

whose official motto is „Je me souviens” (I remember), has greatly changed since the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Of the three strategies of its traditional survival policy—adherence to the French language and the Catholic faith and a high rate of natural reproduction („la revanche des berceaux”)—only the first is still in operation. Even the Québécois tongue, however, is nowadays irreverently used by *écritures migrantes* writers, who convey the province's increasingly complex ethical and cultural configuration caused by immigration. Ferociously satiric, anti-patriotic immigrant writing in Québec is represented by such texts as Haiti-born Dany Laferrière's 1985 novel *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer*.

After dealing summarily with the notions „state” and „nation” in the North American context, the context itself will be focused on: continentalism. The continental approach offers a wide spectrum of Canadian attitudes ranging from that expressed in the title of J.W. Dafoe's 1935 study *Canada: An American Nation*, where a fundamental sameness between the two countries is postulated, to George Grant's poignant *Lament for a Nation* in 1965.⁹ It should be stressed that even a nationalist view of Canada as culturally quite distinct from the U.S. uses the continental framework as a heuristic device, as evidenced by Northrop Frye's contrasting of the Canadian garrison mentality and the American frontier spirit.¹⁰ Related to Frye's is Margaret Atwood's thesis that striving for survival—expressed in an historical array of victim positions from the hardships undergone by the early explorers through the subjugation of the Aboriginal people to the French/English contest and its reverberations—marks the Canadian psyche.¹¹ Atwood's thesis might be called continental in capaciousness and nationalist in spirit. Given the manifold

⁹ Cf. Allan Smith, *Canada—An American Nation: Essays on Continentalism, Identity, and the Canadian Frame of Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 4.

¹⁰ See his „Conclusion” to *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1965), 821-29.

¹¹ See Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972).