

'Canada is experiencing'

A New Chapter for Canadian Authors in Britain

The British press has always recognised major writers like Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Robertson Davies and Brian Moore. The success story is their glowing praise for a list of newcomers.

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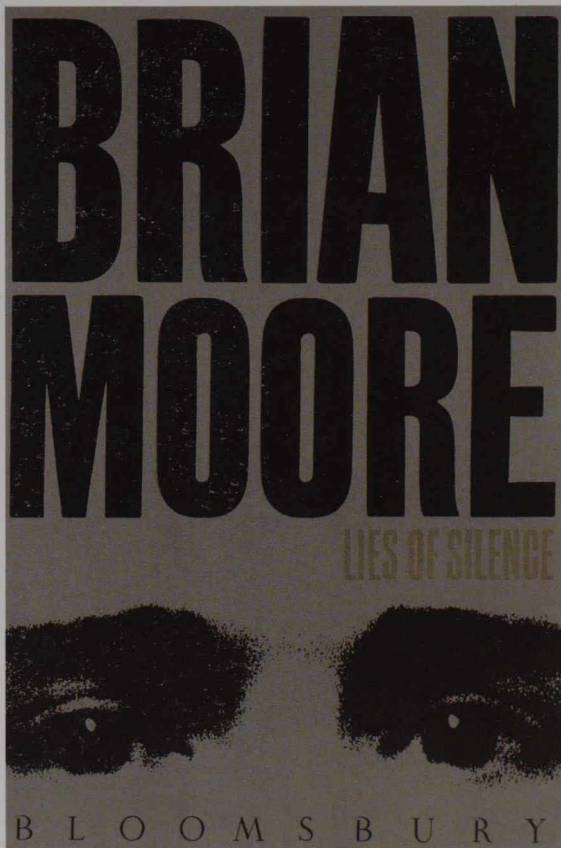
I heralded the new visibility of Canadian writers on the British literary scene in *Canada Today/d'aujourd'hui* four years ago. A look again in 1991 highlights some significant changes in the reception of Canadian fiction in Britain and some exciting recent initiatives in publishing.

In 1987 the focus was on a few well-known names: Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Robertson Davies, Mavis Gallant, whose fiction was already popular in Britain as well as in Canada. The appearance of Atwood and Davies on the important UK Booker Prize list in 1986 was hailed with a

cautious optimism, for everything was still in the balance. The signs were good: Canadian novels seemed to translate well from one culture context to another, many of them had a strongly international flavour, and British publishers and readers were proving quite generously receptive to non-British novelists.

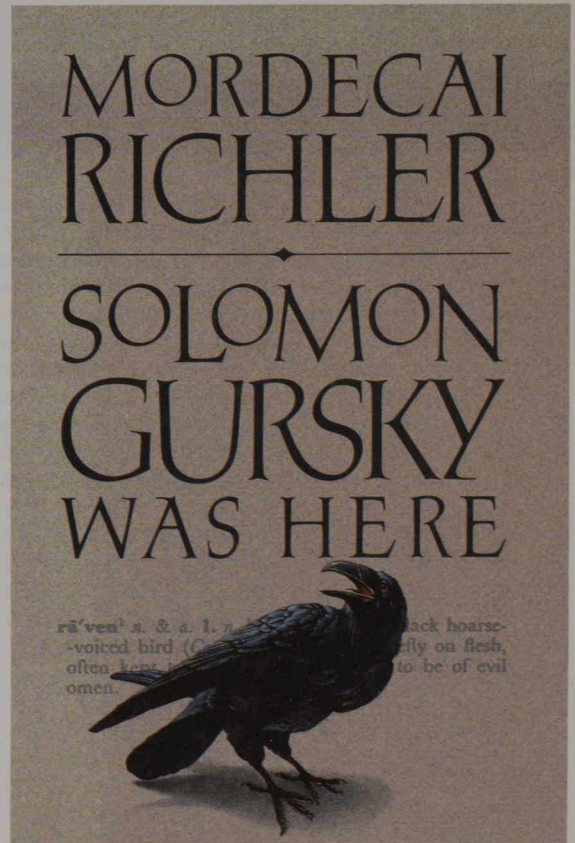
Of that group of older writers I remarked, 'They will be heard here with increasing authority'. It was a safe prediction. Atwood has recently been in Oxford to give the prestigious Clarendon Lectures entitled 'Strange Things: 4 Lectures on Canadian Literature', following her prize-worthy *Cat's Eye* and the film version of her award-winning novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. Robertson Davies will be a guest of honour at the Aldeburgh Festival and invited to read at the Purcell Room in June. He has another novel due to be published here in the autumn. Munro's *Friend of my Youth* was read on BBC Woman's Hour when it was published at the end of last year and *The Times* critic has described her as 'one of the best short story writers alive'. Again two senior Canadian novelists were short listed for the Booker Prize in 1990: Brian Moore with *Lies of Silence* and Mordecai Richler with *Solomon Gursky Was Here*.

Lies of Silence and *Solomon Gursky Was Here* were both short listed for the 1990 Booker Prize.



'Moore is such a fine craftsman that for once the word unputdownable is deserved'

Sunday Telegraph Apr 90



'A major work of rich complexity'

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