the idiosyncratic. Newlove's "The Hitchhiker," for example, while reprising

familiar exploration motifs, focuses less on the rugged geographical terrain to be traversed than on the traveler's mental terrain—not on external dangers but on precarious psychic security:

> going through the country
> to no end, only
> to turn again at one sea
> and begin it again,
> feeling safe with strangers
> in a moving car. (back cover)

In Nowlan's "The Spy" psychic insecurity is given a more domestic focus. Perturbed when his child "cries out in his sleep," the speaker bends close to "spy on his dreams," while realizing that his son's interiority is "too private to share / even with me" (back cover).

Like Newlove's "The Hitchhiker," Gwendolyn MacEwen's "This Northern Mouth" takes up the familiar discourse of exploration and transmutes it into an internal search: "this, my northern mouth / speaks at times east, speaks south, / if only to test / the latitudes of speech." The metaphorical progression from geographic exploration to poetic quest, dating back at least to Keats—"Much have I travelled in the realms of gold"—here gets imaginatively mapped onto a northern landscape. But it is not a landscape to be found on any conventional, HBC agent's map; MacEwen's "latitudes" is a witty pun. When the speaker declares "I sometimes journey outward / and around; yet in the east / they ask me of the dark, mysterious west" (back cover), the east and west she refers to belong uniquely to MacEwen, not to Mercator. MacEwen is playing slyly with geographical clichés; here the hackneyed "mysterious East" is transformed into her own poetic "mysterious west."

A comparable shift from the rigidly corporate to the more flexibly personal is executed by another HBC poet with an eloquent northern mouth, Al Purdy. In "Arctic Rhododendrons," the speaker repeatedly shies away from categorical explanations for the feelings prompted by these tiny, purple flowers: "a matter of association I guess / But that doesn't explain it." And when Purdy's speaker approaches a cosmological explanation that is broader still, he tentatively borrows its terminology while emphatically rejecting its doctrinal tenets:

> Like the Stations of the Cross
> if a man were religious
> --but the feeling I have
> for something like this
> replaces God (back cover)

In effect, Purdy and Lamarche are participating in an implicit dialogue: where Lamarche's "Kateri Tekakwitha" insists on the compulsory progression from "pagan" nature worship to Christian orthodoxy, Purdy walks the Stations of the Cross backwards, abandoning orthodoxy in favour of spontaneous paganism. For all its affinities with earlier HBC campaigns, Kilvert's "poetic" initiative is more hospitable to ideological variance than the reverently cited recollections of Company men.

Because of this openness—because Kilvert took the unorthodox risk of pressing poetic productions into service as advertising text—some of the poems Kilvert chose for the purpose are implicitly resistant to the national promotional objectives of the HBC. In "Rasmussen Speaks," excerpted from the verse play *Terror and Erebus*, MacEwen has the eponymous explorer—the first European to cross the Northwest Passage on dogsled—address a famous forerunner: "Now the great passage is open, / the one you dreamed of, Franklin." Rasmussen evokes a stirring picture of commerce pouring through the passage in the best Hudson's Bay Company fashion: "great white ships sail through it / over and over again, / easily, lightly, / packed with cargo and carefree men." The focus now shifts, however, from brute material accomplishment to the inward power of imagination: "or . . . is it that the way was invented, / Franklin . . . ? / that you cracked the passage open / with the forces of sheer certainty." But the speech concludes on a more subversive note still: "or is it that you cannot know, / can never know, / where the passage lies / between conjecture and reality . . ."(2). Here the "sheer certainty" of commercial triumphalism dissolves into indeterminacy; passages that can be mapped or charted yield place to speculative passages that resist being fully probed. This is a far cry from the swelling confidence of standard HBC self-promoting proclamations, on the order of "Across the span of nearly three centuries . . . and from sea to sea Ours is a tradition of service to Canadians" (HBC, "Across the Span").

A poem even more subversively challenging to HBC promotional commonplaces is "Carved Animals," the piece Kilvert selected for use from among the seven poems Atwood sent her. An identical version of the poem would shortly be included in *The Circle Game* as the last in a sequence of three poems entitled "Some Objects of Wood and Stone." "Carved Animals" thus appeared in two quite disparate contexts: one of which Hayakawa would no doubt class as "venal" and the other as "disinterested." But whatever the mediating force of the commercial frame of an HBC ad, Atwood's poem resists any simple imputation of "venality."

To begin with, HBC's use of the poems Kilvert selected, "Carved Animals" included, is obviously unlike Monster.com's appropriation of Frost's "The Road Not Taken"; there has been no invasive tampering with the texts of the poems. And like the other poems, "Carved Animals" was of course not initially tailored by the poet to fit the commercial context. Instead, its evocation of people seated in a circle clearly places it within recurring patterns of imagery that run through the collection *The Circle Game*, and the poem's resonance partly depends on that context. Parachuted into an ad rather than finding its home in a collection, the poem inevitably loses some of that resonance. Still, even when relocated for commercial purposes, the poem can hardly be reduced to a mere pitch for HBC consumer goods. "Carved Animals" dwells not just on the naïve external gratification of possessing concrete objects, but on the *internalizing* of the skillfully crafted artifact:

> and the hands, the fingers the
> hidden small bones
> of the hands bend to hold the shape,
> shape themselves, grow cold with the stone's cold, grow
> also animal, exchange
> until the skin wonders
> if stone is human. (89)

This kind of "exchange" between the artistic maker, the material medium, and the appreciative consumer leaves far behind the sorts of transactions normally engaged in by companies like HBC.

However, one should not exaggerate the immunity even of so resistant a poem to the subtle influence of a commercial context. One might still argue that the poem's transposition into a commercial frame entails a more covert but deleterious form of tampering. Once the poem is situated within a promotional campaign, its focus on consumable objects inevitably harmonizes to a degree with the role of the Hudson's Bay Company as the purveyor of as "choice goods as can be bought for money." Ironically, in 1953, only sixteen years before "Carved Animals" appeared, HBC had become the main supplier of Inuit carvings to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild (*Corporate Collections*), in a move that has been criticized for its tendency to circumscribe the artistic freedom of Indigenous producers. In other ways, too, the advertisement as it appeared, with its combination of visual and verbal text, reverses the trajectory that the poem itself traces from material object to cultural interiority. The inclusion of Bruce Head's totemic drawings also refers the viewer back to the poem's concrete starting

point, in effect rematerializing what the poem wishes to render inward and spiritual. So that, while not crudely mutilating the text like a Monster.com ad, the commercial layout enforces the logic of the marketplace, in effect contradicting the logic of the poem. The same process holds good, to a greater or lesser extent, for the other poems employed in HBC's campaign.

Ultimately, of course, no published work of literature can be considered entirely "disinterested," existing in a realm above and beyond the soilure of economic exchange. Any such literary production is, after all, a commodity. Rather than dismissing HBC's initiative as fatally besmirching the pristine beauty of art, it would make more sense to view it as an exceptional venture that served the corporate agenda while, at the same time, increasing the visibility of Canadian poetry. In a rare critical reference to this now largely forgotten advertising campaign, Mark Abley makes essentially the same point: that, despite being geared to corporate purposes, the HBC poetry campaign at least offered poets social visibility and a modest equivalent of traditional patronage:

> In a magazine like *Quarry*, you might expect to find ads from the local university, a local bookstore and a few poetry publishers. You might not be surprised to find an ad from the local newspaper. All those institutions did, in fact, advertise in *Quarry* in 1966. But so did the Hudson's Bay Company, whose ad took up a back cover and featured a poem by Gwendolyn MacEwen, "This Northern Mouth." Can you imagine Wal-Mart paying good money to advertise in a literary magazine? Can you imagine Sears or Canadian Tire approving marketing copy with a poem at the heart? . . . In 1966, evidently there was nothing odd in the idea that local businesses, from barbers to jewellers, had a responsibility to support literary culture, and that it might even prove economically worthwhile for them to do so . . . many of us now feel we're writing into a social vacuum. (4)

Abley's inference that "there was nothing odd" about the HBC campaign is certainly an exaggeration. True, the initiative was not altogether unique or unprecedented.[3] Nor, as we have shown, did it represent a total break with earlier HBC promotional culture. However, the use of literary works to promote firms and their merchandise was hardly common in the 1960s. Even Barbara Kilvert, in a letter to *Time* journalist Serrell Hillman, guardedly refers to the idea as "slightly off-beat" (Kilvert, Letter to Serrell Hillman). There is no proof that the "social vacuum" which Abley laments was any less gaping then than it is now.

Still, Abley's central point—that the HBC poetry campaign was a valuable and far-sighted promotional venture—has substantial merit. The linkage between commercial power and poetic creativity offers some obvious positive possibilities, like the "enliven[ing]" energizing potential Jane

Bennett perceives in the pleasures of promotional art. At the same time, though, that linkage opens other, more troubling possibilities. As we have also argued, poets' works risk becoming complicit with an imperialist culture that continues to profit from the colonization of Indigenous people and the commercial exploitation of their land and creative powers; the poet's northern mouth can too easily get upstaged by the louder company one. The insistent presence of corporate logos and trademarks, too—even a demurely inscribed "Hudson's Bay Company" at the foot of a poem—has an inevitable, mediating influence over readers' perceptions. The union of poetry and commerce is not necessarily an infernal beauty-and-the-beast misalliance, but neither is it a marriage made in heaven.

APPENDIX: SELECTED HBC POETIC ADS

1966

Phyllis Gotlieb, "I Ask You." *Canadian Literature* 29 (1966): Inside Front cover; *The Tamarack Review* 41 (1966): Back cover.
Gwendolyn MacEwen, "Rasmussen Speaks." *Canadian Literature* 30 (1966): 2.
John Newlove, "The Hitchhiker." *The Tamarack Review* 39 (1966): Back cover.
Alden Nowlan, "Two Poems" ["Midnight of the First Snow" and "The Spy"]. *Canadian Literature* 28 (1966): 56; *The Tamarack Review* 40 (1966): Back cover.
A. W. Purdy, "Arctic Rhododendrons." *The Tamarack Review* 38 (1966): Back cover.

1967

Joan Finnigan, "Windy Night." *The Tamarack Review* 45 (1967): Back cover.
Gustave Lamarche, "Kateri Tekakwitha." *The Tamarack Review* 43 (1967): Back cover.
Gwendolyn MacEwen, "This Northern Mouth." *Canadian Literature* 32 (1967): 67.
A. W. Purdy, "Arctic Rhododendrons." *Canadian Literature* 31 (1967): 73.
James Reaney, "Near Tobermory, Ontario." *Quarry* 17.1 (1967): Back cover.
A. J. M. Smith, "The Birches." *The Tamarack Review* 42 (1967): Back cover.
Raymond Souster, "Ward's Island." *Canadian Literature* 34 (1967): 71.
Miriam Waddington, "Apollo Tree." *The Tamarack Review* 44 (1967): Back cover.

1968

Louis Dudek, "Atlantis." *Quarry* 17.3 (1968): Back cover.
Joan Finnegan, "Canadian Stanza." *Quarry* 17.2 (1968): Back cover.
Phyllis Gotlieb, "I Ask You." *Quarry* 17.1 (1968): Back cover.
Ralph Gustafson, "In a Time of Minor Wars." *Canadian Literature* 37 (1968): Inside Front cover.
Gwendolyn MacEwen, "This Northern Mouth." *Quarry* 18 (1968): Back cover.
A. J. M. Smith, "The Birches." *Canadian Literature* 36 (1968): 97.
Miriam Waddington, "Apollo Tree." *Canadian Literature* 35 (1968): 76.

1969

Margaret Atwood, "Carved Animals." *Canadian Literature* 39 (1969): 89.
John Robert Columbo, "In the Universe." Canadian Literature 40 (1969): Inside Back cover

Dorothy Livesay, "The Quarrel." *Canadian Literature* 41 (1969): Inside Back cover
D. G. Jones, "XXV." *Quarry* 18.4 (1969): Back cover.
Alden Nowlan, "Two Poems" ["Midnight of the First Snow" and "The Spy"]. *Quarry* 8.2 (1969): Back cover.
P. K. Page/ Irwin, "motor trip 1968." *Canadian Literature* 42 (1969): Inside Back cover
Al Purdy, "Whoever You Are." *Quarry* 18.3 (1969): Back cover.

1970

Earle Birney, "there are delicacies." *Canadian Literature* 46 (1970): Inside Back cover
Joan Finnigan, "Heron on the Grand River." Canadian Literature 45 (1970): Inside Back cover
George Jonas, "Girls." *Canadian Literature* 44 (1970): Inside Back cover
Michael Ondaatje, "Early Morning, Kingston to Gananoque." *Canadian Literature* 43 (1970): Inside Back cover

1971

Judith Copithorne, "Fire Flowers." *Canadian Literature* 50 (1971): Back cover
David Helwig, "Now islands." *Canadian Literature* 47 (1971): Back cover
Michael. J. Yates, "The Great Bear Lake Meditations No. 13." *Canadian Literature* 48 (1971): Inside Back cover

1972

Peter Steven, "Winter Storm." *Canadian Literature* 54 (1972): Back cover
Miriam Waddington, "Walking in London One." *Canadian Literature* 52 (1972): Back cover

NOTES

1 John Everett Millais's 1886 painting entitled "A Child's World" ("Bubbles") was famously used in an advertisement for Pears soap with a bar of the soap added to the painted image. This use of an artwork was vigorously debated at the time, even charged with being an act of "prostitution" (See Hindley and Hindley 43-44).

2 The evidence in the HBC archives includes no critical responses or refusals on the part of poets who were contacted by Kilvert. Although this may be a result of company editing of its own archive, we do not know of any poet contacted by Kilvert who was not receptive.

3 To cite just one example, between 1950 and the mid-1970s, the Chicago Container Corporation of America (CCA) ran a series of ads "Great Ideas of Western Man" that featured citations from, among others, Montesquieu, John Stuart Mill, Dr. Johnson, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Henry David Thoreau. (See Allison, Chapter Three.)

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John Donlan

Testament

A foot and a half thick at breast height
this "over-mature" poplar's
soon to topple into forest floor.
From seven stories up a porcupine

has dropped a ring of chopped branchlets
around the base, their tender twigs snibbed off.
Tonight the porcupine could feast, or a fisher
circling, dodging the murderous tail, could tear

its face till bloody and blind it faints and dies.
I'll have it easy, my death
undramatic, at some expense my body
swiftly tidied away.

Or to end by this beaver pond:
no food, no drink; in a few days I'd be gone.
The fisher could eat what flesh there was
and the porcupine chew the bones for calcium.

Roshaya Rodness

Thomas King's National Literary Celebrity and the Cultural Ambassadorship of a Native Canadian Writer

I'd done quite a bit of work under Thomas King
—Thomas King

The recent publication of Thomas King's *The Inconvenient Indian* (2012) offers scholars of King's literary career, and of Aboriginal literature, an opportunity to revisit King's concerns about Indigenous celebrity and public visibility. His studied management of his own visibility as an Aboriginal writer, artist, and filmmaker in Canada underscores a literary persona in that text that offers an intimate view of the reclusive process of writing and the direct influences of his wife and son on his literary production. King's hospitable posture adopted in the earliest pages of *The Inconvenient Indian* reverberates, however spectrally, in later chapters where he explores the legacy of Native participation and representation in cinema and literature. These concerns are a continuation of those explored in his much studied novel *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), where he both diagnoses patterns of Native representation in Hollywood and tests, as I will argue, his own role as a Native literary celebrity in Canada. King does not address the uneasy space he occupies as a Native celebrity writing about Native celebrity directly in these texts, nor what he considers to be the interpenetration of the type of national acclaim that frames his career in Canada and that which frames the actors and performers he discusses. However, his interviews and public appearances are riven with an acute and self-reflexive understanding of a dimension of his career that cannot escape comparison to the legacy of colonial visibility that has long attended the public lives of Native individuals.

My concern in this paper is the deployment of King's indigeneity and his multinational identity as what Laura Moss (2006) has referred to, in the context of a discussion about Margaret Atwood, as a "cultural ambassador" of the nation (20). Moss claims that literary celebrities are frequently enlisted by the public and by the government to serve as delegates of culture at home and abroad. As a multiracial American-born Cherokee living and working in Canada with Canadian citizenship, King can be exported as an index of Canadian multiculturalism. However, as someone who calls the Canada-US border a "line from somebody else's imagination" (qtd. in Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 13), King also denies the very boundaries that he is assumed to both embody and transcend.

By examining the national features of King's literary celebrity we glimpse an increasingly complex, seemingly contradictory, picture of cultural ambassadorship in Canada. If, as Moss argues, the cultural ambassador is a branding icon entrusted with selling cultural goods as well as symbolic capital at home and abroad (21), then these interests support and are supported by individuals like King, who may deploy divergent opinions about the national space, to the extent that they may even reject the legitimacy of the nation they are poised to represent, as long as their efforts come back to the nation in the form of financial and cultural capital. Further, as we see with King, cultural ambassadorship is not simply a role conferred and managed exclusively by media institutions outside of and away from the individual and his or her interests; cultural ambassadorship is a mode of celebrity in which the individual is a key player. It is a role that the individual takes part in moulding both in ways that affirm and resist the national interests and the platforms that support it. The national consecration of culture is an intricate activity that frequently produces and involves resistant cultural artifacts as legitimating products. King's refutation of the Canada-US border enables his celebrity status by reinforcing images of Canadian inclusivity even in the moment that he denies the parameters that make possible that national identification. Further, his tight, long-standing relationship with the CBC ensures that even his rejection of the legitimacy of the Canada-US border can be transformed into national capital.

In this paper I consider related phenomena to describe King's public life, including "celebrity," "literary celebrity," "cultural ambassador," "public intellectual," and "canonical author." These subjectivities overlap and diverge depending on the venue in which King is received. As I will discuss shortly, King is hailed as a range of subjects across his public appearances

and commitments. Consequently, the mode in which his visibility is made intelligible shifts according to the interests at play. For an academic interviewer he is a public intellectual; for a university instructor he is a canonical author. These roles have a cumulative effect in what I call, after Lorraine York, King's "literary celebrity," which names a combination of public and private investments in an author that are primarily, but not exclusively, derived from his or her literary output.

Although I am chiefly concerned with King's reception within Canada, Moss' observation of the "paradox of transnational-nationalism" reflects the national discourse in which King is frequently involved. If transnationalism is the "flow of people, ideas, goods, and capital, across national territory, [which] undermines nationality and nationalism as discrete categories of identification, economic organization, and political constitution" (Braziel and Mannur, qtd. in Moss 22-3), then transnationalism, she writes, "paradoxically . . . relies precisely on the designation of individuals, often well-known cultural figures, to represent the nation categorically beyond its borders" (23). King has had a wide reception outside of Canada and the United States. The most recent collection of scholarly essays on King, Eva Gruber's *Thomas King: Works and Impact* (2012), reflects the international interest in his work. The tongue-in-cheek photograph on the volume's cover—King mimicking the outward-looking gaze of a kitschy Indian figurine—suggests that King is gazing back at those scholars beyond the borders his work has breached. Transnationalism is established through the means of cultural production, as it traffics both in authors like King and commodities like the figurine. King's globalizing reach should also serve to remind us that as an Aboriginal writer allied with First Nations north of the forty-ninth parallel, he has always produced and performed his work within a transnational context.

King has been a visible presence on the Canadian literary scene since the late 1980s. He has edited two volumes of Native literature in Canada; his first novel, *Medicine River* (1989), received a number of awards and was adapted into a film in 1993; he was shortlisted for the 1991 Commonwealth Writer's Prize; he has been nominated twice for the Governor General's Award; he created and hosted the popular CBC radio series *Dead Dog Café*; he delivered the CBC Massey Lectures in 2003; the publication of the Lectures, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (2003), received the Trillium Award in 2003; he was inducted into the Order of Canada in 2004; and his work has been featured on CBC's Canada Reads. In recent years

he has written, directed, and starred in a short film, *I'm Not the Indian You Had in Mind* (2007), and run for federal office as a candidate for the New Democratic Party in Guelph, Ontario.[1] Although he has never been called a literary celebrity in the press,[2] King certainly has the trappings of a well-regarded and beloved Canadian writer. He is known, specifically, as a Native writer who thematizes Native politics, figures, and stories in his work. Born of Cherokee and Swiss-Greek descent in the United States, King's Canadian national image rests on a nervously multivalent identity that includes Cherokee descent, Canadian citizenship, American citizenship, and First Nations communities on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel. In a 1999 interview with literary critics Margery Fee and Sneja Gunew, he says,

> When I go on book tours, it's the damnedest thing. It's like I have to figure out who they are and what they want and then I have to see if I can strike that pose, or if I want to strike that pose. So you say, "Well, here with Tom King, a Cherokee writer." "Hi, I'm Cherokee. I'm Tom King." Or, "Here we are with Canadian writer Thomas King." "Yeah, I'm Canadian, eh?" (n. pag.)

King articulates how he contributes to a made-to-order public image that conforms to celebrity theorist Richard Dyer's theory of "constructed polysemy" (*Stars* 3), in which celebrity figures are characterized by "the finite multiplicity of meanings and affects they embody and the attempt so to structure them that some meanings and affects are foregrounded and others are masked or displaced" (3). In this book tour, King's literary identity is multiplied along the fault lines of nation and race to make him legible to different reading demographics. Indeed, Arnold E. Davidson, Priscilla L. Walton, and Jennifer Andrews suggest that King's popularity cannot be adduced *solely* to a question of literary merit, but is routed through his identification with both sides of the Canada-US border, as well as the thematization of this border in his fiction (11).

King's celebrity status is indexed by a range of national signifiers. He was called "Canada's best storyteller" (George 50) by the former leader of the NDP, the late Jack Layton. He has also been called a "Native American Kurt Vonnegut" (Weaver 55). Reviewers tend to associate King with his pan-tribal trickster characters. For instance, Diane Turbide from *Maclean's* calls him a "literary trickster" because, like Coyote, "he is busy creating fictional worlds" (43) and he "maintains a light, mischievous touch" in his work (43). King's literary style has even been compared to his national background. Janne Korkka claims that his works "appear highly hybridized, and so does the author himself" (144). Because of his transnational background, critics in Canada and the US often claim him categorically as their own.

In interviews, King is frequently asked how his identity contributes to his writing and his public reception. In the interview with Fee and Gunew, Fee tries to locate King's identity with what Dyer (1991) would call a "deconstructive" gaze (132). The interviewer explains that for her project on public intellectuals in Canada and Australia, King is perfect because, "you're both an immigrant in a way and an Aboriginal as well. You see, in our project we're dealing with people who are in a sense diasporic, and also people who are indigenous in both Canada and Australia. You're a multiple category in your own person, which I like a lot." To which King responds, "Only if you believe in national lines." The interview continues:

> MF: I mean, you may not believe in the Canadian border, but in a sense you are an American immigrant in one aspect of yourself.
> TK: Politically that's true.
> MF: And I think you've probably had people react to you that way whether you believe it or not.
> TK: Yes.
> MF: I'd like maybe to ask you to talk about the politics of being American in Canada, being Canadian in the States (when you're back), and possibly being Cherokee in First Nations communities.
> TK: Or wherever. (n. pag.)

King's responses betray a sense of uneasiness that Lorraine York (2007) has argued is a condition of literary celebrity, particularly one resting on an interest in the writer's citizenship (4). "If celebrity," she claims, "marks the uneasy space wherein the single, special individual and the group demographic both meet and separate, then citizenship, as a condition wherein the individual and the group mutually define each other, is a prime expression of that uneasy space" (5). The uneasy tone of the interview with Fee represents that shared space in which identity labels signal the failure of mutual definition. The labels conducive to the interviewer seem excessive and exclusive as modes of relating his experiences to his readership. King once again dances around easy answers to any of Fee's questions. The recombination of labels ("both an immigrant and an Aboriginal") suggests just how inoperable they are, even as she tries to show that they can be contiguous. Indeed, the comedy of these many labels and their juxtaposition derives precisely from their opacity as living relics of a national censorial imagination.

As the interview proceeds, we see that even as the identity labels work discursively to manage King's public appearances King rejects such management:

> With me it's sort of like, "We don't need the Cherokee anymore, let's find an American. Oh my God, he's an American. Leave him in the corner there." . . . [T]hey'll say, "Well, how does it feel to be an American in Canada?" And I'll say, "Well, I'm a Canadian, you know. I've got citizenship." "Really. But you're still an American, right?" "Well, yeah, but I'm Cherokee, too." "What's that got to do with anything?" they'll say. "Well, you know, I guess it doesn't for this show, but the next one I'm going to be on. . . ." (n.pag.)

For media industries, King's identity quickly becomes a case of the convenient—or inconvenient—Indian. The language of this passage strikingly forecasts the observation in *The Inconvenient Indian* that Indian populations were dispossessed of their land and scuttled from place to place, and continue to be subjected to surveillance, management, and administration "like furniture" (82). The media's clumsy shuffling of the star Indian between various "corners" of national investment gestures to the fledgling biopolitical regimes under which Aboriginal populations were controlled, and reterritorializes that vocabulary as an expression of the cultural marketplace in which King's celebrity is managed with increasing intensity. King's provocative argument in *The Inconvenient Indian* that, "when we look at Native-non-Native relations, there is no great difference between the past and the present" (xv), suggests that the domain of cultural production cannot be considered outside of a continuous relationship with the history of dispossession.

But while Indigenous celebrity is typically defined in Indigenous studies as a mode of injury wholly complicit with this history, (Daniel Francis [1992] argues that "the defining characteristic of the celebrity Indian is that he or she be selected by non-Natives" [142]), the example of King's literary celebrity tells a much more intricate story about the conditions of Native visibility. Fee avoids the connotative injury of "celebrity" by classifying King as a public intellectual, a title he most certainly deserves. In this subsequent study of King's public engagements, I have deployed a vocabulary of celebrity in a strategic effort to foreground King's institutional investments, the public interest in King's personal life, and the desire to locate the author in the folds of his productions. After York, I define literary celebrity not as a cult of the individual—an ideology of which Indigenous communities may be more suspicious—but as an ambiguous site of negotiation that marks the convergence of a diverse set of interests.

In addition to his identification with his more visible works, King's self-positioning as the "Indian you didn't have in mind" is one of his more enduring and agented public avatars. From his short film, *I'm Not The Indian You Had*

In Mind, this self-assigned image is a shorthand for the many "Live Indians"[3] that have not been included in what counts as representable indigeneity and that indexes the indifferent space of the individual and group identity. As one of three actors who speak these eight words in the film, King gives an account of himself that does not belong to him alone. The narrative King tells in the film about the absent father and the daughter with FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome) begs comparison to what we know of King's biography,[4] but as part of this pedagogical assemblage, is shown to resist private ownership and to circulate, as stories do, in a wider communal context.

King's engagement with non-Native audiences also reveals his keen understanding of the stakes of public visibility. In *The Truth About Stories*, King discusses literature as a site of negotiation between Native peoples and the nation-state. He comments on the difference between oral and written literature: "instead of waiting for you to come to us, as we have in the past, written literature has allowed us to come to you" (114). His apprehension of written literature as a vehicle for Native activists to engage Canadians on the terms of both Indigenous and non-Native Canadians suggests to me how he continues to maintain a devoted audience within Canada. While he is in no way uncritical of colonial politics, King envisions cultural divides and reaches across them, making certain interests legible to a non-Native audience as he controls access in-between. King is wary about the benefits for Native peoples that have come from this supposedly mutually beneficial bridging (114-15), and he quickly notes the efforts of other well-known Native Canadian authors who have written literature exclusively for Native communities. But his positing of an "us" communicating with a "you"—in both *Stories* and *I'm Not The Indian You Had In Mind*—puts him in a position to be received as the Native informant that in other venues he consciously resists. The three repeating voices in *I'm Not The Indian You Had In Mind* is one form of resistance to this positioning.

King's stance on the value of literature as a point of mediation with non-Native peoples in *Stories* is evidence of an evolving stance on the topic that has undergone significant reform since the publication of *Green Grass.* In a 1993 interview with Jace Weaver, he says, "I really don't care about the white audience. . . . They don't have an understanding of the intricacies of Native life, and I don't think they're much interested in it, quite frankly" (qtd. in Weaver 56). One the one hand, the splintering of these two approaches in different venues suggests how King exploits Dyer's "constructed polysemy" in his public life. On the other hand, King's increasing exposure to a non-Native

reading public as a popular author in the years following 1993 must have given him cause to reflect on this relatively privileged position and the possibilities for engagement that it opened. As an effect of this position, King has had to negotiate the demand to play the "Native informant" that Timothy Brennan argues is the fraught site of literary celebrity. "[T]he political correctness debate itself," he writes, "in its distinction between phony and real third-world literature . . . allows one to discuss the issue of celebrity making in the literary field as an issue about native informants" (41).[5] Brennan locates the politics of the Native informant in literature within a larger trend towards cosmopolitanism in the West; the job of the star author is to create phantasms of their society that the colonial audience already expects to see. A large part of King's continued national success, I argue, reflects the degree to which he has been received in this role. By refusing to rehash images of the "Dead Indians" that saturate North American popular culture, King meets the skin-deep liberal demand for "real" images of Native life. As the purveyor of images of "Live Indians," even his critique of colonial representation can be construed as an overture of special insight into Native life.

King is also associated with a particular portion of his oeuvre. Although one of the staples of his artistic career is arguably his experimentation with genre,[6] King's literary fiction and historical prose are often foregrounded while his genre fiction is placed in the background or displaced. In her review of *A Short History of Indians in Canada* (2005), Suzanne Methot claims that King has had "highs and lows in his writing career" ("King Provides"). The newest short story collection is King "at his best," and its quality matches the other works that have marked the "highs" of his career such as the "classic" *Green Grass, Running Water,* and *The Truth About Stories*, which Methot calls "a deliciously layered examination of the identities we create with the stories we tell" ("King Provides"). On her list of "lows," is King's first detective novel, *DreadfulWater Shows Up* (2003), which she calls "formulaic and predictable" ("King Provides"). Elsewhere, she writes with frustration that the novel is "completely devoid of the metaphorical substance of King's other works, in which he uses humour to deconstruct Western culture, aboriginal culture, and Anglo-aboriginal relations" ("DreadfulWater"). Many reviewers celebrated the stylistic traits associated with King's literary fiction, but the novel has received very little critical attention in comparison with King's literary and historical works.[7] Methot represents a more extreme region of a community that has, by and

large, deemed *DreadfulWater* unfit as the subject of scholarly and popular discourse. Methot's protestation that King's genre fiction is, in effect, *too generic,* ignores the labour of King's engagement with convention and formula as defining features of Native representation, not to mention the features of genre writing. In King's literary fiction, the Hollywood Western is an enduring trope that indexes a range of formulaic representations that inform non-Native attitudes towards Native communities. As in his non-detective novel, *Green Grass, Running Water*, the conventions of Western cinema are a focal point from which King explores the conditions of Native celebrity. King's light-hearted inhabitation of *formula* through the photographer Thumps DreadfulWater—a character who "frames" as he is generically framed and investigates a framing—has been overlooked as an important contribution to King's oeuvre. Such neglect in turn preserves his image as a literary author and helps maintain a certain prestige of iconic Canadian literary output.[8]

For Methot, the novel presents a "tricky matter of identity: Not cultural identity," she insists, "but authorial identity. Hartley GoodWeather is the name that appears on the cover, but the goofy film-noir author photo . . . on the back of my advance reading copy clearly shows Thomas King, author of the novel *Green Grass*, *Running Water*" ("DreadfulWater"). The novel's pseudonymous cover did not seem to fool any reviewers; more likely, the burlesqued conventions of detective fiction confounded expectations of the person that Methot names "the author of *Green Grass, Running Water*." But Methot is not alone, it seems, in desiring to bracket this novel to the side of the assemblage of works that has been readily and repeatedly appropriated by Canadian readers. By using a pseudonym for his detective novels, King explains that he "wanted to separate [his] serious work from his detective fiction" (Interview with Jordan Wilson). Considering King's use of scatological humour in *Green Grass,* his collection of children's stories, and his hilariously irreverent *Dead Dog Café* radio show, "serious" is an odd way to describe a collection of texts that more accurately balks at the institutional division between serious and non-serious literature.[9] The tricky matter of authorial identity is not primarily the pseudonym, but the "authentic" author whose rogue detective novels contest the appropriations of his more transparently named works. The less critically well-received *DreadfulWater* resists the high culture identity of King's literary works that are readily associated with the "tricky(ster?) identity" of King himself.[10] Negotiating the platforms of his authorial identity, King intricately plays so-called highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow genres off each other.

The paradox of King's cultural ambassadorship for Canada is nowhere more clear than in Season Four of CBC's Canada Reads when his second, Governor General's Award-nominated novel, *Green Grass, Running Water,* was represented by then-mayor of Winnipeg Glen Murray in the *Survivor*-style battle of the books.[11] The novel was in the running to be the one book that all of Canada should read, a title that would likely have launched a new print run of the novel by its Canadian publisher and facilitated tremendous exposure within Canada. *Green Grass* lost to Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Last Crossing* (2003), but it was not the final score that raised the issue of the novel's place in Canadian national pedagogy. Defending the novel, Murray claims, "I like novels that move me outside my comfort zone . . . I want to get annoyed and angry when I read" (qtd. in Fuller 13). Danielle Fuller interprets this to mean that Murray desires a "reading practice oriented toward political transformation" that challenges the reader's assumptions and values (12). Murray was able to engage with and advocate for theories of national transcendence through the paradigm of Canada Reads, an occasion that posits from its outset an already defined national space variously characterized by cultural production. As an author who is invested in storytelling as a multiple and varied set of power-laden cultural events, I wonder what King thought of his novel competing to be the *one* story that *all* the nation should read. *Green Grass* works to "decentre the origins of master-narrative texts" (Davidson, Walton, and Andrews 67), and yet it was included in an event that aims to promote a single shared narrative. Conversely, I can only imagine that King would be pleased at the idea of a *story* being used as a forum and a catalyst for the type of communal discussion that a "mass reading event," to use the term coined by Fuller and DeNel Rehberg Sedo (8-9), has the potential to promote.

The national pedagogical project into which King's work has frequently been appropriated follows what Smaro Kamboureli, taking her lead from Emily Apter, has described as the "imperium of affect," by which "national pedagogy is an imperial project with at once a decidedly imperialist lineage and a globalizing intent" (45). The "easy feelings" (45) of unity and collective association facilitated by Canada Reads are part of an imperial project that, Kamboureli continues, "gathers into its domain everything, including those discourses it seeks to cancel out" (45). If *Green Grass* makes Murray feel "annoyed and angry," these "uneasy" feelings locate Murray as a potentially resistant voice on Canada Reads. His comments defy what the singer Measha Brueggergosman said when *Green Grass* lost to *The Last Crossing*: "how

very Canadian—we don't want anything that challenges us" (qtd. in Fuller and Sedo 24). Alternatively, Murray's affective response is secured within a framework of pleasure that he feels when he entertains a resistant discourse on a national platform that ultimately leaves the centrality of his identity and his privileges unharmed.

Although the novel has received considerable attention since its debut, it has never been discussed as a constitutive benchmark of the author's celebrity career. As well as a complex and polemical meditation on colonial borders, *Green Grass* thematizes the type of celebrity that is frequently conferred on Native writers and actors. We should not overlook the fact that the novel almost singularly responsible for activating King's public career has much to say about Native peoples and public visibility. As a Native writer, King's celebrity status is part of a legacy of a desire for authenticity reflexively staged in *Green Grass*. Francis notes that non-Native Canadians have always searched for representative Indians to give voice to the "special insight into the Indian way of life" (109). Francis also notes that many of these voices are inauthentic (109). There is a tension in Francis' essay between the fetishistic search for the "authentic" Indian that so fascinates the white world, and the much-repeated fact that many Indian celebrities have been inauthentic. In both instances, there is a continued interest in the authenticity of the Indian Native informant that King invokes playfully in both his public life and his fiction.

King takes on this tension in *Green Grass* when Eli, a Blackfoot character, remembers the Sun Dance festival he attended when he was fourteen. During one of the men's dances, a family of tourists drives onto the reserve. The father steps up onto the roof of his car and begins to take pictures of the ceremony. Seeing the Blackfoot men approaching the car, the father jumps back into the car, rolls up his windows, and locks the doors. Eli's uncle Orville demands the roll of film, explaining that one is not permitted to take photos of the Sun Dance. When we cut back to Eli's present situation, he is being told by a dam developer that he and his family are not "real Indians anyway" (*Green* 119). The developer continues, "you drive cars, watch television, go to hockey games. Look at you. You're a university professor" (119). The message here seems clear: the notion that what one perceives as authentic Native life is available for entertainment is exploitative, and yet at the same time, Native people are constantly being asked to produce that authenticity as a legitimating product.

"Green grass, running water" is a phrase found in early treaties, the title of the novel, and a line an "Indian" character speaks in a Western film that one

of King's characters watches in the novel (173). It unifies, therefore, a history of Anglo-Aboriginal relations that links Westerns with land claims.[12] In the novel, Western films are among the first things that the four elderly Native characters who escape the psychiatric hospital to fix the world decide to repair. At the mid-point of the text, all the major characters are watching a fictional Western, *The Mysterious Warrior*, and one of them is reading the novel (172-185). The Western is constituted by an assemblage of generic conventions that elsewhere King apes as a detective novelist. The conventional structure of the Western unites the novel's main characters as participants in the sphere of cultural production. When Alberta, Bill Bursum, Christian and Latisha, Lionel, Charlie, Babo, and Dr. Hovaugh are all watching the film in different places and times, they each observe a convention: Alberta watches "soldiers . . . trapped on one side of river . . . and the Indians . . . on their ponies on the other side (178); Christian and Latisha watch "as the cavalry charged into the river bottom" (179); Lionel watches as "an Indian danced his horse in the shallows of a river" (180); and Charlie spots his father playing "Iron Eyes" in a series of climactic motions summarized as "Etc., etc., etc." (182). Portland, playing Iron Eyes, is included as an actor rather than a spectator, reinforcing the performed nature of these ubiquitous images. The chain of conventions in the film shifts imperceptibly to the equally monotonous motion of Eli flipping the pages of his Western novel. All the scenes are interchangeable, as if the fictional *Mysterious Warrior* is simply an assemblage of conventions taken from the graves of Western cinema.

The Westerns, like the Native characters animating them, could have been manufactured on a Ford-era assembly line. Hollywood indexes the machine that in King's novel produces the Western storylines. Charlie Looking Bear's father, Portland, is nostalgic for the days he was a Hollywood actor playing Indian roles. To score major roles, Portland changes his name to "Iron Eyes Screeching Eagle"[13] because it was "more dramatic" (127) and agrees to wear a fake nose that makes him "look more Indian" (130). Once he adequately resembles the archetypal Indian that Hollywood seeks to reproduce, he begins to perform identical simulacra of that figure on screen: "But before the year was out, Portland was playing chiefs. He played Quick Fox in *Duel at Sioux Crossing,* Chief Jumping Otter in *They Rode for Glory,* and Chief Lazy Dog in *Cheyenne Sunrise.* He was a Sioux eighteen times, a Cheyenne ten times, a Kiowa six times, an Apache five times, and a Navaho once" (127).[14] The less distinctive Portland looks, the more distinctive roles he can play, and the more he resembles the cloned films he animates.

Portland's "Indian celebrity" in the Hollywood Western is a curious paradox that at once elevates his unique status on film ("Portland was playing chiefs") by erasing all signifiers of uniqueness (the name and the nose). The film producers capitalize on his indigeneity by exterminating the markers of his ethnicity and replacing them with commercial signifiers of authentic Indianness. The elevation to celebrity status for King's Native characters requires the submission to commodity status. As Charlie's mother explains, "It was your father's nose that brought us home [from Hollywood]" (128). Although I do not want to confuse character for author, Portland's objection to his screen representation gestures towards some of King's own struggles concerning his physical presentation. King actively resists interpellation for himself by this same consumerist model of celebrity. He tells Jace Weaver, "I don't want people to get the mistaken idea that I am an authentic Indian or that they're getting the kind of Indian that they'd like to have." He claims that he has been told, "you gotta get rid of that moustache [because] you're in the Indian business" (qtd. in Weaver 56). Like Portland's nose, King's moustache is an interruptive signifier of ethnic particularity that shapes what and who will be intelligible to a national audience as "authentically" Aboriginal.

There is another moment in *Green Grass* that has been overlooked as a site of celebrity critique mixed with biographical play. After we are introduced to Latisha, a single mother, we are introduced to her three children. They are Christian, Benjamin, and Elizabeth. Readers familiar with King's own biography will know that these are the names of his three children. King playfully gestures to his own family in the narrative in a strangely self-effacing way. We learn that Latisha's abusive husband abandoned the family, leaving her to care for their children alone. King has said elsewhere that he has difficulty writing active fathers into his stories because his own father was absent (Andrews 166), so the scene appears primed for readers to assume that they have found a biographical hook. The author seems to have gone out of his way to construct a familial fantasy in the novel that obfuscates his own appearance. Fans and celebrity interviewers are frequently invested in the degree to which they can locate an intelligible phantasm of the author in his or her writing. King strikes a critical pose in *Green Grass,* commenting not only on the national agendas through which Indigenous people experience fame, but also on the expectations of authenticity and intimacy that attend Indigenous people in public space.

Without turning the novel into a biography, I want to suggest that the character of the children's father is nonetheless a rich occasion for scholars

interested in King's celebrity to ask how the novel is thinking about Native celebrity. The children's father is by no means absent from the novel. George Morningstar, named for General George Armstrong Custer, is Latisha's abusive ex-husband who originates from Ohio and Michigan.[15] That his pet name for Latisha is "Country" further suggests that his character serves as a conceptual link between the history of violence against Native peoples and domestic violence against Native women. Morningstar fills the domestic role in the novel that readers might expect to be a placeholder for the author, which makes Morningstar's disturbing final appearance in the novel a surprising and provocative occasion to query King's own thoughts about celebrity and his impact as an artist on Native communities. The final scene is a reprise of Eli's memory of the Sun Dance Festival from which his uncle chased a man trying to take pictures. In this redemptive moment for Eli, it is he who must confront the photographer, Morningstar, who is secretly trying to photograph the Festival. King is also a photographer, and if at first it seems that Morningstar plays out a simple Oedipal drama for the author, the character's role and its relation to the author become more complex when Morningstar is driven in disgrace from the Festival for representing Native life photographically. It is worth dwelling on the fact that the father of Christian, Benjamin, and Elizabeth in *Green Grass* is driven out of the community near the end of the novel for representing the Sun Dance while King himself describes parts of this festival in a work of fiction (that will go on to launch the author's career). My suggestion is not that Morningstar is a self-hating mirror for King—far from it—but that Morningstar marks a convincing place in the text where King is thinking about and experimenting with the stakes of being a Native writer read by non-Native and Indigenous readers alike. King could not have known that his novel would attract the volume of readers that it did, but he may well have been ruminating on the responsibilities and expectations of Indigenous authors. Morningstar's hideous personality and his disgraceful namesake animate the risks associated with being hailed as a cultural ambassador. As one of the first novels that thrust King into the national spotlight, *Green Grass* comments sensitively on the anxieties that attend its own circulation.

When asked if *Green Grass* is a Canadian novel, King claims, "Well, since I am a Canadian citizen and it was written in Canada, and it was written about places in Canada and characters who are, by and large, Native and Canadian—for all those reasons it's a Canadian novel" (King in Andrews 161). But King is not sure whether the novel is Canadian in

an "aesthetic sense" (161), or what a Canadian aesthetic might be. King's oddly quantitative and ambivalent answer may not be a questioning of the novel's national aesthetic so much as an affirmation of its Canadian national affinity; having published *Green Grass* in the same year that Robert Lecker published "A Country Without A Canon?: Canadian Literature and the Esthetics of Idealism" (1993), King appears to share in what Lecker identifies as a condition that ranges from indifference to objection to the notion of a Canadian literary canon. Indeed, King's concerns have not seemed to hinder the novel's circulation within Canada, nor do they reflect a wider consensus about its Canadian identity. Not only was it nominated for the Governor General's Award in 1993, but it was featured on Canada Reads and it is frequently taught in literature courses in Canadian universities (161), arguably making it part of the de facto Canadian literary canon.

As King shows, the labour of defining and refining the Canadian literary canon, especially as it relates to Aboriginal literature, is constitutive—rather than limiting—of the project of cultural ambassadorship. King's own visibility presents an opportunity to arbitrate the categories available to us for appropriating and deploying his literary productions. Davidson, Walton, and Andrews claim that while King can be considered a Native writer and a Canadian writer, "he cannot be a Canadian Native writer because the Cherokees are not "native" to Canada" (13). Such policing of identity categories reveals their inadequacy as descriptors of the national imaginary reflected in the Canadian literary canon as well as Canadians' continued interest in them as legitimating products of national consecration. The fact that King appears to embody different and perhaps conflicting identities does not preclude him from cultural ambassadorship because the very process of national consecration of cultural artifacts is itself often an ambiguous, nervous activity. The national appropriation of cultural artifacts not only invests in works that already fall within a nationalizing agenda, but also frequently operates with and across resistant works. King is exemplary not of a particular Canadian condition but of a critical voice that comes to bear on the condition of national literary celebrity.

NOTES

1 King's bid for office initiated another mode of celebrity that is deserving of additional attention, but this essay does not seek to intervene in the discussion of King's political celebrity. For more on King's political persona, see George (2008); "Guelph NDP: Tom

King Introduces Himself" (2008); and thoughts on political speech and novelistic speech in Rintoul (2012).

2 King was once called a "local celebrity" (George) in reference to his bid for office in Guelph, Ontario. In contrast, Lorraine York (2007) refers to Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, and Carol Shields as twenty-first century Canadian literary celebrities on the basis that they are described as such in the media.

3 See *The Inconvenient Indian,* 53-75, where King distinguishes between living Native people—"Live Indians"—and the "Dead Indians" imagined by North Americans in self-serving ways.

4 See King in George (2008) where he discusses his adopted daughter with fetal alcohol syndrome. Elsewhere, King tells Andrews (1999) that, as an effect of his own father abandoning him as a child, he writes absent fathers in his fiction (166).

5 While Aboriginal nations are not "third-world" nations, I believe that Brennan's observation that an exploration of literary celebrity cannot proceed without a discussion of the Native informant is quite relevant to the history of Native celebrity. First Nations have been described as "fourth-world" nations, a term coined by George Manuel in his 1974 book *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality.*

6 See King's interview with Jordan Wilson (2009) for a discussion of King's multi-genre career.

7 To date, there are only three scholarly articles on King's detective fiction (Breitbach 2012; Daxell 2005; and Andrews and Walton 2006).

8 Julie Breitbach (2012) has also shown that King's detective fiction contributes to a wide-ranging genre known as "Native Detective Fiction" (89-94).

9 When asked why he prefers not to be labeled a comic writer, King says, "[p]artly it's because comic writers don't win literary awards" (qtd. in Andrews 165). National celebrity is clearly one motivating factor in his decisions regarding the promotion of his writing.

10 The second printing of *DreadfulWater* is attributed to "Thomas King writing as Hartley GoodWeather," as is the second novel in the DreadfulWater series, *The Red Power Murders.* This deferred attribution more radically brackets them from King's featured works. For if *DreadfulWater* and *Red* are written *as* GoodWeather, then King's other works are presumably written as King. The publishers of *DreadfulWater* and *Red* ensure readers that the detective novels are penned by a persona who declines to compete with appropriations of King's "classic" texts while still acknowledging the marketing power of the Thomas King brand name.

11 Murray represented *Green Grass* on CBC's Canada Reads the same year that King was awarded the Order of Canada.

12 Davidson, Walton, and Andrews claim that this phrase comes from early Anglo-Aboriginal treaties that state the terms of the treaty shall be observed "as long as the grass is green and the water runs" (3). King admits in *Inconvenient Indian* that he has yet to find a treaty containing these words, suggesting that they are as much a part of the folklore in which Western cinema has partaken as they are representative of fraught Native-colonial relations. A promise as phantasmagoric as the colonial state's commitment to a land claim becomes a commodified, convenient sound bite in a Western film.

13 Portland's screen name is phonetic with "ironize," perhaps to underscore the irony of the inauthentic process by which he assumes the guise of authenticity.

14 Portland's screen life exploits the image of the "pan-tribal" Indian with which King himself has been associated (see pp 58). The pan-tribal identification is a complex

association that both erodes difference and allows the individual to resist striking the pose of a Native informant for a particular community.

15 George Armstrong Custer (1839-1876) was a Commander in the American Civil War and later a General in the Indian Wars. He and his subordinates were all killed during the Battle of Little Bighorn. He was born in Ohio and was raised in Michigan. Author Evan S. Connell named him "Son of the Morning Star" in his 1984 book of that name. In *Green Grass,* Morningstar jokes with the Lone Ranger that he is "General Custer" (319).

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Cyril Dabydeen

After Aristotle

An organ for cooling the blood,
how the brain forms—
having nice manners really,
I hear you say.

Nice behaviour with tranquillity,
of heart and lungs
when meeting others, especially
those with vile tempers

But never your own, you think;
what's in the spleen,
or viscera (so-called)—
the body in motion

Water in the brain, you see, what
comes from a mountain,
volcano or lava, if somewhere else,
what matters now

The heart at rest indeed, what
the Ancients knew best
I will tell about again—
trying to imagine you.

Petra Fachinger

Intersections of Diaspora and Indigeneity

The Standoff at Kahnesatake in Lee Maracle's *Sundogs* and Tessa McWatt's *Out of My Skin*

> But if you imagine a character who is from my world, attempting to deconstruct the attitudes of yours, while you may not be stealing, you still leave yourself open to criticism unless you do it well. (Maracle, "The 'Postcolonial' Imagination")

> The Okanagan word we have for *extended family* is translated as "sharing one skin." The concept refers to blood ties within community and the instinct to protect our individual selves extended to all who share the same skin.
>
> —Jeannette Armstrong, "'Sharing One Skin': Okanagan Community"

***S**undogs* (1992) by Salish / Métis writer and activist Lee Maracle and *Out of My Skin* (1998) by Guyanese Canadian writer Tessa McWatt are among a small number of narratives written in Canada set during the standoff at Kahnesatake.[1] The paucity of texts concerned with this national crisis and with five centuries of colonial injustice is surprising. As Kim Anderson notes, in "Canada, many Native people refer to the Oka crisis as a turning point in their lives" (125). Further, many Indigenous communities were afflicted by the "post-Oka blues" as Maracle portrays them in *Daughters are Forever*. The "implosion that follows resistance" (152) might be partly responsible for the reluctance of Aboriginal writers to treat the standoff in fiction. The fact that very few non-Aboriginal Canadian fiction writers have addressed the standoff seems to corroborate assessment of Anishinaabe writer Richard Wagamese that "[t]here is much to learn from the fractured relationship between natives and governments up to now and there will be much more to learn from the era we enter together

now" (75). In his 1996 essay, Wagamese claims that the conflict has not yet been resolved: "the Mohawks did not surrender"; "the rule of law did not prevail"; "the situation [was] not over"; "the standoff did not end peacefully"; "the biggest criminals walked away"; and "the Canada we felt we knew has disappeared forever" (75-76). Miscommunication, misconceptions, and racism continue to fuel confrontations between Aboriginal people, other Canadians, and the Canadian government as Idle No More (established in 2012) has proven.[2] As one of the most significant events in contemporary Canadian history, the Oka standoff seemed to imply that "Aboriginal peoples neither assimilate nor succeed: they are forever a skeleton in the closet of Canadian ambitions" (Barsh 284). As Russel Lawrence Barsh argues, "Canada owes its conscience to the fact that Aboriginal peoples have not disappeared, but remain as witnesses to the efforts of successive waves of immigrants to create a country—witnesses who have grown increasingly outspoken and critical" (284). While the relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples and their histories has traditionally been constructed by mainstream Canadian society as a relationship between the descendants of the first settlers from Britain and France and Indigenous peoples, the relationship between Indigenous peoples and racialized minorities in Canada, particularly those from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean remains less clearly defined. Whereas the official political discourse has focused on reconciliation, affiliation and solidarity in the struggle against oppression and colonization have been the objective of racialized minority groups in political and academic debates and in cultural and artistic production. [3]

In recent discussions of contemporary Canadian literature concerned with settler-colonial / Indigenous relations, the focus has shifted from treatments of the appropriation of Indigenous materials by mainstream writers—including the "stealing of Native stories" as Lenore Keeshig Tobias called it in 1990—to the exploration of cross-cultural alliances between Indigenous and racialized diasporic peoples. Rita Wong's groundbreaking article "Decolonizasian: Reading Asian and First Nations Relations in Literature," in which she discusses Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café*, Tamai Kobayashi's *Exile and the Heart: Lesbian Fiction*, Hiromi Goto's *The Kappa Child*, Marie Clements' *Burning Vision*, and Lee Maracle's "Yin Chin," addresses the possibilities of Asian Canadian alliances with Indigenous peoples in the struggle against decolonization (159). Other Canadian critics have also been concerned with the complex intersections of diaspora and indigeneity, in an attempt to challenge conventional notions of the former as associated

with mobility, hybridity, and heterogeneity, and the latter with dwelling in place, relation to land, and kinship communities. Among those critics are the contributors to *Cultural Grammars of Nation, Diaspora, and Indigeneity in Canada*, notably Sophie McCall in her analysis of Gregory Scofield's *Singing Home the Bones*, which connects forced Aboriginal relocation and genocide to Jewish diaspora and the Holocaust, and Renate Eigenbrod in her discussion of "spatial and ideological diaspora" (136)—terms she adopts from Cree scholar Neal McLeod—in Richard Wagamese's texts. In their investigation of relations between postcolonialism, diaspora, and indigeneity, the editors are keenly aware of Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua's observation that "critical race and postcolonial scholars have systematically excluded ongoing colonization from the ways in which racism is articulated. This has erased the presence of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing struggles for decolonization, precluding a more sophisticated analysis of migration, diasporic identities, and diasporic countercultures" (130). Such exclusions have also left the issue of the complicity of racialized diasporic groups in the ongoing colonial project unaddressed. Critics today seem to agree that any discussion of intersections between diasporic and Indigenous peoples needs to proceed with an awareness of crucial differences between them, and that more work needs to be done to theorize the relationships between diaspora studies and Indigenous studies.[4] By bringing *Sundogs* and *Out of My Skin* together in conversation, I hope to contribute further to unsettling the binaries on which the construction of Canada's diversity rests and to encourage new ways of looking at relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.[5] According to Rita Dhamoon and Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Canada is characterized by its unique combination of four major internal differences:

> that between an indigenous population and a settler population; that between whites and nonwhites; that between European groups (French and British origin or French speakers and English speakers); and that between immigrants and native-born. Combined, these internal differences mean that Canada is not only a 'country of immigration' but also a 'nation-state' which also contains 'stateless nations' in its borders. These stateless nations include Indigenous peoples (some of whom are organized as First Nations) and the Québécois in the predominantly French-speaking province of Quebec. (164)

In their discussion of the standoff at Kahnesatake, the two authors claim that "the presence of Mohawks from across Canada and the US was especially seen as a threat to the nation-state because the Mohawks (and other Indigenous peoples) rejected the legitimacy of colonially defined national borders, and

because of fears that alliances would be strengthened among Mohawks" (175).

By reading the texts through a diasporic lens, I argue that *Sundogs* and *Out of My Skin*, written in the direct wake of the "crisis," portray the standoff to challenge notions of national identity, sovereignty, citizenship, and belonging. The term diaspora is often used to mean dispersal and dislocation and evokes the notion of a homeland with which the dispersed community continues to maintain close relationships or even sustains notions of return. While diaspora criticism needs to examine the temporal and spatial specificities of each of the diasporas under consideration (Jewish diaspora, South Asian diaspora, Palestinian diaspora) in any discussion of intersections between them, reading two very different types of "diaspora" experience on Turtle Island First Nations / Métis and Afro-Caribbean Canadian in dialogue with each other is productive for several reasons. Both texts rewrite notions of "home" and "homeland" and emphasize the importance of cross-cultural alliances in nation building. Rather than discuss Asian / Aboriginal affiliations as most of the novels representing contact between diasporic and Indigenous people do, these two texts use Africa and the Caribbean as reference points to challenge white dominance. Maracle, whose work has been inspired by Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), explains that she is particularly interested in Fanon's "ideas on Native / settler relations and the connections between colonialism and neo-colonialism" (*Bobbi Lee* 194). Such ideas are echoed in *Sundogs* and in her second novel *Ravensong* (1993).[6] By showing how an Indigenous family lives a diasporic life in the city (the text is set in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside), Maracle challenges the dichotomies of immigrant and native-born as well as notions of Canada as nation-state. Similarly, in her novel *Out of My Skin,* McWatt explores intersecting histories of black diasporic and Indigenous marginalization, trauma, and (de)colonization, as she shows how alliance-building across cultures can facilitate new and different dialogues about the meaning of "home" and the implications of belonging in Canada. Furthermore, the notion of "diasporic community" is challenged in McWatt's transracial adoption narrative, reminding the reader of the diversity of diasporic perspectives and the complex issues around the possible expectation that a diasporic writer and / or protagonist might speak for a particular community. In her discussion of mixed race and adoption, McWatt also challenges the dichotomies of white-non-white and native-migrant. In addition, both novels emphasize the importance of language and voice in the process of (de)colonization, as they decentre the white reader by using unsettling narrative strategies and focus on the emotional and

spiritual growth of their young female protagonists as they interact with the urban environment.[7] Both texts can profitably be read allegorically as the standoff initiates the protagonists' political awakenings and changes their notions of Canada. The fact that both books are written by women and focus on the experience of their female protagonists further highlights the intersection of gender and race in considerations of diasporic subject positioning.[8]

Here I am indebted to Anishinaabe scholar Jean-Paul Restoule's argument that "many urban Aboriginal people may be seen to share the characteristics or dimensions of commonly accepted diasporic populations" (21). Restoule further claims that "urbanization of Aboriginal people in the twentieth century, an attempt by settler states to encourage the cultural assimilation of Aboriginal people, has led many Aboriginal people in urban areas to resist assimilation, in the process creating diasporic identities" (21). Drawing on the criteria proposed by William Safran, who reserves the concept of diaspora for groups held together by an identifiable historical trauma, Restoule maintains that urban Aboriginal people satisfy most of his criteria: dispersal of a population "from an original center to two or more peripheral regions"; "retention of collective memory of the homeland"; "partial alienation from the host society"; "aspirations to return to ancestral homeland"; "commitment to the maintenance or restoration of that homeland"; "and derivation of collective consciousness and solidarity from a relationship with the homeland" (25). *Sundogs* in particular demonstrates that ties between land, language, and identity can be fostered in urban spaces. The text also undermines the stereotypical association of the reserve, rural spaces, and the village with tradition, and the city with assimilation. Moreover, a diasporic reading of *Sundogs* highlights Maracle's affiliative politics and her views on Indigenous nation building. The public resistance of the MLA from Red Sucker Creek, Manitoba, Elijah Harper, to the Meech Lake Accord in June 1990 and the Oka standoff itself strengthen the self-esteem of the Aboriginal characters in *Sundogs* as the characters' relationships with each other are transformed.[9] The text suggests that Aboriginal families have suffered because Aboriginal men have been divested of their masculinity through repeated acts of colonization.[10] As Marianne observes: "[o]ur men have been denied work, denied their role as providers, governors of our destiny" (101). The decolonization process Maracle's characters engage in while in the urban environment of Vancouver facilitates a resurgence of "manhood" as well as a revival of Indigenous knowledge. The characters' growing awareness of the possibilities of sovereignty enables them to reappropriate the urban space by

establishing an Aboriginal community in the heart of the city, by reclaiming their voices, and by revitalizing Indigenous languages. The emphasis of the text, however, is on reclaiming female leadership. While *Sundogs* considers both the role of the warrior and the wise Elder, the latter personified by Elijah Harper, it stresses the importance of a new generation of well-educated female knowledge holders.

Twenty-year-old Marianne, the youngest of five siblings, was three years old when her Métis mother moved her family from "the village" to the city after her Okanagan husband's premature death: "[m]y mother moved to the city because life in our tiny village not far from Vancouver had been too hard. I realize now that she never intended to integrate herself or any of her progeny into the social fabric of white Canada" (195). Marianne is alienated from her mother and her older siblings Lacey, Rita, Rudy, and Joseph. Repeatedly referring to herself as "the only social idiot in the family," she is aware of how her university education has affected her social and cultural values and consequently her ability to communicate with her relatives. Toward the end of the narrative, Marianne discovers that her family decided not to share traditional knowledge with her and not to teach her Cree and Okanagan—the languages that they occasionally speak amongst themselves—to help facilitate her integration into the mainstream education system. Through a series of transformative experiences she unlearns acting "white," assumes responsibility for her family and community, reconnects with the ways of the Elders, and is able to speak her mother's language: "I could hear my Momma's language coming through my mouth and it felt damned good" (210). The transformative family events described in the text include the birth of Rita's twin girls, the death of Lacey's teenaged daughter Dorry, Marianne's participation in the Okanagan Peace Run from Oliver in British Columbia to Oka, and Momma's purchase of a house. The way in which Maracle connects these events is indicative of her interweaving of novelistic discourse and oratory. The narrative concludes by showing Marianne as fully integrated into her family and prefigures her future role as knowledge holder.

The birth of identical twin girls symbolically stands at the beginning of all subsequent events in the text. It is reminiscent of the Haudenosaunee creation story, according to which daughter of Sky Woman gave birth to male twins who were endowed with special creative powers. According to some traditions, one of the twins believed in diplomacy while the other believed in confrontation. Throughout *Sundogs* these two options are weighed cautiously against each other. Maracle also uses character

constellation and imagery to explore notions of "twinning" in this carefully crafted text. *Sundogs* refers to the "mixed" ethnic background of Marianne and her siblings, Métis and Okanagan, as a "twinning of separate nations" (205). The image of the sundogs, from which the text derives its title, is central to the narrative. As Marianne reminisces, "[w]hat was that story that Minnesota boy told us about sundogs? 'Impossible images reflected under extraordinary circumstances.' Sundogs. Twin suns; twins image my family, my mountain home backdropped by twin mountains with twin peaks, made of twin sisters" (191). According to Catherine Rainwater, "the lore of tribal pairs emphasizes balance (versus Eurocentric hierarchy) or harmony of opposites (versus western dualism)" (110).

While the birth of her sister Rita's twin girls, the death of Lacey's teenaged dauther Dorry, and Momma's purchase of a house are the transformative family events described in the text, Elijah Harper's inspiring act of resistance contributes to an even greater degree to Marianne's social and political awakening. Although the community celebrates Elijah Harper's victory, the events around the Oka standoff as described in the novel lower aspirations for a stronger brotherhood among Aboriginal peoples and greater understanding between all Canadians. As Marianne comments: "Does it always have to go that way—just at the moment when togetherness is possible, the ghost of white men invades the small space between you and erects an invisible wall dividing you. We can't love each other and now they are out there bulldozing graves for a golf course" (135). The "extraordinary circumstances," the military intervention, and the violence and racism launched against Aboriginal people during the standoff represent another in a series of historical breaches of the Kaswentha, the Two-Row Wampum Treaty, which envisioned Aboriginal self-government and a coequal relationship between settlers and Aboriginal peoples. Those who join the Peace Run in the novel emphasize the need for a peaceful solution to the standoff, but there are also calls for sovereignty. Marianne observes: "They talk a lot about sovereignty, and this confuses me. I came here to stop the army from killing Mohawks. . . . I want to promote peace" (181). After the runners are greeted with racial slurs and pelted with stones by an angry crowd in Ontario, Marianne has a vision when arriving at Paise Platte. She sees a dark figure running alongside her and wonders if this figure could be a "young voyageur from Montreal" who found her here "running his journey home" (198-99). The experience of the Run motivates Marianne to reconnect with her heritage. The intention of the runners was to witness the events in person and report to Aboriginal communities on the

way back home, but the organizers stop the Run before the runners reach Oka. They say it is to protect them and those at the barricades. *Sundogs* is particularly concerned with the manipulation of the truth by the mainstream media and their construction of the dangerous and violent "Indian" in the shape of the masked and gun-toting Mohawk warrior. Much of the interaction between family members in the text happens against the backdrop of the events covered on the television screen. As Kiera Ladner observes, "[t]he 'Oka Crisis' was different—it was televised. We were all there, watching, emotionally wrought as it happened from the comfort of our living rooms. But like many Americans say of the Vietnam War, for the first time, it was if it were happening in our living rooms. Thus, from coast to coast to coast and to the coasts beyond that, for many the 'Oka Crisis' was a personal experience" (310-11).

Drew Hayden Taylor's "A Blurry Image on the Six O'Clock News" (2005), one of the few other texts by Native writers, dealing with the standoff, focuses, like *Sundogs*, on the role of the media. In that story, the divorce of an Ojibway man named Richard Spencer and an Irish Canadian woman named Lisa signifies the deepening rift between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal Canadians as the events of the standoff unfold. The story is told from the perspective of Lisa who spots Richard on TV "prowling somewhere in the crowds of Oka" (235). Puzzled by the unexpected political activism of her ex-husband, she blames the accidental death of his brother Donnelly for Richard's transformation and estrangement from her. Unlike Richard, Donnelly did not move off the Otter Lake Reserve and remained connected with his heritage. The story ends with Lisa seeing Richard once again on the TV screen: "He was walking in the distance, toward the general direction of the camera. But somebody was with him, walking beside him. A woman. A Native woman. And he was holding hands with her" (243). Rather than perpetuating the monolithic media image of the militant Mohawk warrior, the news report in Taylor's story concludes by focusing on a couple holding hands and walking peacefully toward the camera.

In *Sundogs*, Momma smashes the TV with a rock, expressing her frustration with the biased national media coverage as it sensationalizes the violence and criminalizes Indigenous people. Earlier on in the text, Marianne describes her mother as always fighting the good fight although the odds have always been against her (81): "There are their weapons: organized violence, conquest by sword and musket, organized child stealing through the school system and the Child Welfare Act, apprehension, terror, defamation of national character, racism, alcohol poisoning, imprisonment,

hanging, language and cultural prohibition, total racial invalidations. And our weapons? We have but one: dogged insistence on truth" (81). Both texts also emphasize the importance of reconnecting to traditional ways and portray relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people as marred by miscommunication.

Taylor's short story also shares another plot element with *Sundogs*: the tragic accidental death of a close relative, which seems to be a common theme in post-Oka literature and, as such, is perhaps a symptom of the "post-Oka blues." Ruby Slipperjack's *Silent Words* and Alexie's *Porcupines and China Dolls* similarly hinge on a death in the family. This family member is sometimes portrayed as having the gifts of a visionary and healer. The loss of such a person is thus particularly profound for the community, but it often also initiates healing. In *Sundogs*, Marianne's sixteen-year-old niece is a visionary painter whose trademark technique is superimposition. As Marianne observes, "[s]he has this one particular painting I am curious about. A solitary black woman, sweet and innocent, is silhouetted over an [I]ndigenous woman, also young and innocent, in the foreground. Behind them the illusion of crowds and picket signs, with no writing on them, makes the background" (85). Dorry explains to Marianne that the two women are protesting apartheid. The painting captures a moment of African and Indigenous women's solidarity in the parallel battles against racism and colonization. Another painting shows "what she imagines Khatsalano's village to look like, and layered over it is a bunch of apartment buildings. . . . Khatsalano's village is actually a line drawing, while the new apartments that crowd the old location are superimposed on the village in water colour" (18). Dorry's graphic technique is reminiscent of Pauline Johnson's narrative strategy in *Legends of Vancouver*, in which she juxtaposes colonial and Squamish perspectives to undermine assumptions of colonial dominance. Marianne, who looks at the painting through the lens of a sociologist, is puzzled by Dorry's vision and needs her help to understand it.

Dorry also comes to Marianne's aid when she commits one of her social blunders when in front of a stranger she asks her brother and her sister-in-law why they are not having children. When "disappointment in [Marianne's] complete alienation from [her] family hangs thick in the air around [her]" (113), the young woman defiantly declares, "I am going to paint us young people clutching at the edges of the chasm, barely hanging on, and our elders will stand away from the chasm with their backs half-turned. Between our elders and ourselves, I am going to paint cities, red with

war, and between it all, coming magically from the whole centre of the work, I am going to paint Marianne, one hand pushing up on the city and the other hand reaching out to the young and old" (116). This imagined painting envisions Marianne overcoming her lack of purpose and her alienation from her family and community and assuming the role of a spiritual leader who will be able to bridge cultural divides thanks to her European education and her gradual refamiliarization with Indigenous knowledges. Dorry dies in a car accident shortly after sharing her vision. Her death brings the family together for a traditional funeral as it inspires Marianne to join the Peace Run and Momma to buy a house for the family.

The fact that Marianne's mother buys a house in the city is not a sign of assimilation, but of the consolidation of family and community. Having left her village to provide an economically better life for her five children, "[s]he wants to take Canada on. She wants to be a citizen, a citizen who adds her own cultural stamp to the garden of flowers that blooms in the urban centres of the country" (115). Like her oldest daughter Lacey, Momma creates diasporic community within the heart of Vancouver. Pondering the differences between Lacey and her own continuous negotiations between the non-Aboriginal world and that of the Indigenous community, Marianne observes, "[y]ou re-created a village in the middle of Vancouver, a village full of Natives from all kinds of nations, all sorts of occupations . . . all of them bronze, with cornhusk and violins in their voices" (168-69). Although the family does not plan to return to the village and remains removed from its land base, it maintains links to "homeland" by reconnecting to ancestral heritage in the city. According to Restoule, "[t]his lost connection to land is what urban Aboriginal people face and is a key difference in the makeup of their diasporic identity. While in the city, they form identities based on traditional values, but they are in many ways as disconnected from the (home)land, as all diasporas are" (31). Moreover, as Dorry's painting of Khatsalano's village shows, urban Aboriginal people often find themselves minorities in what was once the traditional territory of another community, as Marianne's family lives on the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples. Restoule contends that "when Aboriginal people are pushed and pulled into cities, it leaves the reserve community with fewer people, fewer potential leaders, and fewer contributors to the strength of the community" (26). In Maracle's novel, Marianne is fully aware of these colonizing forces:

> Land. Land. We are landless. The land dribbled through our hands in moments when disease and hunger rendered us impotent. Royal Commission laws. There are

> so few Indians left in this village that this commission recommends appropriation of the land and the transfer of the remaining stragglers to another reserve. They became few in numbers because disease, induced artificially, killed them. (163)

Elijah Harper's "no" and the standoff at Kahnesatake have had profound repercussions not only for the Aboriginal characters in the text, but also for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. The narrative concludes with Marianne's proud recognition of her mother's participation in a demonstration and the fact that she raised her voice publicly for the first time: "[t]his is my Momma's country and she can do just exactly what she wants to in it" (218).

Like *Sundogs*, *Out of My Skin*, concludes with an affirmation of voice and identity. In her novel, McWatt remaps the urban landscape of Montreal and juxtaposes this crucial moment in Canadian colonial history with (de)colonization in another part of the Commonwealth, The novel "compares" in a "non-competitive" (Rothberg 3) way the individual and collective traumatic experience of Afro-Caribbean Canadians with that of Indigenous peoples and suggests a way out of situating diaspora and indigeneity at opposite ends. McWatt's awareness of the limitations of the "comparability" of racialized minority and Indigenous trauma, oppression, and forced assimilation is apparent in the construction of her protagonist's biological, racial, and cultural background. Daphne, who as a small child was adopted by a white Canadian couple named Jennifer and Bill Baird, receives no parental guidance of how to be non-white in a predominantly white society and initially has no knowledge of her biological and racial background. She gradually learns that "comparing" her own "dislocation" with that of the Aboriginal activist Surefoot's ignores the differences between their experiences. At the beginning of *Out of My Skin*, Daphne is literally "out of her skin" as she engages in self-mutilation and attempts suicide after finding out that she is the offspring of an incestuous relationship. She is also metaphorically "out of her skin" in not knowing her kin and her own racial background. As a thirty-year-old, Daphne leaves Toronto to extricate herself from a dysfunctional relationship, hoping "to be absorbed into a foreign, cosmopolitan city, but she felt more and more as if she had marooned herself in an island village" (65). To her disappointment she discovers that "the languages of two empires [are] still fighting a colonial war" while recent immigrants live in their own cultural niches. From a Torontonian's perspective, Montreal seems to be just as "foreign" to Daphne as "the Mohawk crisis" (65). Daphne learns from Sheila Eyre, the Guyanese

Canadian sister of her birth mother, that Muriel Eyre committed suicide shortly after giving birth to her. Not surprisingly, these revelations unsettle the protagonist who is already confused about her identity. The character reminisces about how when she was in second grade, the teacher asked the class if anyone knew what a "Negro" was. When one of Daphne's classmates responds with "yeah, Daphne," the teacher observes: "No that's different. Quite different. . . . What are you, anyway, Daphne?" (16). Her adoptive father's response is irritated and evasive: "You're a Canadian, and don't you let anyone tell you otherwise" (16).

Questions of her racial identity become even more vexing when she receives information about her birth mother. Revealing the name of her biological mother, the agent at the Adoption Registry comments, "[g]ood name she had . . . Eyre . . . very good name" (10). He adds, "'British Guiana, now Guyana' . . . a country of many cultures, Chinese, African, Indian, Portuguese, British, as though explaining Daphne to herself" (10). Daphne's multiracial ancestry makes it more difficult to fit in because being of mixed race is not a notion easily accommodated by Canadian multiculturalism, which acknowledges Canadians' right to identify with the cultural traditions of their or their ancestors' country of origin while being a Canadian citizen. The hyphen, a by-product of the implementation of multiculturalism, thus links ethnic and national identity as in German-Canadian, Haitian-Canadian, and Japanese-Canadian. This kind of hyphenation is based on notions of racial and cultural homogeneity. For example, it does not easily accommodate a person of Aboriginal and Chinese Canadian identity. When Daphne and her aunt Sheila first meet, her aunt asks her what "hyphenation" she used before discovering her racial background: "'I mean, what was your hyphenation? I have a friend, a lady from home—she makes me laugh. She says, 'In dis country it's important to have de propa' hyphenation. . . . Now you know your hyphenation. West Indian-Canadian. What did you used to say?'" (81). Daphne's mixed-race background also raises questions about the investment of racialized settlers, and more complicated, of mixed-race settlers in Canada's colonial project. As a result of her confusion, Daphne passes through various stages of ethnic impersonation during her childhood and adolescence. Mistaking West Indian for "Indian," that is, South Asian, she "fashioned saris out of bed sheets and wore them around the house, saying words like *curry* and *tandoori* over and over like a mantra" in recognition of a homeless West Indian man who accompanied her home after she got lost in the park (20). This phase was followed by a fascination

with things stereotypically Native in response to reading and absorbing Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. She and her friend dress up as "Indians" and speak in a secret language to each other. After she grows up and returns to an old copy of *Hiawatha* in her Montreal apartment, Daphne defiantly observes that Longfellow's "noble savage" has little to do with the images of the "militant Mohawk warriors" (69). She continues, "these were the quiet people she knew, not those defiantly boisterous others on the television behind her" (McWatt 70).

Both textual and television images of Indigenous people rely on the performance of ethnicity not unlike Daphne's own. According to Amelia Kalant, it was the warriors' masks that were particularly upsetting to settler society and the government because they "'hid' the true purpose and intention of the warriors" (242). Further, Kalant maintains that "only in hiding themselves and refusing to look the part, could the protesters move beyond the fantasies of Indianness that had been projected onto them by Canadianness" (242). However, when the masks where removed, Canadians "could back away from" the related question "about who was Indian" and what was "nativeness" (242). The novel also plays with notions of "masking" of identity and portrays stereotypical perceptions that members of the dominant society have about those who look different. One of Daphne's white colleagues attempts to talk her into joining the protesters by emphasizing the importance of the visibly "ethnic" (143) support at the barricades. Moreover, Daphne remains unaware of the fact that, as the text seems to imply, the Indigenous people of Guyana might well be among her ancestors. When they first meet, Surefoot observes that Daphne's features remind her of those of Indigenous people in the Mississippi Delta: "A Delta gal, you look like to me. There're some Indians there look like you" (14). Ironically, her adoptive father, oblivious of this potential connection, refers to her as "his own little Hiawatha" (70), both exoticizing his adopted daughter and making her "more familiar" by projecting the romanticized notion of the "Indian" onto her. McWatt shows here how members of white Canadian society in their discomfort with racial and cultural otherness employ strategies to "familiarize" the unknown in a process that blurs differences between Indigenous and diasporic identities rather than making appropriate and constructive connections between them.

In addition to representing different responses from non-Aboriginal locals to the standoff—ranging from active support of the Mohawk blockades to setting "Indian effigies" on fire (181)—the novel gives voice to an Indigenous

perspective through the character of Surefoot. Daphne meets Surefoot at the Adoption Registry where she, as a residential school survivor, hopes to locate her parents. However, unlike Daphne, she remains unsuccessful in her search. As Surefoot observes, "too many different tribes . . . they didn't keep the same records" (11). The Registry's response indicates that Indigenous children were either not considered important enough for proper record keeping or that records have not been made available in an attempt to cover up acts of abuse and violence committed at the schools. Surefoot herself is the survivor of severe physical abuse. Large parts of her body remain scarred from burns inflicted by one of the nuns at the school. Yet the question of biological origin does not seem to bear much weight for her. She explains to Daphne: "A Mohawk friend told me it didn't matter what tribe I belonged to" (99). Daphne repeatedly turns to Surefoot for guidance and eventually joins the protesters at the Mercier bridge blockade only to witness four soldiers lifting her into a truck: "Surefoot wasn't struggling, but from her face Daphne could see she was channeling all the weight of her ancestry into every cell of her body" (181). At the end of the novel Daphne demythologizes her own identity by no longer thinking of the Greek gods as her "real family" and by no longer attempting to find clues to her own existence in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Similarly she decolonizes her image of "Indians," acknowledging that the reality of the Mohawks protecting their ancestors' land has little in common with the images of Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. Daphne's emotional growth and political awakening enable her to enter into a relationship with *her* (my emphasis) Rochester, a Québécois produce vendor of Italian descent.

What makes Michel a welcome suitor is his question "Where've you been?" (90) rather than "where are you from?" when they first meet, challenging notions of migration and autochthony. Walking toward Michel at the conclusion of the novel, she announces "I'm here" (208). She achieves this new sense of belonging by having received information about her biological parents as well as about Guyanese history, underlining the importance of the past in understanding the present. By discussing similarities between Indigenous people's stolen lives and history and those deprived by history through slavery, *Out of my Skin* points at two of the pillars of white supremacy. Early on in her quest, Daphne explores her roots by seeking out a Caribbean grocery store. Intrigued by an unknown vegetable, okra, she asks the store owner how to cook it. Amused by this unexpected question, the woman responds: "you could boil it, fry it, mek a coocoo wid it" (6). Daphne quickly leaves the store, but the woman's

accented voice stays with her. She later associates the voice with that of her birth mother, and it eventually becomes her inner voice. Daphne's journey of "coming home" through voice and story begins when a West Indian homeless man finds the eight-year-old girl, having wandered off, one night in High Park. He accompanies her back to her parents' house telling her a Jamaican trickster story on the way. It is this chance encounter that awakens Daphne's curiosity about her own racial background and arouses her interest in mythology, albeit ancient mythology. As in *Sundogs*, storytelling is a vehicle for cultural transmission. It links successive generations with each other and creates "home" in a cultural sense. According to Michael Rothberg, "our relationship to the past does partially determine who we are in the present, but never straightforwardly and directly, and never without unexpected or even unwanted consequences that bind us to those whom we consider other. When the productive, intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory is explicitly claimed . . . it has the potential to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice" (5). In this sense, *Out of My Skin* suggests that "multidirectional memory," that is, the memory of trauma—however distinct—suffered by people in various places of the globe inflicted by colonization, relocation, violence, and racism facilitates the coming together of diasporic and Indigenous groups. The settler-native dichotomy on which the discussion of decolonization in Canada and in other settler societies is sometimes based is portrayed here as being unhinged by the racialized, mixed race, diasporic subject who was adopted by white Euro-Canadian parents.

Although *Out of My Skin* encourages readers to think critically about how racialized minorities are complicit in the colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada and how issues of racial discrimination and exclusion experienced by African and Afro-Caribbean Canadians cannot be separated from colonial legacies that continue to affect Indigenous peoples, it hesitates to fully imagine the implications of such complicity. After having been carried away by the soldiers, Surefoot disappears from the text. Daphne goes on a canoe journey and gets lost in the Canadian wilderness where for the first time she identifies with Bertha Mason rather than with Jane Eyre, and where she buries her father's diaries, which record the physical and emotional abuse that he suffered in a mental asylum in pre-independence Guyana and which disclose her parentage. Her experience of being reborn in the bush is reminiscent of the experience of other protagonists of Canadian novels, which, as Labrador Métis scholar Kristina Fagan has argued, represent their protagonists as "going native" in an attempt to feel at home on the North American continent (251).

Yet the plot of *Out of My Skin* deviates from the formula of the typical "Indian novel" in that Daphne goes on her journey without an Aboriginal guide and thus somewhat complicates the stereotype of the "Indian" as feeling at home in the wilderness. The fairy tale ending of *Jane Eyre,* where the governess marries and transforms the cold-hearted master, has left many critics dissatisfied, particularly those who read the novel from a feminist perspective. Perhaps the equally puzzling ending of *Out of My Skin* is meant to remind us of the Victorian novel's conundrum of reconciling tensions reflective of the tumultuous time in which it is set and in which it was written—not unlike McWatt's.

The fact that only a small number of Aboriginal texts portray the standoff at Kahnesatake and that, to my knowledge, *Out of My Skin* is the only text by a non-Aboriginal writer to do so surprises in light of the significance of the event for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. As Kalant observes "[n]ational crises are those instances in which an entire web of myths threatens to be pulled apart: a tearing of a strand in which the skeins of other stories are so closely interwoven that the major presuppositions of nation are cast into doubt. Oka was not about a simple binary relationship of Native-Canadian, but involved the myths about Canada and the United States, Canada as a Northern nation, Canada and Quebec" (4-5). Both texts by Maracle and McWatt subvert notions of the status quo by unsettling the binaries on which the construction of Canada's diversity has rested in their representations of the standoff at Kahnesatake. *Sundogs* "marginalizes" white society while Aboriginal identity is affirmed by "reclaiming" Vancouver and by reviving traditional knowledges in the city. *Out of My Skin* disrupts the notion of the "two solitudes" by acknowledging the role of both Aboriginal and racialized diasporic peoples in nation building. Although *Sundogs* was published twenty-two years ago and *Out of My Skin* came out sixteen years ago, the conflicts that the two novels portray are still with us. Their promotion of Indigenous and diasporic alliances resonates with recent critical and cultural production.

NOTES

1 The resistance carried out by people from Kahnesatake, Kahnawake, and Akwesasne began in the spring of 1990 with the intent of peacefully blocking the expansion of the Oka golf course into the Pines, a small piece of land that the people of Kahnesatake had been fighting to have recognized as theirs for at least three centuries. The conflict escalated in the summer of 1990 in a seventy-eight-day armed standoff in Kahnesatake, Kahnawake, and the non-native town of Oka between the Mohawks and other bands, and the Sûreté du Québec, the RCMP, and the Canadian army. Jordan Wheeler's "Red Waves," Richard

Wagamese's *A Quality of Light*, and Drew Hayden Taylor's "A Blurry Image on the Six O'Clock News" are among the few texts that discuss the conflict.

2 According to Kiera L. Ladner, "[r]egardless as to whether the message was ever really heard, at the time, it was impossible for Canadians and Indigenous people alike not to think about the cost of action and inaction" (302).

3 The contributions to *Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation through the Lens of Cultural Diversity* focus on shared experiences of relocation, colonization, and genocide. As Georges Erasmus, a Dene man from Yellowknife and President of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, explains: "the subjects of historical wrongdoings and redress, healing, and reconciliation have many localized variants, among them the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War and the demolition of Africville in the 1960s" (vii).

4 Yet Indigenous scholars seem to have been reluctant to explore intersections between diaspora and indigeneity with the same enthusiasm as their non-Aboriginal counterparts in light of growing interest in Indigenous literary nationalisms. See "Canadian Indian Literary Nationalism? Critical Approaches in Canadian Indigenous Contexts—A Collaborative Interlogue" in *Cultural Grammars*. Lee Maracle seems to be reluctant to subsume Indigenous literatures under a transnational CanLit project. This is clear in her contribution to *Trans. Can.Lit: Resituating the Study of Canadian Literature*, "Oratory on Oratory," in which she, as the only Indigenous scholar included in the volume, expresses concerns about the institutionalization of diaspora.

5 My position as a white German-born academic inadvertently shapes my reading of these texts and limits my perspective. I would like to acknowledge Renate Eigenbrod's complex and thoughtful deliberations about her own positioning vis-à-vis Indigenous texts.

6 The title of Maracle's *Sojourner's Truth* pays homage to Sojourner Truth, the African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist.

7 *Sundogs* is not strictly speaking a "novel" in the conventional sense of the word. Maracle points out that in her writing she tries "to integrate two mediums: oratory and European story, our sense of metaphor, our use of it, with traditional European metaphor and story form" (*Sojourners* 11).

8 As Lily Cho reminds us, diaspora "is not about membership, but about a raced and gendered condition of melancholia and loss which is intimately related to the traumas of dislocation and the perpetual intrusion of the past of this trauma into the present" (174).

9 The Premier of Manitoba needed unanimous approval for ratifying the Accord. Harper refused to give his consent on the grounds that Aboriginal people had not been consulted or recognized in the constitutional discussions around the Accord, and so initiated procedural delays in the legislature. When the Legislative Assembly adjourned, it had not voted on the Accord.

10 In referring to "Aboriginal," I do not mean to imply that there is only one Aboriginal culture or people.

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Steve Noyes

All That Was Desired

Among the shapes come down
From the modern medieval period
Is the stylized and elongated hypotenuse
Of the Roofline Corporation's logo,
Its steady ascension near every Springfield exit.

Statistics is the description of abscissae:
Moms and Pops up and closed shop
Rather than confront the Roofline juggernaut,
Retired to air-con and powdered ice-tea,
While their basement kids began to climb Mt. Credit.

At first, a furious burgeoning. as trucks brought
All that was desired, pallet upon pallet;
Under the friendly Roofline lay Earth's coded fungibles
From factories on jungle fringes, from docks blue
With the effusions of forklift motors:

Aisles of the riveted, the crimped and heat-sealed,
And Springfielders kachinged their barbecues
And fish-tank-sized TVs. Then the brief zenith
Dipped towards investor pessimism, layoffs,
Until there were only a few jobs left,

Poorly paid; others quit to mind the grandkids.
Remaining staff dealt with a narrower community,
Until glass smashed under the abscissa,
And We the People carted off the cases of KD,
The cappuccino-makers—a strong demand curve—

And Roofline came to echo in the rust-in-snow
Of swing-sets, handsaws and gazebos cluttering
Springfield's garages and backyards,
In the apron with the boom and doom roofline,
Folded for years in a drawer, after the math

Moved on to newer markets, in the pioneering way.

Andrea Medovarski

Roughing It in Bermuda

Mary Prince, Susanna Strickland Moodie, Dionne Brand, and the Black Diaspora

Canadian literature has, since its inception, been overwhelmingly preoccupied with geography. Susanna Moodie's narrative, *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852), is recognized as one of the first canonical texts of the English Canadian settler tradition, and has been used to narrate the Canadian nation-space as an "empty wilderness" and a place of "peaceful settlement." While Moodie is seen as one of the inaugural figures of Canadian literature, few critics consider her literary career in England or the diasporic history of transatlantic slavery that haunts her writing.[1] Before marrying John Dunbar Moodie and emigrating to Upper Canada in 1832, Susanna Strickland was involved in the abolitionist movement in England, transcribing two slave narratives: *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself* (1831), and *The Narrative of Ashton Warner* (1831). Mary Prince's is also a significant first text. Moira Ferguson, in her introduction to the critical edition, describes Prince as "an intrepid woman narrating a pioneering history: the first British black woman to write an autobiography and a polemic against slavery" (28). The language of "pioneering" has significant resonances in the context of this article, enabling possibilities for exploring the uneasy relationship between Mary Prince and Susanna Strickland Moodie in the various geographic spaces they inhabit, and the ways both of their writings resonate in contemporary black Canadian literatures.

By considering Strickland's role as Prince's amanuensis, this paper focuses on both literary and geographic concerns. In the first half, by tracing such a trajectory for Canadian letters, I explore the intertextual conversations

that might be staged when reading Moodie's narrative in conjunction with Prince's. In the second half, I consider the ways their intertwined literary legacies echo in contemporary Canadian writers such as Dionne Brand, whose work is perhaps best understood in conversation with *both* Prince and Moodie. By foregrounding such connections, we might then use Moodie's canonical text to rearticulate Canada as a black geography, and to "better understand the racialization that has long formed the underpinning for the production of space" (McKittrick and Woods 5). Rather than framing Moodie as a settler writer, how might the dominant discourse of English Canadian literature be revised if we understand her instead in a diasporic context? While racialized Canadian writers such as Brand are often framed as diasporic, there are profound implications for thinking about canonical white writers in a similar fashion. Canada's national narrative of peaceful settlement, of "roughing it in the bush," is dependent on the erasure of its violent colonial history, revealing the ways "geographic desires [are] bound up in conquest" (McKittrick and Woods 5). Reading Moodie's narrative through Prince's, however, suggests a different starting point for Canadian literature, one which frames this nation within the Americas rather than emphasizing only its historical ties to Britain and France. Thinking about these earliest connections between Canadian and black diasporic writing foregrounds the histories of violence, colonization, and transatlantic slavery on which this hemisphere has been built.

As such, this paper is a "conceptual exercise" (Walcott 30), not unlike the one Rinaldo Walcott engages in when he uses the figure of nineteenth-century black journalist Mary Ann Shadd Cary to "elaborate a sustainable place in Canadian Studies for blackness" (30). My questions for the academic discourse of CanLit are inspired by Walcott's concerns. I ask: What happens if, instead of seeing Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* as one of the significant starting points for Canadian literature, we instead trace this literary tradition back to *The History of Mary Prince*? What does it mean for Moodie, and for subsequent Canadian writers, to write in the wake of a slave narrative? What are the implications for a literary tradition to have emerged out of bondage? Henry Louis Gates has considered this question regarding the African-American, and by extension the American, literary tradition. But this question has perhaps never been asked of the Canadian literary tradition. Moira Ferguson argues that, in order to fully understand the brutal impacts of slavery we must pay attention to the "conspicuous gaps in [Prince's] narrative" (1). So too might we better understand the discursive legacies

of slavery and colonization if we read against the grain and explore the silences—some notable, others less conspicuous—in and around Moodie's narrative. *Roughing It in the Bush* is most often understood within the tradition of the "settlement journal," situated alongside those written by her sister, Catharine Parr Traill, and eighteenth-century Hudson's Bay Company officials such as Samuel Hearne and David Thompson. By turning to Mary Prince as a different literary antecedent for Susanna Moodie, I suggest that the very notion of the "settlement journal" must be rethought. What are the implications of reading Moodie's text through what might aptly be articulated as the "un-settlement journal" of Prince's slave narrative?

This line of inquiry necessitates a different articulation of the Canadian nation-space as well. In order to illuminate new and more productive spatial practices than those enabled by existing geographic and literary constructs, Katherine McKittrick, in *Demonic Grounds*, suggests that we "have to enter the material landscape from a different location" (15). This is why I turn to Bermuda, Turks Island, and Antigua, the Caribbean locations inhabited by an enslaved Mary Prince, as an alternate point from which to enter the Canadian landscape. I also come to the Canadian landscape via the England Prince inhabited as an escaped slave. The England she negotiates via these "new world" geographies is very different from the ostensibly homogenous "originary" England to which a Canadian settler history is usually traced, elaborating the diasporic connections between Prince and Moodie, whose lives collide in the home of abolitionist Thomas Pringle. I suggest that Moodie's literal emigration to Canada is therefore coloured (pun intended) by the earlier migrations she narrates and vicariously experiences when transcribing Prince's first-person narrative in Pringle's home. The result is a geographic confluence between Canada, the Caribbean, and England that might be best understood through Paul Gilroy's now-famous articulation of the black Atlantic, or Stuart Hall's "re-staged narrative of the post-colonial" (249), both of which foreground the diasporic migrations resulting from four centuries of "expansion, exploration, conquest, colonization and imperial hegemonisation which constituted the 'outer face,' the constitutive outside, of European and then Western capitalist modernity after 1492" (Hall 249). While this is not the symbolic historical moment to which the Canadian settler narrative is normally traced, doing so enables alternate possibilities, both literary and geographical.

Within the dominant cultural discourses of English Canada, spatial metaphors emanating from the settler tradition have been a sustained

critical tool for critics to articulate Canadian literary culture. In 1971, Northrop Frye famously argued that the most significant task facing Canadian cultural producers was to liberate themselves from the "garrison mentality" of colonial days, claiming that the nation "is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?'" (12). Margaret Atwood, a year later in *Survival*, similarly utilizes a language of exploration and wilderness that can be traced directly back to writers like Moodie, calling for "a map of the territory" of CanLit (18). The questions Frye and Atwood raise about mapping and location might resonate very differently if they were examined not through Susanna Moodie but through Mary Prince, and through a diasporic framework rather than a strictly national one. Paul Gilroy, for example, in exploring the liberatory political possibilities of black Atlantic autobiographies, suggests that slave narratives offer trenchant examples of self-creation and self-emancipation by "seeking to answer the metaphysical questions 'Who am I?' and 'When am I most myself?'" (70). These questions, although phrased in the same language, sit uneasily next to Frye's, forcing us to consider that "Where is here?" is a very different and much more highly charged concern for enslaved peoples than those who, like Moodie, emigrate to Canada by choice and / or economic necessity. Further, McKittrick reminds us that black peoples in Canada are "presumed surprises because they are 'not here' and 'here' simultaneously: they are, like blackness… concealed in a landscape of systemic blacklessness" (93). Thus, the "here" to which Frye and Atwood refer becomes an even more complicated geography when such racial erasures are articulated in specifically spatial terms.

These erasures are evident from the opening pages of Moodie's narrative, one of the earliest literary texts to articulate slavery as, in McKittrick's words, "a denied and deniable Canadian institution" (91). *Roughing It* begins with the Moodies' arrival in 1832, two years before the abolition of slavery in Canada and the British Empire. Nonetheless, Moodie erroneously describes Canada as a place in which the emigrant can be "no more oppressed, no more a slave / here freedom dwells beyond the wave" (10). Such an appropriation of the language of bondage is perhaps surprising coming from a writer who worked actively for the abolitionist cause.[2] In an early expression of the dominant national narrative of the last two centuries, Moodie positions Canada as the land of freedom, relegating North American slavery only to the southern United States which she describes as "the far-distant land of the exile and the slave" (489).

The hauntings of slavery, and of Mary Prince, are nonetheless evident from Moodie's earliest pages—if we choose to read them in this way. The epigraph of *Roughing It* includes a poem in which she states: "I sketch from Nature, and the picture's true / Whate'er the subject, whether grave or gay, / Painful experience in a distant land / Made it mine own."[3] Despite Moodie's invocation of transparent space ("the picture's true"),[4] these lines resonate very differently if we consider the "painful experiences" in "distant lands" experienced by Prince, which might be buried in this articulation of migration. While Moodie is able to lay claim to the land, to make it her own, Prince never had this option, neither in the Caribbean locations in which she was enslaved, nor in England, where her freedom is provisional upon her not returning to Antigua, since her last owners refuse to emancipate her. Moodie's opening lines might also reveal further hauntings. The first sentence, "In most instances, emigration is a matter of necessity, not of choice" (3), is situated within an opening paragraph describing her family's arrival to the "new world" on a crowded ship, on which many passengers had been ill and/or were starving. Upon landing, the ship is "emptied of all her live cargo" (16). Without looking to make the suffering of emigration commensurable to that of slavery, I do think that Moodie's gestures to the middle passage make this a provocative choice of opening imagery. Regardless of whether these discursive intersections between the settler and the slave are intentional or accidental, they suggest to me that Mary Prince is *not* "to all intents and purposes left behind" (43) after John and Susanna Moodie marry and leave England, as Gillian Whitlock argues in her study of postcolonial women's autobiography. While there has been substantial critical discussion about the ways slave narratives are mediated, and often expressively limited, by white abolitionist discourse, perhaps the obverse is also at play here: that Prince's narrative also mediates Moodie's. Although I would not go so far as George Elliott Clarke, who argues that Moodie's memoir is "really—audaciously—a displaced slave narrative" (Kyser 863), I think it is important to ponder the multidirectional influence of these two writers, and to explore the possibility that Prince has, in some capacity, shaped Moodie's text just as Moodie/Strickland has shaped Prince's.

Although rarely discussed by CanLit critics, a number of black characters appear in *Roughing It*, making palpable a black presence in Upper Canada from the earliest waves of settlement.[5] Moodie's narrative includes references to a Caribbean-descended, mixed-race neighbour, to a black neighbour and family servant, Mollineaux, and a long story about an escaped American

slave who marries a white Irishwoman and is subsequently killed by rowdy young men in an act of charivari—although lynching might be a more accurate label for this act of social and racial discipline.[6] But the most substantial and significant black presence in Moodie's text is, arguably, the H— family, who arrived in Canada in the early 1790s. The first member of the family to which readers are introduced is "Old Joe," described initially in racially neutral terms as having "a jolly red face, twinkling black eyes and a rubicund nose" (136). The rest of his family, however, is consistently racialized. Joe refers to his father, "a New England Loyalist… of doubtful attachment to the British government" (136), as "an old coon" (137). Moodie describes his children as a "brown brood of seven girls" (138) and his mother, Mrs. H— , is blatantly referred to by Captain Moodie and his business associate as an "old nigger" (140). Moodie also describes Mrs. H—'s red head scarf, harsh demeanour regarding her daughter-in-law, and Captain Moodie's attempts to bribe her with a black silk dress. These images invoke the "Mammy" stereotype. Although, as readers soon learn, however, Mrs. H— is nowhere near as obsequious as this stereotype conventionally suggests. In an argument with Susanna, Old Joe's wife defiantly tells her, "I'm a *free-born* American" (149, italics mine), a designation which resonates all the more powerfully given the family's racialization, and is a notable contrast to escaped slave Tom Smith, the "runaway nigger" (224) who is lynched in a subsequent chapter.

After living on a rented farm for their first years, the Moodies purchase a homestead from Old Joe, for what his family perceives to be an unfairly low price. This purchase, largely ignored by CanLit critics, belies the pioneering title of Moodie's narrative. She and her family do not "rough it in the bush"; rather, they engage in a profitable real estate transaction. The Moodies' displacement of the H— family is, literally and symbolically, an early manifestation of centuries of black marginalization—geographical, historical, and literary. Nonetheless, even after the sale of the property is finalized, Mrs. H— stubbornly refuses to leave the house the Moodies will soon occupy. Her persistence speaks to her unwillingness to be "rendered ungeographic" (McKittrick x) by white settlement. When she is finally forced to move, Mrs. H— expresses tremendous regret at having to leave her home of nearly four decades. She tells Susanna:

> I have lived here six-and-thirty years; 'tis a pretty place and it vexes me to leave it. . . . There is not an acre in cultivation but I helped to clear it, not a tree in yonder orchard but I held it while my poor man, who is dead and gone, planted it; and I

> have watched the trees bud from year to year, until their boughs overshadowed the hut where all my children, but Joe, were born. (144)

In buying land that has been cultivated by black labour, the Moodies have revealed the ways that blackness is implicated in the literal production of space, while simultaneously displacing that blackness from the landscape. This moment indirectly evokes the erasures of enslaved black labour that are foundational to plantation economies and geographies. Evoking a history of slavery also contextualizes the position of the settler within a wider colonial history. W. H. New draws attention to "the term settler as a (tendentious) discursive phenomenon" and "foregrounds the slippage from invader to peaceful settler within the project of imperialism" (158). New also points out that for the settler, land is "an impediment to commerce, valuable only when reconstructed or rearranged" (74).[7] It is this labour, performed by Mr. and Mrs. H— for nearly half a century, through skills possibly acquired as a result of their slave ancestry, which has given the land its value. In *Roughing It,* the only impediments to commerce are Captain Moodie's failed financial dealings in land speculation, and his family's inability to clear it. But in this instance, the H—family's presence on the land, which predates that of the Moodies by a full generation, illustrates that Canadian settlement was neither peaceful nor benign. While the myth of the empty lands usually speaks to the erasure of Canada's Native inhabitants, colonial hegemonisation is revealed, in this instance of black displacement, to be an even more complex process.

The implications of hegemonisation are also revealed in the critical reception of such a reading of Moodie's text. While scholars who work on black Canadian literature consider Moodie's ample textual references as evidence enough to support an interpretation of the H— family as black, "in the field of early CanLit the presence of blackness constitutes difficult knowledge for many critics" who are resistant to such interventions into hegemonic discourses (Antwi 2). Some scholars read the H— family as white and see the racial slur "nigger" as a derogatory, but deracialized, epithet the Moodies use to express their displeasure about squatters. Yet nowhere else in *Roughing It*, or in *Life in the Clearings*, does Moodie use this slur to refer to people who are not black, so I am left to wonder why this particular reference would be an exception. While I have found no historical evidence that proves definitively that the Harris family is black, I have also found no historical evidence to prove that they are not. Yet their whiteness is presumed. In order to make such a presumption, certain

historical evidence must be disregarded such as the fact that the first census in 1731 of Dutchess County, New York, from which the Harrises originate, states a population of 1,727, "of whom 112 were 'blacks'" (Hasbruck 50). The 1790 census cites 440 free blacks and 1856 slaves. Two important settlers of the county, William Coe and Peter Enigh, who settled in 1740, both had a sizeable number of slaves. Moreover, Dutchess County has had more congregations of the Religious Society of Friends than any other in the state (Hasbruck 651), and Oswego, from which Boltus Harris (Old Joe's father) originates, was once referred to as "Quaker City" (Hasbruck 464). The Quakers were active participants in antislavery movements and openly accepted black congregants. Among the influx of Loyalist migration to Upper Canada in the 1780-90s were a number of both enslaved blacks and freed men who "lived side by side" (Winks 28). All of these factors, as well as the tangled, untraceable genealogies of slavery, suggest that it is problematic to automatically assume the Harris family's whiteness.

A debate about the Harris family's racialization must also be understood within the context of long-standing debates regarding the generic classification of Moodie's narrative. While some critics read *Roughing It* as a factual autobiography (Peterman), others have considered the text's various and sometimes contradictory literary influences and the ways in which it defies any straightforward categorization (Thomas; Glickman). Susan Glickman chooses a provocative, racially charged language to describe *Roughing It* as "a miscegenous work, resisting generic classification" (22). Some critics have suggested that we read the text as a novel (Klinck; Fowler). Even those scholars who read it eyas autobiography acknowledge that the collation of multiple editions and manuscripts of Moodie's text "reveals telling manipulations of phrase and detail" (Peterman 40). My point is that, regardless of the Harris family's "actual" racial identity, Moodie repeatedly "blackens" them, racializing them when she talks about their unwanted presence on the land. This speaks volumes about blackness as an unwanted, undesirable, and erasable presence in nineteenth century Upper Canada. Moreover, a reluctance to consider the blackness, and / or the racial implications of the "blackening" of the H— family enacts the very kinds of erasures this paper seeks to illuminate and write against.

Whether literal or discursive, the removal of a black woman such as Mrs H— from the landscape to make room for white middle-class English settlement has profound symbolic resonances. Speaking again of Shadd Cary, Walcott observes that "when gender is raced, the disruption is massive.

When it is a black woman we must consider, national formation is thrown into chaos" (38). In Moodie's narrative, to consider the racialization and displacement of Mrs. H— is to throw the dominant discourses of CanLit, and its presumed origins in a white settler tradition, into chaos. In the interest of imposing order, the settlement narrative relies on the most violent erasures and acts of spatial marginalization. According to Alan Lawson, "[f]or the settler . . . the land has to be empty. Empty land can be settled, but occupied land can only be invaded. So the land must be emptied so that it can be filled, in turn, with both discourse and cattle" (155). While he, like most critics who explore postcolonial settler societies, refers to the evacuation of the indigene, his observations hold true for other racialized subjects, like the H— family. His reference to "discourse and cattle" resonates ominously in Moodie's pronouncement that Canada got its name from the first explorers who exclaimed "'Aca nada'—there is nothing here" (519), and also humorously given that Moodie speaks recurrently of her fear of cows, asking Mrs. H— to do her milking. Moodie's narrative also enacts a discursive "neatness" as well, in its attenuation of this family's story. Readers never learn what becomes of Old Joe or his family. Since their fate is deemed narratively unimportant in comparison to that of the Moodies, they are simply made to disappear.

The H— family's narrative attenuation, however, does not resolve so easily the contradictory refusal *and* longing which their presence invokes. Richard Almonte, in one of the few studies to account for the pervasive presence of blackness in early Canadian literature, observes that "Blackness signals not so much what whites might be, but what they do not want to be" (24). In Moodie's narrative a similar contradiction arises, in that the H— family's blackness represents what the Moodies don't want to be at the same time as it represents what they aspire to: they too long for the knowledge and ability to run a good homestead, clear fields, and plant orchards (even though they never do so with much success). Yet despite this, the final chapter of *Roughing It* includes an extended correlation between geography and white supremacy. Moodie speaks about "the progress of the Northern races of mankind," whose labour in inhospitable climates "has endowed them with an unconquerable energy of character, which has enabled them to become the masters of the world" (519). By contrast, the peoples of "more favoured climates" have, according to Moodie, "remained comparatively feeble and inactive, or have sunk into sloth and luxury" (519-20). In order to reinforce this colonialist mentality, not only does the labour

of the H— family have to be erased, so too must Moodie strategically forget the years of toil, deprivation, violence, and hard labour that Mary Prince (and Ashton Warner) endured in the "favoured climates" of the Caribbean. Moodie reveals this contradictory premise when she acknowledges that the supposedly "desirable," genteel and civilized immigrants, British middle-class officers and their families, are "a class perfectly unfitted by their previous habits and education for contending with the stern realities of emigrant life" (6). But these dissonances, while troubling in their illumination of racial / spatial concealment, also create opportunities for finding alternate geographic and conceptual possibilities within this discursive slippage.

McKittrick argues that "[s]ociospatial reordering moves blackness away from nonexistence and into the nation, wherein the nation is asked to be held accountable for the ways in which domination reproduces different forms of black invisibility" (101). Her argument brings much to bear on this discussion of canon-formation, nation-formation, and spatial-formation. By asking us to read Susanna Moodie, and also the rest of CanLit, through Mary Prince, I am also asking Canada to be held accountable for the ways blackness was and continues to be displaced and rendered either invisible or irrelevant to the nation. As McKittrick further points out, "absence and elsewhere are, in fact, critical sites of nation" (103), insisting on the need to "make plausible a new terrain—a different material and imaginative geography—of Canada and the black diaspora" (118). Reading CanLit via a Caribbean / British slave narrative may not be "plausible" within dominant understandings of this field of study or dominant discourses of Canadianness. But if we make it plausible, both literary and geographic possibilities may arise.

Possibilities for thinking differently about both space and literature can also be explored through an analysis of the ways contemporary black Canadian writers such as Dionne Brand grapple with the historical legacies of Susanna Moodie and the "(un)settlement journal." Just as Moodie's writing is not usually traced to the slave narrative, Brand's writing is not often traced to the English Canadian settler tradition, despite her repeated invocation of some of the literary tropes established by Moodie and subsequent canonical writers. While the Canadian landscape and her place in it have been a sustained preoccupation in Brand's corpus, these moments are not often considered by critics who have focused largely on the migratory, postcolonial, and diasporic elements of her writing. In my attempts to articulate a different way into literary and material geographies,

I explore how blackness and whiteness, nation and diaspora have been mutually constitutive in Brand's work. I suggest that her writing is most intelligible when it is understood as engaged with the literary legacies of (among others) both Mary Prince and Susanna Moodie. While Brand's Caribbeanness is often foregrounded, there are also important ways of thinking about her in a specifically Canadian context, that insist on a decoupling of race and nation and stretch the boundaries of what "CanLit" is and looks like, and the questions it asks of the nation.

Brand's own auto/biographical narrative *A Map to the Door of No Return*, might be read as a complex intertextual conversation with both *Mary Prince* and *Roughing It*. Also defying simple generic categorization, Brand's text is a first-person memoir of sorts. In its meditations on contemporary and historical struggles of African-descended peoples in the diaspora, the corporeal legacies of the transatlantic slave trade, and the Middle Passage and its ensuing ruptures of subjectivity that continue to haunt African-descended peoples, the text is clearly in conversation with some of the major themes explored in slave narratives. But *A Map to the Door* also engages with the predominant discourses of Canadianness. Some sections of Brand's narrative explore the northern Canadian landscape, and in these moments the interplay between Brand and Moodie is significant. For Brand, like Moodie, roughing it in the bush is a matter of necessity not of choice: she moves to Burnt River, three hours north of Toronto, because she "had no money" (150), and, like her literary antecedent, has "ended up writing a few books" (150) during her time there. Brand is immediately disillusioned by the language of "mystery and wilderness" (67) attached to the landscape which she describes as "a crypto-fascist romance" (67). Her concerns, however, extend beyond those of Moodie, whose anxieties are directed largely at a hostile landscape. Brand says, "I have been living out here in the bush for two years now. This place fills me with a sense of dread but also of mystery. I fear the people more than the elements, which are themselves brutal" (143). In foregrounding the way she perceives the racism of the people who inhabit this northern landscape, Brand reveals the manner in which this space is historicized and socially produced, and critiques the powerful processes through which black geographic and social displacement have been, and continue to be, accepted in an ostensibly peaceful settler context. She also draws attention to other processes of colonization through which she has arrived in this place. Recounting a rare visit from a group of friends, one of them, who is from the Six Nations, asks "Whose land is this, I wonder" (151).

It is a profound query that was never made by the largely silent and silenced Indigenous people who appear in Moodie's narrative.

Like Moodie, Brand does not socialize with her neighbours; with uncharacteristic obsequiousness she states that she is "much more eager to please or not to cause offence here in this town, which is all white, except for the Chinese people who took over the restaurant in my last year in the bush" (147). Her reluctance to enter social life, however, is quite differently motivated. While Moodie keeps her distance from her neighbours out of classism and a perceived sense of her own British superiority, Brand's fear drives her into a social isolation that has even greater impact than does her geographic isolation. In "Pinery Road and Concession 11," she tells of an episode in which her car breaks down on a rural road and she sits in it, "wondering how I can get the car to move without going for help" (144). The incident gestures to Moodie's chapter on "The Borrowing System," in which she recounts the many ways neighbours swindle her by borrowing her goods. Brand, however, is reluctant to ask anyone for help, even in a time of need, as she is so afraid of the hostility that will be directed at her. Recalling the classism and colourism she faced growing up in rural Trinidad, she recalls, "[h]elp exposes you to peoples' disdain was how my grandmother saw it" (144). This sentiment, while differently motivated, is not unlike Moodie's, who also does not want to ask her neighbours for anything, despite their constant requests of her: "so averse have I ever been to this practice that I would at all times quietly submit to a temporary inconvenience than obtain anything I wanted in this manner" (84).[8] As Brand sits in her car considering what to do her fear of judgment brings on suicidal thoughts, a sort of death by landscape: "I contemplate leaving the car there in the middle of the road and walking deliberately into the snow and the forest" (144). Instead, she thinks repeatedly of her grandmother. These references and memories gesture to a different place, bringing Trinidad, its epistemologies, and her grandmother's matriarchal wisdom, into the Canadian landscape. Memory becomes a necessary antidote for the harshness the narrator encounters from people who are "treacherous," and "as cold and forbidding as the landscape" (145).

Brand's memories of her grandmother are a coping mechanism for dealing with spatial and social hostility. For Moodie, memories of England are a nostalgic form of sustenance, and she often contrasts her perception of its refined and cultivated gentility to the harsh Canadian wilderness. Nonetheless, like Moodie, whose excitement upon receiving letters from friends and relatives is palpable, Brand is similarly "delighted" when the flag on her

mailbox is up since "it means that there is news from away" (147). But for Brand, the geographical boundaries between "here" and "away" are not as straightforward or compartmentalized as Moodie's. As she moves back and forth between narrating her life in the bush and reminiscing about her childhood, she intertwines the northern Canadian landscape with that of the Caribbean. Burnt River sits alongside specific streets, buildings and villages in Trinidad; the snow and trees of the Canadian North are reflected through the waves of the sea; the forty-fifth parallel collides with the tenth (143-52). In this regard, her narrative might be read as a twenty-first century manifestation of the ways Susanna Moodie's Canadian landscape is haunted by Mary Prince's Caribbean one. Such is one of the many, indirect routes through which Brand offers a "map to the door of no return" in her memoir. Brand's notion of mapping, however, is profoundly different from that invoked by Atwood thirty years before to explain some singular notion of Canadian identity. For Brand, "[c]artography is description not journey" (96) and she insists that "[p]laces and those who inhabit them are indeed fictions. This news has cemented the idea that in order to draw a map only the skill of listening may be necessary. And the mystery of interpretation" (18).

Brand also explored mapping at length in her previous volume, *Land To Light On*, a text that, in its very refusal of some of the dominant discourses of Canadianness, in particular the white settler tradition and its preoccupation with the Canadian landscape, becomes deeply implicated in them. In her first poems to consider the northern Canadian landscape in detail, Brand introduces some of the concerns she subsequently pursues in *A Map to the Door of No Return*. Although large sections of this volume are set in the bush, Brand claims that "I did not want to write poems / about stacking cords of wood, as if the world / is that simple" (7). These lines are striking for a number of reasons. First, Brand cannot easily extract herself from a literary tradition built upon such images. Second, thinking about the ways Mary Prince haunts Susanna Moodie's writing, as well as Brand's own poetic reflections about the landscape in this volume, reveals that the world is not that simple at all. In the opening lines, the rural Canadian and Caribbean landscapes again intertwine: "Out here I am like someone without a sheet / without a branch but not even as safe as the sea / . . . if I am peaceful in this discomfort, is not peace / is getting used to harm" (3). Gesturing indirectly to the settlement narrative, Brand immediately calls attention to her *un*settlement in this space, foreshadowing the violence she will encounter here. As in *A Map to the Door*, the people pose a greater threat to

her than the frozen landscape. When a white man in a red truck threatens her on a snowy road, "screaming his exact hatred" (4), his racist and sexist comments haunt Brand for the entire volume. This moment is a frightening contemporary echo of Tom Smith's lynching in Moodie's narrative for his perceived racial and sexual transgressions. The man in the red truck, in the bluntest way, wants to erase Brand from the landscape, just as Mrs. H— was erased by Moodie over the course of her narrative. Despite the simplicity of how he expresses his prejudices, Brand struggles to respond and to come to terms with her own fear. She says, "I lift my head in the cold and I get confuse" (5). She also states that her "mouth could not find a language" (5) to articulate her fear. These notable shifts to Trinidadian English to try to write the Canadian landscape, and her place in it, operate in much the same way that her reminiscences of her grandmother do in *Map*—they serve to intertwine Canada and the Caribbean, providing her with a necessary vehicle through which to explore the racism that has been directed at her.

Brand's inability to speak the Canadian landscape is a major preoccupation in these poems, even prior to her well-known proclamation that she "don't want no fucking country, here / or there and all the way back" (48). The section entitled "Land To Light On" opens with an extended examination of the mythic Canadian wilderness:

> Maybe this wide country just stretches your life to a thinness just trying to take it in, trying to calculate in it what you must do, the airy bay at its head scatters your thoughts like someone going mad from science and birds pulling your hair, ice invades your nostrils in chunks, land fills your throat, you are so busy with collecting the north, scrambling to the arctic so willfully, so busy getting a handle to steady you to this place you get blown into bays and lakes and fissures. (43)

In an unsettling shift to second person, the speaker makes a direct address to the reader. Depending on who "you" are, this move either invites readers to recognize, share and perhaps commiserate with her experiences of marginalization, or forces them to inhabit this space, to feel what it is like to be "stretched" "to a thinness." The landscape is personified; rather than a passive presence it becomes an active agent oppressing the speaker. Forcing herself into nature takes its psychological toll, provoking madness, while images of corporeal violence abound as the natural elements invade the speaker's body, filling her nose and throat, and preventing her from speaking. In her willful collection of Northern images, the speaker recognizes her complicity, however reluctant, in nature and its discourse

even as it has been forced upon her. This realization speaks to the hegemonic power of the nation and the ways the speaker seems to have become a self-disciplining subject in an attempt to manufacture some sense of belonging.

For the speaker, it "always takes long to come to what you have to say" because she has to "sweep this stretch of land up around your feet and point to the / signs, pleat whole histories with pins in your mouth and guess / at the fall of words" (43). This image of pleating from dressmaking is significant, revealing the ways some narratives are concealed, placed behind others, in order to provide structure and substance to a narrative of peaceful Canadian settlement. The speaker's struggles to speak about, embody, or inhabit these natural images is contrasted sharply to that of white Canadians in her poems. When Brand, her lover, and a friend, all racialized subjects, are stopped by a police officer on their way to Buxton and Chatham—important geographic locations when thinking about blackness in Canada because of their history as black settlements in the nineteenth century—the speaker notes the contrast: "That cop's face has it . . . / something there, written as / wilderness, wood, nickel, water, coal, rock, prairie" (77). While this representative of masculine hegemonic whiteness and the repressive state apparatus is seamlessly integrated into the landscape, so *settled* in the comfortable way he inhabits this space, Brand struggles throughout the volume, contorting herself, forcing herself into a landscape that has no place for her. She draws attention to the erasures she, and by extension Mary Prince, have experienced, pointing out that "in this country . . . islands vanish" (73).

Brand's intertextual conversation with the settler narrative also continues in her subsequent volumes. Although their thematic preoccupations are different, exploring political upheavals, violences, and social and environmental degradation in the current global capitalist conjuncture, both *Inventory* (2006) and *Ossuaries* (2010) include traces of her earlier literary dialogues with Moodie. This ongoing confluence speaks to the pervasive ways Brand's literary corpus is woven into the fabric of the dominant discourses of Canadian literature. In *Inventory*, the speaker bears witness, as she catalogues the wars, killings, environmental devastation, political instabilities, and neocolonialism that have shaped her contemporary moment. Leaving "that ravaged world" (47), she travels into the Canadian wilderness for what she perceives will be some solace from the thoughts that haunt her. This geography, however, does not provide her with the refuge she desires. Unable to familiarize herself with it, she hears "the various last calls of day birds she cannot / name" (49). The images of war that haunt

the speaker also pervade her descriptions of the ostensibly benign natural surroundings. "Hard bodied ants" are described as "border guards" who "leav[e] their radioactive / shells strewn on the floor" (51). Spiders are seen "patrolling the windowpanes" (51); "the path to the lake, / furiously / modernizing their barbed wire every breached hour" (51). Echoing the violent characterizations of the landscape in *Land to Light On*, these images of battle and militarization suggest that the Canadian landscape cannot be a depoliticized space of escape and beauty and nothing more. While the episode speaks to the despairing state of the speaker's mind, it also resonates with the underlying and unspoken conquest that informs the Canadian settler narrative as it illuminates the power dynamics and erasures involved in the production of space.

After various global travels, the speaker again contemplates the natural landscape in the final section:

> but let's leave nature for a while
> how can we, yes, let's not essentialize the only
> essential thing, it doesn't work, it fails often,
> fails, fails whom (96)

Brand's refusal to see "nature" as essentialized suggests that she rejects the notion of transparent space; the picture Brand sketches from nature is not "true" the way it is in Moodie's epigraph. This rejection of essentialism also means rejecting the notion that space is fixed and static; rather, it is an insistence that, to echo McKittrick, geographies are alterable. They are shifting and fluid. They can and must be historicized. Embedded in these lines is also an important question: "fails whom"? The suggestion that nature fails some subjects—but perhaps not others—also draws attention to the ways not everyone has equal access to "nature" and the discourses that inform it. "Nature," particularly as a socially constructed concept, "doesn't work"; it has perhaps failed black and other racialized peoples in a Canadian context. This point is more clearly illustrated when we consider Neil Smith's notion of "the production of nature," which, he argues, "jars our traditional acceptance of what had hitherto seemed self-evident" (7). "What jars us so much about this idea," he claims, "is that it defies the conventional, sacrosanct separation of nature and society, and it does so with such abandon and without shame" (7). Emphasizing that "the concept of nature is extremely complex and often contradictory" (11), Smith's arguments (and Brand's poems) reveal that nature is not universal, nor is it devoid of the social processes that shape other aspects of culture. While he argues

that understandings of nature have historically been informed by Western epistemological legacies and the rise of industrial capitalism, I argue that they have also been informed by legacies of racist discourse, and these are the processes to which Brand draws our attention in the above lines.

Like *Inventory*, *Ossuaries* is a poetic narration of various border crossings, literal and imagined, legal and illegalized, made by the central character, Yasmine. As she journeys, she takes sustenance from "this genealogy she's made by hand, this good silk lace, / Engels plaited to Bird, Claudia Jones edgestitched / to Monk, Rosa Luxembourg braids Coltrane" (52). The image of plaiting her own genealogy, of drawing connections between seemingly disparate philosophers, musicians, and political activists, resonates in the context of my project, which similarly stitches together the historical and discursive continuities between Mary Prince, Susanna Moodie, and Dionne Brand in ways that are not often considered. Braiding together canonical white Canadian literatures with slave narratives and contemporary black Canadian literatures can help reshape how we might view these supposedly different literary traditions in relation to one another, and help us understand them as mutually constitutive.

Yasmine arrives in Canada on a forged passport originally belonging to a deceased Caucasian woman. The photograph of Yasmine's racialized body on an official government document displaces, however tenuously, the historical correlation between whiteness and citizenship on which dominant national narratives have been built. Looking out at the landscape from the window of the train as it crosses the Niagara River, Yasmine feels a "brief relief" (116) from her disillusionment:

> the only thing that amazes her now is the earth,
> its ubiquitous snows and lights,
> and waters, its combustible air, its nocturnal
> screeches and beeps, its miraculous
> colours,
> what to say about that, everything (116-17)

There is "everything" to say about this moment when it is read in the wake of the writings of Susanna Moodie. Yasmine's unexpected amazement is, for me, reminiscent of the wonder Moodie feels at Gros Isle when she similarly takes her first "sublime view" (17) of the Canadian landscape from the ship's deck. Yasmine's fascination similarly continues as the train stops, and her arrival is heralded by a quintessential image of Canadianness: "call it heron, great blue, long-legged migrating alone / north, it broke off, it took air, /

flew into an apostrophe, / heading to the wet marsh of another lake" (120). But, just as Moodie's image of the sublime landscape is undercut upon landing and witnessing the "barbarians" (21), the noisy, partially clothed Irish emigrants doing laundry, Yasmine's fascination is undercut by the harsh realities she faces as an undocumented migrant. While Moodie is unprepared for the drudgery of Canadian pioneering, Yasmine, in the very next lines, reveals that she must "reset her compass" (120) to the drudgery of slaughtering chickens in the Maple Leaf Farms factory. This textual correlation between Yasmine's and Moodie's arrival in Canada may not be immediately obvious to readers, but drawing this connection is one of the ways we can heed McKittrick's request to "make plausible a new terrain—a different material and imaginative geography—of Canada and the black diaspora" (118). How might we, in drawing correlations between twenty-first-century undocumented migration and nineteenth-century emigration, be asked to think about the haunting legacy of black displacement? Yasmine's illegalized border crossing into Canada also reveals a contemporary manifestation of Frye's "garrison mentality," speaking to the ways Canada's borders are slowly being closed to refugees and migrant workers by recent government policy. Canada's long history of racist immigration policy, which has made concerted efforts to restrict racialized others while actively enabling British and northern European immigration, might, in a symbolic sense, be reflective of Moodie's insistence that middle-class English immigrants are the most desirable entrants to Canada.

Thinking about the relationship between Mary Prince and Susanna Moodie illuminates some disruptive moments in Canadian literature. In *Roughing It,* Moodie claims that "there are no ghosts in Canada" (286). But the hauntings of Mary Prince revealed in her writing, and both of their subsequent legacies within Brand's writing, suggest otherwise. In considering literary and material geographies, McKittrick emphasizes that "we make concealment happen" (xi). This is important to foreground. Moodie's narrative does not conceal the fact that her family displaces a racialized family from their homestead—but the academic discourses of CanLit have effectively concealed it by not fully examining this moment. We have also made concealment happen by not thinking enough about the ways Dionne Brand is deeply engaged with dominant discourses of Canadianness, relegating her instead to a "postcolonial" or "diasporic" writer. In many ways, then, this paper has come to rest on a fairly simple premise: that "black Canadian literature" is "Canadian literature" and needs to be

analyzed as such. In *Survival*, Atwood points out that "the answers you get from literature depend on the questions you pose" (14). Rather than trying to come up with answers, I have posed different questions that disrupt any simple division between "white" "settler" writing and "black" "diasporic" writing. In proposing a different entry point from which to explore the geographical concerns that are intertwined with Canadian settler writing, I have endeavoured a constitutive project rather than an oppositional one, to consider the ways blackness and whiteness have always been deeply and inextricably implicated in each other.

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NOTES

1 A notable exception is Whitlock.
2 I also wonder how Moodie, a former abolitionist, can assert in *Life in the Clearings* (1853), that: "The consistent influx of runaway slaves from the States has added greatly to the criminal lists on the frontier. The addition of these people to our population is not much to be coveted. . . . The slave, from his previous habits and education, does not always make a good citizen" (157).
3 She also repeats this verse as the epigraph to *Life in the Clearings*, suggesting a particular investment to this presumed notion of verisimilitude.
4 A term coined by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*, which is now widely used by social geographers. In contrast to the notion that space is socially produced, transparent space rests on the belief that space is something fixed, concrete, factual, and easily understood.
5 The few scholars who do explore black characters in early Canadian letters similarly argue that blackness in nineteenth-century Canada is not a marginal presence, but a substantive one. See, in particular, Almonte and Antwi.
6 For an extended examination of this episode see Antwi.
7 John Dunbar Moodie acknowledges as much in his sections of *Roughing It* when he states that "uncleared land in a remote situation from markets possesses, properly speaking, no intrinsic value, like cleared land, for a great deal of labour or money must be expended before it can be made to produce anything to sell" (268-9). He further observes that land is "only rendered valuable by the labour of the settler" (364).
8 Nonetheless, Moodie does ask Mrs. H— for assistance more than once, from the aforementioned requests to milk her cows, to tasks as menial as asking her to sew a button onto one of her servants' shirts.

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Alex Robichaud

forecast.

There's a chance of a messy commute
for those tan-faced drivers
he said
It's a large system
New York and the New England States
disillusioned and overwrought
by American women, heavy rains, and flying green birds.

In Montreal they'll get snow

Rachel Bryant

Cartographic Dissonance
Between Geographies in Douglas Glover's *Elle*

We cannot be saved, I think, unless we are willing to be changed.
—Douglas Glover, *Elle*

Each time early colonists and explorers set foot in what we now call northeastern North America, they entered into *Native space* or space which the Abenaki historian Lisa Brooks defines as "a network of relations and waterways containing many different groups of people as well as animal, plant, and rock beings that was sustained through the constant transformative 'being' of its inhabitants" (3). And when European newcomers encountered this interconnected, cooperative, and sustainable civilization in their relentless pursuit of wealth, power, and resources, they worked tirelessly, in the words of the early American studies scholar Drew Lopenzina, in their deeds and in their official record books, to "transform Native space into colonial space" (20)—or to reinscribe Indigenous lands with Western perspectives.

The work of imperial exploration and settlement in the northeast thus involved a systematic obfuscation of Native space. In postcolonial terms, it was a process of *worlding*, which Gayatri Spivak defines as the inscription "of a world upon supposedly uninscribed territory," and the dominant maps of the Americas, first sketched during those early stages of European expansion, are the conventional cultural products of a strategic "textualizing, a making into . . . an object to be understood" (153-54). Of course, those inscriptions, however privileged in historic and contemporary non-Indigenous imaginaries, have never been able to fully obscure the world beneath, and this is the world that seeps through the pages of Douglas Glover's *Elle*. By mapping the transformation of Elle's perspective in Native space, this novel draws attention to Canada's ongoing role in the legacy of imperial conquest. To make this case, the following essay sketches

out what are arguably the three main stages of this transformation: first, Elle participates in a phase of conventional "old world" mythologizing; second, the novel turns to the erosion and rupture of those mythologies in what Mary Louise Pratt influentially termed the contact zone; and finally transformation occurs through what I am calling a kind of *cartographic dissonance* which developed in the concluding sections of the text, where Elle is psychologically trapped somewhere in between imperial and Indigenous cultural geographies. Through this evolving trajectory, Glover challenges imperial history and emphasizes the shortcomings of imperial narratives. Moreover, as sixteenth-century contact emerges from Elle's narrative as a missed opportunity to cooperatively create a truly "new" world, the novel simultaneously draws attention to some of the specific ways in which Canadians continue to perpetuate this failure.

The first broad phase of Elle's narrative reflects a faithful deference to conventional colonial mythmaking—and mapmaking—strategies. As Lopenzina notes, "colonial paradigms were generally geared toward the containment of," rather than any kind of actual engagement with, "space and knowledge," and the contents of the colonial archive reflect this need to "[impose] monologic responses to one's encounter with the world" (21). Much has been written on the ways in which European imperial powers legitimized the assertion of their will on the world stage by delineating boundaries around what was publicly comprehensible, or by carefully controlling historical and popular narratives. This is essential context for the initial section of *Elle*, where Jacques Cartier guides the reader's entry into colonial space as the protagonist is "left for dead in the land God gave to Cain" (17). In his first official account of New France, the French explorer Cartier offered his initial impressions of Labrador, complaining,

> If the soil were as good as the harbours, it would be a blessing; but the land should not be called the New Land, being composed of stones and horrible rugged rocks; . . . In fine, I am rather inclined to believe that this is the land God gave to Cain. There are people on this coast whose bodies are fairly well formed, but they are wild and savage folk. (9-10)

Such is an example of how French and English colonists and explorers, from Cartier to Plymouth colony's William Bradford, worked throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to control the flow of information between "new" and "old" worlds by interpreting their experiences typologically.[1] In *Travels*, Cartier not only translates his thoughts and experiences into a context that is culturally familiar to a broad European readership by using a

widely known Judeo-Christian story as a model, but he also paints a dramatic picture of a continent populated by wild, subhuman "savages"—fallen exiles of Western civilization who have been condemned by God to wander the earth locked in inescapable cycles of hardship and suffering. As Elle's experiences eventually confirm, this propagandist narrative construction, however legitimizing for the French public and crown, was about as useful to Europeans hoping to survive in sixteenth-century Labrador as Cartier's lexicon which, while Elle is among the Innu and the Inuit, can only be used to communicate with other Europeans.

Cartier amassed words for his lexicon during his time among the Indigenous inhabitants of Hochelaga, near what is now Montreal, and according to the Abenaki ethnologist Frederick Wiseman, linguists now believe this language "to be more similar to Wendat," or Huron, "than Six Nations Iroquois," or Haudenosaunee. Wiseman goes on to note that "The Wendat, for their own sovereignty issues, resent being called Iroquoian" (62). Certainly the nature of this issue alone speaks to the impossibility of viewing the many nations of what is now Canada as a culturally, politically, or linguistically homogenous group; nonetheless, shortly after her unhappy arrival on the so-called Isle des Démons, Elle prepares herself for first contact by faithfully practicing the words handed down to her through Cartier's lexicon. She encourages her lover, Richard, to do the same, to "speak . . . in the savage tongue or not at all" (44), and when he fails to comply with this request, she condemns his foolish rigidity, disapprovingly noting that "He will act the way he has learned to act, even though it is impractical in the New World and will lead only to starvation or other forms of premature extinction" (45). Ironically, what Elle herself has learned from scribes like Cartier leaves her similarly susceptible to "premature extinction"—a fate that was met by many of Cartier's own men during his infamous second voyage, and a fate that is, within the novel, quickly shared by Richard and the nurse Bastienne. Elle's deference to the supposed authority of Cartier's text reflects how imperial paradigms preclude engagement with Indigenous systems of knowledge. By consistently dismissing the Native people as bereft of systems of law, spiritual beliefs, and cultural traditions, early colonial writers neatly classified all Native people as nondescript members of a uniform group. Within this easily mastered system of signification, Elle is led to conclude that the Native peoples of these vast lands share a common language—the "savage tongue"—for to consider linguistic differences among the Indigenous population would be to acknowledge possible variation at the level of culture and identity.

During this initial stage of her narrative, while claiming to recognize that she has "entered a place where the old definitions, words themselves, no longer apply" (37), Elle repeatedly and compulsively attempts to reduce her experiences to fit neatly within the boundaries of her deeply partisan world view. Early on, she reflects,

> We have a name for such a place as this—wilderness. It is a name for a thing without a name, for everything that is not us, not me. It is a place without God or correction, with no knowledge of philosophy, science, cookery or the arts, including the art of love—and those who dwell therein are known as savages. (38)

Here Glover is drawing on the historic Eurocentric perspective that views those who are not me as less than human and knowledge that is not mine as invalid. Certainly Elle's lingering adherence to this reductive ontology speaks to the resiliency of such cultural narratives, and to make this point, we might briefly consider Elle's initial experience of "contact"—her delirious discovery that a man has visited her camp. At this juncture, despite the fact that she has been "left for dead" in a harsh climatic environment, that her friends have now perished, and that she is dressed from head to foot in bags of feathers—her monstrous down coat prototype—Elle glimpses the footprints of a Native hunter, and her first impulse is to enslave him. "I own all this now," she babbles to the corpse of Bastienne, "he's one of my people. I shall claim my rights. We'll get him to build a better house. Peasants are always better at that than the nobility" (62). And as Elle confidently identifies herself as "the nobility" of this land in which she is so quickly and obviously deteriorating, readers are assured only of her profound inability to adapt in accordance with the demands of this place. To reiterate, Glover places his central character in an inherited narrative structure that cannot hold up to realities that function beyond the limitations of her knowledge. For as long as her imported tennis racket remains a useless tennis racket, as opposed to a much more practical snowshoe, she continues to wither away.

In another key moment, Elle attempts to orient herself within the landscape of Labrador by citing "the most up-to-date" theories and information from the "geographers, cosmographers, map-makers, astrologers, admirals, kings, court jesters and merchant adventurers of Europe." Feeling suddenly and entirely apart from the known world of France, she comforts herself with the idea that everyone in Europe officially agrees that "Canada is: (a) a thin strip of land running north-south and dividing the Atlantic Ocean from the Pacific Ocean; (b) an archipelago of large and small islands encompassing a labyrinth of channels leading more or less directly from the Atlantic to

the Pacific; and (c) a continent enclosing a vast inland sea" (46). Through her attempts to orient and thereby insulate herself within these prevailing notions of "Canada," Elle relies on a historically reductive cartographic tradition that imitates while simultaneously disregarding reality. In *Territorial Disputes*, Graham Huggan explores some of the ways in which "the convention of mimesis," throughout the long history of Canadian and Australian cartography, has

> served to promote and reinforce the stability of Western culture through its implicit justification of the dispossession and subjugation of "non-Western" peoples. . . . In this context, the imitative operations of mimesis can be interpreted as having stabilized (or having attempted to stabilize) a falsely essentialist conception of the world which negates or suppresses alternative views to its own: views that might endanger the privileged position of the Western perceiver. (150)

Of course, all maps are conceptualizations of space that are deeply informed by the cultural perspective(s) of the mapmaker(s). Thus, as Huggan rightly notes, the critical factor or distinguishing feature of this tradition has been the West's historic refusal to imagine its own conceptualizations and creations as anything other than direct reflections of an objective reality.

Scholars like Frederick Wiseman use traditional knowledge to present Indigenous visions of space that undermine imperial "realities" and geographic inscriptions. Wiseman's map of Wôbanakik, for example, portrays a portion of the ancestral homelands of the Wabanaki Confederacy of Indigenous nations, a territory that spans what is now most commonly known as New England and the Atlantic Provinces, along with large swaths of Quebec.[2] Most students of northeastern geography would be puzzled by Wiseman's map, which seems to depict the St. Lawrence River (or Ktsitegok) flowing from the southeast to the northwest rather than from the southwest to the northeast. However, this discrepancy is a reflection of an Abenaki epistemology; the Wabanaki are the People of the Dawn, and it thus makes sense that east, not north, could anchor the top of their maps. Wiseman's map of Wôbanakik thus functions as a striking visual metaphor for the disorientation that most non-Natives experience upon exposure to Indigenous perspectives, and this disorientation is a direct product of the degree to which North American settler societies have elected to privilege imperial conceptions space.

Disorienting visions like Wiseman's articulate and emanate from a space that can be very difficult to grasp, especially for non-Native audiences, because the geography of Wôbanakik, like other Indigenous geographies, has been

elided from the dominant Western consciousness.[3] This is useful context for the second broad phase of Glover's novel, where Indigenous geographies begin to permeate Elle's consciousness, increasingly undermining her efforts to insulate herself within the paradigms of colonial space. Initially, she anxiously resists the possibility of multiple realities or ways of making sense of the world, writing, "My world is turning itself upside down: Two Gods are as bad as two suns or two moons for a person's peace of mind. One God guarantees the words I speak are true; two makes them a joke; three gods (or more!)—it doesn't bear thinking about" (58). Nonetheless, her monologic responses to the world continue to fail and rupture as she enters more fully into what Pratt termed the *contact zone*, or "the space of imperial encounters . . . in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations" (9). For Elle, contact is a place where "everything means something but nothing is understood" (135), and this middle section of her narrative is filled with contradictions, mistranslations, and missed cues. As she struggles to make sense of what she sees and hears, or to maintain control over a narrative that is increasingly spiralling beyond her cognitive reach, she projects her own concerns and desires onto the Indigenous populations.

Importantly, Elle's efforts in this regard are undermined by the substance of her encounters, and as is the case in many colonial-era accounts of contact such as the *Jesuit Relations*, the implications of these meetings often spin beyond the limits of Elle's immediate understanding—and thus, at times, beyond the limits of her written narrative. For example, shortly after the Inuk hunter Itslk arrives on the scene, and after he has quickly transformed her "tomb" into a home (81), Elle relates, "Itslk insists that all the savages live south of us, up the Great River. His people live to the north and call themselves the People, as if they were the only ones" (83). Here we are reminded, in the narrator's own words, "how ripe the world of translation is for . . . misrepresentation" (78), for all Indigenous nations refer to themselves as "the people" in their own languages. In the Inuttitut language, the word *Inuit* translates as "the people," just as *Wolastoqiyik* (Maliseet) means "the people," *Haudenosaunee* (Iroquois) means "the people," and *L'nu* (Mi'kmaq) means "the people." These names do not indicate the presence of a Western-style hierarchical system, and in fact, the names perform an important relational function as diverse populations identify themselves as the human components of spaces that also consist, as Brooks reminds us, of many non-human beings and inhabitants. Importantly, and in subtle ways, Elle's reproductions of Indigenous perspectives consistently

remind us that it she who holds the pen (with Glover behind her), and her translations generally do more to undermine Eurocentric views—the views of a people who, particularly in the contexts of imperial expansion, far too often act "as if they were the only ones."

Ambiguous and loaded moments frequently emerge in this novel to challenge Elle's abilities to comprehend even the most basic articulations of cultures that are foreign in relation to her own, and as her relationship with Itslk evolves, she increasingly projects onto him her own desires and anxieties. As she attempts to render her own experiences intelligible, she mimics the imperial cartographic impulse by using Itslk as a supposedly uninscribed canvas, plotting and mapping her own thoughts and insecurities against the established qualities and characteristics of his person. She assumes, for example, that he longs to "restart the universe exactly as it was" (87)—perhaps, we might wager, "as it was" sixty pages earlier in Elle's own narrative, at which point comforting European paradigms still seemed perfectly viable. Moreover, as Itslk works cheerfully to bring Elle back from the brink of death, patiently teaching her how to survive in a subarctic climate, Elle increasingly attributes to him the same inflexibility that she had only recently identified in herself and in her two friends. "He is as imprisoned in his world as Richard was in his," she somberly asserts,

> Though he has saved me, he cannot save himself from the swirl of words, inventions, ideas and commerce that will one day overwhelm him. At some point, he will face a choice: die in the torrent clutching his beliefs like a twig in the storm, or persist in a wan state beside the raw, surging, careless proliferation of the new. (87)

Of course, Itslk is elsewhere utterly unimpressed (as opposed to overwhelmed), by the monologic nature of European "words," a response that clearly emerges when he first lays hands on Elle's English bible: "What's this? He said. These are words, I said, pointing to the text. He put his ear to the pages and listened intently, looking disappointed. . . . I tried to read to him, but he took the book away. Let it speak for itself, he said" (85). In short, Elle's elegiac vision of Itslk, who is in fact a highly adaptable man who speaks Spanish, Basque, Portuguese, French, and any number of Indigenous languages, is not otherwise supported by the text. Time and again, Elle's flawed perceptions and faulty inferences draw the reader's attention to the limitations inherent in imperial modes of knowledge-making. In a discussion of transculturation in this novel, Rūta Šlapkauskaitė astutely notes that "Itslk's experience shows that cultural constructs are capable of accommodating otherness without complete assimilation, so long as they

seek understanding rather than appropriation and eventual subjugation" (11). For his part, Itslk treats contact as an opportunity to actively and productively incorporate new experiences and information into a growing body of useful knowledge. Thus, even as Elle's narrative bears witness to a birth of the trope of the "vanishing Native," it simultaneously works to undermine the legitimacy or basis of this trope in the world. Certainly the "vanishing Native" as portrayed in this text is simply another product of a fractured and deeply insecure imperial imagination.

A primary threat that Europeans posed to original inhabitants was their dangerous potential to disrupt larger networks of relations. Because colonists generally worked to contain rather than engage with Indigenous systems of space and knowledge, they almost universally failed to recognize that within the fully cooperative system of life in the Native northeast, as Brooks explains, "every part affected the whole. If one person went hungry, if certain individuals were excluded from the bounty of [the earth], the whole would face physical and/or psychological repercussions from this rupture in the network of relations" (5). When beings feel excluded or threatened, they are much more likely to behave unsustainably. This realization is the basis of Indigenous hospitality, and each nation of the northeast had, and continues to have, its own "way of thinking through their relationships to others, of forming and renewing relations through ceremonial councils, and of acknowledging their dependence on nonhuman inhabitants through rituals of thanksgiving" (Brooks 4). Unsurprisingly, early European scribes struggled to describe such traditions and rituals with any degree of cultural sensitivity in their records. For example, in one revealing passage from the early-seventeenth-century, the French missionary Joseph Le Caron expounded upon the "disposition" and "superstitions" of the Innu of Tadoussac, with whom he had spent the winters of 1618 and 1622, explaining that

> [t]hese poor blind creatures . . . profess a thousand other superstitions with which the devils entertain them. They believe that many kinds of animals have reasonable souls; they have an insane superstition against profaning certain bones of elk, beaver, and other beasts, or letting their dogs gnaw them. They preserve them carefully or throw them into a river. They pretend that the souls of these animals come to see how their bodies are treated, and go tell the living beasts and those that are dead; so that if they are ill-treated the beasts of the same kind will no longer allow themselves to be taken either in this world or the next. (219-20)

The disparaging tone of Le Caron's description reflects how difficult early European explorers and settlers found it to lend credence to any world view

other than their own. In the second phase of the novel, Elle is repeatedly confronted with Indigenous systems of honour and symbiotic reciprocity, and much like Le Caron, she is initially disturbed by what she sees. When, for example, she arrives in the old Innu woman's camp, she sees that "animal skulls dangle from tree branches," and she "[counts] half a dozen heads, their jaws tied shut with leather straps, bands of red paint splashed across their craniums" (119). Her description of this scene is likely inspired by one of Glover's source texts for the novel, Frank Speck's 1935 *Naskapi: The Savage Hunters of the Labrador Peninsula*, which contains images of bear and beaver skulls suspended from tree branches in an Innu encampment. As Speck notes, it is an offering that is meant to "satisfy the spirits of the animals" (75). And while this scene initially strikes Elle as a kind of nightmare vision—or as "strange" and certainly unsettling—such displays of honour are part of what allow the human inhabitants of Native space to renew their relations with the animals they rely on for sustenance. By precluding thoughtless, unsustainable, or parasitic behaviour towards nonhuman inhabitants, these ritual offerings and demonstrations function as an essential means of survival within the larger network. In this sense, the Innu bear ceremony that is witnessed and eventually participated in by Elle makes "the rebirth of bears possible, so that people could hunt more bears in the future" (Hämäläinen 57). This is the same general spirit in which Itslk offers seal remains to Sedna, the Inuit goddess of the sea, so that she will continue to feed his people.

In this context, we should consider the fascinating scene in which, shortly after his discovery of Elle, Itslk voices his sudden inability to hunt. Despite the fact that "the ice teems with sea cat and walrus, and caribou come down to the beaches to call him," his efforts are fruitless, and "when he walks out with his bow, nothing is there" (91). When Elle views the land through her "imperial eyes," it is empty, *terra nulla*, rather than teeming with life as Itslk sees it. Elle's inability to recognize the functioning system of relations that underlies all life impedes Itslk's ability to sustain himself. This scene subtly anticipates the effects that disruptive and predatory European visions and practices would eventually have on Indigenous populations, who would be increasingly cut off from their traditional lifeways by colonial violence and by the creation of allegedly "lawful" boundaries: the strategic and partisan inscriptions of lines across the North American map. Again, for as long as Europeans refused to recognize the demands and cultural practices of Native space—or to respect the terms of another functioning geography—they threatened to collapse the system of sustenance that was so crucial to

the physical and spiritual wellbeing of all. This threat is reiterated as Elle prepares to leave the island as Captain Finch, head of the whaling ship that rescues the narrator, slaughters a "huge deer-like creature" for his frivolous collection of "curiosities" (165), leaving the body of the beheaded animal to rot in the woods. Through this unsustainable behaviour, Finch clearly demonstrates that the only "being" he honours is himself.

Eventually, when Elle is finally "rescued from the Land God Gave to Cain, delivered from savagery, redeemed, like the Israelites, from the wilderness" (159), she is struck by the impossibility of mutual understanding in a world where powerful people choose to interpret their experiences in such rigid and exclusory terms. As the whaling ship moves away from the coast, she surveys the abandoned Innu fishing village for a final time, this time noting, "the pole frames of the savage huts look like skeletons" (163). What was so recently experienced as a vibrant and highly structured community once more descends into a state of lifelessness when viewed through the eyes of an outsider. In some ways, this development in the text again raises the difficult question of whether one can ever understand or appreciate another culture from the outside; however, in the end, the trajectory of the novel suggests that Glover is more concerned with the underlying issue of how settler populations might better behave themselves when confronted with the realities of human difference. Certainly Elle is wrenched from her staunch Eurocentric position by her experiences in Native space. As her ship sails east across the ocean, she struggles to come to terms with her new position in the world. "Everything that once had meaning is forgotten," she writes; "I am a citizen of neither the New World or the Old" (165). What she has seen and experienced, and indeed what she has become as a result of those experiences, cannot be reincorporated into European society; she has herself become a "legend" (158), and as such, she physically returns to France while in many ways remaining outcast.

The final section of the novel finds Elle at home in France, gazing out at the world through "leaded windows" that crudely and simplistically "chop the outside world into squares" (171). Here, in the wake of her experiences in Native space, Elle feels the limitations of the imperial world view—the system of presumptions that strives to reduce, to neatly categorize, and to contain—and she wonders if interaction in the contact zone must always be characterized by asymmetrical power relations. She questions, for example, if Cartier "understands by how much he failed to grasp the moment of contact . . . how, when love was offered, he failed to reach out a lover's hand" (190).

At this point in the text, to borrow from Homi Bhabha, Elle can be seen to imagine the contact zone as a potential third space, a dimension where discourse can take place as a "negotiation (rather than a negation)" (33) and where "elements . . . are neither the One . . . nor the Other . . . but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both" (41). Such a space can only be generated if contact is based, from the perspective of both parties, on a mutual recognition of the inherent worth and validity of the other. And if this conception of cultural contact seems idealistic, given the historic contexts of the novel, the alternative is darkly envisioned as a "future" in which "the stage will shrink to a prison, we will see ourselves as inmates separated from everyone else by bars"—or by lines across the map—"and heroism and love will be impossible" (55). These are the effects of the leaded windows that parallel the thick lines inscribed across maps and imaginations.

As a result of her time spent on the island, Elle ultimately achieves what I have termed *cartographic dissonance*, which is an ability to hold two or more competing conceptualizations of a single geographic space in her imagination. This is what Elle refers to as the narrative progresses when she claims to be "of two minds" (135). On a fundamental level, this dissonance destabilizes pervasive assumptions about the dominant Western culture's privileged position in the collective cultural geography, for it requires the continuous recognition that mine is not the only world and that mine is not the only world view. As with cognitive dissonance, this knowledge (however incomplete) of "other" geographies manifests as grief. Elle's knowledge of two worlds—one violent and aloof, the other increasingly under attack—is the painful awareness of systemic dispossession and oppression, and even this limited knowledge makes her feel helpless and homeless. Importantly, however, this grief is also what compels her to love and protect a bear cub as if it were a member of her family. Such compassionate behavior could not be ascribed to the Elle of the first section of this novel. In addition, by the final phase of the novel, she is able to love and mourn Comes Winter, the young Haudenosaunee girl who suffers and dies under the authority of Cartier. In her grief over the fate of her friend, Elle writes, "[t]his is too sad for me . . . to be exiled and watch my loved ones die, then to return home and find the process repeated in reverse. It is as if the whole journey was meant to teach me to see this girl, to guess her torment and dream her dreams of rescue" (178). And of course, that *is* the whole point; what Elle has gained through her experiences in Native space is an emerging

ability to recognize and respond to the needs of beings who are different from herself, and with that ability comes important, if profoundly difficult, responsibilities.

If this novel gestures towards the need for a third space social consciousness, and especially if, as Stephen Henighan problematically argues, the novel reflects the birth of a distinctively "Canadian consciousness" in the so-called new world (152), then it is important to recognize the various elements of this text that prevent contemporary settler Canadians from congratulating themselves or from otherwise distancing themselves from the legacy of "European" and "American" colonial violence. Troublingly, the death of Comes Winter in the final section of this novel only reinforces Elle's deeply flawed belief that Natives will not physically or culturally survive colonialism. Certainly one could argue, given the ongoing and deeply damaging authority of this imperial narrative, that Glover should have done more to criticize Elle for this short-sightedness. As Renée Bergland notes, when we "[focus] exclusively on those who perished . . . we risk forgetting the fact that many survived" (2-3). Importantly, however, in the final section of this text, and even from her new, vaguely enlightened perspective, Elle remains profoundly unable to speak to the complexities and character of Native space. In this sense, her narrative reflects an urgent and continuous need for increased attention to Indigenous voices. In other words, in the final section of this novel, Glover is careful not to portray the decolonization of Elle's perspective as a completed feat. It is instead a difficult and ongoing process that requires a continuous willingness to learn, to listen, and to change. For example, in her admirable attempts to comfort Comes Winter, Elle constructs a "facsimile of a Canadian encampment" on Cartier's property in France, filling it with what is, from the cultural perspective of her friend, "alien [Innu] symbolism" (182). And when the pig's skulls and chicken heads that she hangs from tree branches only make Comes Winter feel "uncomfortable," it dawns on Elle that "nothing is exactly as it should be: Comes Winter belongs to Donnacona's tribe, which speaks the language of the lexicon and lives far from the lands inhabited by Itslk's family and the Bear-Hunting People. Her customs and usages are far different from what I myself learned" (182). Even at this late point in her narrative, then, Elle continues to be surprised and disturbed by evidence of a diverse and complex cultural geography that is still only beginning to seep through the cracks of her fractured imagination.

In a recent article dealing with strategies for forging respectful alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in contemporary times,

Adam Barker riffs on Paulette Regan's influential concept of "unsettling the settler within," arguing that

> we as Settlers must learn to accept that being unsettled is not something to be avoided, but rather to be embraced and explored. We become unsettled when we are confronted with the inconsistencies in colonial logic, and the paradoxes of colonial ideals. As such, unsettling moments provide for Settler people a signpost that they are bumping up against one of the weak points of imperial existence: the internal inconsistencies that only continue to function because we overlook and tacitly accept them. (323)

Non-Indigenous / settler Canadians even today need to embrace and explore such epistemological disorientation at home, for this country cannot be imagined within the limitations of that strategically constructed and carefully regulated world view that Western imperialisms have relied upon and that have persisted to enable powerful populations to insulate themselves against the demands, concerns, and functions of Indigenous geographies. In a recent study of the genocidal functions of colonial era cartography, the Maliseet scholar Andrea Bear Nicholas powerfully argues that for Indigenous nations, "the consequences" of settler imperialism in the northeast "[have] been two and a half centuries of lethal poverty and deprivation." For Bear Nicholas and others, the undeniable fact that northeastern Indigenous nations, like the Maliseet,

> remain dispossessed and mostly poor today is testament to the ongoing existence of settler imperialism and a legitimizing discourse as fundamentally racist as that used to justify the initial dispossession. As long as the story remains hidden or unaddressed, the future for Maliseets and indeed for other First Nations will remain as bleak as it has been for the last two and a half centuries. (49)

In a number of important ways, Glover's novel challenges Canadian settlers and their descendants—the contemporary beneficiaries of European imperial conquest—to consider that these lands have layers of history and many stories that must be heard. As the novel draws to a close, those readers are left with only a vague and incomplete sense of the complex worlds that have been repressed through the establishment of cultural and national mythologies and an unsettling question regarding our communal responsibilities to such worlds.

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NOTES

1 In his writings on the plight of the first Plymouth Plantation colonists, Bradford relied on the Old Testament story of Moses and the Israelites, who fled lives of slavery in Egypt to search for the so-called promised land: "Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men—and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes" (62).

2 The Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Abenaki are the constituent nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy.

3 This elision is commonly dealt with in contemporary Wabanaki literatures, such as the work of the Abenaki poet Cheryl Savageau, who, in her 1995 collection *Dirt Road Home*, imagines the northeast as "one land" that remains fundamentally undivided beneath the partisan inscriptions of a dominant settler population.

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Undisciplining CanLit

Kit Dobson and Smaro Kamboureli, eds.
Producing Canadian Literature: Authors Speak on the Literary Marketplace.
Wilfrid Laurier UP $29.99

Smaro Kamboureli and Robert Zacharias, eds.
Shifting the Ground of Canadian Literary Study.
Wilfrid Laurier UP $42.95

Reviewed by Brendan McCormack

Smaro Kamboureli's TransCanada Institute produces cultural interventions that actively conjugate Canadian literary study into the present progressive tense. Following publications aimed at "trans-ing," "resituating," and "retooling" CanLit, two recent collections—*Shifting the Ground of Canadian Literary Study* and *Producing Canadian Literature*—inflect the discipline again. Both follow TransCanada's decree that "the study of Canadian literature can no longer take place in isolation from larger external forces," the former through transdisciplinary essays charting the widespread contexts presently shaping Canadian literary study, the latter by exploring how Canadian writers interact with the cultural economy. Leaving the question of whether CanLit ever circulated in such discrete "isolation" aside, these books make important contributions to the groundswell of methodological shifts in contemporary criticism seeking to unsettle the "national" and "literary" assumptions evoked by the category of "Canadian literature," from its production to its reception.

In eleven essays gathered from the second TransCanada conference (Guelph 2007), *Shifting the Ground* approaches literary study through its intersections with a Canadian nation-state reshaped within global-neoliberal currents. The editors crucially affirm the persisting influence of Canada and its colonial logics within discourses of globalization all-too-eager to disarticulate the nation-state as a category, though the essays work reflexively to unsettle the assumed homology between nation and national literature forged by CanLit's institutionalization. Canadianists will find in *Shifting the Ground* a metacritical mirror reflecting the present state of heightened "disciplinary consciousness," which Kamboureli's introduction historicizes through a series of "emergent" events beginning in the 1980s that catalyzed expansions in CanLit's previously narrow-minded purview. Thus *Shifting the Ground* does not declare a paradigm shift, but rather advances the nascent shiftings that have moved CanLit progressively toward the broader context of cultural study and away from the national(ist) context of Canada. Literary history is admittedly not Kamboureli's project, so the prevailing orthodoxy that CanLit pre-1980 was singularly nationalizing goes largely untested.

"Nation-state, culture, and indigeneity" broadly triangulate the highly interdisciplinary essays, which are individually strong though widely divergent. Their shared ground is a reflexive concern with methodology, or the methodological questions

arising when conceptions of "nation" and "literature" are suitably shifted. Several unravel the "literary" itself, eroding what Kamboureli calls "the division between inside and outside of literature *and* its study." Janine Brody (the biopolitics of Throne Speeches), Monika Kin Gagnon and Yasmin Jiwani (media coverage of l'Affaire Hérouxville), and Robert Zacharias (the founding "myth" of Vimy Ridge) all explore wider cultural and political discourses wherein national imaginaries circulate. Other contributors "trans" both the discipline and the nation. Danielle Fuller reflects on a "collaborative interdisciplinarity" between social sciences and humanities methodologies in researching transatlantic book clubs, while Kathy Mezei and the late Yoko Fujimoto both explore print economies and literary translation as complex sites of national (Mezei) and transnational (Fujimoto) cultural exchange.

Reading across the collection, these disparate trajectories find coherence in the sustained indigenizing focus offered by the last three essays. Pauline Wakeham's excellent contribution critiques Canada's political investment in reconciliation as a sly twist on white civility and a reinvention of multiculturalism's sedative management of national pasts. Sákéj Henderson's *sui generis* Aboriginal jurisprudence provides Wakeham a transcultural methodology for retheorizing legal relationships between Indigenous peoples and the nation-state, a notion Len Findlay's essay—which primarily functions to familiarize Canadianists with Henderson's work—articulates as "*sui generis* solidarity." Peter Kulchyski's critique of neoliberalism closes the volume with Indigenous inscription and "bush/writing" as a linguistic resistance to the state, which is only "a certain kind of writing." These scholars theorize social justice with/in Indigenous epistemologies that resonate a politico-methodological challenge to Canada's prevailing colonial paradigms. Yet, the absence of Indigenous voices themselves in a book that centres "indigeneity" within CanLit's shifting conversations is curious. Need Len Findlay's imperative work still pace the "long march" of indigenizing for Canadianists?

What literary study gains from this productive transdisciplinarity should be measured against what's lost, which seems to be literature (conventionally understood) itself. Two of the strongest essays are by Jeff Derksen and Larissa Lai, the only two that perform close readings of literary texts. Derksen's critique of the "global-local" spatiality in Timothy Taylor's *Stanley Park* becomes critical praxis, connecting his theoretical goal of resituating the "nation-scale" within multiscalar neoliberal space with his methodological concern over poststructuralism's discursive alignment with the "de-territorialization of globalization." Lai explores the master/slave dialectic of racialized subjectivities (re)produced through the genre of special issues on Asian-Canadian writing. Her meticulous close readings (the "u" in "colour" is unfastened with enough nuance to satisfy anyone's inner Formalist) explicate a complex politics/poetics of representation both "hopeful and productively incomplete" for anti-racist work. These essays vitally demonstrate that disciplinary interests in resituating methodologies and humanist concerns with the Canadian polity can and do take shape in literary critical practice. In the long moment of "crisis" facing the discipline of literary study, my worry with the metacritical bearing of *Shifting the Ground* is that literature too often gets short shrift or shifted away.

While CanLit's critical foundations have become exposed under neoliberal globalization, *Producing Canadian Literature* makes visible how authors respond to what Jeff Derksen's foreword calls the "forces we now rather casually generalize as 'the market.'" Kamboureli and Kit Dobson interview

Christian Bök, George Elliott Clarke, Daniel Justice, Larissa Lai, Stephen Henighan, Erín Moure, Ashok Mathur, Lee Maracle, Jane Urquhart, and Aritha van Herk, and append a useful timeline of key events in the evolution of Canada's cultural bodies. Interviews explore "*how* books come to be" rather than "what books are *about,*" though inevitably these categories become mutually informing. These writers' diversity in terms of form, genre, politics, age, gender, race, and success reverberates in their wide-ranging opinions, suggesting these positionalities significantly inform literature's political economy. It's perhaps no surprise, for example, that the formally unorthodox Christian Bök has a "vexed" relationship with the Canada Council, whereas Jane Urquhart—who eschews the "murky waters" of literary politics—has had positive experiences.

Reading these interviews through the methodological prism of *Shifting the Ground* yields two noteworthy observations. First, while the editors clearly sought diversity, the common tie between most of the writers is that they butter their bread elsewhere as academics. Only two of the ten do not hold (often well-paid) positions as (often prominent) scholars, and of these two, one is Jane Urquhart. This book more accurately explores how a certain *class* of author relates to the literary marketplace. Questions about arts funding and economic pressures often fall flat with these writer-critics, who are somewhat liberated from the market forces being investigated. What this clarifies is that Canada is not an easy place to make a living writing. "You know," states Lee Maracle, "I don't make enough money from art to stay alive."

Second, because CRC and SSHRC funds supported the project, interview questions were preapproved for compliance with ethical standards of research on human subjects. The result is a formulaic pattern of inquiry tackling (in this order) arts funding; the publishing industry; national retailing and global circulation; literary awards and celebrity; and the future of Canadian writing. Interviews can read like responses to a standardized survey, and what's often missing is a sense of organic conversation or cross-examination. There is a more generative corollary to the questionnaire style, however, which is the fascinating variability in responses to largely identical question sets. For example, while Erín Moure's hilarious interview critiques creative-writing programs that produce students expecting immediate publication of what are "nice master's theses, but not books," in the following interview, Aritha van Herk reveals her MA thesis was published by McClelland & Stewart after packaging it with a covering letter saying, "This is my first book, I have never published before, thank you very much for reading this manuscript."

Some important consensus does emerge, including collective support for continued arts funding and small presses, a more robust literary infrastructure, a wider circulation of reviews, and more translation outside Canada's two official languages. Most notably, these writers all reveal a keen awareness of the expectations engendered by a cultural economy that tends to cater to the middle. Experiences of marginalization in terms of form (Bök, Lai, Moure) or racialization (Clarke, Justice, Lai, Mathur, Maracle) suggest that Canadian literature is never an apolitical production. In Slavoj Žižek's terms, these authors relate to their economic regime not through "false consciousness" in the Marxist sense, but with a healthy dose of "ideological cynicism." They are intensely cognizant of market-driven demands, and respond in different ways. Several resist, others defy and critique, and some, like George Elliott Clarke, play the market's game in hopes of landing "that golden egg."

"Our problem as artists," says van Herk, "is that we often expect the audience to be what we want them to be." My sense is that

these writers weren't always what the editors had in mind, but this takes nothing from their revealing insights. *Producing Canadian Literature* will be valuable for writers as well as scholars of Canadian literatures, particularly those interested in print culture and sites where the arts, markets, and public policy intersect. Together with *Shifting the Ground*, these TransCanada books should be read by Canadianists not for what they say about actual literary works—which is little, and not really their project—but for how they open the field itself by crossing it from exterior entry points. Absent of the literature, their contribution is more to the study of *the study of* CanLit—an increasingly undisciplined discipline.

Indigena Awry

Annharte (Marie Baker)
Indigena Awry. New Star Books $19.00

Reviewed by Lorraine Weir

The first book in ten years from this fine Anishinabe (Little Saskatchewan First Nation) poet, *Indigena Awry* is darker and tougher than its predecessors, saturated with rejection of "honest Injun" clichés and of ageist and sexist stereotypes from settler culture. It is also laced with mortality in relation to poverty, illness, the multiple systemic oppressions of colonization. In place of shape-shifting, weasel words and easy reconciliation—

> I could use truth and reconciliation to figure how I now shape shift into a weasel woman shifty in glance relentless swirl of poverty life's strange tragedy is unknown conniving weasel whose outer limits will always wait.

—Annharte offers "Indigenous Verse Ability":

> Hang in there, even Riel knew how crazy monias [whites] were
> stripped naked he showed them all he could not be hung
> Laugh it up, not every day is a good day to genocide
> not easy to chortle word choice snicker sounds digital

Instead of reconciliation, the poet offers writing which is breath overcoming silence, pushing back the end:

> My child memory convinces me that I spoke my mother language, Ojibwe, with my mother. I remember always hearing the sing song speak of my aunties and cousins as they worked in the house. My father spoke English and so I no doubt experienced a bilingual upbringing until my mother disappeared. Then I learned silence. . . . Did my breath stop as it does in near drowning?

If the poems of *Indigena Awry* constitute the writer's act of both witnessing the sustained impact of colonization, particularly on urban Indigenous women, and repudiating its effects, they are also characterized by a ferocious hope in the future as in the "granny boot camp" poems with their rejection of grandmother stereotypes and fake spirituality ("I will proudly wear a button MEDICINE WOMAN NOT"). Sometimes hope comes in the form of excoriation as in "Raving in the Hood," the brilliant dub elegy which concludes this collection, for all the women "gone away down memory lane time / done prime chance to become even newsworthy story rehash . . . remember no one told story about life friends / rough rave in the hood death just raven it up after all up to no good / up to no good should we should no body guessed her body. . ."—for the victims of convicted murderer Robert Pickton and for all the Indigenous women whose violent deaths are the subject of the "next national day protest plan staged complain refrain fries ketchup mustard came slow. . ." Neither token protests nor mass meetings address the issues. Perhaps reconciliation is like resurgence: "Takes five centuries for resurgence take back / ancestral dreamtime before us

forgotten women / use imperialist nostalgia to reconnect the power. . . ."

In this tough-minded, sometimes funny, and frequently eloquent book, five centuries have distilled rage into incandescence. Yet, seeking to contextualize Annharte's work, some critics have begun to associate her with the Kootenay School of Writing and other (mostly white, mostly male) icons of postmodern Vancouver where Annharte lived for many years. In her commitment to technical experimentation, Annharte's work ranges from dub to lyric, from spoken word to elegy, from colloquial humour to jagged irony in which the "experimental" is never separate from a passionate rejection of white bourgeois aesthetics. In this, Annharte is closer to Skeena Reece and Rebecca Belmore in her crafting of an "enemy language" to do the work of resurgence.

Visualizations

bill bissett
hungree throat. Talonbooks $17.95

Jim Christy
Sweet Assorted: 121 Takes from a Tin Box. Anvil $20.00

David Collier
Hamilton Illustrated. Poplar $19.00

Reviewed by Mike Borkent

The following books—a collection, a memoir, and a novel—all use visual and verbal elements to complicate how we represent and construe our experiences.

David Collier's book *Hamilton Illustrated* collects small cartoons, comics, and prose pieces that range broadly in content from autobiographical scenes to portraits of passersby, old buildings, and the bay, beautiful liner-notes illustrating the lyrics of a Hamilton band, anecdotes about local bike stores and bike paths, and commentaries on gentrification, climate change, and technology.

Throughout his excellent book, Collier also offers observations about the nature of cartooning, especially the benefits of sketching (Collier's characteristic style) and the role of "art's regenerative powers" in society. These comments inform the book as a whole, which clearly reflects Collier's gaze and style but regularly includes self-reflexive elements as well as allusions to historical figures such as Mohawk leader Joseph Brant. For instance, a small cartoon features Collier standing dejectedly on a trash-strewn trail. He writes, "Next time . . . you find yourself in a staring contest with a groundhog, instead of just standing there, you can ask yourself: What would Ernest Thompson Seton do? You know damn well what he would've done—Whipped out his sketchbook & drawn a picture!" The caption offers both an admonishment and a historical and cultural frame for understanding Collier's practice. Thompson Seton would have drawn the animal in the "wild"; Collier draws the animal and the person in a less-than-ideal engagement in a soiled suburban landscape. While affirming the artistry of Thompson Seton, Collier suggests a more self-reflexive perspective as a contextualized and inter-subjective observer.

Collier's inter-subjective focus informs the entire book through his use of comics to embed himself in scenes as he documents them, while also commenting on historical and social elements of his community. Collier elegantly employs the form and practice of comics as an entry point into the dynamics of life in Hamilton in order to reflect on those dynamics directly.

Jim Christy's memoir *Sweet Assorted* compiles images and writings that discuss a random collection of receipts, notes, photos, sketches, and small sculptures thrown into an old biscuit tin for over forty years. Each entry is numbered, to presumably signal the order in which items were taken from the tin, and includes a grey-scale image of the object. Most entries reflect the objects through ekphrastic prose, which often feels redundant but also adds some contexts to the images. While employing documentarian

features of the archive, the book ignores further structures such as links through chronology or content that could give it more coherence. Thus, it remains a true miscellany, disordered and free-associating.

The richest moments in this book come when the objects become metonyms for events and people from Christy's past, points of reference that he augments with assessments, reflections, and even occasional sales pitches for his current work. While often coated in contrasting, occasionally distracting tones of nostalgia and judgment, the sheer range of experiences and the quirky (and at times famous) figures from Christy's past intrigue and entertain. Simultaneously, Christy's significant temporal distance from the many figures and events raises the crucial question of autobiography: how factual are these recollections? Christy regularly admits his inability to remember particular details or events surrounding the objects, but at other times is seemingly able to offer decade-old conversations in detail. Thus, the book presents an archive of questionable oft-dissociated anecdotes that blend objects, events, and memories.

bill bissett's novel *hungree throat* also plays with connections and tensions between images and language by weaving together drawings, visual poems, lyric poems, and prose while telling the story of the relationship between two gay men through several stages of their lives. In classic bissett style, the short sections are written in phonetic rather than grammatical English and often integrate discussions between the characters on meditation, metaphysics, and the challenge of overcoming fears, traumas, and disappointments. The spiritual, Zen-like focus of the book adds to the salience of the psychedelic images and weaves them into the narrative.

While interesting, the story is not particularly strong and relies upon the defamiliarizing thought-language of phonetic spellings, experimental poetic sequences, and the drawings to add novelty where broken prose falls short. While noteworthy, especially for bissett's mesmerizing images and their interactions with the language surrounding them, the book might not stand up to sustained meditation. Nonetheless, it remains, along with the works of Collier and Christy, an interesting and intriguing reading/viewing of the struggles of coming to terms with, and visualizing, a tumultuous world and "how we feel abt unsirtintee."

Words, Places, Silences

Jared Bland, ed.
Finding the Words: Writers on Inspiration, Desire, War, Celebrity, Exile, and Breaking the Rules.
Emblem $24.99

Reviewed by Lorraine York

Introducing this collection, Jared Bland observes that words have the potential both to be banal and to shake the foundations of our lived experience; "they are at once capable of altering the course of the world we inhabit and changing the amount of sugar in our coffee." The thirty-one contributors to this volume—a project undertaken in support of PEN Canada—almost do run this gamut in their meditations on the ways in which language implicates us, its speakers, whether by its presence or its absence.

Many of these authors, mindful of the volume's stated objective, to fund PEN's work defending writers around the world whose language has been silenced, have meditated on the nexus between words and political realities. Several powerful contributions stand out. Richard Poplak, for example, examines Afrikaans as a rich idiom, "a poet's plaything. . . . But strip it down, and it becomes the cudgel with which some of history's vilest laws were bashed into being." He explores the linguistic struggles of Solomon Plaatje, one of the founders of what

would become the ANC, who experimented with IPA, the International Phonetic Alphabet, as "a final dalliance in his love affair with European culture." Madeleine Thien movingly meditates on the relative lack of words in the exhibition of photographs from Cambodia's infamous Tuol Sleng prison at the Museum of Modern Art in 1997: "In MoMA's brief exhibition text," she notes, "there was little context and almost no history." She cites journalist Nic Dunlop to the effect that the subjects of these photographs "are presented as the Khmer Rouge saw them: without a name, without family, without an identity or country."

David Chariandy explores the way in which place (like photography) can conceal a history that needs to be re-spoken. During a conference in Berlin, he was put up at a luxurious guest house overlooking the lake, where he treasured a chance to write undisturbed. Only after his German publisher's representative asked him how he felt to be staying "here" did he search out the words behind the lovely landscape; he discovered that he was staying at Lake Wannsee, the site of another conference at which Heydrich, Eichmann and other top Nazis met to address "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question." In that seemingly idyllic setting, Chariandy recalls, he "had failed to read the history. I had not drawn the link between a landscape and its story."

One of the most moving examples of bringing suppressed stories into words is *Globe and Mail* correspondent Stephanie Nolen's recollection of reporting on mass rape as an instrument of warfare in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She had been warned that women would not wish to speak to her about their traumatic experiences, but she found, on the contrary, that women were lining up outside the Catholic rectory in which she was staying to tell her their stories, even though, as Nolen admits, "I could give them nothing but the sight of those words being recorded."

Another major thread of the collection is the challenge facing the writer in an environment that seems taken up with other, newer media. Stephen Heighton laments the loss of boredom, which he sees as a precondition for creativity, caused by widespread digital means of passing one's time. Karen Connolly basically agrees with Heighton, deploring what she sees as a digital inundation, "not waving but drowning in a mass of language from which there is no escape." Such lamentations are familiar cultural territory, and while to some degree they rest upon a questionable distinction between digital and previous media revolutions (one thinks of earlier writers bemoaning the inundation of printed materials clamouring for their attention and competition), there are aspects of the digital environment that do pose pressing questions for writers. Guy Gavriel Kay identifies some of them, in his contribution to the volume, especially the growing pressure placed upon writers to market themselves online. He is savvy enough to realize that "the book trade has always had an element of writers performing jigs," but he argues nevertheless that the blurring of distinctions between the work and the artist has its dangers: "There's a value to keeping how one looks at a work of art separate from one's sense (manufactured or otherwise) of the artist who made it." Though he does not use the terminology of celebrity, what Kay describes here are some of the implications of celebrity literary culture in the digital age, and they are worth thinking about.

Words—their absence, loss, commercial uses, overabundance, danger, beauty—are inexhaustible, as are the writers who struggle to bring them into being.

Profession conteur

Hédi Bouraoui
Le conteur. Vermillon 18,00 $

Compte rendu par Angela Buono

« Ceci n'est pas un roman » : la reformulation du titre célèbre du conte de Diderot constituerait une excellente définition du dernier roman qu'Hédi Bouraoui a fait paraître. Ainsi que son illustre prédécesseur, il brouille les pistes des titres et des genres, mais il n'échappe pas au lecteur averti que *Le conteur* n'est que la dernière étape du parcours d'écriture qu'Hédi Bouraoui poursuit depuis le début de sa longue carrière littéraire et qu'il qualifie lui-même de *transpoétique* : un parcours de création et de réflexion théorique visant à tisser des liens entre les cultures différentes, les genres littéraires variés, les diverses expressions de l'art, afin d'établir un dialogue fécond entre les pays, les peuples, les identités.

La définition de *roman* cache, plus qu'elle ne dévoile, la nature transpoétique du texte. Par contre, le titre est bien révélateur, non simplement de l'identité du protagoniste Samy Ben Meddah, conteur professionnel et *alter ego* de l'auteur — tous les deux portant inscrite dans leurs noms de famille la résonance arabe du mot *conteur* — mais plus particulièrement du style de l'œuvre : comme Samy, maghrébin émigré au Canada, « a consciencieusement accompli sa tâche de passeur entre le sédentaire et l'immigré . . . de conteur d'histoires et de voyageur », le texte lui-même accomplit le but de dépasser toute frontière entre les genres littéraires, en se situant à la croisée de l'écriture romanesque et de la narration orale. Cette intention de l'œuvre s'étale dans l'exploitation de la gamme complète des formes de l'oralité — du dialogue traditionnel au monologue, de la conversation au débat public, de la conférence au récit, de la lecture de poèmes au slam, forme toute récente de récitation poétique — et va jusqu'à imaginer un genre tout nouveau : la « vignette-inscription », sorte de dessin animé en paroles, visant à « éviter la facilité de l'image virtuelle » et à « livrer de vive voix la culture vivante », afin de réinventer la communication de façon plus directe et « naturelle ».

On peut considérer la vignette-inscription comme une mise en abîme de l'œuvre : tout en relatant les voyages des protagonistes entre le Canada et la Puglia — région d'Italie riche en beautés naturelles et en trésors d'art et d'histoire — la narration esquisse des tableaux vivants des lieux et des paysages, peint les scènes d'épisodes marquants de l'histoire ancienne et récente, brosse des portraits de personnages plus ou moins illustres qui ont manifesté, chacun à sa façon, la même recherche d'une communion avec la différence de l'autre, se résumant sous la devise « l'unité ne peut se nourrir de l'unique ».

Tout enraciné dans la vérité, de l'Histoire et des histoires, *Le conteur* « dit vrai car il dialogue avec l'autre en lui! Il ne peut s'imaginer que dans la vérité tout le long de son conte ». Ce livre est le roman de notre humanité qui demande à être écoutée.

Indigenous Feminisms

Robin Jarvis Brownlie and Valerie J. Korinek, eds.
Finding a Way to the Heart: Feminist Writings on Aboriginal and Women's History in Canada. U of Manitoba P $27.95

Marie Clements
Tombs of the Vanishing Indian. Talonbooks $16.95

Reviewed by June Scudeler

While these two very different books engage Indigenous feminisms, Métis playwright Marie Clement's *Tombs of the Vanishing* embodies Indigenous-centred ways of being, whereas *Finding a Way to the Heart*, a tribute to Sylvia Van Kirk and her groundbreaking work on Indigenous women in

the fur trade, is somewhat hampered by its focus on history and on liberal feminism.

Finding a Way to the Heart is a collection of essays in tribute to and inspired by Van Kirk's work. While Van Kirk reclaimed Indigenous women's voices in the archives, the book mostly erases their voices. Jennifer S. H. Brown, who has done considerable work in fur trade history, believes "too much reliance on the modern theories of outsiders risks silencing, a serious problem seen also by Aboriginal writers." Authors' Indigenous affiliations are not included. It is common practice in Indigenous literary studies to foreground Indigenous voices. Elizabeth Jameson equates Van Kirk's work "as cultural intermediary for U.S. and Canadian historians" with the "inbetweenness" of Aboriginal and First Nations women. However, the contributions by Indigenous authors highlight the necessity of Indigenous peoples in historical studies. Robert Alexander Innes (Cree) situates Cree, Assiniboine, Métis, and Salteaux as kin illustrating that many Plains First Nations peoples saw Métis peoples as relatives and highlighting the importance of culture rather than race. Angela Wanhalla (Ngāi Tahu) documents mixed-race peoples of southern New Zealand who, like the Métis in Canada, were deemed to be white if not living like Maori.

Tombs of the Vanishing Indian, commissioned by the Autry National Center and the Southwest Museum of the American Indian in Los Angeles to mark the tenth anniversary of their Native Voices series, is a play that covers a wide swath of Native American history in the Los Angeles area, particularly of the San Gabrilieno-Tongva Nation and the pervasiveness of Hollywood stereotyping of Native peoples. Three sisters—tough-minded aspiring actress Miranda, street person Janey, and doctor Jessie—were put in foster homes after the murder of their mother by police in 1955, an event which both opens and closes the play. Raised in separate foster care, the sisters are unaware of each other's existence. Janey inadvertently helps Jessie almost twenty years later, when Janey discovers that her co-doctor boyfriend helped to sterilize Native American women, including Janey, as part of USA's *Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970*. Miranda's sassy talk-back to a white director of cowboy and Indian movies is the most successful: when the director asks her "this a western. What does that mean to you?" Miranda surprises him by replying, "It means Indians die." Their mother Lone Woman, a woman who returned to San Nicolas Island to unsuccessfully save her baby when the Tongva were forcibly relocated to a mission, provides commentary in Tongva to her daughters. While Clements provides information on relocation and the sterilization of Native American women, I was left wondering where the translations of the Tongva came from, as there are no language speakers left.

The most effective part of the play is the monologue that subtly changes to echo each sister. The monologue recounts the story of the sisters and their mother on the bus from Oklahoma to LA as part of the Relocation Act. Their mother recognises the three big rocks as being from home, showing that culture can be recovered and that family ties are strong. The play ends with the three sisters turning into the boulders, overcome by the tears of Indians. But Wounded Knee and the rise of Indigenous rights movements are just starting to emerge.

Neither Broken nor Hidden

Joylene Nowell Butler
Broken but Not Dead. Theytus $18.95

Gord Hill
The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book: From the WTO to the G20. Arsenal Pulp $12.95

Daniel J. K. Beavon, Cora J. Voyageur, and David R. Newhouse, eds.
Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture, Volume II. U of Toronto P $37.95

Reviewed by Sarah Henzi

"That'd be the day I'd let some bastard break my spirit" is Zoë's comment to her mother, Professor Brendell Kisêpîsim Meshango, about her best friend Jasmine's abusive husband. It might, however, also be a perfect subtitle for Joylene Nowell Butler's second novel, *Broken but Not Dead*. For ultimately, Brendell not only surfaces as *un*broken, despite her fears, prejudices, and the abuse—both psychological and physical—that has been inflicted upon her, but she also opens herself to another level of understanding which, ironically, without Declan Warner, she may not have found.

Butler's novel centres its intrigue on both language and mind games, gender power, and psychopathic, suicidal tendencies. Of special *forte* is the character Declan/Patris, who develops from being a sadist into a sad, unfortunate character; this is reflected in how his relationship with Brendell develops as well, from fear, to hate, to a kind of compassionate connection, as depicted in the final dialogue at the end of the novel. It is in fact almost hard to believe that Patris, the dark-clad, in-control, bigoted, violent persona, who sequesters, beats and drugs Brendell senseless at the onset of the novel, is Declan, who at the end of the novel admits he "is in love with the idea of [Zoë]" and the pride she has for her mother; he is "glad" that Brendell is there with him when he kills himself: "Tell my mum I'm sorry," he says to her. Despite what Declan/Patris did, including shooting his own brother in cold blood moments before, it is hard to not feel some element of empathy for Declan. The word "mum" seems to resonate even more poignantly: Declan's manner of speaking becomes that of a broken, depressed youth, who longs to be loved and forgiven.

Beyond Brendell's relationship with her own daughter Zoë, Butler further explores the importance of the mother figure with regard to Brendell's troubled relationship with her own mother Agnostine who abused and beat her children senseless not only for being born, but also for being a quarter white (their father being Métis). These different layers of her past seem to conspire against Brendell throughout the novel: indeed, Agnostine's hatred for anyone non-Native (she would call her daughter a "hideous, stupid frog-squaw") resonates with Brendell's own distrust of white people which, coupled with her distrust of figures of authority, puts her to the test on both a professional and personal level with Sergeant Gabriel Lacroix. De facto, after being attacked, Brendell refuses to go to the police to report what she believes to be a random hate crime. Her distrust and weariness is partially confirmed when she finds out that her abuser is none other than the son of a powerful (white) man—Leland Warner, the town's MP. What could the white policeman do for her anyway?

However, as with Declan, Brendell's relationship with the sergeant shifts as well to a different level of understanding. Ultimately, this was Declan's lesson: the distrust, fear, and prejudice she inherited from her mother from her past can only be undone by herself if she is to become a strong, unbroken individual.

In continuance with his *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*, Gord Hill's new comic book, *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book* links different movements, concerns, and grassroots movements—from

the 1999 "Battle of Seattle" against the WTO to the Toronto G20 summit in 2010—with a continuing visual, and at times indeed graphic, accountability. Along the lines of the two other books I am discussing in this review, the emphasis is placed on resistance and continuance when faced with adversity, the importance of the individual as a living, participatory part of the community, and rewriting an idea of history as dictated by colonial, neo-colonial, and imperialist authorities and institutions.

Additionally, given that Hill's work is grounded in his own Indigenous struggles, this book rekindles a long-lasting alliance—for instance, going back to the 1996 Zapatistas' "Encuentro for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism"—between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, mobilizing along similar lines such as anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism, and anti-globalization. The numerous pages devoted to the anti-2010 Olympics—"No Olympics on Stolen Native Land"—underline concerns on a global scale about the environment, territorial occupancy, poverty, and homelessness, and how, ultimately, oppressive powers converge. More importantly, Hill's work emphasizes how a history of repression against demonstrators—whether anarchists, pacifists, or environmentalists—has consequently intensified militancy: both media and "authoritative" representations of insurgency has thus pushed confrontation to the forefront, often to the detriment of what the message truly is. As such, Hill's comic book truly does clarify "what taking on capitalism is really about."

As with *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*, and in the wake of the different Occupy movements and, most recently, the Idle No More movement, Hill's graphic novel is certainly, once again, timely.

The second volume of *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture* is a long-awaited follow-up and complement to the 2005 first volume. In volume two, the editors have carefully and wisely chosen a selection of essays that reflect upon the contributions and impact of Aboriginal peoples in Canada on economical and community development, environmental initiatives, education, politics, the North, and arts and culture. In addition, it includes profiles of several of Canada's most prominent and thought-provoking Aboriginal personalities, such as writer Maria Campbell, filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, politician Elijah Harper, historian Olive Patricia Dickason, and many others whose drive has been, and still is, to change and take the establishment to task, using as many tools and media as possible in order to do so. As Gord Hill suggested in *The 500 Years of Resistance Comic Book*, it is important to make use of "many diverse methods of communication—including newsletters, books, videos, music, posters, stickers, banners, and t-shirts—because no single one will be successful by itself."

Furthermore, volume two of *Hidden in Plain Sight*, not only includes but also offers an extended "Aboriginal Vision for Canada"; one that goes beyond that proposed in the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, if only in the sense that it underlines what has been done and not done, what has been promised and apologized for, and what has been forgotten and forgiven, in the almost two decades since the report. In light of Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the global exposure of Canada's overall despicable treatment of its Aboriginal population—most recently, Canadian government-conducted nutrition experiments on malnourished Aboriginal children and adults in communities and in residential schools—it is no longer possible to ignore, nor keep hidden, these aspects of our history. It is no longer possible to think of

Aboriginal Peoples simply in terms of a colonized, broken people, battling different kinds of authorities and oppressive powers. There is no need to think of Aboriginal cultures, as has been done for too long, in terms of "preservation," for if something needs to be preserved, it means it is on the verge of extinction. On the contrary, as the engaging and highly informative essays and profiles in this collection go to show, "a change has begun"; though I would venture to say that this wind of change has been underway for a lot longer than we—in particular our institutions—may choose to acknowledge. Indeed, this volume affirms, enhances, and promotes the voices of Aboriginal Peoples and their achievements, not only in terms of their contributions and sacrifices to Canadian identity and culture, but also in terms of a much more global, durable, (w)holistic and indigenous-based approach to understanding our identities and cultures as individuals participating in, and seeking for, an appreciation for our heritage as part of a more humane community. In this way, books like *Hidden in Plain Sight* are necessary to the formation of a new methodology of education, a pedagogical awakening, as they can enable readers to transcend that dark chapter in our collective consciousness and move onwards, in a proactive way, with the challenges that remain.

Reconciliation at the Kitchen Table

Nellie Carlson, Kathleen Steinhauer, with Linda Goyette, eds. Foreword by Maria Campbell

Disinherited Generations: Our Struggle to Reclaim Treaty Rights for First Nations Women and their Descendants. U of Alberta P $24.95

Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham, eds.

Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress. U of Toronto P $45.00

Reviewed by David Gaertner

The books under review here unpack the intricacies of Canadian redress culture as it unfolded out of the 1980s, tracing the contours of Canada's position in what Elazar Barkan terms, in *The Guilt of Nations*, "the new international morality" as a first-world, colonial nation state. At stake in both texts is the upset of a national narrative that mobilizes redress and apology to disavow colonial histories and perpetuate the myth of Canadian benevolence. However, as unique collaborative efforts, both texts also help to establish what reconciliation might mean as a textual practice in a discourse that, as Marlene Brant Castellano argues in her contribution to *From Truth to Reconciliation*, requires "a thousand points of encounter."

As political concepts, reconciliation and redress are still contemporary ideas. According to Barkan, as the Cold War drew to a close, "moral issues came to dominate public attention and political issues and displayed the willingness of nations to embrace their own guilt. This national reflexivity is the new guilt of nations." Before the Cold War drew to a close in the late 1980s, *realpolitik* (diplomacy based on material and practical considerations, as opposed to moral premises) was the primary international politic. The race to increase, reinforce, and protect ideology, be it capitalist or communist, compelled nation-states

to take staunchly defensive positions, which did not permit the space for governments to admit responsibility for harm inflicted on their own citizens by the State itself—for instance via apology or restitution. Tension began to ease across the globe with the 1986 Reykjavík Summit and the 1989 collapse of the Berlin wall; with these events, the humanitarian consequences of *realpolitik* became more apparent and the call for change grew louder. Citizens in both the East and the West recognized the need for an alternative to power politics, which had nearly led the world to nuclear destruction. Détente signalled a new international political climate founded in morality. In the moral turn from *realpolitik*, nations were compelled to address the crimes they had committed against their own citizens, leading to the deluge of nation-state Commissions and Tribunals aimed at addressing, redressing and reconciling internal crime inflicted by the state: for instance in Uganda (1986); Chile (1991); El Salvador (1992); Yugoslavia (1994); Guatemala (1994); Rwanda (1994); South Africa (1995).

Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress, a collection of essays and historical documents edited by Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham, is a recent contribution to a growing archive of texts that map out a topography of "the new international morality" as it builds out of the 1980s. *Reconciling Canada* is also the first text to comprehensively unpack Canada's unique position in this history, marking it as an important contribution to both Canadian and reconciliation studies. While the current Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) incited the production of this text, the collection of essays is an account of the individual threads that make up the fabric of Canadian redress as it unfolded out of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) and the moral turn Barkan identifies. According to Henderson and Wakeham, "*Reconciling Canada* seeks to broaden the terms of debate for understanding the rise of reconciliation as a prominent social paradigm, arguing for the necessity of tracing the complex relations between a range of redress movements that have, through processes of cross-pollination, collectively shaped the contemporary and political fields." *Reconciling Canada*'s most important contribution to the field of Canadian and reconciliation studies lies precisely in how it incorporates a wide range of perspectives and historical moments to illustrate the complexity with which the culture of redress has developed, and continues developing, in Canada. Via a cultural studies lens, the essays and appendices in this collection (the latter of which makes up one-third of the text) make evident that redress and reconciliation have played a definitive role in the formation of contemporary Canadian identity, not just in its major movements (notably Japanese Canadian Redress and the TRC) but in the political and cultural events that have yet to be framed within a reconciliatory framework (Air India, the Maher Arar case, the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards). As such, this book pushes the limits of what reconciliation in Canada is and stretches the boundaries of what it might accomplish as a first-world politic—both as a strategic deployment of conservative ideology and as an interruption of that ideology.

The dialectic that arises between the transformative and assimilative potentials of reconciliation in *Reconciling Canada* develops organically out of the collection of voices in the text with authors making reference to one another's arguments. As such, reconciliation, as a textual practice, is established as a conversation in process. Indeed, the text's large appendices reinforces the notion that *Reconciling Canada* is constructed as a resource—a place to begin, test, and develop research. While "reconciliation" is roundly critiqued as a tool of the nation-state in

Reconciling Canada, Henderson and Wakeham make good on their introductory promise to explore ways in which reconciliation can also "disrupt" Canada's beneficent national narrative, "its singularity of perspective, its teleological assumptions, and its undisputed righteousness" (15). Analysis of the potential of reconciliation is clearly the more difficult thread of critique to maintain in this text, as there simply seems to be so much more evidence *against* reconciliation as transformative politics—particularly in a settler-colonial context. Indeed, the majority of work being produced elsewhere in the field at this time is focusing on "the current entanglement of settler coloniality with the politics of reconciliation," to use Glenn Coulthard's phrase from the forthcoming book *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*.

Locating the possibility of redress that Henderson and Wakeham gesture towards in their introduction can be difficult because of the dexterity with which the state seems able to recuperate it, not to mention the theoretical nuance with which critics are able to apply to its analysis. Still, *Reconciling Canada* includes important interventions into reconciliation as a counter-hegemonic mode of inquiry. For instance, Len Findlay's contribution to the text offers incisive analysis of work from Sa'ke'j Henderson, Lori Blondeau, and the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, which affirms the potential of "new modes of knowledge keeping and knowledge making" in the reconciliatory process. Roy Miki's analysis of Kerri Sakamoto's *One Million Hearts*, which he reads as a "post-redress literary work," brings "to surface the practices of life and culture that unfold beneath the radar of state power" (quoting Kandice Chuh) by illustrating the transnational implications of a national discourse of reconciliation.

Disinherited Generations: Our Struggle to Reclaim Treaty Rights for First Nations Women and Their Descendants, focuses on an issue that is rarely considered under the trope of redress, but which has made a significant contribution to Canada's "moral" politics: the 1985 amendment of the *Indian Act* via Bill C-31. In the 1951 *Indian Act* revisions, the federal government eliminated the treaty rights of "red-ticket holders," women with treaty status who had married non-status or Métis men. Under this legislation, thousands of Aboriginal women and their children lost their status and legal claims to their land, resources and homes—which also threatened the connection to culture and traditional knowledge for many families. Building out of the socio-political momentum of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms,* Bill C-31 gave many Indigenous women (and men) back the status and land they were denied via state definitions.

A collaborative project between Nellie Carlson, Kathleen Steinhauer and Linda Goyette (with major contributions from Maria Campbell and the late Jenny Margetts), *Disinherited Generations* is an oral, autobiographical, as-told-to narrative of two Cree women, Carlson and Steinhauer, who helped to organize Indian Rights for Indian Women and whose efforts eventually amount to Bill C-31. Bill C-31 aligned the Indian Act with the gender equality provisions of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, "including significant changes to Indian status and band membership, with three major goals: to address gender discrimination of the Indian Act, to restore Indian status to those who had been forcibly enfranchised due to previous discriminatory provisions, and to allow bands to control their own band membership as a step towards self-government" (UBC *Indigenous Foundations*). As a direct result of Carlson and Steinhauer's work, the number of "registered Indians" in Canada more than doubled, from about 360,000 in 1985 to 824,341 in 2010—radically impacting the face of Aboriginal/State relations in Canada, and with it the face of what "reconciliation" looks like today in Canada.

One of the most significant things about *Disinherited Generations*, aside from being a remarkable historical account of the Bill, is the way in which Goyette makes space for Carlson and Steinhauer to share this history as they would at the kitchen table. Carlson and Steinhauer are old friends; Goyette is a journalist who has known the two women for years; the book is written to best capture this history as it unfolds as a conversation between these three in their homes. In Goyette's carefully composed introduction (which includes the terms of the contract the three signed before beginning the project), she lays out the meticulous processes by which she Carlson, Steinhauer—and later the publishers—negotiated the politics of an as-told-to narrative and worked to capture the tone of Cree and Métis spoken culture. At the core of this project is a desire to inject these cultures into Canadian history and academic debate. Towards the end of her introduction, Goyette writes, "[i]t is a cold day in Edmonton. Imagine that you are sipping hot soup and listening to Kathleen Steinhauer and Nellie Carlson as they begin to tell an important story. A blizzard will keep you here all afternoon while time stops. Would you like some bannock?"

The hospitality offered here does not depoliticize this book. Abenaki scholar Lisa Brooks argues that "kitchen table" dialogue, such as the kind that Goyette is able to capture, must be held in relation to academic discourse when Indigenous issues are at hand. The kitchen table is not a complementary space to the academy (because it in no way relies on it) but it is an equally rigorous space of debate and conversation, which can bring necessary life to lecture hall debate—should the hosts wish to include it. Brooks makes it clear that one space (kitchen table or academic desk) is not necessarily more important than the other—indeed she makes clear that the university offers its own kind of "haven"—but she does insist that the kitchen table offers an environment to "unpack" politics in a way that compels thinkers to consider their ideas as pieces of a larger conversation that is alive, dynamic and, most importantly, practiced in Indigenous space.

Carlson and Steinhauer generously invite academics to sit at their kitchen table and to share in and be enlivened by, the story of the struggle towards Bill C-31. Goyette makes it plain that the authors, "would like university professors and their students to investigate Canada's historic discrimination against Aboriginal women, and to produce new and comprehensive academic research and analysis for the public." Indigenizing these archives—inviting researchers to the kitchen table to share Aboriginal history—Carlson, Goyette and Steinhauer offer a uniquely Cree and Métis space for scholars to build research and structure argument. In the way it performs storytelling and conversation, *Disinherited Generations* enacts the kitchen table and challenges readers to unfold Canada's "moral turn"—so intimately connected to *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*—with careful attention to the *Indian Act* and Aboriginal rights.

In the ways that they employ the collaborative form, both *Disinherited Generations* and *Reconciling Canada* gesture to the ways in which collective projects can begin to respond to a discourse that permeates the modern sociopolitical experience and informs intersubjective relations across cultural, historical, political and methodological borders.

Le nœud de la guerre

Collectif d'auteurs; Toma Iczkovits, illus. *Printemps spécial.* Héliotrope 17,95 $

Compte rendu par Anne-Marie David

Si le printemps étudiant de 2012 a suscité moult tumultes dans les rues et les esprits du Québec, ses effets se sont aussi fait sentir dans le monde éditorial. Suite à la défaite électorale des libéraux en septembre, les

rayons des librairies prennent toutes les teintes de rouge : pourpre des réflexions d'intellectuels engagés, vermillon des fictions en textes et en images. Les douze nouvelles de *Printemps spécial*, si elles appartiennent de facto à la seconde catégorie, empruntent à la première un certain recul vis-à-vis de leur sujet.

Cette mise à distance — évidemment variable d'un écrivain à l'autre — est lisible dans les oppositions qui sous-tendent presque toutes les nouvelles. Spatiale chez Nicolas Chalifour, qui ouvre le recueil, l'opposition devient temporelle dès l'appel semi-ironique « À la casserole! » de Catherine Mavrikakis, avant de prendre, sous la plume de Martine Delvaux, les traits d'une dialectique entre l'individu et la multitude. « Tu écris comme tu marches dans la ville », affirme Delvaux, anticipant du même coup les dichotomies urbaines — Montréal-Paris, Montréal-New York, Montréal-Berlin — déclinées par André Marois, Gail Scott, Patrick Lessard et Michèle Lesbre. Le tiers des textes témoigne en effet des événements de l'extérieur : accrochés aux délires médiatiques ou aux nouvelles de leurs amis Facebook, leurs auteurs portent un regard tour à tour indigné, enthousiaste ou terrifié sur une métropole à la fois proche et lointaine.

Car le reste du Québec, il faut le dire, n'apparaît qu'en vague filigrane du collectif. La grève, la manifestation, la revendication sociale sont des signes proprement montréalais et curieusement féminins. Si la « jeune fille » fait une entrée anonyme et un peu fantastique, chez Chalifour, elle gagne une présence corporelle « lumineuse » chez Gabriel Anctil avant de se multiplier dans le kaléidoscope des désirs parisiens et indécis de Lessard. Grégory Lemay pour sa part la promeut effigie et fantasme : c'est une « déesse de la révolution » bardée de *studs* et de *barbells* — et, somme toute, aussi risible que problématique.

Ces représentations stéréotypées appellent une satire que la bouffonnerie bienvenue de Simon Paquet insuffle au recueil. Riant de tout et surtout de lui-même, « L'inactiviste » dévoile presque par inadvertance le ridicule — ou la violence — de certains comportements, d'une manière qui rappelle l'ironie de la narratrice de Mavrikakis à l'égard de sa protagoniste, prof à l'UQAM. Autre facette de l'expérience enseignante, « L'atelier rouge » de Carole David mêle des trames individuelles et historiques pour tisser, en amont et en aval, une mémoire de la grève.

Il sera encore question de tissage et de nœuds dans l'avant-dernier texte, « La corde ». En guise de conclusion dystopique ou de rêverie cathartique, Olga Duhamel-Noyer imagine l'envers pervers des manifs gorgées d'espoir précédemment décrites. En marge de l'une d'elle et sans raison apparente, la « déesse de la révolution » se mue en femme soumise aux pulsions de ravisseurs masculins. Allégorie du sexisme présent dans les réseaux militants? Réflexion sur le confort de l'ordre établi? Dérangeante et opaque, la nouvelle ouvre les significations de tout le recueil en invitant le lecteur « carré rouge » à le relire d'un œil plus critique.

Notebook Narratives

Douglas Coupland; Graham Roumieu, illus.
Highly Inappropriate Tales for Young People.
Random House Canada $24.00

Susin Nielsen
The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen.
Tundra $19.99

Reviewed by Philip Miletic

There are at least two forms of writing that young people take to: the journal and doodling with (sometimes) an accompanying story. Both these modes of writing are often therapeutic and are revealing of the young person, as well as what s/he is writing/doodling about. Both the journal and doodling, whether out of boredom in a

classroom or before going to bed, are ways for a young person to understand the world in which s/he is struggling to grow up in. Susin Nielsen's *The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen* and Douglas Coupland and Graham Roumieu's *Highly Inappropriate Tales for Young People* each present one of these two modes of writing, Nielsen's the journal, and Coupland and Roumieu's the doodle with an accompanying story. Although both books deal with contemporary issues that young people encounter with a humorous slant, one does this better than the other.

Written by Coupland and illustrated by Roumieu, *Highly Inappropriate Tales for Young People* contains seven short tales of "seven evil characters you can't help but love." These miscreants include (to name just a few) Donald, the "Incredibly Hostile Juice Box"; Kevin, the "Hobo Minivan with Extremely Low Morals"; Sandra, the "Truly Dreadful Babysitter." Just gleaning these titles reveals the content's satirical tone. But do not be misled by these straightforward names; the tales' satirical content is more complex than the titles may suggest. For instance, although Sandra, the babysitter, asks the kids she babysits to steal or start a fire, the narrative notes that despite the kids' instincts, they obey Sandra because they were always taught to either "respect your elders" or "raised to try to see the good in people." What these kids are not taught, and what this inappropriate tale posits, is that they should trust their own judgments and instincts, that they should have some sort of autonomy and not just rely on adult dictums and authority.

Roumieu's illustrations are a wonderful accompaniment to Coupland's absurd tales, elevating the humour by providing a visualization of these miscreants and their victims. I am curious whether the illustrations or the tales came first. At times the text appears to be playing off the illustrations, and at other times the illustrations are playing off the text. The playfulness of these two forms creates an entertaining dynamic, but I felt that this playfulness trumps the satire of the book's stories. Although hilarious and entertaining, the "punch lines" of each tale fall flat for me, the satire feeling empty at times.

Susin Nielsen's *The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen*, on the other hand, contains much lighter (and less grotesque) humour to discuss a poignant concern of young people today: bullying. The novel is in the form of Henry K. Larsen's journal, an activity his psychologist prescribed to him. Despite his reluctance to write, Henry is continually drawn to the journal, and the result is an intimate, funny, but also incredibly sad, tale of Henry's self-recovery and self-reinvention after a traumatizing "worst-case bully scenario." To reveal this scenario would ruin how Henry confronts this issue. But let it suffice to say that the scenario *is* the worst-case of bully scenarios.

Nielsen's novel is a well-written and well-handled story of a very touchy subject. Although the journal format is a tad unrealistic with full, detailed conversations, the journal nonetheless effectively provides an insightful and intimate look at Henry's maturation. Henry grows from speaking "robot voice," which "strips emotion out of everything," and criticizing others' shortcomings to appreciating and loving those with the strangest of quirks. The Global Wrestling Foundation (Henry's favourite form of entertainment) stands in as a metaphor for the blurriness of good vs. evil. All people (the novel suggests), including "bullies," should not be categorized in binary terms. As Henry's neighbour tells him, people do horrible things but this does not mean they are horrible people. Nielsen does not wrap everything up in a neat package; rather, she ends the novel once Henry has matured and learned that he has to confront the difficulties and ambiguities of life ahead, an ending I believe keeps Nielsen's novel grounded.

Appropriate or inappropriate, both these books are widely entertaining and do not disappoint. Whereas *Inappropriate Tales* is a book you pick up and share with others and have a good laugh, *The Reluctant Journal* is a novel that you sit down with and think through to consider the struggles that Henry encounters. Either way, both books allow the reader to see what a young adult's notebook might look like and the narrative it constructs.

Troubled Legacies: The Map and the Canoe

Misao Dean
Inheriting a Canoe Paddle: The Canoe in Discourses of English-Canadian Nationalism. U of Toronto P $29.95

Mishuana Goeman
Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nation. U of Minnesota P $25.00

Reviewed by Marlene Goldman

Misao Dean's and Mishuana Goeman's books aim to instigate a reconsideration of space and place in the settler-invader societies established in North America. Goeman speaks frankly from her subject position both as a Professor of Women's Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and as "a Seneca woman from a family that moved and migrated around the East Coast," the daughter of a white mother in a Nation in which women largely govern the land. Goeman's family moved and migrated around the East coast, travelling by car to Tonawanda or, more often, to northern rural Maine, to a place called Twelve Corners—"the most vivid place of my childhood memories." Furnished with this intimate, local knowledge about what it meant to grow up in "rural, predominately white, poverty-stricken Maine," Goeman's study offers an account of the larger colonial praxis of mapping North America, beginning with the signing of the 1870s Medicine Treaties and the corralling of Native peoples onto reservations. The antithesis of a dispassionate historian, Goeman aims to unsettle colonial maps. To achieve this goal, she relies on Native women's writing to critically read her own tradition. Drawing on texts by Pauline Johnson, Esther Berlin, Joy Harjo, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Heid Erdrich, and contextualizing their writing in light of US and Canadian law, Goeman illustrates how Native women's writing simultaneously exposes the constructed nature of nation states' maps and reinstalls the marginalized perspective of Native peoples. At the bottom, Goeman challenges the pervasive myth of the disappearing Indian by demonstrating that both the peoples and geographies foundational to Native communities have not disappeared but "are waiting to be (re)mapped and 'grasped.'"

Dean, a professor of English at the University of Victoria, begins her book with an equally forthright introduction that likewise attests to the personal significance of her historically and theoretically informed research. As Dean explains, she embarked on her project to analyze how the canoe came to be a an icon in the Canadian national imaginary in 2000 when her father died following his year-long battle with colon cancer. Dean confesses that of all the objects he bequeathed to her, her father's canoe paddle was the one that held the most meaning. For Dean, as for many Canadians, the paddle's and, by extension, the canoe's significance lies in the capacity to evoke personal, familial, and cultural memories. By turns elegiac, comic, and polemical, Dean's book explores how the personal and the political are imbricated in the image of the canoe. As the introduction attests, Dean's study is fundamentally a narrative about loss—"the loss of childhood, family, stability, but also a loss of fixed political identity that I think is common to many other Canadians of my generation." Dean

traces the loss of Anglo-Canadians' fixed political identity by skillfully reading both literary and historical documents from the late nineteenth century to the present, ranging from the poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott to the short stories of Margaret Atwood.

Throughout the book, Dean's gifts as a storyteller enables her to animate the people, events, and institutions—including the 1967 Canadian Centennial Canoe Pageant and the founding of the Canoe Museum in Ottawa—that helped to transform the canoe into what it is today, the pre-eminent icon of Canadian nationalism. Early chapters explore the largely successful efforts on the part of historians and politicos to promulgate the fiction of "the innocence of Anglo-Canadian society"—a fiction predicated on maintaining that the fur trade "depended on keeping First Nations on the land and preserving their traditional hunting way of life." As Dean argues, this foundational fiction, increasingly promoted after World War II, enhanced the subsequent nationalist fetishizing of the canoe by famous Canadian canoeing enthusiasts and environmentalists such as Eric Morse and Bill Mason. These men attempted to demonstrate "how canoeists, by virtue of their canoeing, are not European anymore, but something new, Canadian." Ultimately, Dean's study ends where Goeman's begins. The final chapter documents Native peoples' efforts in BC to reappropriate the canoe and to use it as a strategy for decolonization. In her conclusion, Dean counsels readers to use her strategy in an effort to become more aware of their inheritance: "Find out about the specific piece of land you stand on: how it became part of Canada and what became of the people who owned/own it." Thanks to their lucid, well-researched arguments, Goeman and Dean have offered a model for this journey and, in the process, made their mark.

Composing Identity

Jennifer Bowering Delisle
The Newfoundland Diaspora: Mapping the Literature of Out-Migration.
Wilfrid Laurier UP $42.99

Hans Werner
The Constructed Mennonite: History, Memory, and the Second World War.
U of Manitoba P $27.95

Review by Robert Zacharias

Pairing the two books under review here is, in many ways, a study in contrasts, but they overlap as investigations into a series of questions that arise from their shared concern with the relationship between identity, history, and representation. What are the cultural and political possibilities of identity, and how are these possibilities circumscribed by the historical and disciplinary contexts in which they are expressed? How does whiteness complicate discussions of cultural difference in Canada? And how does cultural identity relate to other scales of identity, including national and individual identity?

In *The Newfoundland Diaspora: Mapping the Literature of Out-Migration,* Jennifer Bowering Delisle argues for an understanding of Newfoundland writing within the critical framework of diaspora. Well aware that the conventions of diaspora studies would seem to set Newfoundland's "out-migration" into the rest of Canada firmly outside its purview—diaspora is nearly always understood as a transnational phenomenon, and, in Canadian literary studies, it has largely been tied to past trauma and the lived experience of racialized minorities in the present—Delisle emphasizes her primary interest in the expression of a "diasporic consciousness." Drawing first on the region's political and economic history, she goes on to find ample evidence for a "complex post-Confederation nationalism" across a range of Newfoundland

writing. By positioning her consideration of Newfoundland literature as an examination of Canadian diaspora studies, Delisle anticipates concerns about her use of diaspora in ways that are cogent and—if perhaps not always completely convincing—consistently important in their wide-ranging implications for the larger field.

In addition to an introduction and conclusion, *The Newfoundland Diaspora* is broken into five sections. The first section is dedicated entirely to "Newfoundland and the Concept of Diaspora," while the following four sections each include two chapters pairing particular aspects of diaspora with different authors, including questions of affect with Donna Morrissey and Carl Leggo, questions of cultural "authenticity" with E. J. Pratt and Wayne Johnston, questions of nationalism with David French and Johnston, and questions of ethnicity with Helen Buss/Margaret Clarke and David Macfarlane. The project's ambitious range of key terms—she also explores nostalgia and regionalism—is admirable, but it also means that some of its engagements are too brief to move beyond simply demonstrating how individual texts confirm the established concerns of their respective fields. While the value of several chapters remains most firmly in their implications for further study, then, Delisle draws compelling insights from the overlap between Newfoundland and diaspora, including notions of "experiential nostalgia" (in which the romancing of the past is tempered by the lived experiences of migration), "ghost histories" (alternative pasts that haunt the present with what "might have been"), and the "holdin' ground" (the ongoing tie between land and the second generation migrants). Other sections of the study that are particularly valuable include a reconsideration of the position of E.J. Pratt in Canadian literary history and a productive interrogation of the role of "whiteness" in Canadian diaspora studies. Clearly written and mercifully light on footnotes, *The Newfoundland Diaspora* makes a valuable contribution to Canadian literary studies, and, in particular, to diaspora studies and the growing field of Atlantic Canadian literary studies.

In stark contrast to Delisle's wide-ranging study of collective identity, Hans Werner's *The Constructed Mennonite: History, Memory, and the Second World War* is a book-length examination of a single life. Much has been made in Mennonite studies about the mass migration of some 20,000 Mennonites from Russia to Canada during the 1920s, but comparatively little has been said about those Mennonites who, like Werner's father, attempted to join the migration but were turned back by Soviet officials. Werner draws on his own interviews, along with extensive archival and other primary research, to reconstruct his father's dramatic life story, from his early years in Siberia following the Russian Revolution, through his time as a soldier with the Soviet and German armies during the Second World War, and into his efforts at settling into Canada as a postwar immigrant. Tracing his father's evolution through his series of assumed names—born Hans, he became Ivan in Stalinist Russia, Johann in Hitler's Germany, and John in Canada—Werner suggests his father constructed a "building block version of himself" by sharing only those memories most appropriate for a pacifist Mennonite community in Cold War Canada. Broken into an introduction and thirteen chapters organized in three sections ("Siberia," "War," and "Becoming Normal"), the study includes a number of helpful maps and photographs, as well as family trees and a lengthy glossary.

Despite its evocative subtitle, *The Constructed Mennonite* is best read as a detailed reconstruction of a fascinating individual life, for this is much more a critically informed biography than it is a theoretical consideration of the relationship

between *History, Memory, and the Second World War.* The brief addendums to each chapter provide Werner with space to reflect on and contextualize his material, but not enough to engage extensively with the secondary theoretical materials that are invoked. More valuable is the way that Werner has structured the narrative so that the account provided by his father's stories is supplemented—and, in several key instances, contradicted—by additional histories that arrive via the author's research. His mother's account, for example, offers a brief but valuable counter to the father's stories, and serves to emphasize the highly gendered nature of the larger narrative. Given his father's military and romantic adventures, Werner's cyclical and engaging book is likely to upend some of the assumptions that commonly surround Mennonite identity in Canada.

Despite their differences in focus and style, *The Newfoundland Diaspora* and *The Constructed Mennonite* place a shared pressure on the disciplinary boundaries that often circumscribe contemporary scholarship on identity. Although the answers they offer differ, the larger discussion about representation and identity in Canada is richer because of their shared examination into complex questions of narrative, migration, and belonging.

The Virile Pen

Patricia Demers, ed.
Travels and Tales of Miriam Ellis Green: Pioneer Journalist of the Canadian West.
U of Alberta P $34.95

Reviewed by Valerie Legge

Patricia Demers is one *very* lucky researcher; very few of Canada's pioneer women journalists left easily identifiable paper trails relating to their personal or professional lives. According to Barbara M. Freeman, journalist Kathleen Blake Coleman ("Kit") often instructed her "Woman's Kingdom" readers to burn their letters and diaries. Those pioneering journalists who *did* preserve their papers made critical decisions regarding which documents to keep and which to destroy. In doing so, they garnered some control over the possible narratives that future researchers would construct regarding their lives and times.

In the Preface to *Travels and Tales of Miriam Green Ellis: Pioneer Journalist of the Canadian West*, Demers tells us that she "discovered" the journalist "serendipitously about five years ago" while searching for information about Oblate missionary Émile Grouard. Demers stumbled upon a photograph that Ellis had taken of Grouard at the Edmonton train station in 1922 when they were both setting out on their Northern journeys. That timely discovery led Demers to 21 boxes of print material which thankfully Ellis had the foresight to bequeath to the University of Alberta.

There are several ironies associated with Demers' "serendipitous discovery": as lady "travellers in skirts" or as modern women in breeches, a number of journalists (including Elizabeth R. Taylor, Emma Shaw Colcleugh, Emily Murphy, Agnes Deans Cameron, and Miriam Green Ellis) helped document and memorialize the travels and accomplishments of male missionaries in the Canadian North, yet the travels, tales, and professional accomplishments of these pioneering journalists were not so assiduously documented by themselves or by others. I suspect that Ellis would be amused to know that the "discovery" of her papers was sparked by what Agnes Deans Cameron and her contemporaries would have described as a "kodaking" moment. By 1910, the term kodaking, used as verb and modifier, had entered the public lexicon. With her Kodak camera, Ellis captured a visual image of a man who, at that time, was already a well-recognized and thoroughly-valorized figure. Nearly a century later, Ellis and many of her

contemporaries are only now beginning to emerge from the shadows of history.

In 1892, having been inspired in childhood by Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem "The Two Stream," Elizabeth Taylor, equipped with camera and notebook, set out on a trip that took her from France to Athabasca and the Arctic Circle. Today we know very little about this intrepid young woman whose northern adventure began in the Latin Quarter of Paris and ended at a little hotel in Edmonton where she arrived months later, her Parisian skirts "dripping wet and splashed with mud."

Three years later, gypsy journalist Emma Shaw Colcleugh headed North, trailing in Taylor's wake. A decade later, journalist and colonization agent Agnes Deans Cameron made the pilgrimage North. While recognizing the impact that economic and religious colonization had and was continuing to have on a northern way of life, these three women were, in different ways, propagandists for companies, institutions, and individuals exploiting the North. And all three were unabashedly enthusiastic in heralding the accomplishments of male missionaries such as Bishop Grouard, Bishop Grandin and Bishop Breynat. Taylor, Shaw and Cameron acknowledged the presence of the Gray Nuns in the North but, as vanguards of religious colonization, these black-robed women were definitely not given the kind of attention paid to their male counterparts. In *Seeds of Pine* (1922) Emily Murphy (Janey Canuck) devoted an entire chapter to the 50th anniversary of Bishop Grouard's consecration, an event celebrated by people from all walks of western life: nuns, priests, journalists, government officials, ranchers, traders, doctors, and bankers.

In a letter to her friend and colleague William Arthur Deacon, dated August 1922, Murphy suggested that Canadian culture (and especially eastern Canadian culture) was not always receptive to the points of view presented by women scribes: "I doubt," Murphy wrote, "some male literary agents like western women . . . we are to [sic] 'breachy' to suit certain standards prevailing by the Sea of Ontario." It is tempting to think that Murphy's comment was a veiled reference to Ellis and her friend E. Cora Hind. Surely there was something suspect about women who, unchaperoned or in the close company of other women, roamed around an "uncharted and unmapped country" in search of copy. And if a woman journalist chose to dress in breeches and tweeds and pack a Winchester rifle (as Ellis did on her trip North), then she was sure to draw additional suspicion and criticism.

What was it about these scribbling women with their "virile pens" that generated anxiety in so many readers, reviewers, and publishers? While praised for their "pluck," their literary skill, and their sense of adventure, women who chose to write about more than plum puddings and pink teas were often castigated for their "racy" or "cheeky" language, for their unconventional dress (knickers, short skirts, breeches) and what were seen as manly manners. Perhaps readers were quick to recognize that women with pens possessed no small measure of power; unlike women whose work was restricted to domestic spaces, roving women reporters were in positions to influence and shape public perception.

In a collection of essays titled *Working in Women's Archives*, Helen M. Buss and Marlene Kadar identify some of the "challenges and opportunities that arise from encounters with female archival subjects" (2). As Marion Beyea, Carrie MacMillan, Carole Gerson and others have noted, the first problem in researching our early women writers is locating women subjects for study. And when these women, once lost, are recovered "from the anonymity of history," contemporary scholars have to decide how to read and how to "re/deconstruct" (to use Gwen Davies' term)

the historical records and archival materials associated with them.

In the Preface to *Travels and Tales*, Demers sets the stage for her own "re/deconstruction" of Miriam Green Ellis, a larger-than-life woman who, on moving out west from Ontario, discovered that western Canada's frontier-like environment provided her and other women with many freedoms and opportunities not so readily available in the east. As Ellis' friend and colleague E. Cora Hind observed, "the West was big enough and strong enough to have the truth told about it." Contemporary scholars are now discovering that Hind's statement may also apply to Canada's first wave of women writers. Perhaps Canadians are ready to accept the reality rather than the romance of early-twentieth-century working women's lives. When Agnes C. Laut began reporting for the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 1895, she observed that journalism for women meant grime and grind: poor pay, long hours, and lousy working conditions (newspaper rooms blue with cigar smoke and raucous language).

Demers' 50 page introductory essay titled "A Passionate Spirit" provides a brief biographical sketch of Ellis and an account of Ellis' entry into the wide world of western journalism. The West, historian Grant MacEwen tells us, produced some "mighty men" and "some mighty women too." Having discovered the professional papers of one of western Canada's "mighty women," Demers transforms MacEwen's "lady with a notebook" into a "forthright, bold, and often pugnacious" figure. To support her reading of Ellis as a strong, smart, confident, and compassionate writer with a wonderful sense of humor ("a car is a woman's best friend") and diverse interests (agriculture, new technologies, the arts, Aboriginal peoples and their cultures), Demers includes a dozen travel, magazine, and newspaper essays, illustrated by a number of strategically selected and provocative photographs ("composed pictures") of Ellis and her contemporaries. The camera (as well as the typewriter, which Agnes Deans Cameron deemed the "modern notebook") was one of the new technologies that gave women easier access to the field of journalism.

In "Down North" Ellis presents herself initially as a tenderfoot, one whose longing to travel to "the land of the midnight sun" began when she was still "a small girl in pinafores." Early in the trip, two of Ellis' fellow travellers, an American botanist and the manager of the northern transportation company, attempt to stereotype her as a "modern woman and they conveyed to [her] quite simply . . . what they thought of women who wore knickers and tried to ape men's ways." Unfazed by their overt criticism, Ellis responds with humor, casual conversation, and considerable self-reflection. And throughout the trip, the views of her fellow travellers do not prevent Ellis from donning a bathing suit and taking a daily swim.

When Ellis, the newspaper reporter, is excited by the sight of a lone man searching for oil or minerals on the side of a river bank, the captain curtly dismisses the legitimacy of her response by replying that the man is "just some fool scratching around in the dirt." When the boat stops to take on wood for the engine and Ellis asks permission to go ashore, the manager's response to her "very polite inquiry" is that "the mosquitoes would eat [her] alive," that "there was absolutely nothing to see if [she] did get off," and that he was afraid that she would "lose [herself] in the marsh." With good humor Ellis complies outwardly while quietly reflecting that this is "only another instance to prove why women do not deserve equal rights. That man is about half as big as I am and I should just have taken him by the collar and thrown him overboard."

This recognition of her own superior position leads to Ellis' determination to take charge of her situation. When the boat

is forced to land due to a storm on Lake Athabasca, without fanfare or confrontation, Ellis simply disembarks, "creating a precedent . . . which carried [her] through the rest of the trip." When she returns to the boat, covered in mud "from [her] heels to [her] hat," Ellis ignores her fellow travellers' insincere expressions of concern. "I am not worrying about the mud," she writes. "I have had intimate relations with it before." The portrait of Ellis that emerges from the "Down North" essay is consistent with the sane, sympathetic persona who narrates "A War Bride's Return" and the journalist impressed by the Women Grain Growers of Saskatchewan, nonchalantly balancing business and babies.

In *Travels and Tales of Miriam Green* Ellis makes a valuable contribution to the fields of women's history, women's culture, and print culture in Canada. Just as the "commercial geography of the continent will have to be readjusted to accommodate the manufacture of untold natural resources" in the Canadian North, so too must perceptions of women, their work and their literary productions widen and deepen to reflect "the way we were as westerns and Canadians in the early decades of the twentieth century."

Stories as Bagijiganan

Jill Doerfler, Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, eds.

Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World Through Stories. U of Manitoba P $29.95

Reviewed by June Scudeler

The anthology *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World Through Stories* begins, appropriately, with a humorous tale of Nanaboozhoo's mistaking an outhouse as a potential source of food. Like Nanaboozhoo, John Borrows, with the help of bear, lynx, and fish, discovers that he is still hungry but pleased that the book for which he is trying desperately to write an introduction will help readers understand why Anishinaabeg stories have the potential to transform how we relate to the world. A tall order but one *Centering* does admirably well. *Centering* is bagijigan or an offering, which is reflected in its table of contents comprised of seven Rs: roots; relationship; revelation; resiliency; resistance; reclamation, and reflections. The essays run the gamut from literary studies to tribal law to hydromythology or how mishipizhu, an underwater panther and powerful manitou, is hindering or helping climate change. But the idea of stories as foundational to Aninshinaabeg world views, laws, and arts weaves these disparate essays together. Editors Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, who are Anishinaabe from different territories, stress the varieties of Anishinaabeg experiences. Anishinaabe "incarnation shapes a connection, defines a relationship, and is an offering to a multiply defined whole." In other words, as suggested by the different spellings of Anishinaabe (e.g. Anishnawbe, Anishinape, Nishnaabe), Anishinaabe people and communities have separate experiences but are still part of an interconnectedness between relations, whether human or other-than-human. Stories make these relationships work, but, as the editors argue, stories are most importantly at the core of what it means to be Anishinaabe from time immemorial and into the future. And stories enact change in the world, such as embodying sovereignty or structuring political institutions.

Literary scholar and playwright Heid E. Erdrich uses the term *name*', which can be translated as "find/leave signs of somebody's presence," as the basis of recovering her literary ancestors. Erdrich uses Maungwudaus' 1848 account of travels among the whites "in the United States, England, Ireland, Scotland, France

and Belgium," in which he humorously described English men as "whiskered as black squirrels" and English women as "too weak to carry their own babies," as inspiration for her own script. Paintings can also be storied images, an assertion David Stirrup uses to explore the works of three contemporary Anishinaabe artists—Andrea Carlson, Star Wallowing Bull and Jim Denomie—to highlight how stories and paintings are a process rather than a product.

Basil H. Johnston and Gerald Vizenor loom large in the collection. Johnston's "Is That All There Is? Tribal Literature" uses a child's boredom with learning about Indians in school ("Is that all there is to Indians?" he asks Johnston) to ruminate on how non-Indigenous people should try to understand Indigenous peoples through their intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic sides. Johnston also calls for the regeneration of myths and legends into poetry, drama, and novels, that resist the stereotype of Indigenous peoples and stories as unchanging. James McKay's interview with Vizenor, who uses postmodernism to demolish stereotypes, explores how Vizenor became the Principal Writer of the proposed new Constitution of the White Earth Nation to replace the 1964 Revised Constitution of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, an undemocratic document that used blood quantum and centralizes government powers. Vizenor situates the Constitution as created in a "spirit of resistance, and independent governance," an apt description for *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies.*

The Limits of Healing

Laurie Meijer Drees
Healing Histories: Stories from Canada's Indian Hospitals. U of Alberta P $29.95

Dale Lakevold and Darrell Racine
Misty Lake. Loon $17.95

Bev Sellars
They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival in an Indian Residential School. Talonbooks $19.95

Reviewed by Christina Turner

The Indian Residential School (IRS) system, operational in Canada for over a century, was far more than a set of individual schools. The tentacles of the system reached well beyond the walls of each institution, impacting lives on reserves, in hospitals, and across generations. The reach of the IRS system is a thread connecting three recent works on intergenerational trauma and healing in First Nations communities.

Laurie Meijer Drees's *Healing Histories* is a history of Canada's Indian Health Services (IHS) based on oral accounts from former patients and staff. Developed after the Second World War, partially in response to tuberculosis epidemics in western and northern Indigenous communities, the IHS operated 18 hospitals at its peak before health services were devolved to communities in the 1970s. Drees's work seeks to address a gap in archival and statistical information on IHS by presenting individual narratives collected through traditional Indigenous storytelling practices. Through interviews with former hospital staff and elders from the Cowichan, Haida, and Snuneymuxw nations (among others), Drees covers hospital conditions, patient experiences and the persistence of traditional healing practices (Snuwuyulth) within institutional contexts.

As a social history of Indian Health Services, *Healing Histories* covers a surprisingly broad range of topics. This makes

it informative for the general reader, yet, methodologically, it means that some threads introduced by Drees or her interviewees remain inconclusive, such as multiple speculations about the prevalence of medical experiments on tuberculosis patients. Yet the stories collected in *Healing Histories* also prove the inadequacy of the archive: for instance, several of Drees' interviewees recall a vocational training program for patients who were too debilitated by tuberculosis to return to their remote home communities, but no official record of such a program exists. The stories of such former nurses and patients as Evelyn Voyageur and Violet Clark demonstrate how the IHS and IRS systems functioned as symbiotic arms of colonial policy, since poor conditions in the schools increased the prevalence of tuberculosis, supplying hospitals with patients, and as hospital staff were often recruited directly from the schools. Drees' social history will be useful for scholars and readers working in the fields of Indigenous storytelling, healthcare, and the history of residential schools.

For Bev Sellars, treatment for tuberculosis at Coqualeetza Indian Hospital was a dark precursor of the isolation to come at St. Joseph's Mission in Williams Lake. *They Called Me Number One* tells the story of Sellars' childhood, her five years at residential school, and the long journey to recovery from destroyed confidence and alcoholism brought on by her school experiences. Sellars (who is now chief of Xat'sull First Nation in BC's Cariboo region) tells a story of programming and deprogramming, of being engrained with the powerful myth of white superiority at home and school, and of the years-long process of unspooling that myth though self-help books, university education, and political activism. Like other residential school memoirs, Sellars' story explicitly connects the IRS system with contemporary issues of alcoholism and violence in Indigenous communities—but unlike earlier works such as Basil H. Johnston's *Indian School Days*, Sellars has no time for the limited benefits conferred by her education, nor for government-initiated discourses of reconciliation. "There can be no forgiveness for evil done in the guise of religion," Sellars writes. "There can be no forgiveness for racism." While Sellars' memoir celebrates the triumph of returning from the brink, it is also a stark condemnation of historical and extant paternalistic policies and the personal tragedies these policies continue to breed.

The limits of reconciliation is similarly a theme of *Misty Lake,* the play by Dale Lakevold and Darrell Racine about a reporter who visits a remote Dene community to conduct interviews with residential school survivors. Based on interviews with Elizabeth Samuel, a survivor of Guy Hill Indian Residential School, the play opens with Patty, an outsider bent on exporting an empathetic story to audiences in the South, as antagonist to Mary, the elusive former student who refuses to adhere to Patty's standards of reportage. This binary dissolves nearly as soon as it emerges, however, when Patty, a Métis woman, reveals that her grandmother attended residential school and that she, too, suffers from intergenerational trauma. Over the course of seven scenes delivered in short, rhythmic dialogue, Mary transforms from interview subject to healer, telling Patty: "You came out of that system/two generations later." As in *They Called Me Number One,* here reconciliation does not occur in government halls, but at the level of individual dialogue, as when Mary reminds Patty that "healing is about learning how to suffer."

Taken together, these texts sit at the intersection of reconciliation discourse and what Jo-Ann Archibald terms "Indigenous storywork." While prior histories like J. R. Miller's *Shingwauk's Vision* have provided comprehensive overviews of the IRS system, Drees, Sellars, Lakevold and Racine

represent a turn toward more interpersonal and intimate depictions of healing.

Canada's Lagos?

Will Ferguson
419. Viking $32.00

Reviewed by Stephen Ney

This is a novel about Canada and about Nigeria that was awarded Canada's top literary honour, the Giller Prize, in 2012. The novel is about a harmless Calgary retiree who is driven to suicide because he becomes trapped in an elaborate Nigerian financial scam called a "419" after the section of the Nigerian criminal code intended to curtail it. Since this is the subject, it is no surprise that the novel does not make Nigeria out to be a very civilized place, a safe place, or a place worth investing your time, your money, or your hopes. In other words, *419* is one of those Western representations of Africa that make Africa out to be eternally the very antithesis of what defines *us*; the journey of Laura the protagonist, the gutsy and vengeful daughter of the deceased, to Lagos feels like a journey into Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, into what Conrad called "a black and incomprehensible frenzy." As the narrative ranges across Nigeria, Ferguson describes "rivers of raw sewage," "shirtless shoulders draped with ammunition," "endless arrangements of thorn bush and scrub grass," and "thousands of dead fish . . . floating on the water, . . . coated in oil." Added to those familiar images of dark, impoverished Africa are depictions of dark, rich Africa: the opulence of Lagos' nouveaux riches, rich because of mafia-esque criminal operations, particularly internet scams, and ruthless violence.

Since the first Giller Prize was given in 1994, half of the prizes awarded have gone to novels set in whole or in large part overseas (including two of Vassanji's novels about East Africa). Ferguson has done a great deal of research about Nigeria and is able to do justice to Nigeria's tremendous geographic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity. Despite confirming some negative stereotypes about Africa, his novel is a tremendous education. But what's more interesting to this reviewer is the way it locates in Calgary some of the same horrors. The novel incriminates multinational oil companies for destroying the natural and social environment of the Niger Delta, where the childhood of one main character is located; but it also gives a brief account of the death of the panhandler Ambrose Littlechild, who was doused in oil by unknown assailants, and set on fire in the shadow of downtown Calgary's oil company towers. At the novel's centre is Laura Curtis's attempt to work out her love for her father—by mourning but also by revenge; yet love and pain are continually set side-by-side with similar dynamics in the families of the Nigerian characters who occupy the three main subplots.

Amina is a young Tuareg woman from Nigeria's far north who is walking hundreds of kilometres across the savannah, inexplicably, though we know her journey has to do with her love for the child she will soon give birth to. Nnamdi is an Ijaw fisherman from Nigeria's south-east, the Delta, who becomes a technician with the oil companies but also gets involved with illegal pipeline tapping; his faithfulness to his mother and his spiritual kinship with his tribe and his deceased father are his primary motivations. Winston is a privileged Lagosian who supports his parents with the proceeds of his "419" scams; he is the one whose emails eventually won him all of Henry Curtis' assets, driving the Calgarian to take his own life in an attempt to provide for his family through his life insurance. Parents caring for children and children caring for parents are the novel's leitmotifs.

Ferguson's complex plot is well built. The 129 chapters, many of which are only a page long, allow him to jump rapidly back and forth among the subplots. Only in the novel's last few pages do they all converge; and it is partly the question of how they will ever manage to converge that maintains the novel's intensity for 400 pages. Another source of excitement is the emails, where we get to see the way the e-predator lures his e-prey and, at the end of the novel, how Laura, a copywriter by profession, manages to beat the predator at his own game.

Our Home on Native Land

Margot Francis
Creative Subversions: Whiteness, Indigeneity, and the National Imaginary. UBC Press $32.95

Stephen McGregor
Two Trails Narrow: A Novel. Theytus $21.95

Richard Van Camp
Godless but Loyal to Heaven: Stories.
Enfield & Wizenty $19.95

Reviewed by Mareike Neuhaus

In *Creative Subversions*, Margot Francis analyzes the paradox of Canadian national belonging—its national imaginary is grounded on romantic constructions of "Indianness," yet Canada has deprived Indigenous people of their own lands—by framing Canada's national legacy as a "public secret": Canadians "know not to know" their nation's history of genocide and colonization. Through a discussion of four central national symbols—the beaver, the railway, Banff National Park, and "Indians"—Francis shows how banal emblems of Canadianness both "reveal and conceal" Canada's public secret. These symbols allow Canadians to distance themselves from what is closest to them; yet, the ghosts of history continue to haunt the nation, reminding its citizens of their own complicity in Canada's not so benign history. However, the banality of Canada's nationalism also allows for creative ways to reimagine, subvert, and challenge the Canadian national imaginary. Through creative subversions, Francis argues, Indigenous artists "have [thus] reappropriated the legacies of Indianness and created new hybrids in places we would least expect."

It is not just through the genres discussed by Francis in her study—performance (Grand River First Nation Hiawatha pageant, Anishnaabe), photography (Jeffrey Thomas, Onondaga), and painting (Kent Monkman, Cree)—that contemporary Indigenous artists engage with the Canadian national imaginary; some contemporary Indigenous writers also explore pivotal moments or discourses of Canadian nation-building, although their approaches differ considerably at times. The paradox of Canadian national belonging that Francis exposes is also at the very centre of *Two Trails Narrow*, Algonquin writer Stephen McGregor's debut novel which traces the story of two Algonquin soldiers who serve in special Canadian commando units during D-Day and the liberation of Normandy. Abraham Scott and Ryman McGregor fight against Nazi Germany to ensure the future well-being of a nation that has denied them access to the processes of nation-building, whether Canadian or Algonquin. By prefacing the war story with a prologue telling of Abraham and Ryman's escape from St. Xavier's Residential School where they are physically and emotionally abused by Jesuit priests, McGregor also exposes—though less eloquently than Joseph Boyden in his Giller Prize-winning *Three Day Road*—the hypocrisy of a nation that is all too happy to publicly acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous soldiers but is still struggling to admit its own complicity in a history of colonialism still unfolding.

McGregor's novel overtly challenges Canada's self-construction as a benign nation dedicated to peace and order but leaves little room for Indigenous

constructions of belonging: readers eventually meet Ryman's mother and siblings but other than that McGregor has constructed Abraham and Ryman as very solitary characters (much unlike Boyden's depiction of Niska, Xavier, and Elijah). Van Camp's story collection, on the other hand, engages with the Canadian national imaginary only marginally and goes beyond a critique of the Canadian nation-building project. The stories in *Godless but Loyal to Heaven* are a powerful testament to the resilience of Indigenous traditional knowledges that only happens to challenge common Canadian conceptions of the North. True, as any of Van Camp's story collections, *Godless but Loyal to Heaven* can be read as depicting the North not as "strong and free" but as exploited for its resources (the tar sands) and abused as a dumping ground (uranium) by a ruthless capitalist and colonist regime. In its honesty, brutality, and magic, Van Camp's storytelling serves another bigger purpose, however: what stands out despite all the illnesses exposed in his narratives is the perseverance of Indigenous traditional ways of knowing. Of all of Van Camp's collections, *Godless but Loyal to Heaven* includes the most overt references to traditional Dogrib medicine, good or bad. Further, Van Camp shows how old Dogrib narrative knowledge may be used to make sense of pressing contemporary issues, such as the destruction caused by the tar sands in Alberta.

Thus, while McGregor's *Two Trails Narrow* paints a bleak picture that offers no alternative to Indigenous people other than to constantly react and adapt to decisions made for them by a colonial regime, Van Camp's *Godless but Loyal to Heaven* offers strategies for self-empowerment as medicine. Here, then, also lies the one weakness of Francis' otherwise astute study: her reluctance to consider Indigenous intellectual traditions, particularly Indigenous models of nationhood, and to read Indigenous artistic productions from within their own traditions. People and nations never exist in a vacuum; to make sense of their nation Canadians will need to learn to listen to Indigenous peoples and dialogue with Indigenous nationalisms.

Writing Wars

Sherrill Grace, Patrick Imbert, and Tiffany Johnstone, eds.
Bearing Witness: Perspectives on War and Peace from the Arts and Humanities.
McGill-Queen's UP $27.95

Reviewed by Joel Baetz

Every war has its art. Poets and painters rush to their notepads and sketchbooks as soldiers rush to the front lines, war rooms, or conflict zones. Virgil wrote his song about arms and man; Shakespeare, Goya, Whitman, Woolf, DeLillo and countless others (with varying degrees of skill, with varying perspectives on the necessity and outcomes of their wars) followed suit. War is one of the great subjects for the arts. But because of its scope, ideological complexity, and affective burden, it is notoriously difficult to render in a painting or poem or play. Yet artists keep returning to the subject and insisting on their relevance or even their necessity to document and interpret proximate and distant battles.

For nearly every piece of war art, there is a defense of its existence. Picasso famously discussed his art, for instance, as a form of attack and defense against enemy forces; Tim O'Brien has long shielded his war stories against accusations of lying by talking about his elliptical narrative style as the best way for him to get at the elusive spiritual and emotional truths about the war. The frequency of these defenses (and, on occasion, their tonal intensity) betrays an anxiety about the relationship between war and art that they aim to justify. Even as these artists insist on the necessity of their

productions to interpret war, they seem to realize how easily or how frequently their art can be dismissed as frivolous or even harmful. Or as Sherrill Grace puts it, in the introduction to *Bearing Witness* (and this is the central motivation for the volume), "the voices and views of people working in the areas included in the broad category of 'arts and humanities' were rarely heard in contemporary discussions of war or peace"; and they deserve to be. They make important contributions "to the wider discussion of issues usually considered the purview of government policy makers, political scientists, scholars in peace and conflict studies."

Bearing Witness collects fourteen essays by historians, art critics, semiologists, artists, and literary critics on various aspects of war and peace in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. To give some shape to the volume, the essays are divided into four sections: the reasons why people fight; the art, literature, and photography of war; the rhetoric of war and peace; and two artists' reflections (one by a filmmaker, the other by a composer) on the creation of war art. The essays themselves range in topic—from video game culture to WWI and WWII Canadian poetry to the depiction of corpses in Canadian war art to avant-garde German war poetry—and are diverse in almost every way. The third section, for instance, leaps from an examination of the rhetoric of war and peace produced by western democracies and the Taliban to a comparative analysis of South Africa's negotiated settlement and the Israel/Palestine peace process to a rendition of a northern Aboriginal community's participation in the extraction of radium.

There are some wonderful ideas—and some wonderful essays—in this volume. In particular, Alan Filewod's examination of video games as warplay (and, for that reason, reminiscent of historical re-enactment practices) stands out as ambitious and erudite, especially for its emphasis on the obligation produced by homosocial bonding and for its careful reading of the practices by which war video games legitimize "a narrative of war as regulated and professionalized, as uniformed, and as the organized operation of legalized force." Sandra Djwa's essay offers a good catalogue of war work produced by three of Canada's most recognizable modernists: E. J. Pratt, F. R. Scott, and P. K. Page. Christl Verduyn and Conny Steenman Marcusse's history of Dutch photographer Emmy Andriesse's most popular works is moving and thoughtful; their skillful combination of historical context and close reading (with particular attention to metaphor and composition) illuminate her "documentary intentions" and "aesthetic concerns." Jonathan F. Vance's essay is judicious as it reorients some longstanding ideas about motivations for enlistment in Canada. Finally, Peter C. Van Wyck's history of the Dene community's involvement in the mining of radium and the secrecy surrounding it (both rendered in vocabularies of toxicity and suppression) is an outstanding contribution; his ideas find fuller articulation in *The Highway of the Atom* (2011); but here they are a welcome introduction to the ethical dimensions of a hidden part of the north's history.

More generally, I'm struck by the creativity of these essays, the diversity in approach and subject matter, their refusal of old and misleading binaries (which pit war against peace or the reality of war against the lies of the home front), and the careful attention to language, performance, and line. This collection stands as a rich archive of vibrant ideas about trauma, death, greed, violence, and recovery. The volume shows what is possible when smart people think creatively about the burdens of war and the exigencies of peace.

But I do have one reservation. With so many different approaches and so many different topics, I wonder if a more focused or clearer organization of the volume would be more helpful. These war and peace

efforts are drastically different, each located in its own historical moment with its own particular circumstances. "War" is a broad placeholder for different events and different experiences on different continents in different time periods. And the specificity of the essays—their admirable and careful attention to particular formulations of historically-dependent ideas—makes it difficult to reach conclusions about war in the past hundred years or so. The gaps are sometimes too large to bridge or facilitate understanding. To recall the volume's central motivation: with so many voices and views competing for attention, the risk is that they can't or won't be heard.

Still, this collection of essays is both admirable and useful. Its high quality is easily recognized and defended.

Critiquing Nostalgia

Connie Guzzo-McParland
The Girls of Piazza D'Amore. Linda Leith $13.95

Reviewed by Linda M. Morra

As the title suggests, Connie Guzzo-McParland's *The Girls of Piazza D'Amore* is a charming fictional account told from the perspective of Caterina, a woman living in Montreal who was nine years of age when she and her family left Mulirena, a small town in Calabria, just after the Second World War. The emphasis on the lives of girls and women in the book is revealing of the socio-political context of the era; in such southern Italian villages, many men were away fighting in the Second World War. Upon their return, they often departed again to locate employment opportunities as the only means to support their families. The women, therefore, were left behind as the mainstay to traditional Italian family life; they cared for the children and generally managed domestic concerns until their male counterparts were able to return and assume their place again as the head of the household. Sometimes, that intervening period could extend for years.

This novel's consideration of this period in Italy is complex and sophisticated in its rendering of the past. Although there is a trajectory of Italian-Canadian literature that is informed by an unmitigated sense of loss and longing for a world left behind, Caterina's recollections that inspire and inform this novel are not single-mindedly nostalgic. As an adult looking back on the period, she *does* characterize the loss of that period as "a persistent ache of yearning, like the grief for a lost love"; however, these reminiscences of her early life in Italy are also contrasted with a present moment to showcase how life in Italy was complicated by one's status as a female subject. On the one hand, memory allows the protagonist to reconnect with those women and girls who were central to her childhood; on the other hand, she recalls how women's and girl's desires were often thwarted by the strict gender codes in place. Indeed, at times, those strict gender codes were enforced by the women themselves.

The novel's opening epigraph thus locates itself in another literary trajectory that encompasses Italian-Canadian women and their struggles with a cultural inheritance that is at once rich and nourishing but also limiting and destructive. Citing an excerpt from the titular poem of Gianna Patriarca's *Italian Women and Other Tragedies* as its epigraph, the novel promises both to reflect upon and also to critique Italian customs that marginalized Italian women and their vast contributions to their families and that obliged them to grapple with the inflexibilities of a patriarchal culture: they "breathe only / leftover air / and speak only / when deeper voices / have fallen asleep." With her novel, Guzzo-McParland permits these voices to be heard and forges greater space for the articulation of their concerns. She allows to be seen the very lives that might have otherwise disappeared from view.

The Book of Negroes

Lawrence Hill
Dear Sir, I Intend to Burn your Book: An Anatomy of a Book Burning. U of Alberta P $10.95

Ruth Holmes Whitehead
Black Loyalists: Southern Settlers of Nova Scotia's First Free Black Communities. Nimbus $29.95

Christian J. Krampe
The Past is Present: The African-Canadian Experience in Lawrence Hill's Fiction. Peter Lang $89.99

Reviewed by Maureen Moynagh

Central to all three works under review is the late-eighteenth-century British military ledger known as The Book of Negroes. What could be more emblematic of British imperialism: a ledger keeping an account of the traffic in human beings. The Book of Negroes is a record of all the black people leaving New York on British convoys in 1783, whether enslaved, indentured or freed. This document of a troubling colonial legacy is important for all three of the works I consider here because of what it represents for Canada. It is a testament to the foundational role played by black people in the nation, to Canada's involvement in the history of slavery, and to Canada's status as both destination and point of departure among the routes that made up the Black Atlantic. Its very existence is a powerful riposte to popular narratives of Canadian exceptionalism.

Lawrence Hill, whose novel *The Book of Negroes* (2007) takes its name from The Book of Negroes—at least in its Canadian and UK editions—knows as well as anyone how troubling and ambivalent a document this is. As he explains in the text of the lecture he delivered at the University of Alberta in 2012, readers of the novel elsewhere in the world have found the title of the novel sufficiently disturbing to burn the book, or at least the cover bearing the offending title. Hill's use of the term "Negro," derived as it was from the historical record, was sufficiently offensive to Roy Groenberg and the group he represented (Honor and Restore Victims of Slavery in Suriname) to prompt the burning of copies of the Dutch cover in a park in Amsterdam next to a monument commemorating the victims of Dutch slavery. This act serves, in the lecture, as the point of departure for a meditation on book burnings and censorship and it forms the basis for an impassioned plea for freedom of expression, even in cases when one can understand the undeniable hurt experienced by some readers. Hill's situation was, after all, not without a painful irony: the title offended many of the very readers he imagined himself to be writing for, and not just in the Netherlands, but in the US where Hill's publishers requested a different title in anticipation of a negative response from readers and booksellers. Hill has agreed to such changes; he even proposed it himself when a German publisher approached him. Yet he also insists that "there is sometimes room to use painful language to reclaim our own history."

For Ruth Whitehead, the import of The Book of Negroes has to do with genealogy and history. The descendants of many Black Loyalists have been able to trace the arrival of their families in Nova Scotia thanks to this ledger, and Whitehead has been able to use it alongside census records, muster rolls, court cases, church records, and estate inventories to track Black Loyalists back to the period of their enslavement and escape in the US. *Black Loyalists: Southern Settlers of Nova Scotia's First Free Black Communities* concentrates in particular on the genealogical connections between South Carolina, Georgia, and Nova Scotia. Whitehead's focus on specific Black Loyalist families and on the historical linkages between key southern states and the province of Nova Scotia during the American Revolutionary War enriches the extant historical literature on Black Loyalists. Her book also represents

an important contribution to studies of slavery in North America more broadly, for as she points out, using The Book of Negroes together with other archival materials Whitehead has been able to trace genealogies for some of the Black Loyalists "*seventy years earlier* than any comparable record can be created for most blacks in the United States." If parts of her book rehearse well-known aspects of the history of slavery, Whitehead's concentration on the roots and routes of specific individuals from slavery to freedom is valuable and compelling. Perhaps most importantly, Whitehead's study complements the body of writing, both historical and literary, that seeks to intervene in Canadian national narratives about slavery and racial (in)justice north of the 49th parallel.

Collective memory is also central to *The Past is Present*, Christian Krampe's literary-critical study of Lawrence Hill's fiction. Arguing that Hill's preoccupation, in his historical fiction, with a "usable past" is emblematic of African-Canadian literature as a whole, Krampe offers detailed readings of *The Book of Negroes* and *Any Known Blood* that focus on Hill's contestation of hegemonic Canadian narratives about the nation's relationship to slavery and other forms of racial injustice. This is not by any means a new argument, but the extended readings of Lawrence Hill's work are a welcome contribution to African-Canadian literary study. *The Past is Present* was Krampe's PhD dissertation for the University of Trier, and it reads very much like a dissertation in its extended review of the theoretical literature on collective memory, historical metafiction, and documentary fiction as well as its methodically structured discussions of the two novels by Hill. The detailed plot summaries and the extended documentation of the ways Hill's novels, especially *The Book of Negroes*, incorporate the standard topoi of slave narratives identified by James Olney are not really necessary. Revised from dissertation into book, Krampe's study would be more engaging to read and its contribution more pointed.

Having said that, I must add that Krampe offers important insights into what sets Hill's representation of slave narratives apart from other neo-slave narratives and marks his novels as speaking to particularly Canadian concerns. Hill's evident preoccupation with historical veracity, Krampe rightly argues, has less to do with persuading readers of the cruelty of slavery as an institution than it does with persuading readers of Canada's role in that history. Similarly, the critique of the myth that Canada is the promised land for escaping slaves that was rehearsed so often in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave narratives can be, and arguably *must* be, effected by Canadian neo-slave narratives. Krampe's book includes an appendix that will be of interest to students of African-Canadian literature. In addition to very interesting interviews with both Lawrence Hill and George Elliott Clarke, Krampe has provided a table tracking the representation of African-Canadian writers in the Governor General's and the Giller literary prizes and in the Canada Reads competition, as well as a thematic bibliography of African-Canadian poetry.

All three of these works usefully illuminate one another, particularly if one adds Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes* into the mix. If relatively few readers are likely to pursue this course of reading, I would nonetheless recommend Ruth Whitehead's study of the Black Loyalists as an illuminating companion to Hill's novel. Putting The Book of Negroes together with *The Book of Negroes* seems fitting, particularly in view of the historical ambitions of Hill's fiction, and it just might be that his bestseller has paved the way for a broader readership for works like Whitehead's. If the hemispheric history of slavery remains a painful one, confronting it and its mixed legacies from the

perspective of those who were enslaved as Hill (both in his novel and his lecture) and Whitehead do seems the only way forward.

Another Notable Insomniac in the World of Literature

Viðar Hreinsson
Wakeful Nights—Stephan G. Stephansson: Icelandic-Canadian Poet. Benson Ranch $42.00

Reviewed by Birna Bjarnadóttir

Originally published in Icelandic in 2002 (Vol. I) and 2003 (Vol. II), Viðar Hreinsson's biography *Wakeful Nights—Stephan G. Stephansson: Icelandic–Canadian Poet*, is a landmark publication in the field of Canadian literature and culture. Hreinsson's aim with the abridged English version is to present—to the English-speaking world—"a comprehensive biography of Stephan G. Stephansson." The result is an immensely rich story about the life and work of an Icelandic–Canadian poet, farmer, essayist, pacifist and social prophet. Born in 1853 in a remote fjord in the northern part of Iceland, Stephan G. immigrated with his parents to North America in 1873. He was a pioneer in Wisconsin and Dakota Territories until 1889 when he homesteaded in Alberta. He passed away in Markerville in 1927.

Given the cultural scope of the subject matter, and the way in which the story of Stephan G.'s life and work crosses both centuries and continents, the biography also serves as a significant source on the history of emigration, the ideologies of modernity, and the turmoil of the First World War. Last, but not least, the biography reveals the inherent drama in the making of cultures: Stephan G.'s towering status as a poet within the Icelandic community on both sides of the Atlantic somewhat intensifies the fact that his contribution to Canadian literature and culture has been recognized by only a handful of his non-Icelandic fellow countrymen in Canada.

As to be expected, Hreinsson is fully aware of the challenge of his subject matter. If anything, he may be too cautious in his Preface where he advises the reader to keep in mind that this biography was originally written "for Icelandic readers, from an Icelandic point of view. Had it been written by a Canadian, it would be quite different. This abridged version is an attempt to present the life and work of Stephan G. in a narrative manner without intrusive authorial comments." However, Hreinsson's precaution may, in turn, encourage the reader to reflect upon the urgency of the book's subject matter. Here, I am not only referring to Stephan G.'s consistent and deep running views on religion, capitalism and warfare. As it is, these views set him apart from many of the Icelandic immigrants in both Canada and the US, and the controversy that followed is carefully documented in Hreinsson's book. What is no less compelling to observe is the nature of the cultural "crack" at play in a biography like this one. For what is the "light" that pours through the Wakeful Nights?

"I have acquired somehow no fatherland," composed Stephan G. in his poem "Exile"; a prevailing existential condition that never inspired him to write his poetry in English. Thereby, he contributed—like the Icelandic-Canadian writers Guttormur J. Guttormsson and Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason—to the strange beauty of a remote region in Canadian literature and culture. As such, this book has also much to offer to the subjects of the poetics of immigration and the translation of cultures. As a living testament to Northrop Frye's view that literature shapes cultural identity, readers can make themselves familiar with the Icelandic immigrant who became a key writer of Icelandic literature on both sides of the Atlantic; the farmer who ferried with him an entire cultural heritage across the Atlantic; the disciple of Emerson in the ranks of North American poets and

philosophers; and the notable insomniac in the world of literature who worked in the field during the day and read and composed in the night.

Canada in Eight Tongues

Katalin Kurtosi, ed.
Canada in Eight Tongues: Translating Canada in Central Europe / Le Canada en huit langues : Traduire le Canada en Europe centrale.
Masaryk University n.p.

Reviewed by Robert Schwartzwald

This bilingual collection of twenty-five essays (five are in French) by academics and translators in central Europe offers worthy insights into how Canadian literature circulates in a part of the world where nation-building since the nineteenth century has been endlessly interrupted, disrupted, and reprised. Contributions to the first and longest section, "A Panorama of Translations in Countries of the Region," also underscore the shared necessity of translation for countries whose languages are spoken by relatively small populations. Yet the essays recount a diversity of outcomes against a backdrop of a common regional periodicity: the post Second World War imposition of the "democratic republics" (regarded here predominantly as an act of brutal cultural violence), the collapse of the East bloc post-1989, and the difficult negotiation of ethnic and national claims in tandem with the imperatives of European integration ever since. Perhaps this explains the recurring interest by contributors in works from our mid-size, multi-national, multicultural country that engage the "survival Gothic" or the meta-textual exploration of storytelling and mythmaking. Even so, they demonstrate how more localized political factors also enter into the picture to belie the common assumption of uniform censorship during the *ancien régime*. For example, Canadian writing enjoyed a continuous presence in the former Yugoslavia during the years when the Tito regime strove to differentiate its own variety of socialism from the Soviet Union's. In Bulgaria, it was not some abstract notion of "freedom" that created an appetite for Canadian books, but the perceived Canadian values of "community, openness and welfare," in other words values more in tune with the claims of "socialism with a human face." The volume's second section examines the translation and reception of canonical writers—Atwood, Cohen, Findley, Kroetsch, Montgomery, Munro, and Ondaatje. Here too, we see how translation was sometimes embraced for state-ideological purposes. In Slovakia, *Anne of Green Gables* was hugely popular with the Socialist regime for its heroine's embodiment of feminine virtue, but all references to Christianity were expunged. "Genders and Genre," the third section, features essays on the translation of women writers and the Canadian short story in Croatia. Both are complicated by the conflict between Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s, including Croatia's attempt to disengage and autonomize its language from the "Serbo-Croatian" of the Tito era. In a third essay, Katalin Kurtosi looks at the translation and performance of Canadian plays in Hungary with a focus on Michel Tremblay's frequently produced *Les Belles soeurs*. Kurtosi observes that Germaine's rapturous covetousness and ill-fated green-stamp party could only make sense in Hungary—or in any other east-bloc country, for that matter—once late capitalist consumerism had actually arrived! She also identifies Lajos Parti Nagy's indebtedness to Tremblay for a Roma-based story as a local example of the play's success worldwide when re-set among minoritarian or marginalized communities. The final section offers three "Translator's insights," including two particularly touching essays on translating Frye into Czech and Hungarian. The latter evokes the challenges of delivering

Anatomy of Criticism to readers trained in a completely different theoretical tradition while the former describes the translator's personal itinerary toward Frye and the difficulties of establishing archetypal literary terms in Czech. In a useful prefatory essay, David Staines praises the volume as an antidote to a residual colonialist diffidence that Canadians too often display toward their country's literature. Indeed, the contributors to *Canada in Eight Tongues* are unapologetic and articulate about what attracts them thematically and stylistically to Canadian writing with an astute awareness of the changing nature of that writing and the diversity of its voices. Most also take the time to acknowledge the crucial role that former Canadian governments played in promoting the publication and performance of Canadian works, as well as in teaching and scholarship on Canada, in central Europe. Their gamble, guided by enlightened self-interest, was that some of the funding would "stick" and produce an informed, serious, and durable community of interest in Canada that would go beyond trade deals. The current government's cancellation of the "Understanding Canada" programs is less enlightened, but consistent with its attempts to control the message and generalized suspicion of academic scholarship. This thoughtful volume can fairly be seen as a vindication of earlier, now abandoned initiatives.

Back to the Epicentre

Dany Laferrière; David Homel, trans.
The Return. Douglas & McIntyre $22.95

Dany Laferrière; David Homel, trans.
The World is Moving Around Me: A Memoir of the Haiti Earthquake. Arsenal $15.95

Reviewed by Niall McArdle

If you are a writer who removes yourself from your native culture for too long, what chance can you have of faithfully recording a return visit? In 2009 Montreal poet Dany Laferrière, after thirty years in Canada, returned "home" to Haiti and the years and distance might have taken their toll. "I have doubts about the vocation of the writer in exile," he writes in *The Return*. Using prose and poetry in a blend of fact, fiction, and memory, *The Return* records a revisiting of his childhood and a rapprochement with his late father, whose body is interred in a Brooklyn cemetery, but whose spirit Laferrière brings with him.

Going home is a literary conceit as old as *The Odyssey*. As Odysseus journeyed westward from Greek isle to Greek isle, Laferrière moves south from island to island, from a freezing Montreal to a temperate Manhattan and then to a tropical Haiti, where his senses go into overload:

> I don't want to think.
> Just see, hear and feel.
> Note it all down before I lose my head,
> drunk on this explosion of tropical
> colors, smells and tastes.

Laferrière is burdened by ghosts, his father's, of course, but also the poet Aimé Césaire's, whose *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* is a touchstone, as well as Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's. Duvalier forced Laferrière's father, Windsor, into exile in the 1970s. Laferrière Jr. soon followed. Duvalier is long gone and Haiti is still recovering, but only barely, and while foreign journalists hole up in a luxury hotel high enough "so they can see / what's boiling over down below / in the great stewpot of Port-au-Prince," Laferrière asks:

> Have you ever considered a city
> of more than two million people
> half of whom are literally starving to death?
> Human flesh is meat too.
> How long can a taboo
> stand up to sheer necessity?

The Return occupies that odd grey area between fiction and memoir. Many of the observations are cogent, but some are

banal, as is, sadly, some of the imagery. Is Laferrière at a loss because he's overwhelmed, or because he's been away too long? Maybe the old truism is false: you *can* go home again, but can you make the return into poetry?

It is ironic that Laferrière is on much surer literary ground when writing *The World is Moving Around Me*, his journal of the physical and psychological destruction wrought by the 2010 Haiti earthquake. "Life seems to have gotten back to normal after decades of trouble," it begins, before outlining Haitian normality: laughing girls, painters of naive canvases, women selling mangoes. Laferrière is there for a literary festival, and his optimism ("literature seems to have supplanted politics in the public mind. Writers are on television more often than elected officials") is immediately shaken when, as he is sitting down to dinner, the ground shakes and he hears "the low roar of buildings falling to their knees."

He records everything he sees and hears in the aftermath, spending that first night listening for the crow of the roosters, and he notes, "the city was filled with a disciplined, generous, and restrained crowd."

After the earthquake, he relates how some Haitian exiles wanted to have been there, and their shame at having missed it: "He even imagined himself buried in the ruins. Do we need to remind him that those who died desired only to live? They don't want his presence at their side."

He notes angrily that the first world uses the earthquake to reimagine Haiti as "a cursed country." After Duvalier, Haiti became a byword for corruption, and now, just as it was getting a sense of itself again, the ground fell out from under it and it reclaimed its spot as cursed: "Some Haitians, at the end of their rope, are even starting to believe it. You have to be really desperate to accept the contempt that others have for you."

Oddly, the memoir of the earthquake feels more personal than the family-ridden *The Return*. Laferrière owed his publisher a book, and he states, "I made up my mind not to let the earthquake upset my schedule." One is left wondering: was it the suddenness of the tragedy that prompted such good reportage, and is it a better memoir than *The Return* because earthquakes are not "The inevitable phone call / that every middle-aged man / one day will receive. / My father has died"?

Trajectories in Feminism

Michele Landsberg
Writing the Revolution. Second Story $24.95

Joan Sangster
Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women's History. U of Alberta P $34.95

Reviewed by Sally Mennill

"Revolutions echo down through generations" says Michele Landsberg in the conclusion to her 2011 compilation of articles, *Writing the Revolution*. Landsberg chronicles her experiences of the feminist movement between 1978 and 2003 via a carefully chosen and curated collection of her *Toronto Star* articles published during that time. Similarly, in *Through Feminist Eyes*, Joan Sangster offers a collection of her feminist academic writing from 1978 to 2011, in which she chronicles the writing of women's and gender history in Canada. Together, these works offer a compilation of some of their authors' life's work to date, with a view to outlining the trajectory of elements of feminism over time. Sangster presents a historiographic look at both the writing of women's history in Canada, and her own implication therein. Landsberg reflects thematically on her career as a feminist activist and journalist. Both authors trace generational growth and renewal in their own streams of feminism.

Landsberg's compilation celebrates her journalism career while at the same time offering a review of some of the major

issues tackled by feminism over more than thirty years. While the book claims to be specifically about the second wave, it certainly bridges second and third wave issues, though discussion of the challenges posed to feminism do not include those within the movement itself. Landsberg's tome is structured around issues as she encountered and wrote about them—including women's liberation, sexual harassment, male sexual entitlement, child protection, immigration and refugees, and other crucial elements of the second wave. Landsberg focuses on lamenting women's challenges alongside celebrating some of feminism's victories, while perhaps glossing over divisions within the movement, and the so-called "transgressions of our foremothers." Many struggles that are ongoing are minimized, for example childcare and socio-economic divisions, while others, namely the twenty-first century neoliberal erosion of women's rights, are featured. Adding a measure of hope, Landsberg ends with a nod to more recent elements of the feminist movement and waxes poetic about future generations. *Writing the Revolution* is a poignant, thorough narrative of Landsberg's revolution, and a pedagogical gem for those of us who teach women's and gender history.

Sangster's work, also a pedagogical gem, though more at the graduate student level, also offers a semi-autobiographical analysis of her role in Canadian feminism. Far more self-reflexive and necessarily focused on the academic realm, Sangster analyzes her experiences with the growth and change of the movement for writing women's and gender history in Canada. Organized chronologically, Sangster offers a collection of her written essays with retrospective editorial content. After an elaborate introduction offering analysis of trends and current elements of local and international histories and historiographies of women and gender, Sangster starts with one of her earliest publications, paying allegiance to her historical materialist roots and offering insight into the beginnings of her career at a time when "doing women's history" was new. Ever careful to analyze the context in which her own work was created, Sangster notes some of the naïveté in her approach, but also highlights the continuing usefulness of her early work. Her second section shows an extensive engagement with labour histories in Peterborough, introducing a broader theoretical engagement with the onset of "the linguistic turn" in women's and gender history.

Much of the remainder of the book focuses on the use of oral history, how Sangster methodologically synthesized the advent of poststructuralist historical study with interview approaches, and a theoretical reconciliation of her labour historian allegiance to historical materialism and her gender historian interest in postmodern analysis. This is, in my opinion, the richest part of Sangster's narrative; a masterful integration of Sangster's own approaches throughout the 1990s and 2000s and critical analysis by theorists and historians alike. She then turns to some unanswered questions in current historical debate, offering insight and ideas rather than a definitive conclusion. Like Landsberg, Sangster offers a nod to future generations of feminist historians, opening up ideas for extended study.

Together, these two collections narrate the personal experiences of two particular streams of feminist thought in the late twentieth and early twemty-first centuries. With different intentions, approaches and disciplines, an in-depth comparison is not effective, but on the surface it is useful to note that these books both analyze the ongoing careers of two extraordinary women, inextricable from their roles in the feminist movement. They are both at once activists and analysts in their own ways, perhaps because it's impossible not to be.

On Anthologies

Robert Lecker
Keepers of the Code: English-Canadian Literary Anthologies and the Representation of Nation.
U of Toronto P $34.95

David O'Meara, ed.
The Griffin Poetry Prize Anthology 2012.
Anansi $19.95

Reviewed by Robert Zacharias

The central thesis of Robert Lecker's ambitious *Keepers of the Code: English-Canadian Literary Anthologies and the Representation of Nation* is straightforward and unlikely to be controversial: that anthologists of English-Canadian literature have understood themselves as contributing to a nationalizing project via a tight connection between literature and citizenship. Naming this the "anthological code," Lecker argues the "keepers of that code have understood that identity and culture are linked, that their job is to reinforce this connection, and that only by repeating the mantra of literature and nation can the actuality of Canada —'real time and space'—be affirmed (sic)." Contemporary anthologists may shy away from overt displays of literary nationalism, Lecker notes, but many still keep the code, rerouting nationalism into a conservative mimetic ideal that values literature to the extent that it reflects its Canadian "readers to themselves."

Lecker begins in 1837 with Simpson's *The Canadian Forget Me Not*, and touches on nearly 200 anthologies en route to 2010 before finishing with a discussion of his own *Open Country* (2007). Although some aspects of Lecker's argument are less than fully convincing—I found his attempt to extend the nakedly theological aspirations of early anthologies onto contemporary selections uneven, for example—*Keepers* shines as a work of critically informed literary history, deftly historicizing a surprisingly broad tradition of anthologies, mapping their shifting priorities, and demystifying the forces behind their compilation. Lecker recounts how the institutionalization of Canadian literature following World War II led to a surge of anthologies aimed at professors rather than a popular audience, for example, and he pulls back the curtain to reveal how fully such books are shaped by extra-literary concerns, calling their "representation of nation . . . the product of a series of negotiations between the editor, the authors included in the collection (and their agents or representatives), the publisher's budgetary control person, the bank, the designer, the typesetter, the printer, and the sales agents." Although there is a disproportionate amount of space given to earlier volumes, the scale of Lecker's survey does lend weight to his discussions of more recent anthologies. His stinging critiques of the romanticized and ahistorical claims made by the editors of *The New Canon* (2005) and *Penguin Book of Canadian Short Stories* (2007), for example, feel self-evident after his having traced nearly two centuries of similar claims over the preceding three hundred pages.

Keepers never manages to completely free itself from the circularity that so often haunts discussions of literary nationalism, however, and when he concludes that it is "almost as if the impulse to affirm the nation is genetically encoded, part of the Canadian anthologist's DNA," one wonders if such an impulse is really prototypically Canadian in any way, or if it is simply the unavoidable tautology of all nationalized literary studies. Lecker is well aware of such concerns, but even a brief comparison to anthological traditions elsewhere would have been useful, as would a more thorough engagement with Canadian literary criticism's long-standing discussions of what is at stake in the field's habit of "worrying [of] the nation."

One way of appreciating the accomplishment of Lecker's study is to read an anthology in light of its claims. In this context, *The Griffin Poetry Prize Anthology*

2012, edited by David O'Meara, appears as a strong but conflicted project. On the one hand, its "international" category serves as a reminder that literary anthologies need not be national, and that the ideal of setting aside nationalist concerns and collecting the very "best" writing remains alive. On the other hand, the Canada-based Griffin Poetry Prize retains a second, "Canadian," category, and it's hard not to hear echoes of Smith's "cosmopolitan" vs. "native" dichotomy, and to wonder about the role played by this latest twist on an enduring distinction. In other, less abstract ways, however, the anthology fails to rise to the occasion of its content. The brief introductions to each poet's selection are the judges' citation for his or her entire book, for example, which means they repeatedly praise poems that are not included in the anthology itself, and are often too full of award-speak to be of much use as introductions (To take a representative example: Różewicz's work, we are told, reveals "a soul the equal of the world's occasion"). And while it is not the editor's fault that there is just a single female among the seven finalists, the range of pages allotted to each poet does seem unjustifiably wide.

Fortunately, the poetry itself is strong. The anthology opens with poems taken from David Harsent's *Night*, which won the international award. Harsent's work is cinematic—boldly voyeuristic, really—and hyper-masculine, full of sharply etched images of men wandering through darkened urban landscapes, and haunted by troubling scenes of eroticized violence. The tight narrative poems from Yusef Komunyakaa's *The Chameleon Couch*, like the more elusive and intimate poems from Sean O'Brien's *November*, retain a sense of violence intersecting the everyday, but are broader, more self-aware, and more politicized. Tadeusz Różewicz's poems, translated under the title *Sobbing Superpower* by Joanna Trzeciak, are the most playful of the international selections, but his critiques of US foreign policy and contemplation of the origin of evil make for its most consistently surprising writing. The Canadian selections begin with a set of thoroughly engaging and approachable poems from Ken Babstock's *Methodist Hatchet*, which offer self-aware critiques ranging from class politics to the internet to poetry itself. Phil Hall's lengthy poem, taken from *Killdeer*, is confessional and cleverly anxious, its careful discussion of poetry's use of pain folding back upon itself. The collection closes with epigrammatic and densely philosophical poems from Jan Zwicky's *Forge*, which engage Bach and Schumann to probe a connection between music and language. The poetry is consistently strong enough to overcome the limitations of the anthology's frame, including its division of poets into International and Canadian sections.

Keepers of the Code will rightly become a key study for discussions of literary anthologies in Canada, richly informing our readings of projects like *The Griffin Poetry Prize Anthology 2012*.

Working for the Weekend

Jody Mason
Writing Unemployment: Worklessness, Mobility, and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Canadian Literatures. U of Toronto P $55.00

Penn Kemp, ed.
Jack Layton: Art in Action. Quattro $24.95

Reviewed by Michael Stewart

Perhaps it is a comment on contemporary neoliberalism and the politics of precarity that a book we would at one time have said to be about labour, nowadays claims to be about unemployment. By the same token, one of the most successful leftist politicians in Canadian history is recognized as such by virtue of an electoral victory completely overshadowed by a majority Conservative government relentlessly dismantling the social democratic legacies of the welfare state.

Jody Mason's impressive new book, *Writing Unemployment: Worklessness, Mobility and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Canadian Literatures* (2013), deploys joblessness, along with the attendant political and cultural strategies developed to combat it, in order to link various leftist and liberal discourses in a materialist print- and book-culture study. It is a needful book that continues the work of Ian McKay's *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (2006) and Candida Rifkind's *Comrades and Critics: Women, Literature, and the Left in 1930s Canada* (2009), fleshing out Canada's leftist twentieth-century literary cultures, without which, as Rifkind has claimed, "modernism in English Canada is unintelligible."

While many critics, like Rifkind, concentrate on the limitations of old-fashioned socialist ideologies and their New Left respondents through feminist, anti-racist, or queer lenses, Mason sets out to situate these competing and cooperating voices within the larger, shared liberal nationalist discourse of Canada's welfare state. Mason casts her net widely, seeking to look beyond the 1930s to elaborate the strands of Canadian leftist history. Beginning with Frederick Philip Grove's *A Search for America* (1927) cast against the turn-of-the-century "vagabondia" poems of Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey, Mason proceeds through the 1930s before finishing with various iterations of Canada's New Left: the reception and publication history of Hugh Garner's *Cabbagetown* (1950; 1968) and a collection of genres and textual forms in the 1970s including radical documentary plays and the socialist-feminist periodical *The Pedestal*.

Unemployment is a useful trope that frames discussions about labour scarcity, the liberal welfare state and, by the Centennial era, Canadian citizenship; but more interesting are the politics of mobility that inform Mason's analysis. Through a series of close readings, Mason teases out the various dialectic iterations of unrest and immobility—the nostalgic figure of the pioneer-settler versus an itinerant, largely immigrant workforce; socialist agitation versus a social-democratic state program of unemployment insurance; social critique versus Canadian nationalism—which comprise and frame the contested fields of cultural production.

Mason's significant and impressive archival work—including exhaustive periodical research—is enough to mark *Writing Unemployment* as notable, but the book also offers many readings of understudied texts, like two of Canada's contributions to the 1930s protest or proletarian novel, Claudius Gregory's *Forgotten Men* (1933) and Irene Baird's *Waste Heritage* (1939), and a convincing new reading of *Cabbagetown* that situates the 1968 "restoration" of Hugh Garner's original 1940s manuscript as a cultural product of the Centennial Era rather than the interwar period.

Mason ends her study in the 1970s as neoliberalism and globalization transform relations between the nation state and its citizens, particularly workers. Since then, the electoral fortunes of Canada's social democratic left have lain with the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP). Electorally speaking, the NDP reached its high-water mark in the 2010 federal election under Jack Layton, doubling their previous highest-ever seat count and sweeping the province of Quebec—despite losing the election to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's first Conservative majority. *Jack Layton: Art in Action* (2013), edited by Canadian poet Penn Kemp, hopes to memorialize Layton, who succumbed to cancer in 2011. Celebrating his connection to the arts, the new volume is a collection of testimonials, essays, and poems by friends, family members and colleagues, depicting the late opposition leader (or "J'activist," as Kemp calls him) as someone who blended art and direct action into his politics.

Layton's involvement in activist struggle is clear from the diversity of sources provided by *Art in Action.* The volume's anecdotes testify to Layton's support for AIDS activism, racialized communities like Sikhs asking for recognition of the 1914 *Komagata Maru* tragedy, and the Canadian artistic community beset by cuts by Harper's Conservative government. The focus on Layton's connection to the arts differentiates *Art in Action* from the two more explicitly political biographies on Layton, *Love, Hope, Optimism: An Informal Portrait of Jack Layton by Those Who Knew Him* (2012), edited by James L. Turk, and party strategist Brad Lavigne's *Building the Orange Wave: The Inside Story Behind the Historic Rise of Jack Layton and the NDP* (2013).

As might be expected in such an anthology, the contributions are highly uneven, highly partisan, and highly sentimental. The best pieces—Judy Rebick's moving tribute "Le Bon Jack," for example—relate specific and personal responses to Jack's death; but too many of the testimonials blend together in a collective blur of platitudes: "leadership," "inspiration," "vision" and so on.

It is hard to discern at times what kind of editorial filter was employed for the material, if any. The collection includes a summary of an interview in which the interlocutor forgot his recording equipment, despite the fact that the transcript of the second (successful) attempt at the same interview is included. The book also badly needs a proofread; while awkward syntax might be expected from some of the unpracticed writers who comprise the book, some sections of the text appear to reference earlier drafts with different layouts.

However, *Art in Action* includes some lovely details about the late politician's life—Layton, it turns out, had perfect pitch. The inclusion of Layton's personal correspondence, apart from being of interest as a primary biographical source, also reveals how quickly he would respond to government attacks on the arts when roused by his constituents, friends, or allies. And without a doubt, the sheer volume of responses reflects the success of both Layton's public persona as an election strategy and his ability to connect with certain members of Canada's artistic constituency on an individual level.

There's No Escape

Susan Musgrave
Given. Thistledown $19.95

Meredith Quartermain
Rupert's Land. NeWest $20.95

Reviewed by Karen Charleson

The protagonists in both Susan Musgrave's *Given* and Meredith Quartermain's *Rupert's Land* escape. They escape from the confines of repressive society, and from the confines of grief. They escape from a prison for criminals, and from a prison-school for Aboriginal children. All of the escapes prove temporary. The protagonists are eventually brought back to the harsh realities of their respective existences. In their journeys of escape, however, they find at least some redemption, some measure of physical, mental, or spiritual healing.

Given takes place within a set of parenthesis. The novel opens with a prison van transporting the unnamed narrator and then crashing because of a billboard that reads: "ETERNITY WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?" At the novel's conclusion, the hearse (driven throughout much of the story) crashes because of another billboard with the identical message. A morbidly curious crowd gathers at both scenes. The narrator escapes from the initial accident. It is not until the novel's conclusion that we realize that the tale as it unfolds is the narrator's dream/hallucination. We are left confused as to what actually happened both in the present and

in the past. This confusion is further compounded by characters that run through both reality and dream.

Musgrave is an acclaimed poet. Perhaps that is why her lack of subtlety here surprises me. Attempts at cleverness seem overly contrived, like the ads for prescription drugs on the walls of the mental hospital. Expressions and situations are sometimes hackneyed. The small town café server, for example, wears sweat pants and holds a cigarette in one hand and a liquor bottle in the other. Musgrave also plays with words and events but the language is sometimes trite. The dead twins are "The Twin Terrorists"; a brand of coffin is "the Chrysalis"; lawyers gather at the "Hung Jury Inn." Glibness and dark humour are carelessly strewn. A bombing bystander is interviewed as an expert because he had "been on a bus tour of Jerusalem." The social satire and commentary are unmistakable.

Given is fast-paced. There are murders, bombings, drugs, and sex. However, things as straightforward as the weather or time of day are not completely clear. There is much that we never find out. At times the novel seems to take place far into the future—at a time of increased female suicide bombings and more murdered babies and children. At other times the setting could easily be ten or more years in the past (there are VCRs but no internet connections).

Musgrave creates a reality (a thinly disguised Haida Gwaii) with strong elements of fantasy. I'm reminded of the magic realism of Jack Hodgins and his Vancouver Island. Mostly however, *Given* reminds me of *Pincher Martin* by the Nobel Laureate William Golding. In that novel, we follow Martin's desperate attempts to survive on a barren rock island in the North Atlantic, only to learn in conclusion that Martin drowned shortly after his ship was sunk. Suddenly, the way we see Martin's narrative changes. All becomes a hallucination in a man's final moments before death. Something similar happened when I read *Given.* The ending jolted me into a deeper and different understanding of the story.

While I can genuinely say that I enjoyed the wild ride that was *Given*, I had a different reaction to *Rupert's Land*. Something continued to bother me after I finished reading. Unlike Musgrave's timeline, Quartermain's history is accurate. The Great Depression, restrictions on Indigenous people and "Indian" Residential schools really happened. The fictional tale of the white girl and Native boy on their trek to find the boy's home and family however, rings false. Somehow, it seemed even more unlikely than Musgrave's bizarre chain of unbelievable events.

At first I thought that it was the human interaction of two nearly teenage children that was off. I have six children of my own. Twelve year olds just don't speak and interact like Quartermain's characters. There is something more though. In the history which Quartermain herself describes, I just don't believe that a white girl and a Native boy could run away together. If by some fluke this actually happened, I cannot believe that any non-Native person would help them, or be anything other than highly suspicious. In the settler society of the day, I cannot believe that the children wouldn't have been apprehended almost immediately. I can believe *Rupert's Land* Part One about Cora on her own; I can believe Part Two about Hunter on his own; but I cannot believe Part Three about Cora and Hunter together.

As in *Given*, threads in *Rupert's Land* link the past and the present. What was once named Rupert's Land, for example, has become by the 1930's, a town presided over by Judge Rupert. Quartermain's descriptions of the Dust Bowl landscape are strong, as are her descriptions of the home lives of her protagonists. Cora and Hunter are trapped in mutually exclusive worlds. Cora struggles with restrictive societal, family, and Church rules and norms. Hunter struggles with

another set of societal and legal laws for "Indians" that oppress his family and eventually succeed in imprisoning him at the Indian Residential School. The children's relationship parallels the power relationship that existed between white and Aboriginal people at the time. Cora bosses; Hunter obeys. Cora is the owner / controller of the horse; Hunter the passenger. Cora is the benefactor; Hunter the recipient. As limited as Cora's options are, they are greater than Hunter's.

We know from the outset that Cora and Hunter's quest will fail. Why? Because white girls and Indian boys do not successfully run away from the systems that bind them on the 1930's Prairies. Ever. Similarly, *Given's* unnamed narrator's escape from prison and her own guilt fails. She simply cannot alter the past. While the protagonists seek and strive toward their own redemption and salvation, ultimately no one can escape their pasts or their presents.

Town and Frown

Riel Nason
The Town That Drowned. Goose Lane $19.95

Lauren B. Davis
Our Daily Bread. HarperCollins $17.99

Reviewed by Timothy Dugdale

Small towns—people love to leave them. And then they can't wait to get back, if only to visit. The small towns people love have fudge shops and gastro pubs and docks at the end of the main street. They're cute and harmless. But there are other small towns, places surrounded by people who never leave and go rancid knowing escape would be futile. They sink in and take everyone they can down with them.

In *Our Daily Bread*, the people of Gideon are god-fearing upright folk who have no love lost for the Erskines, a motley clan that has been mired in destitute cretinism on the impoverished turf of North Mountain. Poverty has driven them to do a lot of bad things to one another. Albert Erskine has had enough. He wants something better than meth and molestation for his kids. Things, however, will get a lot worse for Albert before they get better. Suspecting that he's drifting away from the fold, two of his uncles lay a savage and vulgar beating on him. Undaunted, Albert makes his way to town and befriends the troubled son of a gent who seems to take refuge from an Alice Munro story. Eventually the boy finds his way to North Mountain where there is plenty of opportunity for him to become more troubled.

Davis has written a social tract disguised as hillbilly goth and it works pretty well. She grew up in the Maritimes where there are plenty of chilling stories about real outcasts like the Goler clan whose plight she has mined for material. This is a raw, human story that can never have a happy ending and Davis doesn't try to give it one. She can be poetic with her prose but she's admirably tough minded and unafraid to lay bare the deprivations of people left to their mangled devices by people who should offer the charity their faith and simple human decency commands.

Riel Nason's small town has its own problems in *The Town That Drowned*. The story begins with the hallucination of the young narrator as she's drowning in a New Brunswick lake. She imagines the town submerged under a deluge of water. Sure enough, after her rescue, strange surveying stakes begin to appear. A reckoning looms. A massive dam is to be built and the town must disassemble. Nason sets her story in mid-sixties New Brunswick and lards her tale with homespun niceties that remove any real teeth her tale might have had. The book, despite the clean prose, often reads like youth literature, including a misunderstood brother who launches messages-in-a-bottle from a beloved yet doomed bridge. Still, it is a charming

imagined time capsule of good people forced into a bad situation beyond their control, a classic conundrum of industrial progress.

Indexing Frye

Jean O'Grady, ed.
Index to the Collected Works of Northrop Frye, Vol 30. U of Toronto P $125.00

Reviewed by Graham N. Forst

This final volume of the *Collected Works of Northrop Frye* (*CWNF*) cross-references over 150,000 entries, itemizing all Frye's thinking, reading and writing as contained in the twenty-nine huge volumes that preceded it. The indexing was clearly an enormous project; the *CWNF* makes up a total of over 15,000 pages, and runs around seven-and-a-half-million words. Jean O'Grady, the "Compiler," has also indexed the lengthy and scholarly introductions to each volume, as well as each volume's footnotes, which themselves comprise of three hundred pages, about 2,500 footnotes in all.

There is no precedent for a project of this magnitude in Canadian letters, nor is there ever likely to be. In fact, no modern literary critic anywhere is so celebrated by anything like such a "complete works"—and there's more to come. Robert Denham is working on a collection of material that was omitted from *CWNF*, including a notebook that, according to General Editor Alvin Lee, "accidentally fell through the cracks," along with some newly discovered material that wasn't originally thought worthy of inclusion.

For Frye scholars, the *Index* to the *CWNF* offers a unique map to his mind and critical strategies, revealing the sublime *scope* of Frye's thought and reading. But it also reveals (quite accidentally) the reasons for Frye's precipitous fall from critical dominance in the twenty-first century. First, there is his almost exclusive attention to "canonical" literature, coupled with either a disdain for or avoidance of anything connected to identity politics. And second, there is his "ivory-towerish" (Frye loathed the accusation) diffidence towards contemporary politics and political upheavals, and indeed towards world events in general which, as Terry Eagleton noted, gives his critical work a kind of distance and cool neutrality—"a view of literature from the planet Zog" as he called it.

The literary "map" of Frye's mind which is revealed by the *Index* is not surprising: four full pages of notes on the Bible, eight on Blake (as opposed to one-half page on Pope and less on any other eighteenth century author), three on Dante, five and a half on Milton, and fourteen on Shakespeare. Frye's preference for Romanticism is also clear; for example, Plato has twice as many entries as Aristotle, Rousseau five times more than Hobbes, and entries under "Romantic" override those of "Augustan" by twenty times. Discussion of the genre of "Romance" is given double the attention of the genre of "Irony," and "Comedy" twice the space of "Tragedy." Shakespeare's cynical plays (*Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*) receive almost no notice from Frye, whereas the "festive comedies" have hundreds of notes. The apocalyptic New Testament book of Revelation has three hundred notes; its Old Testament counterpart, the bitter but poetic "Lamentations," only seven.

These facts are important to bear in mind when we recall that, according to Frye's preface to *Anatomy of Criticism*, his goal was to offer "[as] synoptic [a] view of the scope, theory, principles, and techniques of literary criticism [as] is possible." But Frye *did* have his "cultural envelope" as he called it—that of an ordained low-church middle-class Methodist minister (or in his own words, "a plainclothesman for the United Church")—which clearly led him to an overwhelming emphasis on

Protestant literature and history. Thus, for example, all entries for Hebrew patriarchs taken together are dwarfed by the category of "Jesus," reflecting his almost complete disregard for, among others, the great American Jewish novelists of the twentieth century (Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Joseph Heller, E. L. Doctorow, Bernard Malamud et al.), and for atheists like Bertolt Brecht, George Eliot, Nadine Gordimer, Iris Murdoch, Harold Pinter, Kurt Vonnegut, and others.

Regarding Frye's general *Weltanschauung*, the *Index* reveals something else that is rarely broached in Frye studies: his systemic turning from instances of, and discussion of, or acceptance of, radical evil, including confronting the mid-twentieth-century essential threat to Frye's brand of humanism posed by the European Judeocide, which haunted so many of his contemporary critics including Walter Benjamin (in anticipation), Irving Howe, John Lukas, Alfred Kazin, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Rudolf Steiner, all of whom received either no, or little, attention from Frye. Notably, the work of the great Literature Nobelist and Auschwitz survivor Elie Wiesel also does not receive his attention.

If this *Index* reveals anything, then, it is that Frye was criticism's Hegel: a great mind, determined to impose upon an amorphous subject matter a vast Christian architectonic of moral progress, at a time when great schemes were crumbling and moral progress had become increasingly apparent as demonic regress.

"Language to Live By"

Catherine Owen
Catalysts: Confrontations with the Muse.
Wolsak and Wynn $17.00

Amber Dawn
How Poetry Saved my Life: A Hustler's Memoir.
Arsenal $15.95

Reviewed by Tiffany Johnstone

When authors write about the process of writing, they inevitably explore tensions between art and life, and between art and society. As in William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1850) and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), this inquiry often occurs in an autobiographical context. Vancouver authors Catherine Owen and Amber Dawn draw on this tradition of literary memoir in Owen's *Catalysts: Confrontations with the Muse* (2012) and Dawn's *How Poetry Saved My Life: A Hustler's Memoir* (2013). They combine autobiographical non-fiction and poetry to recount the search for a voice as a writer and advocate for social change.

Catalysts is Owen's first prose collection. It consists of a series of autobiographical essays written between 1999 and 2011. Throughout the text, Owen chronicles her attempts to embody artist/muse relationships from the perspective of a blue-collar feminist environmentalist with an interest in "subculture" in all its forms. The book is divided thematically into two sections, "Origins" and "Theories." The first section features a series of "pilgrimages" fuelled by esoteric muses, including American environmentalist poet Robinson Jeffers, obscure female BC pioneer photographer Mattie Gunterman, a host of almost forgotten medieval European female poets, and a lover in Montreal lost to drug addiction and suicide. *Catalysts* abounds in intertextual references that challenge us to abandon lingering perceptions of art as a pure or timeless aesthetic practice. What we have

instead is a polyphonic "mishmash" of "language and rhythm," a conversation rich in peculiarities. The second and stronger part of the book consists of meditations on artistic and scholarly practice, and concludes with the impressive "Dark Ecologies," which envisions a new "ecological consciousness" in Canadian literature. She highlights American writer and holocaust survivor Terrence des Pres' observation that "Poetry that evades our being in the world offers… no language to live by," and she encourages "a reconfiguring, through poems, of ways of relating to the planet." Owen's fixation with downtrodden muses, from little known artists to species on the point of extinction, creates a paradoxical artistic persona. She is drawn to loss and trauma, which she suggests art has the power to recognize but not fully repair. While her message is at times didactic and inconsistent, particularly in her criticism of and simultaneous engagement in aspects of popular culture, she invokes a powerful alternative mythology of subcultural poets and muses.

Dawn also adopts what can be seen as a radical blue-collar feminist poetics "to live by" in *How Poetry Saved My Life*. Her follow-up memoir to the Lambda award-winning novel *Sub Rosa* contains poetry and essays about her experiences as a Vancouver sex-worker, activist, and writer since the 90s. An instant classic in the vein of Evelyn Lau's *Runaway*, Dawn's memoir is extraordinary not only for its tale of personal survival in a community ravaged by poverty, serial killings, disappearances, drugs, and disease, but also for her representation of art as integral to personal and collective survival. The book is divided into three parts, "Outside," "Inside," and "Inward," which refer on a literal level to her time as a sex worker and activist on the streets of east Vancouver and in massage parlours, followed by her retirement from the sex trade and her writing career.

These sections follow Dawn's development as an artist from being inspired by poetry on skid row, to developing her craft, achieving an MFA in creative writing at UBC, and becoming a celebrated queer feminist author and activist. The poetry of "Inside" combines restrained and sensuous imagery with her signature understated humour and colloquial tone to evoke glimpses of life on the streets: ("/. . . women break / barstools, bathroom mirrors, jawbones, neighbours who go missing"). Dawn traces her early identification with art as a source of identity and empowerment amidst the challenges of sex work, drug use, health issues, sexual experimentation, identifying as queer, and finding a voice as a poet and activist of "street social justice." "Inside" follows her development as an increasingly self-aware activist and scholar and includes the standout essay, "How to Bury Our Dead," dedicated to her friend, Shelby Tom, an Asian transgender sex worker who was murdered in 2003. Dawn shows the need to properly mourn violence against the LGBT community whose history of disenfranchisement she shows to be intimately connected to that of women and sex workers. An idea that emerges with nuance throughout "Inside" is that our collective humanity depends on our ability to humanize each other equally. She juxtaposes a massage parlour client's post-coital remark, "[n]ow I feel human again" with her own question of "[w]hat would I pay to feel human again?" to show how society ironically stigmatizes and depends upon sex workers. Dawn challenges readers to relate to her story while avoiding dissociative reactions of voyeurism or pity. At the end of "Inside," she interrupts a story of an aggressive client: "Right now, I want to remind you of how this moment represents all of our lives. Part of us is hurting while part of us is unable to see the injury. We must talk more about this disconnect." Dawn's memoir ends with her continuing to find her voice in a community of artists and activists she helped to forge. The brief and

open-ended final section places the focus on Dawn's earlier challenge to readers to connect her individual survival to collective redemption and reform.

Owen and Dawn show the necessity of art to personal and cultural survival, and to political advocacy. Their street-smart, intertextual feminist poetics offer new ways of making art and of seeing ourselves that engages in the political, cultural, and interpersonal complexities of the world around us.

Artful Poet-Criticism

James Pollock
You Are Here: Essays on the Art of Poetry in Canada. Porcupine's Quill $22.95

Carmine Starnino
Lazy Bastardism: Essays and Reviews on Contemporary Poetry. Gaspereau $27.95

Reviewed by Laura Cameron

"The virtues of a good critical reading," writes James Pollock, are "openness, attentiveness, patience, critical intelligence—and love." Above all, he adds, "criticism should be fully, humanly engaged." In *You Are Here: Essays on the Art of Poetry in Canada*, Pollock models all of these qualities, as does Carmine Starnino in *Lazy Bastardism: Essays and Reviews on Contemporary Poetry*. As poet-critics, Pollock and Starnino share a special—and especially valuable—position: they are "personally implicated in the ways poems can fail" as only poets can be; and at the same time they "strive . . . to make those doubts plausible to those who d[o]n't share them" as only a critic would. *You Are Here* and *Lazy Bastardism* display their authors' mutual appreciation for the aesthetic merits of poetry, their similar personal investment in the judgments that they make, and their common expectation that writing poetry and reading critically are both activities that require training, erudition, and the greatest degree of care and alertness.

In *You Are Here*, James Pollock argues that literature should be both produced and judged with an acute awareness of international aesthetic traditions, and that in Canada, at least since the 1950s, these wider aesthetic contexts have been "distorted or suppressed" for the sake of nationalist ideology. Pollock's critical preferences come across very clearly in the twelve review essays that make up the first two sections of *You Are Here*, including reviews of new and collected work by Daryl Hine, Dennis Lee, Anne Carson, Jeffery Donaldson, Marlene Cookshaw, Karen Solie, and Eric Ormsby, a review of W. J. Keith's *Canadian Literature in English*, and four reviews of anthologies. In these reviews and in the two theoretical essays that conclude his book, Pollock identifies as "an aesthete." He seeks in poetry "a pair of rare and beautiful things: technical mastery, and an authoritative engagement with international poetic traditions" that will be answered by "a clear-eyed, energetic and discerning critical response." He satisfyingly practices what he preaches: manifestly well-read in "the whole history of Western poetry," Pollock writes about poems and their techniques and influences with a patient, thorough adroitness that makes close reading look easy.

It is difficult to disagree with Pollock's conviction that the aesthetic features of a poem are crucial to its success, or that poetry should be read in its international contexts. It also seems reasonable that excessive allegiance to nationalist ideology might engender a critical tradition that "lionizes . . . bad and mediocre poets and marginalizes . . . good ones." But Pollock's use of the imprecise terms "good," "bad," and "mediocre" is frequent enough to be off-putting. Criticism might well require personal evaluative judgments, as he says, but subjectivity is not license for vagueness; articulating personal opinions requires a *more* nuanced critical vocabulary than a scientific, objective assessment would. It

will probably take more than calling Al Purdy, George Bowering, Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Fred Wah, and bpNichol "a great whack of bad and mediocre poets," for instance, to convince readers that these are indeed boring and overrated writers. Moreover, in his efforts to counteract the "self-destructive" nationalism of earlier critics and poets who, in his eyes, sought "to avoid the influence of 'foreign' poetry and poetics," Pollock swings too far the other way, even venturing to dismiss A. M. Klein, one of Canada's most cosmopolitan poets, as merely "a tragic figure who wrote some fine poems"—"but a major poet . . . he is not." Pollock's obsession with escaping "the forest of nationalist ideology" becomes itself a border-drawing ideology. This limitation does not subtract from the obvious merits and value of his work, but it is worth acknowledging.

Carmine Starnino's *Lazy Bastardism: Essays and Reviews of Contemporary Poetry*, on the other hand, *is* free of border-related angst. Starnino is concerned with "contemporary poetry"—there is no "in Canada" in his title—but his subject matter is unapologetically, unanxiously Canadian. *Lazy Bastardism* is, like *You Are Here*, a collection of review essays, framed by theoretical pieces on the art of poetry and literary criticism. "Lazy bastardism," Starnino explains in the first of these essays, is when readers "would rather not take the trouble" to engage with or to acquire a taste for demanding, difficult poems. It is also when poets "kowtow to the convenience of see-Jane-run simple-mindedness because, by gosh, that's what most people want from their poetry." "Lazy bastardism" is, in short, when neither poet nor reader wishes to risk commitment.

Starnino is certainly not a lazy bastard; on the contrary, he is a committed reader and writer whose fair, learned, informative, and dazzlingly written reviews cover poets from the worthily well-known (Earle Birney, Irving Layton) to the worthy but lesser-known (David O'Meara, Anne Szumigalski). The results of his self-professed affection "for the unlucky in fame" are a number of eloquent celebrations of underappreciated writers. Many of the essays in *Lazy Bastardism* handily raise larger questions that are relevant well beyond the individual volumes that they review. Starnino explores the role of the poet-critic in his essay on Adam Kirsch, and in his sensitive appraisal of Margaret Avison, he contemplates poetic innovation. The pieces on older, established figures—Margaret Atwood, Don McKay, bpNichol—are preoccupied with legacy, posterity, and the sustainability of poetic creativity. Starnino writes with particular ease and enthusiasm about Montreal poetry, and his essay on John Glassco, a highlight in the collection, is also a succinct literary-historical account of the 1940s heyday of the Montreal Group poets.

The fact that just six of the twenty-two poets discussed in this volume are women is somewhat troubling; this is surely just a circumstance determined by availability, but it is telling nonetheless. Additionally, the book lacks and needs a proper introduction that straightforwardly sets out its principles of inclusion and organization. The alphabetical arrangement of the reviews is occasionally jarring and, at the risk of sounding like a lazy bastard myself, I would have appreciated a more explicit orientation. A convenient advantage of the alphabetical order, however, is that it allows Starnino to open with a rather spectacular take-down of Margaret Atwood who, he claims, has been turned into a "walking manifesto" by the "star-struck literary-industrial complex [that] has sprung up around her." *Lazy Bastardism* is full of such pithy and resonant insights. "Style is what happens when originality becomes indistinguishable from the poem itself," Starnino quips. "In our mashup-mad era, we yearn for unpigeonholeability." Some might

accuse Starnino of overwriting at moments like these, but his linguistic exuberance never comes at the expense of clarity. The style engages the poetry and the reader and implicitly conveys Starnino's love for his subjects; his poetic-critical language is the connective hyphen in his poet-critic persona.

You Are Here and *Lazy Bastardism* are important books. On a practical level, they are important because they do justice to rich poetry and varied poetic careers through intelligent, sensitive, and captivating close readings. On a cultural level, they are important because they are concerned with nothing less than the future of Canadian poetry. Both Pollock and Starnino make the high stakes of their work palpable with grace and style.

Word Alchemy

Howard Richler
How Happy Became Homosexual: And Other Mysterious Semantic Shifts. Ronsdale $19.95

Reviewed by Gabrielle Lim

The English language is continually changing and, in his seventh book on the subject, Howard Richler seeks to educate and entertain. He sympathizes with alchemists of the Middle Ages who could have easily turned lead into gold with a synonym chain, as he demonstrates with the opposites of black and white: "*Black*–dark–obscure–hidden–concealed–snug–pleasant–easy–simple–pure–*White*." *How Happy Became Homosexual* outlines the semantic transformation of over four hundred words, with changes that trace back hundreds of years as well as changes that are still in process.

Richler draws, appropriately, from literary works and references some of history's most famous authors. Writers and poets, from Chaucer to Shakespeare to T. S. Eliot and beyond, have been essential to the documentation of language and, frequently, have been innovators of semantic changes. Perhaps the most well known example is Shakespeare, whose work both changed and created several word meanings, including "amaze," "pride," and "atone," as Richler notes. More modern references range from films (the *Matrix* trilogy), novels (Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*), and current politics (both Stephen Harper and John McCain are mentioned). Richler's modern references are more often used parenthetically (see "buccaneer," which mentions the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series) and are clear indications of his continual awareness of language.

While the research is comprehensive, the organization of the book is somewhat confusing. In his introduction, Richler outlines seven processes by which words change meanings: metaphor, generalization, narrowing, pejoration, amelioration, weakening, and strengthening. His chapter titles also serve as categories, and two are titled for the processes of pejoration and amelioration. He also has chapters for adjectives, nouns, and verbs, but the overlap with the pejoration and amelioration chapters creates confusion, or at least a lack of clarity. It would have made much more sense if the processes of pejoration and amelioration were mentioned under the appropriate terms as an explanation of how the semantic change occurred. "Uncouth," for example, is in the adjectives section but its change in meaning from "a tad peculiar" to "uncultured" is certainly a downward movement. All words in the pejoration and amelioration chapters can easily be classified by their part of speech, and in some cases this seems more suitable; the semantic shift of "pudding" from something close to haggis to a dessert is not exactly a case of amelioration, for example.

The rest of the words are organized in six major categories: religion, animals and agriculture, people and groups of people, history and the military, discarded beliefs,

and law. Each chapter has a brief introduction, and some contain terms that are not expanded upon in the chapter, but happily, are included in the book's word index.

When Happy Became Homosexual includes many excellent examples of words that have undergone semantic change. They are sorted by lexical and semantic category, but not always by type of change. Nonetheless, Richler, as a steadfast defender of the fluidity of the English language, provides more than enough information to delight and educate any logophile.

A Sound Withheld

Dennison Smith
Fermata. Quattro $14.95

Catherine Owen
Trobairitz. Anvil $18.00

Reviewed by Paul Watkins

Dennison Smith's *Fermata* and Catherine Owen's *Trobairitz* are two poetic texts significant not only for the sounds they make, but for what they withhold. For all the cacophony and multivoicedness sustained in each text, there are plenty of moments that give the reader pause. *Fermata* (a lyrical text of Zen-like suspension) and *Trobairitz* (a text that weds twelfth-century troubadours and their female counterparts, the trobairitz, with twenty-first-century metalheads) are worlds apart; yet, both texts resonate with silences, shift between suffering, love, and desire, and combine and reclaim traditional materials with the alchemical power of the fearless poetess who conducts language at the centre of each narrative. Both Smith and Owen find innovative ways to write poetry, particularly within traditional models, as Smith's *Fermata* searches for voice from nothingness with the "need to speak anew. / Whatever cost" and Owen's *Trobairitz* echoes Pound's maxim to "make it new": "a dark finish, hears it new." These are two British Columbian writers who know how to challenge convention, providing pause at the threshold of new possibilities.

Smith's *Fermata*—a title that refers to the hold in musical notation—is a work of careful listening that brings attention to the muted understandings of our daily lives. *Fermata* weaves lyric poetry, fiction, and prose together with various pauses (𝄐) that serve as markers for reflection. *Fermata* is influenced by the Buddhist ebb and flow of all things, in which suffering ("Rediscover the depth of suffering respected in us all") and nothingness exist within a kind of being without a single essence. The poet's improvisational identity is defined through polyphony, as several melodies combine in an often playful mode. Undoing is chiefly a doing (or un/becoming) in *Fermata*: "undressing I wear myself loosely"; "I am unbecoming"; "the pulse of becoming burns in the gaps." Such aphoristic—and often aporic—thinking grounds meditative poetics in an ecosystem dependent upon change: "I devised a beautiful ecosystem, / but I did not make allowance for change." Change is a constant in *Fermata,* but so is stasis and repetition as poems (including titles) often repeat and rework themselves like mantras. Suiting the elemental imagery in *Fermata*, Smith employs the couplet with contrapuntal effect, which nicely fits with the French meaning of the word: two pieces of iron hinged together. Various musings are hinged together in *Fermata* as the text winds like an arroyo to arrive/arise where reductionisms of love, gender, and desire hold no water. The poet withholds much of herself in order to surrender and find voice, song even. In "Monologue of the Lover" she states: "We must never become so / civilized that nothing sings." Like a restless body, the poet wants to be as fundamental as art. In order to become so, she must withhold a lot, until her own sound in "Loon," like the aquatic bird, becomes suspended presence:

> Sound, an opened thought.
> Sound, a word for itself.

Owen's *Trobairitz* also withholds much, but unlike *Fermata*, its sound is brasher, has more bravado, and is less lyric but with more lyrics. In *Trobairitz* we are confronted with a collision of traditions and eras. The traditions of heavy metal and troubadours (performers of lyric poetry in the High Middle Ages), despite their "maleness," challenge convention, class, religion, and genre (section three is aptly titled, "The Medieval Names of Metal"). Owen unapologetically merges metal and troubadourian lexicons, often working in traditional verse (couplets, tercets, a single *comjat*: the traditional *canso* form); strategically, she traverses masculinist convention through her own gender meandering, crossing borders, like song: "it is the androgyny in us who sings, / the one who will not be confined." Given that only around twenty pieces of the trobairitz tradition survive, Owen's work is also an act of recovery, remix, and homage. Her love of heavy metal music (she played bass in various metal bands) is readily apparent, as she highlights the poetic possibility of metal. Metal is not usually conceived as having a poetic phraseology—as jazz or hip-hop often are—nor is it engaged with as seriously as other music genres (*Rolling Stone*'s Top 50 list of 2013 did not include a single metal album). And yet, as I travel through the metal-toned medieval world Owen envisions, the long struggle for women to belong in (even as they shape) male-dominated traditions (and the historical potency of misogyny) made perfect sense through the medieval/metal hybridization. The opening section, *Cansos*, referring to courtly love poems, a form that opposes the more conventional and chauvinistic *pastorela*, was particularly captivating as the text engages in the trials of love, desire, coitus, and suffering ("How little we have learned to suffer"). The glossary proved useful in dealing with the medieval terminology applied throughout. And for all the intensity of *Trobairitz,* there are plenty of moments where much is withheld, where silence (which "has become a season") gives us pause to contemplate the lacunas of history, recovered through the androgyny of all musical performance:

> For me there is no hearth and no
> silence but serving as witness to love
> and its holy music.

If *Fermata*'s poetic symbol is a loon, *Trobairitz*'s is an electric bass. Smith's *Fermata* and Owen's *Trobairitz* sound and withhold much; they not only underscore how art is often sexed, or overly contained, but they also remind us of the musical resonances and silences that ripple through all of us—across time and gender—if we are willing to listen.

Solitude and Pastorals

Joshua Trotter
All this Could Be Yours. Biblioasis $18.95

E. Blagrave
Tilt. Cormorant $18.00

Reviewed by Alexis Foo

The notion of solitude resonates through the collections of Joshua Trotter and E. Blagrave as both poets explore the fecundity of the solitary mind through different mediums. Trotter's debut poetry collection, *All this Could Be Yours* is layered with philosophical musings about loneliness and nothingness. The opening poem "Theme of the Perpetual Architect" meditates on the satisfaction of solitude within the confines of a home. The speaker is both "landlord and surveyor" in his "lair" where he proclaims, "I rest fulfilled / in my preferred Bauhaus chair, while snow / trashes the window like friends I once knew." Within these lines the speaker's winter solitude is relished as though it is something sacred; even "a trailer-park is an isthmus of light." The speaker then declares, "cohabitation

is the shortest line / away from sane," in contrast to his satisfaction with being alone. The final lines of the poem pay homage to the craft of writing. "To be alone this winter, I stay home / driving black lines through the white." In an imagistic twist, the whiteness of the snow outside parallels the whiteness of the page, while the speaker makes his mark through ink. Though the poem revels in the beauty of the solitary self, Trotter's sense of humour is peppered throughout the collection.

The final poem of the collection, "The Laws of Innocence" announces, "we place our trust in wide open spaces / . . . In airbags, windlasses, D-cups /. . . streetcars." Trotter captures these trappings of the material world and exposes them as being empty. "Try us they tease, Pace your trust with nothing." The poem ends with the haunting lines, "nothing will persevere. Nothing will last. / nothing is nothing if not relentless," which gives readers something to chew on. By the end of the collection, readers are faced with a mirror. We find ourselves alone with *the self*, carefully removed from the material world, staring back at us.

The idyllic, pensive tones of pastoral poetry are reawakened in *Tilt*, E. Blagrave's first collection. The five stanzas of her title poem evoke a plethora of tilting images—"Tilt, the tumbling grey doves," "tilt, a blind man's head," "tilt, the hanged man's neck," "tilt, the knife edge of / the axis"—and finally, in the last line, "tilt, your face for a kiss." The motion of tilting unifies moments that are unrelated yet all connected in a second of change and anticipation.

Nature becomes the backdrop in many of Blagrave's poems. "Twilight" begins with an idyllic walk "amongst willows, / water and soft ground." The speaker wanders in solitude "through sticky boughs" and "curdling clouds" while animals disperse to their dens. The final lines of the poem illuminate a prevalent theme in the collection. "There is a tug at the heart. / In the end / who will call us home." The musings of the heart alone in nature remains at the centre of the collection.

Love amongst the natural world finds its way into many poems in this collection. In "He led me," the speaker calls a mysterious male figure "oh love of mine" and claims "he had the moon and sky for me." This unrevealed "he" catches fish with "branch and thorn" as though he has stepped out of a fairytale. In the short poem "I Have Loved You," the speaker watches the sun "dancing on knife points" on a tree's branches while contemplating the length of time she has loved. "I have loved you these seven years. / Time drips like water on a stone." The inseparability of nature, time, and love imbue Blagrave's collection with wonderment and simplicity while never offering answers. At the core of each poem is a solitary reflection on experiences that seem suspended in time. The poems of *Tilt* unravel in slow motion, allowing the reader to relish them.

Dreams of Empire

Germaine Warkentin, ed.
Pierre-Esprit Radisson: The Collected Writings, Volume 1: The Voyages.
McGill-Queen's UP $65.00

Robert Rogers; Tiffany Potter, ed.
Ponteach, or the Savages of America: A Tragedy
U of Toronto P $27.95

Reviewed by Barbara Belyea

The Canadian public—at least the Anglo component—clings to a myth that this is a country shaped and defined by recent immigration. If memory is the measure, perhaps the myth is halfway to being true. We can't see past the recent past; as a result we are culturally and politically unsure. Yet this year marks the 250th anniversary of the proclamation ending the Seven Years' War; seven years from now the Hudson's Bay Company will celebrate the 350th anniversary of its charter. What do these documents signify? Why should we remember events

and conditions associated with them? New editions of Radisson and Rogers can help us find answers to these questions.

Radisson and Rogers were both active on the frontier of French and British colonies in North America. As a boy Radisson was adopted into a Mohawk band. He then escaped and later joined his brother-in-law Des Groseilliers in fur-trade ventures to the upper Great Lakes. In 1660 they returned to the St Lawrence valley loaded with rich furs; the new royal administration fined them heavily for trading without government permission. "Seeing [them]selves so wronged," finding no justice in France, the brothers enjoyed a better reception at the English court. The Hudson's Bay Company, formed after their successful maritime venture, stood up to French trade initiatives, survived later threats to its charter as well as several regime changes, and is still in business. Meanwhile the French hold on its empire, always uncertain because it was dependent on Native alliances, failed during the Seven Years' War. British colonial expansion west of the Appalachians was an irresistible force. Rogers led his "Rangers" against French troops at Quebec and Native "rebels," notably Pontiac, a charismatic Ottawa leader whose siege of Detroit inspired attacks on eight other British forts. In time Pontiac's resistance crumbled and the colonists moved in, ignoring an edict that provided for undisturbed use of "Hunting Grounds." Rogers nevertheless admired the Ottawa chief and made him the protagonist of a blank-verse tragedy. In this play the character Ponteach and his enemies express attitudes that persist to this day.

Radisson's "writings" and Rogers' play were written by major players in the events they present. It would be hard to imagine a body of texts more difficult to edit than Radisson's *Voyages* and *Relations*—a tissue of facts, self-serving interpretation, valid and unsubstantiated claims written in two seventeenth-century languages. The genres in which Radisson writes come with truth claims; as editor Warkentin explains, the narrative strategies by which Radisson's texts tell the "truth," do so to the author's advantage. She presents a new authoritative description of the manuscripts, a clear and rational apparatus, readable texts, elegantly brief and helpful notes, together with a long introduction in which she untangles the rich but confusing detail of Radisson's adventurous life and shifting loyalties. Warkentin's landmark edition is admirable not only for rescuing Radisson from the obscurity of mere reference, but also for setting a new standard of editorial thoroughness and judgment for Canadian historical texts. Potter's task was easier—that of editing a text established from copies of a single printed issue, with Rogers' own history for generic comparison—but *Ponteach* is also a largely forgotten work that requires reintroduction. Potter begins with critical debate; her introduction would be clearer if it moved from events of the Native resistance to Rogers' *Concise Account* of them, their dramatization, and finally reception of the text. In her own interpretation, Potter follows a now-orthodox historical emphasis on Native agency and sees it at work in the play. *Ponteach* presents "a complex, articulate human being driven to . . . violence and war . . . by his own excess ambition" as well as by "cultural encroachments." But though the "encroachments" are historically specific, hubris has been a tragic trope since the Greeks. Contemporary reviews, which Potter includes, point to the poor fit between Rogers' indecorous subject matter and European literary expectations.

The most interesting legacy of the French era and the fur trade was encouragement of alliances and métissage. British rule all but wiped out this intriguing development. The British rather than French pattern continues in anglophone media and publications:

translation voiceover, citation of translations only, lack of apposite reference to works in French. A narrow unilingual view betrays the complex world reflected in the texts of these editions. I look forward to reading the *Relations* as Radisson wrote them. And Ponteach begs for comparison with Lahontan's Adario.

Wayman in Winter

Tom Wayman
Dirty Snow. Harbour $16.95

Tom Wayman
Winter's Skin. Oolichan $19.95

Reviewed by Owen Percy

Of all the recognitions and awards that Tom Wayman's poetry has garnered since he began publishing in 1973, none have been more appropriate or meaningful than the 2013 Acorn-Plantos Award for People's Poetry he recently received for *Dirty Snow*. Wayman has always striven to be a poet of and for the 99%. Those who have seen him read, or who have encountered any work from his nineteen books of poetry, know already that his everyman voice is accessible and direct—qualities which often see him dismissed by reviewers as uncomplicated and, under the logic of most postmodern literary criticism dictating that obscurity = maturity, unimportant. Critics who go after Wayman for his prosaic syntax, or for his simplification of labour politics—there are almost always clear lines drawn in a Wayman poem—often also ignore or disregard his clearly stated figuration of poetry as an ever-expanding globe of possibility and connection of and for one another, a more democratic space as it is in the world of music. Under Wayman's generic conception, criticizing him for his plainspoken style or his blue-collar poetics is akin to criticizing Jay-Z for not writing good country ballads. And yes, Wayman is Jay-Z in this scenario. You're welcome.

So when *Dirty Snow* was named the winner of the Acorn-Plantos prize, it was apt recognition of Wayman's fine book, but also of his long-standing ethos that poetry can and should be, as he put it in a 2009 interview with Diane Guichon, "a tool useful for beneficial social ends." *Dirty Snow*, it can be surmised then, wants us to consider what it actually meant that Canada became embroiled in the post-9/11 Afghan war. The opening section of the book, "The Effect of the Afghan War on the Landscapes and People of Southeastern British Columbia" explores, well, it's right there in the title. Poems like "Interest" and "There Is No War, And You Would Not Have to Consider It If There Was" directly challenge Wayman's local, regional, and national neighbours to assess their complicity in Canada's foreign exploits. The standouts in this arresting section are "Air Support," in which the military term itself is literalized so that schools, health care, and compassion, not bombs, are showered on the Afghan people, and "Mt. Gimli Pashtun," where a hiker's Kootenay mountain landscape spectrally becomes that of "Pashtuns blown apart, or maimed / by bullets released in the name of this country." By the time the poem declares "[a]n alien death has been brought / to these mountains," we are ourselves shell-shocked—suddenly uncertain of our own surroundings, culture, otherness, and complicity in acts of institutional aggression.

The book also contains several tender elegies for friends, and an aging speaker's meditations on the minutia of our everyday lives. But even in his retirement from teaching, Wayman remains a work poet. Poems like "If You're Not Free at Work, Where Are You Free?," and the especially poignant "Whistle" give us a Wayman whose world since the 1960s has started to repeat its corporate and political sins, and whose calls for social justice and freedom remain as loud as they've been for four decades. The latter poem applies the conceit of

"a slight wheezy sound" that begins "[a]t the threshold of hearing" and permeates scenes of mass corporate firings, bullshit press conferences, meetings, and protests, growing louder all the while until it erupts and becomes the soundtrack—"the tinnitus of the world"—of the so-called Arab Spring, and all the revolutions yet to come elsewhere in the world.

Like in some of his earliest books, the poems here are introduced by short contextual prose pieces that evoke the casual familiarity of Wayman's live readings. The collection also includes rare flashes of the well-established Wayman sense of humor (see "Leonard Cohen Didn't Get Me Laid"), but its concerns are more with making us think than making us laugh. *Dirty Snow* is deserving of its accolades, and it deserves a wide readership of citizens. For all our sakes.

Wayman's most recent book, *Winter's Skin*, evokes another recognizably CanLit conceit through the observations of the nature-navigating speaker. A project "in honor of [his] conceptually oriented colleagues" at the University of Calgary (Wayman retired in 2010), *Winter's Skin* is comprised of twenty-five poems that riff on lines, images, or concepts from Pablo Neruda's posthumous 1974 collection *Jardin de invierno*. Dotted with stark, stunning landscape photographs of southeastern BC by Jeremy Addington and Rod Currie, the book's physical beauty seems a direct answer to the anxious questions many of us continue to ask about the vagaries of digital publishing. The poems themselves strike an introspective and personal intimacy in their delicacy of perception; they are concrete and nuanced in a way that much of Wayman's other poetic writing is not. Consider the haiku sensibility of the first two sections of "Breath":

i
Tufts of snow
that rise from the branch
a chickadee alights on

ii
Winter fog surrounding
the house: on the frosted slope of
the ridge behind, great spruce and pine
blur to white shadows

Ol' Wayman is still *in* these poems, in both voice and persona, but he is more contemplative, less anxious than he has been, even in the book's slower, more measured burns against injustice and death (especially in the excellent "The White Dogs"); *Winter's Skin* is Wayman in the beginnings of his own winter—asking "only / to take the minutes // of the meetings between the season / and [him]self," and exulting in the solitude and reckoning of the ever-falling snow. This is not to say that *Winter's Skin* is tame, or uninterested in politics, literary or otherwise. Wayman's preface to the collection characterizes the book's tone as quietly elegiac, but in general it is vintage Wayman: engaged, observant, prickly, lusty, and open to what the world, and the newly arrived winter, have to teach us about ourselves. Both *Dirty Snow* and *Winter's Skin* renew the call for closer consideration of Wayman's verse; true, these books set their own terms, but they do so in hopes of showing us that we are intimately and inextricably tied to one another in our mutual experience of and conversation about the living world.

Poésie et francophonie

Lélia L. M. Young
Langages poétiques et poésie francophone en Amérique du Nord. PUL 49,95 $

Compte rendu par Julia Hains

L'ouvrage collectif *Langages poétiques et poésie francophone en Amérique du Nord*, dirigé par Lélia L. M. Young, pose avec acuité le problème de la production et des manifestations littéraires en contexte minoritaire. C'est précisément le statut de l'acte poétique et les fonctions assumées par celui-ci dans

l'affirmation et l'essor du fait francophone au Canada qui constitue ici le centre des préoccupations des nombreux chercheurs et chercheuses qui ont collaboré à l'heureuse réalisation de ce recueil d'articles, dont la visée est essentiellement définitionnelle.

Un apport majeur de l'ouvrage réside certainement dans une volonté de repenser le statisme, voire la désuétude de certaines assises relatives à la production poétique dans la francophonie nord-américaine, en favorisant l'exploration de nouvelles perspectives thématiques. C'est une véritable « mosaïque francophone » qu'installe cet appel manifeste à l'interdisciplinarité, dont rend compte la diversité des axes — géographique, historique, minoritaire, socioculturel, identitaire, etc. — autour desquels s'articulent les articles qui composent le recueil.

L'ouvrage fait tout d'abord surgir la question de l'engagement idéologique de l'acte poétique. Pour Pierre Nepveu, cet engagement constitue l'expression d'un malaise lancinant, qui se traduit ici par une interrogation sur les notions d'identité et de culture nationale. Viennent ensuite des articles traitant de sujets variés : le traitement de la poésie dans l'espace public contemporain (Marc-André Brouillette), l'écriture identitaire chez André Roy (Guy Poirier), la dépossession chez Gaston Miron (Ioana Vartolomei), la problématique de la francophonie dans l'écriture poétique de James Sacré (Nelson Charest), la contre culture québécoise (Simon-Pier Labelle-Hogue), l'avènement d'un nouvel éthos poétique au début du XXe siècle (Claude Filteau), l'Acadie historique et mythique dans l'écriture poétique de Napoléon Landry (Denis Bourque), la question de l'écriture de *La Coupe* de François-Xavier Garneau (Yolande Grisé) et l'analyse du poème « Braddock avait toujours dit » (Charles Doutrelepont).

L'étude d'Eileen Lohka, consacrée à la poétique de l'ailleurs dans deux recueils de Lise Gaboury-Diallo, fait office de « texte charnière » dans l'ouvrage, en introduisant plus précisément la problématique des écritures migrantes, qui est soulevée ici par le biais de nouvelles voies analytiques. Ainsi, les auteurs des cinq articles suivants — Simon Grossman, Maya Hauptman, Angela Buono, Noureddine Slimani, Lélia L. M. Young — interrogent les œuvres poétiques des auteurs Gérard Étienne et Hédi Bouraoui en leur posant des questions à fois inédites et fondamentales, à savoir, d'une part, celles de la judéité et des poétiques de la laideur, du manque et de la corruption dans la poésie étiennienne et, de l'autre, celles suscitées par les notions théoriques de transpoétique, de fragmentation et d'appartenance chez Hédi Bouraoui.

L'article de François Paré sur ce qu'il appelle les « poétiques du visible » vient finalement apporter une contribution significative à cet ouvrage dont l'importance est considérable pour la compréhension du fait poétique en Amérique du Nord. Car malgré un certain déséquilibre non négligeable dans l'architecture du recueil, l'éclectisme participe, dans ce contexte, à l'enrichissement des connaissances, en encourageant principalement la réflexion sur un sujet aussi important qu'actuel.

The Skepticism of Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock" (Coda: Caryl Churchill)

Alexander Pettit

In April 1970, the Canadian singer Joni Mitchell released her third album, *Ladies of the Canyon*. The cover featured a linear black and white self-portrait of Mitchell hovering over a colorful inset of Laurel Canyon, the Los Angeles neighborhood where the artist and songwriter lived with her boyfriend Graham Nash. Her face and body, incomplete, merge with the white background. *Ladies of the Canyon* included "Woodstock," Mitchell's response to the August 1969 festival in upstate New York. "Woodstock" would become one of her most famous songs, often recorded and twice anthologized in print (Forbes 184–85; Paglia 225–26). It is her most misunderstood song, too. Like Mitchell in the self-portrait, it is remote and pensive, hardly the anthem it is made out to be.

"Woodstock" is a skeptical lyric, troubled by putatively countercultural models of masculinity. Its author was a questioning and increasingly gender-savvy woman among boyish men and a genuine non-conformist in a period comically ignorant of its own attraction to conformity. Beginning with *Ladies of the Canyon*, Mitchell assessed the threat to individualism lurking in the collectivist enthusiasms of a generation of men whom she regarded as dissolute, often destructive, and increasingly violent, if not therefore charmless. Mitchell would later say, "I wasn't really a hippie at all. I was always looking at it for its upsides and its downsides, balancing it and thinking, here's the beauty of it and here's the exploitative quality of it and here's the silliness of it. I could never buy into it totally as an orthodoxy" ("Our Lady" 167). "Woodstock" is a focused expression of this equilibrium, a habit of mind previewed more generally in "Both Sides, Now." Like much of Mitchell's contemporaneous oeuvre, "Woodstock" criticizes hippiedom for failing to accommodate independently minded women.

One needn't look far to see what Mitchell was up against. Several weeks before the release of *Ladies of the Canyon*, her friends Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young (CSN&Y) issued their undeniably anthemic version of "Woodstock" on *Déjà Vu*. Unlike *Ladies of the Canyon*, *Déjà Vu* is comfortably enmeshed in the sordor of its period, down to the cover photograph of six bleary men surrounded by a mélange of guns and guitars. The cultural nexus of the band's preening thuggery could hardly be less attractive. Five days before the record was released, the Weather Underground had blown up a townhouse in Manhattan, killing three people. Three months earlier, a Rolling Stones concert at the Altamont Speedway in California had become a spectacle of violence. Bullets would soon kill Fred Hampton as they had killed Martin Luther King, Jr.; Robert Kennedy; four kids at Kent State; and thousands of people in southeast Asia. Flickering, detrital also-rans

scrapped for the drugs and the dreams effortlessly available to stars like CSN&Y and, for a few short years, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin. CSN&Y represents a mainstream of artists either insufficiently contemplative to recognize the ugliness that underlay the period's rhetoric of collectivism or sufficiently prudent to retain their remunerative fidelity to that rhetoric. Mindless of irony, the group planted "Woodstock" smack-dab in its author's anxiety zone.

Mitchell's remove from the hippie masculinism of CSN&Y soon became more apparent. On her next record, *Blue*, Mitchell would regret a lover's cavalier attitude toward "Acid, booze, and ass / Needles, guns, and grass" ("Blue") and would broadly ponder the difficulty of finding intimacy in a stoned and self-indulgent culture. This record, she remarked recently, "horrified" men in a "men's world" at the time of its release; her detractors included the anti-establishmentarians Kris Kristofferson and Johnny Cash (Ghomeshi interview). Listeners of such tender sensibilities perhaps preferred CSN&Y's follow-up *4 Way Street* (1971), which included a paean to rote promiscuity (Stephen Stills's "Love the One You're With"); a pompous man's offer to share himself equally with two clueless and indistinguishable women (David Crosby's "Triad"); and, somewhat less certainly, a call to take up arms against the police (Neil Young's puzzling "Ohio"). Neither CSN&Y nor Mitchell did much to bolster the credibility of "Woodstock Nation." This was fine with Mitchell, I suspect.

Mitchell was not the only artist openly skeptical about the gendered assumptions of the counterculture, but she was one of a depressingly small number. Although this essay is principally concerned with her, I will in its latter portion consider an adjunctive case—the "coda" of my title—in order to contextualize Mitchell's incidental sympathy with the discontents of second-wave feminism and to emphasize the breadth and dignity of a protest that required courage as well as discernment and eloquence.[1] Just on the other side of the early 1970s watershed, the British playwright Caryl Churchill revisited the inequities of phony "togetherness" that had bothered Mitchell. In her play *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1978), armed, ultra-left anti-monarchists in the English Civil War (1642–49) spring giddily into and reel dissolutely out of their collectivist moment. Mitchell's concerns about gender also surface in Churchill's play when a putatively democratic movement fails to honor its own boozily egalitarian platitudes. Churchill in 1977 was an ideologist, something Mitchell has never been. But what Mitchell feared personally, Churchill represented socially. Both women criticize collectivism from a gendered position to which hippiedom was notoriously insensitive, thus bracketing a period devastating in its inability to apply the ideals it professed.

Mitchell herself did not attend the three-day "Aquarian Exposition" in, or just outside of, Woodstock. Having been chauffeured to a chartered plane with Nash and his bandmates, she learned that she could not be guaranteed a return trip to New York in time to appear on television that weekend. She watched broadcasts of the festival in the apartment of the entrepreneur David Geffen, where she wrote her song. Several days later, she played it for an appreciative CSN&Y, still abuzz from their experience (see Ruhlmann 37–38; Weller 290–92).

Given that much of Mitchell's early oeuvre is concerned with the instability as well as the allure of the men she knew, Nash included, there is no reason to suppose that Mitchell merely tried to express what her friends were experiencing. Indeed, Mitchell's composition draws on her absence from the event. "I wrote it from the point of view of a kid going there," she recalled, "If I'd been there in the backroom

with all the cut-throat, egomaniacal crap that goes on backstage, I would not have had that perspective" (Ghomeshi interview). The "intense angle" that distance afforded her manifests itself as something like Brechtian alienation, the result of "a representation . . . which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar" (Mitchell, qtd. in Ruhlmann 37; Brecht 192). Mitchell is able to be "socially critical" of the participants even as she writes herself into their story (Brecht 139). Her assertion that the song "was written with empathy" does not prevent her from regarding the event, unfamiliarly as Brecht would have it, as the "culmination" of a process that produced a "liberated, spoiled, selfish generation" (Ghomeshi interview).

Commentators have made the song into "a generational anthem" and its author into a mouthpiece for an uncomplicated myth of group cohesion (Mercer 18). In its most ambitious form, this tradition presents Mitchell's lyrics and her music as unconsciously in conflict. Camille Paglia argues that the singer's "hesitations and ravaged vibrato" convey "doubts" (232) about the "lovely dream" (231) articulated in lyrics of "healing amelioration" (229). The "heady vision of the sixties counterculture" is "already receding and evaporating" (227)—not because Mitchell says so, but because she sounds so. Sheila Weller juxtaposes "communal countercultural" (335) lyrics and "counterintuitive" music that suggests "a primordial, Nordic winter-forest sound" (291). Monk settles for a similar point: "Mitchell seemed to catch a glimpse of her own mythologized reflection, stand back, and question. In the very same breath, she created an anthem for the collective myth of her generation" (89). Lloyd Whitesell's erudite musical-theoretical reading contrasts "utopian" lyrics with the music of "lament" (33). The lyricist becomes a conduit, not an artist or a thinker, an incidentally talented crafter of cultural commonplace. Mitchell becomes ours, or an emblem of us—a hideous possibility to an individualist like her, I'd think, as well as an unseemly act of appropriation.

Such readings overlook Mitchell's tendency to present herself disjunctively with respect to her environment. "Woodstock" is bifurcated from the get-go. The lyrics record a dialogue between the narrator and the unnamed "child of God" whom she encounters walking to the site and who declares his intention to "join in a rock 'n' roll band" upon arrival (Mitchell, *Complete Poems* 58). Either the pilgrim is a musician traveling on foot to join his own small group of performers or a concert-goer anticipating incorporation into a massive "band" bonded by shared ideals or interests. The prominence of the musician/lover in Mitchell's early lyrics and her closeness to "the boys" with whom she had nearly traveled (qtd. in Monk 94) suggests the relative weight of the former possibility. But ambiguity works to her advantage. The pilgrim could hardly "be," say, Nash, simplistically: the performers neither strolled into the throng as rustics in a pastoral poem might stroll into a threshing festival (see, for example, Monk 91), nor did they "camp out on the land" with the hoi polloi, as the speaker means to do (Mitchell, *Complete Poems* 58). If the pedestrian is among those whom Mitchell saw on television, the diction ("band") that Mitchell assigns to him points up the fervency of his desire to imagine himself into the upper ranks of a celebration that pretended to embrace ranklessness. Both readings lead to a dangerous place between pretense and actuality, a fantasy zone that dulls distinctions between oneself and one's imagined "band," a smaller category in the case of, say, Nash, a larger one otherwise. These "bands" do not intersect. They pretend to do so, sometimes by mutual consent and always to the enrichment of the smaller group.[2] And perhaps

Mitchell invokes a pastoral simplicity in keeping with the venue but at odds with the event. Against the implied backdrop of Wordsworthian hips and haws, she asks us to imagine a sweaty throng of "half a million" (59) crusted with mud and bombarded by loud music. In such disjunctions resides a familiar sort of irony. Centuries earlier, Jonathan Swift and John Gay had superimposed the language of pastoral verse onto images of filth and overpopulation, thereby suggesting the impossibility of recapturing innocence that Paglia and others find Mitchell naively endorsing.[3]

The pilgrim is short on the locutional clarity that makes Mitchell an outlier among songwriters of the period. "I'm going on down to Yasgur's farm," he says; "I'm going to join in a rock 'n' roll band"; and "I'm going to camp out on the land" (58). The progressive aspect underscores the idea of the journey beloved of Mitchell from here to *Hejira* (1976), her "traveling album," written during a cross-country ramble ("Our Lady" 174). The clipped, egoistic anaphora, however, suggests the pilgrim's stolid unwillingness to engage his would-be companion as he pushes onward, like Bunyan's Pilgrim uninterested in anything that might retard him, even a local instance of the community he claims to seek. And the primness of the written passage cannot survive the syllabic demands of utterance. Mitchell writes "going to join" and "going to camp," but inevitably the speaker/singer is "gonna" do these things.

As often in Mitchell's work from this period, the narrator is an adjunct to a man less verbally dexterous than herself. (Mitchell plays with a convention, encoded in ancient comedy and vibrant ever since, according to which verbal equality signifies sexual compatibility. Her bumblers are often sexually unfaithful.) In "Conversation," also from *Ladies of the Canyon*, a rival for the narrator's love who "speaks in sorry sentences / Miraculous repentances" affords the narrator an opportunity to speak in bravura iambic tetrameter (48). The evisceration is syntactical, metrical, and characterological. More to the present point, the beloved fares poorly. The lyric anticipates him "speak[ing] his sorrow endlessly" and asking "questions" that the narrator will endeavor to answer. In his one instance of direct speech, he splutters, "Why can't I leave her?" His torpor is both metrical and behavioral, and the emotional wallop comes from Mitchell's aerial glissando, not from the speaker's words. Mitchell's pain is clear to us, the more so as the worthiness of the man who occasions it is not. In "Woman of Heart and Mind," Mitchell's "You imitate the best, and the rest you memorize" also does much of its damage rhetorically, positing the subject's lack of originality in the form of a deft chiasmus (105–06). The target, again, is condemned by both form and substance. Even the Shakespeare-spouting soon-to-be ex-lover of "A Case of You" gets his comeuppance. When he declares himself "as constant as a northern star" (cf. *Julius Caesar* 3.1.60), the narrator zings him with "constantly in the darkness / Where's that at? / If you want me I'll be in the bar" (79).

In these lopsided encounters, we witness the narrator's strained solicitousness for someone who cannot rise to her level of expression: her men are made interesting only by her critical manner of representing them. So it is in "Woodstock." The whiff of supplication in the second verse's "can I walk beside you"—or is it unearned politesse?—flat-out hurts. He should be so lucky, the narrator's polished phrasings will soon suggest.

Mitchell hints at Woodstock's fog of delusion in the first recitation of the famous chorus, ending "we've got to get ourselves back to the garden" (58). The designation "child of God" establishes "the garden" as the fecund plat "eastward in Eden" (Genesis 2.8). This is not surprising. Mitchell was "going through a kind of born again Christian

trip," she said later; "Suddenly, as performers, we were in the position of having so many people look up to us for leadership, and for some unknown reason, I took it seriously and decided I needed a guide and leaned on God." Woodstock "impressed [her] as a modern miracle, like a modern-day fish-and-loaves story" (qtd. in Ruhlmann 38). Mitchell, that is, was awed by but not acquiescent in the deification of popular musicians. Confronted with an unexpected elevation in status, she turned to a power higher than that recognized by the adulatory mob whose destructive energies would soon prompt a hiatus from live performance and with whom she would always have a difficult relationship (see, for example, Ruhlmann 38, 40).

The feeding miracles of the Gospels are in Mitchell's account replicated by the performers, from whose "egomaniacal backstage crap," again, the songwriter was remote both perspectivally and physically. Mitchell is impressed that performers can convert small songs into mass nutriment, but she distances herself from the analogy of Jesus and performer, which is in any case incompatible with her solicitation of God's aid in understanding the cultural weirdness that her analogy illuminates. Religion gave Mitchell her language, but her "serious[ness]" worked against her endorsement of that which she expressed. Brecht would have loathed the religion but appreciated the effect.

The Old Testament provides Mitchell's critique with much of its feminist bite. The mundane garden that Mitchell invokes has of course been shuttered, its entrance guarded by a cherubim and "the brandisht Sword of God," in Milton's rendering (12.633; cf. Genesis 3.24). The compensatory "paradise within thee" that Milton's angel pitches to Eve (12.587) is a "paradise" of female subordination in which Eve will be "rule[d] over" by a husband whose incuriosity is thematic to the narrative (Genesis 3.16). Neither "paradise" offers much to an intelligent woman, like the uncomfortable social gatherings that Mitchell describes in "Lesson in Survival" and "People's Parties." In "Harry's House-Centerpiece," Mitchell would portray a radiant (saintly?) woman driven to rebellion against circumambient male privilege: "Shining as she reeled him in / To tell him like she did today / Just what he could do with Harry's House / And Harry's take home-pay" (Mitchell, *Complete Poems* 149). A horticultural-cum-Genesiac reference to "climbing ivy for the bath" (149)—another ironic invocation of the pastoral—drives the point home. When Mitchell does imagine verdant retreat, there is not an Adam in sight: "I'm learning / It's peaceful / With a good dog and some trees / Out of touch with the breakdown / Of this century" (99). One searches Mitchell's oeuvre in vain for a populous garden, actual or metaphorical.

The terminal chorus of "Woodstock," delivered by the narrator, is laced with qualifications. The pat bits about celebrants as "stardust" and "golden" ring hollow, voiced by a narrator conscious as the pilgrim is not of the evanescence conveyed by "stardust" and the tension inherent in that image's juxtaposition with "golden," a descriptor that suggests folly as well as permanence (59). The lines containing these terms are now modified by references to the throng as "billion year-old carbon" and as "caught in the devil's bargain." The merger of the individual and the collective in the first addendum criticizes the unacknowledged confounding of the two in "[gonna] join in a rock 'n' roll band," equating coalescence with insentience and nodding at a defining fallacy of the pharmatopian culture under consideration. "Devil's bargain" declares an awareness of risk and complexity at odds with the single-mindedness of the pilgrim, who would naively condescend to the mob.[4] Mitchell's introduction of "back to some semblance of a garden" in

the 1974 live version is clunky but canny, a further withdrawal from a conceit central to "Woodstock."

The narrator delivers the second and third verses, both of which testify to her lack of connectedness to the event. The mechanistic imagery of "I feel to be a cog in something turning" hints at a deism far from the dewy intermingling that the song supposedly celebrates and remote from the idea of pilgrimage (58). This is not the re-creation myth promoted in contemporaneous exercises in primitivism like "Wooden Ships," written by Crosby, Stills, and the Jefferson Airplane's Paul Kantner and played by both their bands at Woodstock. In that song, snotty, fructivorous youths huddle tightly in the aftermath of nuclear war, the apex of technology and thus the antithesis of the title's hand-wrought ships. Even Kantner's more crudely petulant anthem "We Can Be Together," is structured as an appeal to a human community, albeit a community of the "obscene, lawless, hideous, dangerous, dirty, violent, and young." As far as I know, "cog" is not an image that claims any positive connotation in the popular music of the period. It more nearly recalls chilly expressionistic exercises like Elmer Rice's play *The Adding Machine* (1923) and Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927). And the self-conscious sustaining of the iambic rhythm with "to be" gives the line a studied feel that again emphasizes the narrator's distance from the spondean pilgrim of "gonna." The metrical and rhetorical contrasts of "Conversation" reappear.

In the third and final verse, the narrator encounters but does not merge with the celebrants. At an event remembered for its hyperkinetic intermingling, she dreams, necessarily alone, of "bombers . . . turning into butterflies" (59). Paglia wonders whether this vision is "a shamanistic or psychedelic hallucination" (230). The former adjective suggests the musician-god paradigm that Mitchell mistrusted; the latter makes the narrator into an acidhead, as her creator was not (see, for example, Sutcliffe interview 144). Crucially, Mitchell's narrator dreams the hallucination: there are several layers between the writer and her "butterflies." The narrator's vision is mediated by the author's self-consciousness, more nearly an act of Brechtian social criticism than an adventure in shamanism or psychedelia. Mitchell's larger oeuvre again provides support. Drugs for Mitchell tend to be part of a gender-specific amalgam that also comprises violence, infidelity, and other threats to interpersonal connectedness. *Blue* and *For the Roses* in particular are catalogues of messed-up and inaccessible men. A friend from 1968 is remembered for the "tombs in [his] eyes" ("Last Time"); a hippie/junky, ironically, is "bashing in veins for peace" ("Cold Blue Steel" 88). Again: "Needles, guns, and grass."

Although dreams and hallucinations are unique to individuals, Paglia mistakes the narrator's vision for a platform. "We cannot live as flitting butterflies," she chides; "Civilization requires internal and external protections and is far more complex and productive than the sixties credo of Flower Power ever comprehended" (231). This schoolmarmish snit has the curious effect of suggesting that Paglia has promoted the canonization of an imbecile. Mitchell has not proposed a "project" or a "credo." To the contrary, in her diction and imagery less abstractly than in her "ravaged vibrato," she has described a dream that, as a dream, is a vision inaccessible to others. Woodstock is 500,000 discrete dreamers. And dreams in Mitchell's work are hermetic, not vatic as they tend to be in more strident writers. "Rainy Night House" describes a man watching the narrator dream, hoping "to see / Who in the world [she] might be." She in turn watches him sleep and wonders about him. The man's departure for a life alone in the desert confirms the separateness that the lyric has already established. Even in

Mitchell's lament that "they won't give peace a chance / That was just a dream some of us had" (73), the narrator assumes a collective identity only to indicate the insubstantiality of collective imagination (or credos).

In its horrified vision of a torporous mass of dreamers, Tennyson's poem "The Lotos-Eaters" provides a sounder analogue to "Woodstock" than the trip-and-strip banalities of CSN&Y and the Jefferson Airplane. Tennyson's portrayal of Ulysses and his becalmed mariners contrasts "dreamful ease" (line 98) to lost muscular commonality. Music delights and deadens, rendering solipsistic those seduced by "the mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters" (line 27):

> Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
> Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
> To each, but whoso did receive of them,
> And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
> Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
> On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
> His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
> And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
> And music in his ears his beating heart did make. (lines 28–36)

The "sweet music" that Tennyson's travelers hear "gentlier on the spirit lies, / Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes"; it "brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies" (lines 50–52). Finally, the men long only "[t]o dream and dream, like yonder amber light, / . . . / To hear each other's whispered speech; / Eating the Lotos day by day" (lines 102–05). "Speech" is a sound, a parody of what was, not a meaning. If "credo" had an opposite, it would be "hallucination."

Mitchell may or may not have known Tennyson's poem, but as we have seen she knew those who benefited from the bogus theology of "Gods together, careless of mankind" (Tennyson, line 155). Caryl Churchill knew them too, and *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* perhaps unexpectedly makes common cause with "Woodstock." Churchill's play nods at the type in the Protestant extremists who fancied themselves "saints" destined for power in post-Caroline England, only to be disenfranchised by the recentralization of government under Oliver Cromwell. The play first exposes the contradictions of bourgeois collectivism in its treatment of class in Cromwell's Model Army. The effort to depose Charles I, albeit gender-exclusive, was meant to be undiscriminating with respect to social status, recognizing only the distinction between damned royalists and a blessed subculture that answered directly to God while awaiting Jesus' return to lead the government. What Churchill called "a revolution that didn't happen" (qtd. in Kritzer 96) implodes at the Putney Debates of 1647, where the country's future was mapped and the spoils of the war were divided. The ultras' dream of equality is destroyed by the new government's retrogressive insistence on the sanctity of property. As in Churchill's model Brecht, top-down ideology is ad hoc and opportunistic, a tool for the enlistment of stooges eager to believe in the virtue of those who espouse it. We recognize Churchill's newly ennobled corn factor and recruiter Star as a charlatan when he speaks to the laborer and soldier Briggs, who was not, then briefly was, then again was not his equal: "The army was united. I gave orders from God and you all heard the same orders from God in you. We fought as one man. But now we begin to be thousands of separate men" (40). Having chosen sides at the start of the war, God trimmed the roster after it. Star enjoys the estate that the army has requisitioned in the name of Jesus. Briggs goes to London to commune with a group of Ranters—a sect espousing "an anarchic belief in economic and sexual freedom," Churchill reminds us (iii)—on the fringes of a society starting to look like the one it has replaced. Mitchell's disdain for her generation's embrace of their parents' materialism (see, for example, Ghomeshi interview) provides one pertinent analogue.

The silence about gender in these scenes prepares the reader for the dissident characters' replication of hierarchy: Briggs and others, disadvantaged by their poverty, will disadvantage women on the basis of their sex. The laborer Claxton is intrigued by the millenarian preacher Jane Hoskins, who has been beaten for championing promiscuity and rejecting the Genesitic inheritance of woman's sin. He describes his journey to hear Hoskins preach: "as I walked, I found my heart was pounding and my breath got short going up the hill. My body knew I was doing something amazing. I knew I was in the midst of something. . . . I felt myself moving faster and faster, more and more certainly towards God" (37). Like Mitchell's pilgrim, Claxton is "going to join in a . . . band," moving single-mindedly toward the presumption of rapture. This band beckons the "child[ren] of God" mystically. The gentleman Cobbe, saved by a "tiny spark of transcendent, unspeakable glory," hears a voice telling him, "'Go to London . . . that great city, and tell them I am coming'" (20). He goes. As in Wordsworth's Westminster Bridge sonnet, and as in the ad hoc metropolis in upstate New York, the city is the new garden.

This garden, however, is no more hospitable to women than the gardens of Genesis or "Woodstock." Hoskins inadvertently raises a red flag. By "next year," she says,

> Christ will be here in his body like a man and he'll be like a king only you can talk to him. And he's a spirit too and that's in us and it's getting stronger and stronger. And that's why you see men and women shining now, everything sparkles because God's not far above us like he used to be when preachers stood in the way, he's started some great happening and we're in it now. (52–53)

Prediction is not prophetic in this utterance, which is egoistic, not pietistic or, we will learn, creditably vatic. The now-jaded Claxton respond drunkenly, "St. Paul to Timothy, 'Let the women learn in silence'" (53; cf. 1 Timothy 2.11). Then Hoskins: "Jane Hoskins to St. Paul, 'fuck off you silly old bugger'" (53). They laugh together and engage in a gross parody of Holy Communion. We are not meant to laugh with them or to imagine them shining and sparkling. Hoskins's enthusiasm for a Jesus "like a man" is pathetic, and Jesus' stubborn incorporeality will leave Hoskins bereft. The exchange between Claxton and Hoskins extends the theme of winnowed privilege evident in the Putney Debates and Star's dismissal of Briggs, but Claxton's ejaculation is only Churchill's bluntest expression of anxiety about the gender-specific perils of communal affiliation. The drunken convocation of the Ranters—a Woodstock *avant le lettre*, if you will—comprises much of the play's second act, in which Churchill focuses the misogynist energies that trouble her throughout the play.

Among the group is Margaret Brotherton, earlier "stripped to the waist" and beaten out of a parish for vagrancy (5), and later shown resisting a man's offer of a half-penny to "come and lie down" (9). Later still, a starving woman meant either to be or to suggest Brotherton tries to suppress her love for her infant sufficiently to leave it outside the house of a wealthy citizen. Brotherton does not fare much better among the Ranters. By handing her an apple, Cobbe forces her into service as the Biblical temptress and so endorses the metaphor that disturbs Mitchell in "Woodstock." God, in everything, is in the apple, Claxton assures Brotherton. This God/apple "wouldn't have you whipped," he adds with an unmistakable leer and a comical ignorance of the image's absurdity. "Touch it again," Claxton continues; "It blesses you. And my hand. Touch my hand" (50). To touch the apple is to touch God and therefore, bathetically, Claxton. When Brotherton insists that "nobody touches me" (50), Claxton and Hoskins press her for details about her last sexual encounter, presumably the coupling

that produced the child she has abandoned. After more sophistry, Claxton recurs to his masturbatory gambit: "Do you want me to touch your hand?" Brotherton remains firm: "no" (51).

Brotherton's agonies over what she comes to represent as infanticide threaten the self-exculpatory moral relativism of a "band" that refuses to admit her on her terms. Mitchell might have appreciated her dilemma, as the young mother of a child she could not keep (see Weller 143–52) and as a sexually engaged but discriminating woman at a time when, she remembers, women "were supposed to be tied down" (qtd. in Mercer 139). "There was no such thing" as "free love" for women, Mitchell recognized, noting the almost pornographic press her high-profile relationships had generated (qtd. in Mercer 138). Brotherton would learn this lesson, too. Her comrades seek to absolve her and she tries to accept their absolution, specious though it is. The exchange ends with Briggs declaring, "You can be touched. It's not so terrible" (60). Ex cathedra, Brotherton is pronounced fit for the sort of sexual commerce that has devastated her, now without even the pretense of choice. She does not again speak in this scene.

Brotherton appears once more in the epilogue, destitute and gleeful that a theft she committed has been blamed on another woman. Claxton, who had sought an "age of the spirit" with "everything shining" (52), now lives in seclusion. His "great desire" is "to see and say nothing" (62). Like Nebuchadnezzar and Swift's Gulliver, Briggs lives among the animals he has taught himself to imitate. Hoskins frets that "Jesus Christ did come and nobody noticed" (61). The unnamed Drunk of the convocation scene gets drunker. Mary Luckhurst observes that the play "crackles with the energy of numerous characters . . . embarking on journeys of unprecedented self-discovery," but she adds that the characters in the epilogue "reveal their broken spirits in a moving lamentation" (59, 62). She might as well be writing about the trajectory of the American counterculture, and perhaps lamentation is the fate of movements prosecuted by those unable to interrogate their own assumptions. Mitchell, at least, suggested as much during a later "age of the spirit."

"Though nobody now expects Christ to make heaven on earth," wrote Churchill rather too confidently in her foreword to *Light Shining*, the "voices" of the blighted revolutionaries are "surprisingly close to us" (iii). Indeed they are. They belong, as I have suggested, to those whose instinct to love was perverted in the service of a culture of "Acid, booze, and ass / Needles, guns, and grass." For some survivors, they may recall rail-thin sisters, sinister cousins of schoolyard chums, twitchy Jesus freaks, and luminous children become residual and blank, band-less, still searching for stardust but settling for smack. Mitchell heard these voices in 1969 and, to her credit, was sufficiently heedless of vogue to declare them troubling.

I can't help wondering: why the reluctance to recognize in Mitchell an intelligence and a temperament hostile to the writing of anthems? Nothing else in her oeuvre suggests a sympathy with this tedious form. Perhaps we do her an injustice by discussing her work in the context of intellectually torpid fist-pumpers like CSN&Y but not thoughtful artists like Caryl Churchill. And has any female contemporary proposed that hippiedom dealt self-consciously, much less liberally, with matters of gender? Or are the complaints of second-wave feminism not supposed to have sullied the ears of waifish folksingers? Mitchell's many listeners will grant that her orientation is unrelentingly personal; but critics, in the teeth of evidence, would make an exception of one of her most famous songs. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that we filter Mitchell's recording through the CSN&Y

version that throbbed over the closing credits of Michael Wadleigh's 1970 documentary and that remains a staple of classic rock radio today, now as then unmindful of the song's subtlety. Or maybe commentators of a certain age hold too tightly to an appropriative, self-aggrandizing myth of corporate identity. Both possibilities suggest the wisdom of Mitchell's skeptical response to her generation's masculinist collectivism.

NOTES

1 Mitchell, who loathes labels, has criticized a "feminism" that she associates with man-hating "Amazons" and, more creditably, first-world elitism (Ghomeshi interview).

2 The tenuousness of the pretense is evident in Mitchell's account of the 1970 Isle of Wight festival: "A handful of French rabble-rousers had stirred the people up to feel that we, the performers, had sold out because we arrived in fancy cars" (Sutcliffe interview 141–42).

3 See Swift, "Description of a Morning" (1709) and "Description of a City Shower" (1710); and Gay, *Trivia* (1716). For utopian or Edenic readings, see Paglia 228; Whitesell 33; and Mercer 18, 175. Monk notes that Adam and Eve "were tossed from the Garden of Eden for Eve's pursuit of knowledge" but reads the lyric as a "reference to rediscovering . . . lost innocence" (99).

4 The diction is pointed. See also "A Case of You": "I'm frightened by the devil / And I'm drawn to those ones that ain't afraid" (79).

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"High Priest of Trinity College": Milton Wilson's Role as Canadian Poetry's Gatekeeper, 1957–1968

Dennis Duffy

Death turns the recent past into ancient history. The death of Milton Wilson (1923-2013) at the advanced age of ninety, necessitates underlining what is perhaps his most influential literary achievement. If you wrote, read, edited, or otherwise ingested contemporary English-Canadian poetry from 1957 to 1968, his influence was manifest.[1] Whether as periodical editor (*Canadian Forum*), annual critical commentator / surveyor (*University of Toronto Quarterly*, July 1961-65), anthologist (*Recent Canadian Verse; Poets Between the Wars; Poetry of Mid-Century*), critical essayist (*Tamarack Review, Queen's Quarterly, Canadian Literature*), willing grant referee, dissertation supervisor, and / or unfailing correspondent, Milton Wilson exercised a considerable influence over the production and consumption of poetry in English-speaking Canada. More than a university-based critical reader, Wilson occupied a hands-on role in his work with various poets whom he counseled, criticized, encouraged, published, and otherwise aided. Imagine an editor of such influence, then place him within the structure of an academic institution with its own unceasing demands for instruction, evaluation and day-to-day administration. The fact that his principal scholarly activity and teaching performance rested in the area of the English Romantics (*Shelley's Later Poetry*, 1959; numerous periodical articles), made his commitment to fostering contemporary Canadian poetry all the more remarkable.[2]

His papers in the Trinity College archives include correspondence from such poets as Milton Acorn, Patrick Anderson, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Avison, Earle Birney, Bill Bissett, Fred Cogswell, Leonard Cohen, Victor Coleman, John Glassco, Phyllis Gotlieb, Patrick Lane, Irving Layton, Dorothy Livesay, Gwendolyn MacEwen, Eli Mandel, Alden Nowlan, Michael Ondaatje, Al Purdy, James Reaney, Joe Rosenblatt, F. R. Scott, A. J. M. Smith, and Miriam Waddington. However illuminating this material may be to any student of Canadian poetry of the 50s and 60s, however uneven in quality and quantity the correspondence may appear, it demonstrates just how many strands of the poetry web vibrated at Wilson's touch.

Wilson's academic / critical publications alone demonstrate his influential critical role. The 1960 *Canadian Literature* article, "Klein's Drowned Poet" was a truly seminal work. It took the corpus of Canadian poetry as an autonomous subject of study, even as a set of materials with its own internal rhythms and motifs. As a later article illustrates, his critical assessments approached the magisterial in their breadth and assurance:

> The staple product of conventional up-to-date British and American poetry can (very broadly indeed) be described as having moved from a metaphoric and allusive phase in the thirties and forties to a more linguistic—idiomatic and syntactic—one in the fifties and sixties, from the rhetoric of the image to the rhetoric of the voice. (Wilson, "Poet without A Muse" 15)

His genial nature did not forestall him from at times offering a trenchant assessment. For instance, he didn't hesitate to comment on Patrick Anderson and P. K. Page as "extremely insulated poets. Anderson's white anaesthetic winter landscape and Page's glass-tight but vulnerable aquarium leave me gasping for air. Anderson's Marxism and self-conscious Canadianism, Page's vague and stunted expansion toward a larger social body, her Spenderian pity and self-pity—all these do not break open their centripetal, pastoral, half-empty worlds" (Wilson, "*Other Canadians* and After" 80)

Whatever the strengths of his critical role, one of his most notable achievements lay in the sheer quantity of the verse whose publication he made possible. During Wilson's 1955-1968 tenure as successively, Board member, Poetry editor and Managing Editor of *Canadian Forum,* no fewer than 1,980 poems originally appeared in the magazine, which did not pay contributors. Poets appeared there because Wilson had made the *Forum* the *agora* for new poetry. As his role in the periodical expanded, so did the number of poems published, from an annual figure of 40 to 133 during Wilson's final period as Managing Editor.[3] For a journal ostensibly devoted to politics and the arts, this figure represents a formidable amount of attention to poetry and its circulation. Ill-natured and inaccurate as it may seem, yet critic Edmund Wilson's generalized assessment of the poetry appearing in the *Forum* during this period—"The monthly *Canadian Forum* prints pages of poems . . . which might almost all be written by the same person" (91-92)—indicates that Edmund Wilson understood exactly where to look for a representative body of Canadian poetry in 1964. Whatever he found in the *Forum* reflected the taste and critical acuity of Milton Wilson. Small wonder then, that Irving Layton addressed Wilson as "High Priest of Trinity College" in a letter of February 1, 1959. Smaller wonder that Wilson countered almost instantly with a rejection of the label in a letter less than a week later (Feb. 6). Wilson's correspondence denies him any remote, lofty role as a literary dictator. It shows him instead as a practical critic and hands-on fellow worker, intent on assisting the development of stronger craftsmanship and self-expression.[4]

Nowhere does this editorial and critical engagement more fully express itself than in the extensive Layton-Wilson correspondence. Francis Mansbridge, editor of Layton's selected letters, refers to Layton's epistolary friendship with Wilson, but the term fails to express fully the relationship at play here (79). Layton's many expressions of personal and critical respect—stressing his trust in Wilson's critical judgment, his importance in the country's literary scene, and the weight of his anthologies—indicate how Layton excepted Wilson from his normal distrust of academics and their reactions to his work (Layton, letters 1958, Apr.1959, Mar. 1959, 1962). Wilson's professional esteem for Layton and his work is caught in a 1958 draft of a recommendation for a Canada Council Senior Arts fellowship:

> I would say that few (if any) Canadian poets can equal the range and quality of Mr. Layton's output over the past five or six years. Since this output shows no signs of stopping or deteriorating, and since the top of his achievements may well lie ahead, Canadian poetry is likely to benefit from the grant of a fellowship to Mr. Layton. (Wilson, Recommendation Letter)

We have, on the one hand, a poet who has no qualms asserting his qualifications for the Nobel Prize (Layton, letter 23 Oct. 1959). On the other, we observe a critic who could garner an award for his scholarship from the Keats-Shelley Society, and then forget to take the plaque home with him (Stoffman). On the one hand, we see a poet chafing at the influence exerted by academic critics over a literary culture providing little extra-academic institutional support for criticism. On the other, there is a reviewer who dismissed any professional basis for his work: "[Poetry reviewing is] probably the least professional literary pursuit in this country" (Glassco 56, 52) These differences, temperamental, professional and stylistic, failed to prevent Wilson and Layton from a mutual and fruitful critical engagement.

Spatial limitations do not allow me to illustrate this creative / critical relationship at great length, but I offer three relatively brief examples. Here is Wilson to Layton, Feb. 18 1958:

> Your new conclusion to "Whatever Else Poetry is Freedom" [for its final version: Layton's *Collected Poems*, 316-17] interests and half-satisfies me. The ending is certainly an inspiration, and ties a lot of things together: e.g., the aggrieved king, in addition to the Christ reference, also develops from the earlier King Canute, the resurrection-sun vs. shadow-vampire opposition comes naturally after the cluster of images in the previous stanza, the statue doesn't merely kill the vampire but also suggests the bread (staff) of life, the resurrection of the body, which in turn belongs with the fleshy images earlier in the stanza, whose skin and glycerine certainly suggest an explosive mixture. Of course the clinching thing is the poetic (and musical) meaning of "stave"—as you suggest in your letter.

Wilson's response to the poem before him however, extends beyond the explicative, and darts into the acutely critical:

> I'm less certain of the first three lines, for a number of reasons: (a) the poet's stilts swiveling in the socket provided by somebody's fat navel is not a very happy image here—particularly as the guy would need two navels; and anyway "swivel" seems dragged in by the half-rhyme; (b) the emphatic tone of lines 2-4 seems a bit laboured and repetitious, perhaps out of key with the more economical and crisp tone of the rest of the poem.

It is in the next brief paragraph that Wilson explains what gives his response its particular flavour: "These were my initial reactions. I include them as from reader to reader, rather than from reader to poet."[5] This insistence on including himself within an undifferentiated community of readership and response indicates the "workshopping" nature of Wilson's approach, and the responsive support he offered to the writer.

A second example, from a letter of September 29, 1958 presents another example of Wilson's insistence on playing a role that is dialogic rather than any critical monologue delivered from on high. Again, the passage underlines the give-and-take of response and revision rather than oracular manifesto between Wilson and his correspondent:

> Your two notes have sent me back to Young Girls Dancing [at Camp Lajoie (*Collected Poems,* 368)]. I must have been looking at it with one eye, because the perspective and focus look a lot better now than they did then. The Timon and Nietszche [sic.] glanced off me I guess, but there's a lot more detail I should have seen. [allusions to other Layton poems follow] However, a letter isn't a careful review, just a rapid impression, and likely to be pretty superficial much of the time. Anyway, I agree with you, it's a much better poem than I first thought, although I still wonder if the conclusion is not a little too heavy and resonant for the tone of the poem—I mean the last two lines. However, they do prepare for the monumental qualities of the two poems that will follow in the series, and of course the contrast in tones does set the no-longer-great events in their proper place. (Wilson n. pag.)

Finally, could any writer demand from a reader a clearer and more economical appraisal of a complex and superb poem than Wilson's response to "A Tall Man Executes a Jig" (*Collected Poems* 383-86)?

> For your amusement, I offer one man's reading of the poem. Before man can be properly resurrected, what's needed is a resurrection of the serpent. To be sure, the tall man tries a resurrection of his own, fly blown as he is, but it won't come, even if his head touches the sky. Or rather, it does come, but in an unexpected way with the appearance of the gutted serpent. Quite a comedown for the tempter—from the arrogant green flame of life to a coldeyed skinflint. I suppose this is the ultimate tragedy of modern life—even our devils are poor, prudent, shriveled things. So the tall man lies down with the serpent in fellowship of

> death—its rigidity is sexually pretty ironic—and only then, as man and snake tunnel back together to the bedrock of history, does the snake turn into sky-dragon being tempted by, worth standing erect for, capable of swallowing its own tail (coiled anyway) and thereby transforming all. But the ending is ambiguous. It's positive no doubt, but how positive? What's the final image left in our minds? A weary old man's last erection or a risen Christ? I think you manage to suggest both and thus preserve your optimism and your pessimism at the same time. (Wilson, letter 11 Dec. 1961)

Layton's reply to this exposition emphasized Wilson's brilliance and his own willingness to amplify and pursue some of the leads furnished by Wilson (Layton, letter 16 Dec. 1961). The two communications, if you will, embody an ideal dialogue between writer and reader, with the object of attention, the poem, illuminated at every step.

Milton Wilson's influence on the Canadian poetry of his time had a considerable institutional basis: the academy, journals and periodicals, and his various anthologies. Despite all these props, as his correspondence indicates, the foundation of his influence rested upon an *earned* response, his willingness to wrestle with the texts before him and to match his own critical responses with those of his correspondents. Here stands a model of reader and writer, poet and editor. Have we any present-day match for this?

NOTES

1 Disclosure: it was my good fortune to occupy the office next to Wilson's for several years during the 60s, and our friendship extended beyond the strictly professional. Milton Wilson also sponsored my admission to the *Canadian Forum* editorial board. We knew the inside of each other's residences. My authority for many of the interpretive matters raised here rests upon my role as colleague, friend, and co-worker during the 60s and early 70s.

2 According to one of his sons, Wilson waited until post-retirement before offering courses concentrating on Canadian literature (Stoffman).

3 While others may have held the title of Literary and / or Poetry editor at this time, everyone connected with the magazine took it for granted that no poem appeared there without Wilson's tacit approval.

4 Ironically, Wilson's personal modesty prevented him for the most part from keeping copies of his own correspondence. This accounts for the fact that bulk of his letters to Layton resides in the Irving Layton fonds rather than at Trinity (Jassom). I extend my warmest thanks to Ms. Sylvia Jassom at the Trinity College archives and Ms. Wendy Knechtel at Concordia's Vanier library for their assistance and support. Indeed, it was the display of many poets' correspondence with Wilson that Ms. Jassom organized for his memorial service that led me to compose this note.

5 Wilson's letter of 15 March 1958 indicates how seriously Layton took his advice by altering some of his lines, and offers the gracious conclusion that even as the poem originally stood, "it was a fine poem even then."

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Contributors

Articles

Rachel **Bryant** is a doctoral candidate at the University of New Brunswick, where she studies northeastern North American literatures and literary cultures. Her work has appeared in the *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review*, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, *Native American and Indigenous Studies*, and *English Studies in Canada*.

Dennis **Duffy**'s essay on *The Seats of the Mighty* and *Jalna* recently appeared in *Canadian Literature and Cultural Memory* (OUP Canada). He is currently at work on the implications of genre theory in the work of Alice Munro.

Petra **Fachinger** has a PhD in Comparative Literature. She teaches in the English Department at Queen's University and is affiliated with the graduate program in Cultural Studies. Her research interests include Canadian literature, Indigenous literatures, diaspora and transnational studies. Her publications focus on cross-cultural relations and transcultural trauma, transnationalism, and urban reality.

Jody **Mason** is an Associate Professor of English at Carleton University. She has published articles on the subjects of Canadian literatures, authorship and publishing in Canada, leftist literary culture, and the politics of mobility. Her first book, *Writing Unemployment*: *Worklessness, Mobility, and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Canadian Literatures*, was published in 2013.

Andrea **Medovarski** completed her PhD in the English department at York University in 2007. She has written and published on a range of Canadian and black diasporic authors, filmmakers, and theorists, including Dionne Brand, Tessa McWatt, Andrea Levy, Clement Virgo, and Katherine McKittrick. After completing a SHHRC postdoctoral fellowship at OISE University of Toronto she now teaches in the Departments of English and Humanities at York, and in the Transition Year Programme affiliated with the university. She also serves on the editorial board of the journal *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*.

Alexander **Pettit** is a Professor of English and affiliated faculty in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of North Texas. He has recently published on American Indian drama, Eugene O'Neill, Luis Valdez, and Tennessee Williams.

Roshaya **Rodness** is a PhD candidate in the Department of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University. Her work has appeared in the journal *Chiasma: A Site For Thought*.

Michael **Ross** is Professor Emeritus at McMaster University. He has published *Storied Cities: Literary Imaginings of Florence, Venice and Rome* as well as *Race Riots: Comedy and Ethnicity in Modern British Fiction*. He has recently completed *Designing Fictions: Literary Confrontations with Advertising*.

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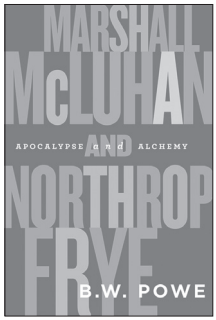

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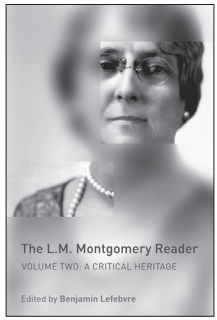

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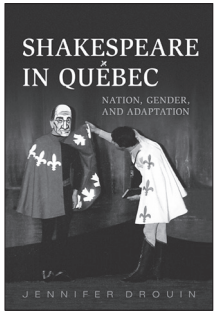

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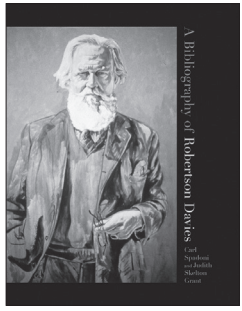

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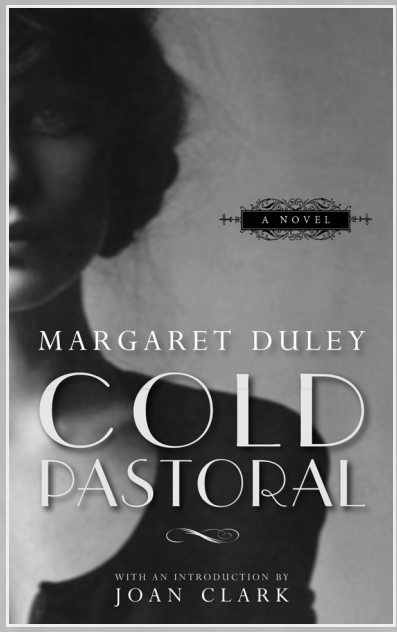

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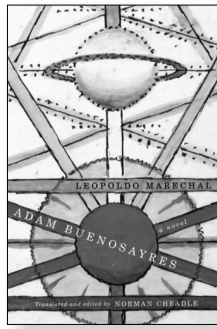

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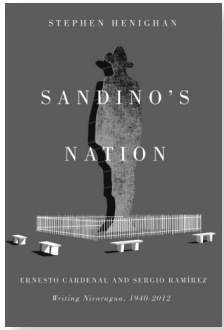

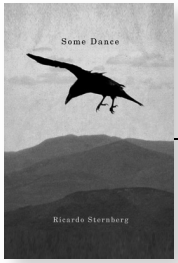

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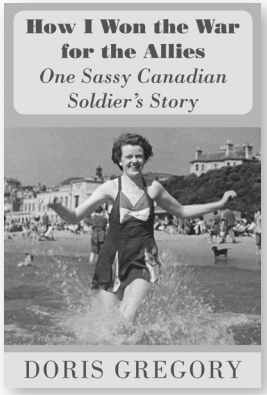

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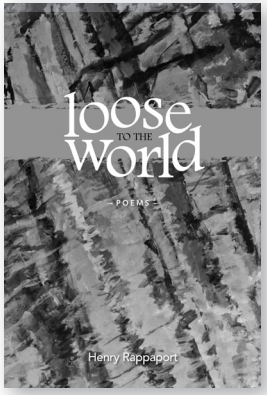

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