

in the practice of writers. Some writers who have lived on both sides of the 49th parallel have offered intriguing fictional accounts of character developments and interesting glimpses of (the) contrasting life-styles in Canada and in the U.S.A.

One may speculate whether the transformation of Cuyler Goodwill in Carol Shields' *The Stone Diaries*¹³⁴ from a taciturn solitary worker in the quarries of his Canadian province to a verbose, prosperous energetic booster of Salem limestone in Bloomington, Indiana, is not only the result of an individual metamorphosis, but also mirrors the influence of a collective identity to which he has adapted. The new life of Cuyler Goodwill also contrasts with the inhibited life-style of Barker Flett, Daisy's second Canadian husband, the botanist in Ottawa, formerly of Winnipeg, whom Daisy, Cuyler Goodwill's daughter, visits after long years of mere correspondence and whom she quickly marries. Should one assume that these (characterological) contrasts are coincidental or can one claim that the juxtaposition reflects habitual constructions of fictional identities? Or may it even be the result of different collective identities, at least in the past?

Another case which we might profitably consider are the preoccupations to be found in the fictional work of Clark Blaise. The son of French-Canadians he was born and reared largely in the USA. As the title of his best-known collection of stories *A North American Education*¹³⁵ suggests, he was taken to many places in North America by his restless family. While the formative experience of regular uprooting shaped the character of Frankie Thibidault, an outsider in whom the reader encounters a veiled self-portrait of the author, the frequent crossing of borders both supports and runs counter to national and regional trends which insist on the preservation of borderlines.

Another fruitful field of inquiry may be the role of the city as a topic in Canadian and in American literatures. If we can trust Nancy

¹³⁴ Cf. *The Stone Diaries*, Toronto, 1993.

¹³⁵ Cf. *A North American Education: A Book of Short Fiction*, Toronto, 1973.