Continentalism and Nationhood in Canada

- Essays -

Editor: Anna JAKABFI

Eötvös Loránd University – Canadian Studies Centre, Budapest
Sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada

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Revision: István GÉHER

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Preface

Canadian Studies started in Hungary by Eötvös Loránd University's first special course on Canadian literature in September 1979. This single course gradually evolved into elective courses of Canadian Culture, 20th century Canadian Literature, 19th century Canadian Literaure, and Canadian History in the 1980's. In 1994 a bilingual Independent Program of ten subjects under the title Canadian and Quebec Studies was launched. Those who completed a minimal six courses and proved a knowledge of basic French were entitled to a Canadian Studies Certificate (which equals a Minor in North America) added to their Master degree in English language and literature.

To obtain a Master degree had become possible if the thesis and the final exam were taken in Canadian Studies subjects upon the choice of the candidate. By the end of the year 2002 altogether 43 Master degree theses had been successfully defended.

It has become also possible to write partly or fully a Canadian Studies Ph.D. thesis at the end of doctoral studies in English language culture and/or literature. At present three postgraduate students are working on/defending their Ph.D. theses who are all assets to the Canadian Studies Centre of Eötvös Loránd University. Both full-time instructors Anna Jakabfi (Director) and János Kenyeres took also their Ph.D. degrees in Canadian Literature in 1989 and 1994 respectively.

Since the early 1990's Canadian and European guest professors who stayed for longer and shorter periods of time in Budapest gave courses/classes in Canadian Studies: John Drew, a British Council lecturer repeatedly taught in Canadian Poetry classes, John Thomas,

University of Wolfville, New Brunswick and Francis Zichy, University of Saskatchewan, taught 20th century fiction; single lectures were given by John Taylor, Rudy Wiebe, John Grube, Simon Mayne, Karen Mulhallen, David Staines, Dennis Cooley, Doug Barbour, Patricia Keeney, Daniel Richler, Kathy and Gabe Scardellato, and Roosevelt Robinson. Many of these visitors gave books to the Canadiana collection. Several Hungarian guest professors gave lectures, among them László Borsányi in First Nations' Arts, Veronika Kniezsa and Dóra Pődör in Linguistics.

Many generous book donations of the Canadian Government had always been welcome since 1979. The book donations made Canadian Studies courses possible in the first place.

Major non-curricular events were organised: a Canadian food festival within a Chrismas Party in 1992; Canada Days with quiz programs for students' teams and lectures of honorary guests Jeanne Delbaere-Garant (Canadian Studies Centre of Brussels, Belgium) 1998, Karen Mulhallen (DESCANT Magazine editor, Toronto, Canada) 2000, Gerhard Düsterhaus (University of Bonn, Germany) in 2002; a major international conference ('Canada and the Millennium') in celebration of 20 years' Canadian Studies at Eötvös Loránd University in the Castle of Seregélyes in 1999. In February 2002 the inauguration Conference of the Canadian Studies Centre was being held of which a selection of the papers is contained in this present volume.

The question may arise why has the topic of Continentalism and Nationhood been chosen as the title of the inauguration conference and also of the ensuing publication. Canada's history as well as literary life have been affected by the double push to the continent of North America and the development of her nationhood versus her old colonial status to the mother country of Great Britain.

Since the term 'continentalism' refers to the English speaking territory of North America – while French, the other culture refers to Canada alone – 'nationhood' is also thought of and treated in the essays with English Canadian culture and literature in mind.

Continentalism points to and directs the reader to North America as an entity of English speaking peoples and thus embraces and treats the culture of the United States and Canada on a comparative basis. Nationhood emphasizes the growing awareness of Canada's development from the colonial and the post-colonial status to an independent community proud of her heritage to the old mother country of Great Britain.

The two terms together: Continentalism and Nationhood explain and explore Canadian identity as a new awareness in the New World.

Authors of this volume are all Europeans and are certainly among the most experienced Canadianists of this continent. The essays show how we see this fundamental issue of Canada and how we think our students should look at Canadian culture and literature and bear in mind the issues: Continentalism and Nationhood.

Budapest, November 2002.

Anna Jakabfi

Part I.
Continentalism

American-Canadian Relations in a Cultural Studies Perspective

Dieter Meindl (University of Erlangen, Germany)

Today the humanities and social sciences tend to conceive of themselves as richly intertwined cultural studies. Culture, for its part, has come to mean an ever-changing network, or overlapping, of discrete human phenomena, particularly those relating to ethnic groups and social strata and involving interchange and negotiation of power. This view of culture is not to be equated with multiculturalism. In conceiving of numerous distinct cultures, multiculturalism involves a totalizing view of each, thus jarring, not jibing with the culture concept indicated, which could be called an interculturalist concept. Closely examined, multiculturalism is a very equivocal position, evoking both a vision of mutual respect between cultures and the specter of an endless multiplication of nationalisms. Interculturalism's foremost spokesman is Homi K. Bhabha, who emphasizes cultural hybridity and critiques multiculturalism by treating it as a rhetoric of exclusion that ignores the interrelatedness of cultures and of their historical locations. For Bhabha, culture is located in what he calls „the third space," defined by him as „the 'inter'–the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space–that carries the burden of the meaning of culture." In this, it would seem, Bhabha was anticipated by Mikhail Bakhtin, who says: „A cultural domain has no inner territory. It is entirely located upon

boundaries, boundaries intersect it everywhere, passing through each of its constituent features."[1]

This paper is based on the premise that Canada cannot be understood apart from the United States, that is, outside the continental context. Hence what follows is situated, as it were, on the boundary between the two states, the International Border, as it is called, that divides and connects Canada, which is the world's second-largest country after Russia, and the United States, the world's sole remaining superpower. This exalted position of the U.S. was foreshadowed as early as 1836 when the Nova Scotian T.C. Haliburton, in his popular Sam Slick sketches, had his protagonist, an itinerant Yankee peddler, say: „I guess we are the greatest nation on the face of the earth, and the most enlightened too."[2] In a complex manner, where Canada is concerned, such concepts as „nation," „state," and „continent" intersect with the major constant in its history, its relationship with the U.S. „State" refers to a legal and political organization; „nation"designates a community of people sharing certain values and interests. Evidently, the United States is both a state and a nation. It has always benefited from a civic nationalism sustaining faith in America's unique democratic mission in the world as the champion of universal human rights. American nationalism and exceptionalism, which often strike the observer as naive, have no counterpart in Canada. This should not surprise us. The U.S. came into being through a revolutionary act, whose ideological premise were English parlamentarism and the enlightenment view of man. Canada took an evolutionary course. To the present day, its head of state is the English king–or queen. To

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[1] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 38; M.M. Bakhtin, „The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art," *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov and Kenneth Brostrom (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 257-325; 274.

[2] Thomas Chandler Haliburton, *The Clockmaker; or, The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville (First Series)*, New Canadian Library (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1958), 24.

pinpoint the beginning of Canadian self-determination is not easy. Did it come with Confederation in 1867? With the Westminster Statute giving Canada full legislative power in 1931? Or with the patriation in 1982 of its constitution, which replaced the English Parliament's British North America Act of 1867, under whose terms the Dominion of Canada was founded and which has not been ratified by all the provinces of Canada yet. Assuredly, Canada is a state, a powerful and successful one at that. However, one hesitates to call Canada–Canada in its entirety–a nation. In contrast, the province of Québec seems a nation; Québec, however, is not a state, or not yet. Canada, as an aggregate, has been called „a 'multination' state."[3] This appelation is derived from the existence within Canada of groups with distinct national identities: the Québécois and the Native Canadians, that is, Indians and Inuit, who also go by the name of „First Nations." In 1999, Canada added another territory to its ten provinces and two territories: Nunavut, an Inuit territory. In contrast, a fifty-first U.S. state on an ethnic basis–let us say a state called „Navajo"–seems impossible, despite the fact that the existing Navajo reservation surpasses in size most of the New England states. The impossibility, it could be argued, is not due, or not wholly due, to a repressive American attitude toward minorities but to „the traditionally open or inclusionary American model of civic nationalism."[4] Even with political correctness replacing the Melting Pot concept, Americans find it hard to conceive a happier fate for any inhabitant of the U.S. than that of becoming a regular American. Even with W(hite)A(nglo-)S(axon)P(rotestant) dominance gone, the American people hold on to consolidating nationalist thinking imbued with America's founding concepts and myths. The „The American Way of Life," a sociologist observed in 1960, „is the symbol by which Americans define themselves and establish their

[3] Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 10.

[4] Knud Krakau, „Nation–National Identity–Nationalism: An Introduction," *The American Nation–National Identity–Nationalism*, ed. Knud Krakau (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1997), 7-15; 13.

unity," an observation that still seems valid.[5] The American mystique is usually claimed and thus endorsed and confirmed even by culturally more or less distinct underprivileged groups within American society, which, given the pervasiveness of American civic nationalism, could be characterized as centripetal.

Canadian society strikes one as centrifugal. Various tensions have marked Canada's history and still impinge on its presence: formerly separate British North American provinces versus Canada's federal organization; Britain's impact versus that–dominant now–of the United States; and, most important, English versus French Canada, a conflict that goes back to the fall of New France in 1759/60, when, as a result of their defeat in the Seven Years' War, the French lost not only Lower Canada (today's Québec), but their control over the St. Lawrence, Ohio, and Mississippi River valleys and the Great Lakes area, that is, the whole hinterland of the English Atlantic seabord colonies, the war thus ending what the English Canadian writer Hugh MacLennan, in his novel *Two Solitudes* (1945), calls „the vastest encircling movement in recorded history."[6] Due to its internal contradictions, Canada has always had its famous identity problem. In the academic sphere, inhabiting and continually studying rather than resolving that problem is now even considered an adequate expression of Canada's identity, which makes the country a very scholarly experiment in nationhood.[7] Jacques Godbout, a French Canadian writer, does not see Canada in a crisis, but defines the country's identity *as* crisis: „Pas de crise, pas de pays."[8] Such a postmodern concept of nationhood would not even be advanced in jest in the U.S., whose self-assurance and sense of mission seem immune to academic cerebrations. The Canadian identity problem also extends to Québec, once such a homogeneous province. Québec,

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[5] Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1960), 78.

[6] Hugh MacLennan, Two Solitudes (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1945), 100.

[7] Cf. Jonathan Kertzer, Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), esp. 192-200.

[8] See ibid., 174.

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 Candian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972).

interpenetrations of nation and continent, one feels uneasy about the alleged „antagonism between continentalism and nationalism in Canada" and their association with pro- and anti-Americanism, respectively.[12] This does not mean that the present writer is on principle opposed to binary oppositions (often figuring as a blundering nuisance in contemporary cultural studies, their *bête noire*, as it were). He would argue, however, that such neat oppositions reflect the cognitive process as such and constitute an inevitable and indeed indispensable approach to cultural phenomena, serving as they do as theoretical models and patterns with which to view the complex sphere of practice and empirical reality. Canada, to provide an illustration, has been customarily viewed as subject to American economic permeation since the nineteenth century, which involves the binary opposition victim/exploiter. The opposition is put to brilliant use in F.R. Scott's poem

National Identity
The Canadian Centenary Council
Meeting in le Reine Elizabeth hotel
To seek those symbols
Which will explain ourselves to ourselves
Evoke bi-cultural responses
And prove that something called Canada
Really exists in the hearts of all
Handed out to every delegate
At the start of proceedings
A portfolio of documents
On the cover of which appeared
In gold letters
not
A Mari Usque Ad Mare
not

[12] Hans Hauge, „Continentalism versus Nationalism: The US, the Canadian, and the Nordic Experience," *Informal Empire? Cultural Relations between Canada, the United States and Europe*, ed. Peter Easingwood, Konrad Groß and Hartmut Lutz (Kiel: 1&f Verlag, 1998), 89-101; 16.

Dieu Et Mon Droit
not
E Pluribus Unum
but
COURTESY OF COCA-COLA LIMITED

A legitimately one-sided satiric view should not preclude awareness of the manifaceted nature of American/Canadian economic relations including the fact that American investors have greatly contributed to the development of economically weak and stagnant areas of Canada and that many of Americans have been fleeced in the process. During the 1920s, the classic Canadian definition of a mine was „a hole in the ground with a liar on top." The ecological impairment and cultural stultification of Canada at the hands of, respectively, American industries and mass media could likewise be subjected to a differentiating and relativizing view.

The nationalism/continentalism scenario in Canada is also related to the fact that there is much more public Canadian interest in the U.S. than vice versa, a unilateral fixation reflecting the asymmetric power connex between the two countries, whose rapport has known phases of a varying nature and intensity. The administration of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, which coincided with a period of history comprising Vietnam, Watergate and the oil crisis, was in Canada a time remarkable for its critical or nationalist attitude toward the U.S. Trudeau described the American/Canadian relationship as „going to bed with an elephant." Viewing that relationship as a marriage or partnership is a widespread and significant discursive activity. Inevitably, in these conceits, Canada figures as *she*, whereas the U.S. represents the *he*. Trudeau's bonmot is quite clear about which of the two is the heavyweight, potent partner. In contemporary Canada, nationalism, which is basically a nineteenth-century attitude, seems on the wane. This is so even in Québec, where, in 2001, a public opinion poll conducted by the Montréal daily *La Presse* showed

that 62% of the Quebecers interviewed on Québec sovereignty did not consider it a priority.[13]

In conclusion, a short comment on a well-known nationalist French Canadian novel will be offered. *Maria Chapdelaine* (1916) was written by the Frenchman Louis Hémon after a mere six-month stay on Québec's northern farming frontier, the then barely developed Lac Saint-Jean area. It is the classic French Canadian *roman de la terre*, celebrating the rural, Catholic, conservative values of agricultural Québec over against the temptations of modern, urban life represented by the United States. Much has been made of the young heroine's choosing to marry Eutrope Gagnon, a man who can offer her nothing but the hard life with which she has been familiar since her childhood, rather than Lorenzo Surprenant, who promises her a much easier life in the States. What critics tend to overlook is the fact that Maria's rational choice of a husband only ensues after her deep emotional commitment to her first and only love, François Paradis, is canceled by the latter's death. Looking at the surnames of the three men who court Maria, we realize that „Gagnon" stands for traditional community values that have gained allegiance over generations, whereas „Surprenant" represents a more recent, flashy, superficial and materialistic mode of life. „Paradis," personifies not only a maiden's dream of love, but something quintessentially non-European: paradise in the sense of the virgin land, the wilderness that the whites penetrate as hunters, loggers, and Indian traders. These are François's occupations, which he would have had to give up or modify as a family man, had he not been killed by the cold during his solitary tramp through the frozen north country, trying to pay a Christmas visit to Maria, his beloved fascinated by the aura of the great outdoors about him. François Paradis's mode of life strikes one as neither specifically French Canadian, nor Canadian, nor American, but as early North American. Somewhat metaphorically called a „coureur de bois" in the text, Paradis is a frontiersman precisely because there are no frontiers or limits to his roaming. He even spurns clearing the

[13] See Canada-Info: Wirtschaft - Politik - Investition (Berlin) 9, no. 2 (March 2001), 4.

land–scratching the earth as he calls it–as a mere continuation of French peasant life:

> It was the everlasting conflict between the two types: pioneer and farmer, the peasant from France who brought to new lands his ideals of ordered life and contented immobility, and that other in whom the vast wilderness awakened distant atavistic instincts for wandering and adventure.[14]

In other words, in the first half of this essentially nationalist novel, we have a continentalist contending for a woman who has struck deep roots in the Québec earth.

The contemporary sequel to the myth of the roving pioneer is the North American road novel, whose fountainhead is *On the Road* (1957) by Jack Kerouac, a man „at the crossroads of many cultures," born of French Canadian parents whose families had emigrated from Québec to New England.[15] Such gasoline-propelled, often rather melancholy road sagas as Robert M. Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974), Jacques Poulin's *Volkswagen blues* (1984) and Aritha Van Herk's *No Fixed Address* (1987)–to provide an American, an English Canadian, and a Québécois example–hark back to James Fenimore Cooper's tales of footloose Leather-Stocking and are reminniscent of the continental sweep of Walt Whitman, who, in „Song of Myself," shows little inclination to observe national borders,

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[14] Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine: A Tale of the Lake St. John Country*, trans. W.H. Blake (New York: Modern Library, 1934), 52. „C'était l'éternel malentendu des deux races: les pionniers et les sédentaires, les paysans venus de France qui avaient continué sur le sol nouveau leur idéal d'ordre et de paix immobile, et ces autres paysans, en qui le vaste pays sauvage avait réveillé un atavisme lointain de vagabondage et d'aventure" (Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine* [Montréal: Fides, 1980], 43).

[15] See *Un homme grand: Jack Kerouac at the Crossroads of Many Cultures/Jack Kérouac à la confluence des cultures*, ed. Pierre Anctil et alii (Ottawa:Carleton University Press, 1990).

feeling „At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in the bush, or with the fishermen off Newfoundland."[16]

To conclude: whether one adopts a nationalist or continentalist view and in conformity with the interculturalist trend in cultural studies, Canadian culture and literature cannot be integrally approached without reference to the powerful and turbulent American republic, which figures both as Canada's other and big brother, as it were, given the strangeness Canadians perceive about the U.S. (with concern, awe, and amusement) and given the family resemblance between the two countries. There is no reason to bewail the prospect that Canada will probably never have an identity all and essentially its own. On the contrary: Canada will yet prove a model for learning to live with what is other and from the outside within one's borders.

Notes

1. Homi K. Bhabna, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 38; M.M. Bakhtin, „The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art," *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays,* ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov and Kenneth Brostrom (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 257-325; 274.
2. Thomas Chandler Haliburton, *The Clockmaker;* or, *The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville (First Series),* New Canadian Library (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 24.
3. Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 10.
4. Knud Krakau, „Nation–National Identity–Nationalism: An Introduction," *The American Nation–National Identity–Nationalism,* ed. Knud Krakau (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1997), 7-15; 13.

[16] Stanza 16, line 339.

5. Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religions Sociology* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1960), 78.

6. Hugh MacLennan, *Two Solitudes* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1945), 100.

7. Cf. Jonathan Kertzer, *Worrying the Nation: Imagining a National Literature in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), esp. 192-200.

8. See ibid., 174.

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).

12. Hans Hauge, „Continentalism versus Nationalism: The US, the Canadian, and the Nordic Experience," *Informal Empire? Cultural Relations between Canada, the United States and Europe,* ed. Peter Easingwood, Konrad Groß and Hartmut Lutz (Kiel: l&f Verlag, 1998), 89-101; 16.

13. See *Canada-Info: Wirtschaft – Politik – Investition* (Berlin) 9, no. 2 (March 2001), 4.

14. Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine: A Tale of the Lake St. John Country,* trans. W.H. Blake (New York: Modern Library, 1934), 52. „C'était l'éternel malentendu des deux races: les pionniers et les sédentaires, les paysans venus de France qui avaient continué sur le sol nouveau leur idéal d'ordre et de paix immobile, et ces autres paysans, en qui le vaste pays sauvage avait réveillé un atavisme lointain de vagabondage et d'aventure" (Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine* [Montréal: Fides, 1980], 43).

15. See *Un homme grand: Jack Kerouac at the Crossroads of Many Cultures/Jack Kérouac à la confluence des cultures,* ed. Pierre Anctil et alii (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990).

16. Stanza 16, line 339.

"Where is here?" Continentalism, Globalism, and the Ethno-Regionalism of the Contemporary Canadian Novel

"Where is here?"
Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden*

Lothar Hönnighausen (University of Bonn, Germany)

In Alistair MacLeod's 1976 short story "The Closing Down of Summer," a group of migrant workers are on home leave, enjoying the last days of summer on a beach of their native Cape Breton Island. After their holidays, they must again take up their work with Renco Developments Toronto, anywhere in Africa, Haiti, or Alaska. The reason why they can no longer pursue their traditional trade as fishermen at home is "that the grounds have been over-fished by the huge factory fleets from Russia, Spain and Portugal."[17] The lights of these "floating factories shining brightly off the coast . . . as strange, moveable, brilliant cities" are an ironic image of the power of globalism and of the ensuing regional dilemma that the story explores. Global forces have invaded the Maritimes and have upset their traditional economy and regional culture. As a reaction, the local fishermen have become part of a global and mobile work force. But their farewell scenes show how profoundly they suffer from the alienation from their families and from the split between their non-

[17] Alistair MacLeod, *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories*, with an afterword by Jane Urquhart (Toronto: The New Canadian Library, McClelland and Stewart, 1986) 12.

descript international work places and their regional culture, still commanding their loyalty and affection.

> We have stood bareheaded by the graves and knelt in the mud by the black granite stones. And we have visited privately and in tiny self-conscious groups the small white churches which we may not see again. As we have become older it seems we have become strangely more religious in ways that border on superstition. We will take with us worn family rosaries and faded charms and loop ancestral medals and crosses of delicate worn fragility around our scar-lashed necks and about the thickness of our wrists. (29)

In contrast to trade figures and unemployment statistics, works of fiction capture the psychological and moral implications that are involved. Further, works of fiction reflect the several loyalties that individuals experience in regard to national, regional, and local manifestations of cultural space as well as the anxieties of dislocation and identity crisis caused by such pervasive developments as increasing globalism. In fact, in the contemporary Canadian novels, which I will study in the second part of this paper, the focus placed on people's ethno-regional heritage seems to be one way of counteracting fears that *the global village* (McLuhan) might turn out to be a *no-man's-land.*

One of the new features of the current critical debate concerning cultural space is that phenomena such as *nations* or *regions* are understood by most scholars as "imagined communities" (Benedict Anderson) or as "cultural constructs" (Alexander B. Murphy).[18] Further, *nations* and *regions* as "cultural constructs" are today perceived as subject to historical developments and as "hybrid" rather than pure

[18] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991). Alexander B. Murphy, "Regions as social constructs: the gap between theory and practice," *Proceedings in Human Geography* 15 (1991) 22 -35.

or homogeneous.[19] In view of all these methodological reflexions, we must remind ourselves also of some basic facts: that *place* is a very emotional thing because it is value-charged, that it is so value-charged because together with ethnicity, gender, and religion it plays a major role in establishing our *self*, that in addition to the attractive features of ethno-regional culture there is also regional terrorism. Obviously, the question "Where is here?" is intimately related to the most vital question of all, the identity question: "Who am I?"[20]

In studying literary manifestations of regionalism in the age of globalism, it seems important not to lose sight of the fact that regionalism is essentially related to space--and not a mere metaphor for social marginality [21]--and that it is a subject demanding interdisciplinary awareness.[22] Regionalism is not only a subnational, it is also a supranational phenomenon, the EU and NAFTA being prominent examples of conglomerates of several states marking particular world regions. However, NAFTA and the much debated extension of the free trade zone to comprise-- under the *pax americana* and the slogan *continentalism* --the whole continent from Alaska to Cape Horn seems to many Latin American countries against their socioeconomic and cultural interests.

In the case of the European Union, close cooperation, not only between the countries involved but also between their regions (border

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[19] On the historical nature of regions see my essay: "The Old and the New Regionalism," *'Writing' Nation and 'Writing' Region in America*, ed. by Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens (Amsterdam: VU UP, 1996) 3 - 20; on the hybrid nature of regionalism see my essay: "Regions and Regionalism: Are They Still Relevant Terms in the Global Age? in *Regional Images and Regional Realities* (Tьbingen: Stauffenburg, 2000) 283 - 301.

[20] Margaret Atwood, *Survival. A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972) 10 quotes the famous question "Where is here" as of particular importance to Canadians from Northrop Frye's *Bush Garden.*

[21] See my essay: "The Old and the New Regionalism" 6 - 7 "Regionalism and Central Culture": A Response to Philip Fisher.

[22] See Michael Steiner and Clarence Mondale, *Region and Regionalism in the United States: A Source Book for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (New York and London: Garland, 1988).

regions in particular), has certainly strengthened the status of regions and impaired the sovereignty of the nation states. Whether the same is also happening to regions of Canada and the United States, can be assessed through an in-depth study of the new heritage novels and their socioeconomic and cultural context. This paper offers some prolegomena to such a project. In this, one prerequisite is to distinguish between socio- economic and cultural regionalism and observe their complicated relationship. In MacLeod's story, the workers from the Maritimes, uprooted from their regional culture, satisfy their emotional and spiritual needs by an increased awareness of and nostalgia for their regional culture that meanwhile - because of their absence - is undergoing a rapid change.

There is little doubt that the strong economic and cultural impact of the United States on Canada, even before NAFTA, together with the dwindling influence of British colonialism were among the factors fueling the cultural nationalism of Margaret Atwood's generation.[23] In her novel *Surfacing* (1972), Americans appear as environmental barbarians, obtuse to the cultural difference of Canadians:

> The Americans were up, they were still alive. . . That was their armor, bland ignorance, heads empty as weather balloons: with that they could defend themselves against anything. The innocents get slaughtered because they exist, I thought, there is nothing inside the happy killers to restrain them, no conscience or piety; for them the only things worthy of life were human, their own kind of human, framed in the proper clothes and gimmicks, laminated. It would have been different in those countries where an animal is the soul of an ancestor or the child of a god, at least they would have felt guilt.[24]

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[23] Atwood's *Survival. A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, often maligned as a scholarly tool, should be appreciated as an influential document of the Canadian cultural nationalism of her time.

[24] Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (New York: Fawcett, 1972) 151.

If the anti-Americanism, erupting in *Surfacing* ("It wouldn't be a bad country if only we could kick out the fucking pig Americans, eh?" 107), is one expression of Canadian cultural nationalism, Canada's active cultural policy both at home and abroad is another and more important one. In any case, we, the international community of Canadianists, have profited enormously from it. In fact, I wonder whether, in 1979, we founding members of the German Association of Canadian Studies would have managed to establish the Association, if it had not been for the inspiration of the Canadian cultural nationalism of the Seventies and its practical concomitants, Ambassador Halstead's commitment and the help of Ottawa.

In this context, Myrna Kostash's introduction of her own work, *The Next Canada: In Search of Our Future Nation* is of interest because it contains a characteristic assessment of the past nationalist phase. She tells us that she decided to attempt her forecast as an alternative to deploring like others of her peer group

> the social and cultural "de-Canadization" of the post-Free Trade Agreement era, and the apparent loss of historical memory and social cohesiveness that had still characterized the last truely "Canadian" generation, namely, my generation, the architects of cultural nationalism and anti-American imperialism."[25]

Given her historical base, it comes as no surprise that after carefully investigating the potential of a future Canada, she draws the reassuring conclusion that the next generation will not dishonour the maple leaf flag although their patriotism will be of a different kind than that of Kostash, Atwood, and their generation.

In attempting to supplement her forecast, I propose to study some recent novels which, instead of brandishing Canadian cultural nationalism and fighting Americanism, explore Canada's various ethno-regional heritage. In this undertaking, a perceptive remark

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[25] Myrna Kostash, *The Next Canada. In Search of Our Future Nation* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2000) ix.

made by Jane Urquhart, in her afterword to MacLeod's *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories*, may serve as an epigraph:

> We Canadians are, after all, a nation composed of people longing for a variety of abandoned homelands and the tribes that inhabited them, whether these be the distant homelands of our recent immigrants, the abducted homelands of our native peoples, the rural homelands vacated by the post-war migrations to the cities, of the various European or Asian homelands left behind by our earliest settlers. All of us have been touched in some way or another by this loss of landscape and of kin, and all of us moved by the sometimes unidentifiable sorrow that accompanies such a loss.[26]

What is particularly important is that Urquhart, herself the author of the ethno-regional novel *Away*, recognizes, in the diversity of ethnicities and situations, the sameness of the loss of homelands.

The narrators in Jane Urquhart's *Away* (1993) tell us--against the background of British colonial exploitation, the mass emigration of the hungry 1840s, and the confederation of the Canadian colonies in 1867[27]-- the story of the O'Malley family who emigrate from "the island of Rathlin off the coast of Ireland" and build their home Loughbreeze Beach on Lake Ontario.[28] The narrators in Lola Lemire Tostevin's *Frog Moon* (1994) describe, from the early 20th century mining frontier to the present, the life of a Roman Catholic francophone family in the region of Timmins and Ansonville (northern Ontario), with Hollinger's gold and ore mine, the company town of Iroquois Falls, and Laura's *pensionnat* of nuns in Sturgeon Falls as major venues.

Both novels are distinguished by intertextual richness-- for instance, the parody of the Irish Latin tradition and the burlesque

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[26] Alistair MacLeod, *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories*, with an afterword by Jane Urquhart, 169.

[27] Eileen, one of the O'Malley women, is involved in the 1868 assassination, by Canadian Fenians, of D'Arcy McGee.

[28] Jane Urquhart, *Away* (Toronto: McClelland &Stewart, 1993) 4-5.

satire of nineteenth century British scientism in *Away*, and the ribald border yarns and such Catholic folk tales as the legend of Rose Latulipp in *Frog Moon*.[29] However, in both novels, the emphasis is not on mono-cultural purity, but rather on "hybridity."[30] Both have assimilated aboriginal culture in addition to the mélange of Irish and English (*Away*) and francophone and anglophone cultures (*Frog Moon*).[31] Despite the narrators' obvious urge to recover the ethno-regional heritage, their attitude toward the past is ironic and revisionist rather than patriotic and nostalgic. The narrators as well as some of their characters are fully aware of the relentlessness of change: "We're in Canada now, we're Canadian, not Irish." (*Away* 256). Revealing images in this regard are, in *Frog Moon,* the difficult intercultural family Christmasses (the four Babel Noel chapters make up the center of the book) that will soon cease when the French-speaking grandparents are no longer able to travel and, in *Away,* the gigantic machines that in cement production "crush the fossilized narratives of ancient migrations into powder."(356) The heroines of both novels tell their ethno-regional family histories because by re-

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[29] Lola Lemire Tostevin, Frog Moon (Dunvegan, Ontario: Cormorant Books, 1994) 40: "My first memory is of my father telling stories."--Urquhart describes, for instance, with gusto how on the occasion of the "staid festivities . . . which celebrated the confederation of the provinces" a riot broke out "when Madam Beausejour's petites filles offered to represent les lacs and les reviures du Quïbec in the Methodist women's tableau entitled 'The New Dominions'." (Away 228) Tostevin's Laura remembers with affection historic place names "the names of childhood where I continue to dwell. The Temagami River, Algonquin Boulevard in Timmins, until we moved to Iroquois Falls near Lake Abitibi, where, you on Saturday afternoons, you could still hear the rumbles of angry Iroquois being led down the falls by an old woman from an enemy tribe." (*Frog Moon* 41)

[30] On the use of Homi K. Bhabha's (*The Location of Culture*) category *hybridity* in regionalism studies see my "Regions and Regionalism: Are They Still Relevant Terms in the Global Age? 298.

[31] In the case of *Frog Moon*, the very title derives from Cree mythology (39) and in *Away*, the only friend and sympathizer of Mary when she is *away* (in her *ecstasis*) is an Ojibwa with the telling name "Exodus Crow."

creating the "abandoned geographies" of their emigrant ancestors (*Away* 128), they establish their own identities.

> Esther O'Malley Robertson is the last and the most subdued of the extreme women. She was told a story at twelve that calmed her down and put her in her place. Now, as an old woman, she wants to tell this story to herself and the Great Lake, there being no one to listen. *Away* 3
>
> She [Esther] paints a landscape in her mind, a landscape she has never seen. Everything began in 1842, she remembers her grandmother Eileen telling her, on the island of Rathlin which lies of the coast of Ireland. Esther allows rocks, sea to form in her imagination. . . "Your great-grandmother's name was Mary," Old Eileen had said to Esther. (4)

It is striking how often, the ethno-regional heritage in the contemporary Canadian novel is presented from and informed by a female perspective. Besides Jane Urquhart's *Away* (1993) and Lola Lemire Tostevin's *Frog Moon* (1994) Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees* (1996) is an eminent example of this. In *Fall On Your Knees*, women play dominant and attractive roles. In addition to the three Piper girls, Kathleen, Mercedes, and Francis, their mother, James Piper's Lebanese wife Materia, her Jewish friend, Mrs. Luvovitz, and the African-Canadian Adelaide Taylor are quite prominent and have their female ways of fusing within their identities ethnic and regional elements and thus contribute to the hybrid culture of contemporary Nova Scotia. "Adelaide cooks all that good plain Nova Scotia stuff. She comes from a community in Halifax called Africville. She is proud of her African Irish United Empire Loyalist blood, proud to have been baptized in Bedford Basin." (331) Materia Piper tells her daughters about the beauties of her native Lebanon ("The buildings are white, they sparkle in the sun like diamonds and the sea is crystal blue" 87), [32] but also about the persecution by the Turks that made

[32] Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees* (Toronto: Vintage, Random House Canada, 1997).

her family immigrate to Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia: "You were lucky to be born on this damp grey rock in the Atlantic, beautiful in its own mournful way. "Because of the Turks?" "Yes."

The narrator supplements this snippet from the conversation in the Piper household with a bitter commentary referring to the ruthless British regime that made another ethnic group, the Irish and her husband's Scottish ancestors, emigrate to Nova Scotia: "This island, familiar to the famined Irish and gnarled-kneed Scots who had been replaced by sheep in their Old Country." (87) Mrs. Luvovitz, whom anti-semitism in Germany forced to emigrate, asks herself "when did this become my home. When I buried Benny here? When the second war came? . . . She just knows that every time she returns to Cape Breton, she feels in her bones, this is my home." (559)

In *Fall On Your Knees*, Nova Scotia's regional history, which is essentially British colonial history from the early twentieth century coal boom and the brutal suppression of strikes to the patriotic participation of James Piper's 85th Overseas Battalion in WWI, serves as background. In Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998), history is placed in the foreground through the leitmotif of D.W. Prowse's *A History of Newfoundland* (1895) and the parodic inter-chapters from the *Condensed History of Newfoundland*, the *Journal*, and the column *Field Day* by Sheilagh Fielding, the hero's fictional friend and foe.[33] In a postmodern fashion, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* presents the *literary revision* of the country's depressing colonialist history and, associated and in metonymic relationship with it, the rise of fictionally distorted Joseph Roberts Smallwood to the province's first premiership (1949 - 1972). Smallwood's preoccupation with Newfoundland's history and geography, the innumerable vivid impressions which he gathers in his several journeys by train, on foot, by boat, and by plane, above all his view of the island as a whole,

[33] Wayne Johnston, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (Toronto: Vintage Random House, 1998). Characteristically, Johnston puts the main focus on Smallwood's life before his premiership (490 pages of 562). Of Smallwood's premiership he only presents his first phase (notably the grotesque Valdmanis affair) and his downfall.

when they "draw a map of Newfoundland with the plane," (452) symbolically underline his idenfication with Newfoundland and constitute one of the special attractions of the novel.[34]

On the day of Confederation, Fielding, Smallwood's counterpart, withdraws to a section shack on the Bonavista branch, and in the absolute quiet, following the jubilant whistle-blowing of a train, she senses that Newfoundland is more than its political history:

> Something abiding, something prevailing, was restored. I have often thought of that train hurtling down the Bonavista like the victory express. And all around it the northern night, the barrens, the bogs, the rocks and ponds and hills of Newfoundland. The Straits of Belle Isle, from the island side of which I have seen the coast of Labrador. These things, finally, primarily, are Newfoundland. From a mind divesting itself of images, those of the land would be the last to go. We are a people on whose minds these images have been imprinted. (*The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* 562)

To arrive at a balanced view of the novel and its implications for the problem of the ethno-regional heritage, we must juxtapose with this essentialist and organic vision of the land the bitterness of Fielding's frustrated life and the parody and satire of her historical analyses of Newfoundland. However, there is little doubt that Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* is informed by similar motives and aspirations, like Jane Urquhart's *Away* (1993), Lola Lemire Tostevin's *Frog Moon* (1994), and Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees* (1996). These novelists no longer affirm the kind of anti-American Canadianness we have associated with the cultural nationalism of Kostash's generation. Rather, they have resigned themselves to the economic and cultural imperialism of the US and feel more acutely threatened by the placelessness of the global age. In this situation,

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[34] As investigative journalist on board a sealing ship (96 - 117), as traveller to New York by rail across the land from St. John's to Port aux Basques (137 - 143), his return trip by foot as organizer of the railroad workers (211 - 243), his journey by boat as organizer of a fishermen's union (344 - 360).

they naturally seek to answer the concrete question "where is here" and explore their own problematic ethno-regional heritage.

Part II.
Nationhood and Regionalism

Imperial Outpost or Self-confident Region? The Example of Canadian Prairie Literature

Martin Kuester (University of Marburg, Germany)

In the 1990s, critics such as Frank Davey claimed that Canada was in a "post-national" state.[35] According to Davey, the nation, which defined itself against imperial centres such as England or America, seems to have all but disappeared as a point of reference. If Davey is right, we can – even disregarding Québec literature, which probably and rightfully should be seen as a separate and independent case anyway – no longer speak of one (anglophone) Canadian literature at the beginning of the new millennium. Canlit may be seen as having split up into an increasing number of subsections (according to ethnic origin, gender, etc. of authors and/or audience) for which no overarching and all-encompassing "master narrative" exists any more.

A rival concept challenging that of nation in this context has been and might be in the future that of region, although this is of

[35] See Frank Davey, *Post-National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone-Canadian Novel Since 1967* (Toronto: UTP, 1993). See also Herb Wyile, "Regionalism, Post-nationalism, and Post-colonialism: The Case of Canadian Literature(s)," *Literature of Region and Nation: Proceedings of the 6th International Literature of Region and Nation Conference*, ed. Winnifred M. Bogaards (Saint John, NB: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada/University of New Brunswick, 1998) 267-276, who speaks about "the fracturing of the contemporary nation-state" (267).

course not exactly a new – and sometimes even a "dubious"[36] – idea: It is rather a concept into which – as recent publications show – there is a renewed interest in literary and cultural studies, although scholars such as the Canadian Herb Wyile and the German Lothar Hönnighausen show that it is not always easy to pin down. Still, as Hönnighausen shows, there are critics "who maintain that as national states will lose their status in the global context, regions... will become more relevant."[37] Whereas it has been generally accepted nowadays that concepts such as national history and identity are constructions rather than naturally given facts, this is of course also true of the concept of region, of which in a 1980 essay, William Westfall states that it "has assumed a position of prominence in Canadian studies" and "seems destined to rival, if not replace the nation-state as the central construction in Canadian studies."[38] Basing my argument on Westfall and other more recent critics such as Robert Wardhaugh and Herb Wyile, who position the discussion of region in historical, postcolonial or postmodern contexts,[39] I wonder whether an innovative concept of region (cultural and psychological rather than merely geographical or even condescending) can be a more useful concept in contemporary literary studies.

The definition of region is often taken for granted. But can region really be defined that easily? There seems to be something like a general agreement that the Canadian regions are Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies and the Pacific region plus, of course,

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[36] Herb Wyile, "Writing, Regionalism and Globalism in a Post-Nationalist Canada," Diverse Landscapes: Re-Reading Place Across Cultures in *Contemporary Canadian Writing* (Prince George: UNBC Press, 1996) 10.

[37] Lothar Hönnighausen, "Regions and Regionalism: Are They Still Relevant Terms in the Global Age?" *Regional Images and Regional Realities*, ed. Lothar Hönnighausen (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2000) 283.

[38] William Westfall, "On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 15.2 (1980): 3.

[39] Robert Wardhaugh, "Introduction: Tandem and Tangent," *Toward Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture, and History*, ed. Robert Wardhaugh (Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 2001). <http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/uofmpress/excerpts/defining_introduction.html>

the North.[40] But even if this subdivision of Canada into regions is generally acceptable, it does not seem to follow the same guidelines for all the regions. In some cases, there are topographical rules according to which the country is subdivided into regions, in others, the subdivision follows political, social and economic reasons. The rather vague meaning of the term *region* can be substantiated in dictionary definitions, too. One finds, for example, the following: "an area or division, especially part of a country or the world having definable characteristics but not always fixed boundaries." The etymology of the word, going back to the Latin verb meaning "to rule, direct," even suggests political rather than topographical overtones,[41] but still most of us would probably agree that, as Westfall puts it, regions are grounded "somehow in the land itself,"[42] even though social classes, ethnicity, and voting patterns also play a certain role and thus lead us away from "reductionist assumptions of physical environmentalism."[43] In the field of Canadian literary criticism an important step away from too close a reliance on topography and environmentalism was taken during the 1978 "Taking Stock" conference at Calgary, where the question of regionalism was discussed at length and where even Rudy Wiebe could be convinced in the end that "regionalism was not concerned with place, in spatial or geographical terms, but with the imagination, that it could be conceived of as an attitude of mind and heart, a fascination with place rather than place itself."[44]

My focus in this paper will be on the Canadian Prairies and the wide range of literature written there. As an introduction, let me

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[40] See, for example the description of Canadian regions in the *VGT* project on the internet: <http://www.uni-marburg.de/geographie/virtual/deutsch/canada/module/m1/u5.htm>

[41] "Region," *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. Judy Pearsall (Oxford: OUP-Clarendon, 1998) 1562.

[42] Westfall 7.

[43] Westfall 10.

[44] "Discussion," *Taking Stock: The Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel*, ed. Charles Steele (Downsview: ECW Press, 1982) 133-134.

quote a text that has often been identified as an archetypal Prairie text, the first page of the novel *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell:

> Here was the least common denominator of nature, the skeleton requirements simply, of land and sky – Saskatchewan prairie. It lay wide around the town, stretching tan to the far line of the sky, shimmering under the June sun and waiting for the unfailing visitation of wind, gentle at first, barely stroking the long grasses and giving them life; later, a long hot gusting that would lift the black topsoil and pile it in barrow pits along the roads, or in deep banks against the fences.[45]

The region of the Prairies in the geographical centre of Canada is here – in a literary context – reduced to the two fundamental "skeleton requirements" – land and sky. There are indications, however, that – although we often tend to think that literature makes nothing happen – there is a clear literary influence on the production of those stereotypes that guide our perception of a region. This can be substantiated in a short essay by the Prairie writer Sharon Butala which I happened upon in the Air Canada in-flight magazine *enRoute* last September on my way to Canada. Butala writes:

> In school I learned that the word *prairie* refers to a plain – a flat area – while *Prairies* is an abbreviation for the Prairie provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which are flat. I was baffled by this because I was born and spent my earliest years among the trees, lakes and rivers in the immense northern bush country of east-central Saskatchewan, none of which is flat. And, like most everyone, I learned at school that Alberta is defined by its Rocky Mountains. I was 20 before I saw the Regina Plains, a glacial lake bed that is as flat as it ever gets. My understandably

[45] W.O. Mitchell, *Who Has Seen the Wind* (1947; Toronto: McClelland and Stewart-Bantam Seal, 1982) 3-4.

> astonished reaction was, "Oh, this is what the teachers meant when they said the Prairies are flat."[46]

In this case, the concept of a region has been constituted or constructed by and through literature, for – and here we return to the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* quoted earlier – Butala claims that "Literature is also to blame" and that Mitchell's novel is guilty of having contributed to the stereotypical Prairie myth: "That story," Butala writes, "continues to perpetuate the myth of flatness for thousands who've never seen the Prairies."[47]

Let me briefly comment on some other stages of this literary construction of the Prairies: Mitchell had of course precursors in his realistic depiction of the Prairies, foremost among them Frederick Philip Grove, whose pioneer farmers – like Abe Spalding in *Fruits of the Earth* – start "conquering" and ploughing the "virgin prairie" on the very evening they arrive on their quarter sections.[48]

Grove's novels abound in literary archetypes that in the 1970s inspired critics such as Laurie Ricou to coin pithy slogans about Prairie literature that were reflected in such book titles as *Vertical Man/Horizontal World*, in which the lonesome and upright settler is confronted by all-powerful and infinite nature. According to Ricou, the "radical and compelling" unity of Canadian prairie fiction is based on the emphasis writers put on "the physical landscape": "their approach to the relationship between man and landscape is usually a variant of the primitive geometric contrast between vertical and horizontal."[49] More recent studies are more critical about such a reductive version of the Prairies. For Alison Calder, much of

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[46] Sharon Butala, "[The Myth]: The Prairies Are Flat," *enRoute* 9 (2001): 35.

[47] Butala 38.

[48] Frederick Philip Grove, *Fruits of the Earth* (1933; Toronto: McClelland and Stewart-NCL, 1989) 23.

[49] Laurence Ricou, "Epilogue," *Essays on Saskatchewan Writing*, ed. E.F. Dyck (Regina: Saskatchewan Writers Guild, 1986) 75. Rpt. from Ricou, *Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1973).

contemporary Prairie literature has turned into a cliché so that "gophers and grain elevators erect themselves against an oppressive sky" and man is "dwarfed by natural forces... "[50] In another recent book on Prairie writing, Deborah Keahey goes on to state that "taking possession of and revaluing stereotypes has long been a productive means of generating Prairie identity, as can be seen, for example, in the critical privileging of 'Prairie realism,'..."[51]

Among the contemporary authors who creatively react against these supposedly realistic stereotypes is Robert Kroetsch who creates his idiosyncratic version of Prairie realism in his "Out West" triptych of novels – presenting the Alberta region around Notikeewin at three different points of the past century – and who constructs a version of magic Prairie realism in *What the Crow Said.* For him, the literary construction of the Prairie landscape is more important than a mere realistic reconstruction. This becomes evident in *The Studhorse Man*, when the world is depicted as perceived by a madman sitting in his bathtub in an insane asylum, observing the outside world through his bathroom mirror.[52]

At least as important as Kroetsch's novels, however, is his contribution to a poetics of the Prairie. This poetics is expressed in various highly readable essays and of course in his long poems. His *Seed Catalogue* is permeated by poetological and philosophical questions that find their – at first sight – awfully banal expression in questions such as "*How do you grow a poet?*" or "*How do you grow a past?*" Kroetsch asks these questions in a situation that seems to lack any traditional cultural vantage points, at least if you go by an European concept of culture. The Prairies cannot offer "Sartre and Heidegger" or rivers overflowing with cultural connotations like "the Seine, the

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[50] Alison Calder, "Reassessing Prairie Realism," *A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing,* ed. Christian Riegel et al. (Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 1998) 51.

[51] Deborah Keahey, *Making it Home: Place in Canadian Prairie Literature* (Winnipeg: U of Manitoba Press, 1998) 160.

[52] Robert Kroetsch, *The Studhorse Man* (1969; Toronto: Random House, 1988).

Rhine, the Danube, the Tiber and the Thames."[53] Prairie poets have to make do with the only semi-literary model they have in their homes beside the Bible, a Seed Catalogue.

Prairie for Kroetsch is thus no longer a merely topographically defined region, and this trend away from a topographically deterministic definition of region is what I feel to be a general one. For example, the Winnipeg novelist David Williams creates in his Lacjardin trilogy a region that is defined as much by the religious environments of Christian fundamentalism and Native Canadian natural religion as it is by topographical features. Especially in his two earliest novels, *The Burning Wood* and *The River Horsemen*, the narrowness of fundamentalist Protestantism is as much a defining element of his Prairie as the river along which his river horsemen paddle on their way to Saskatoon.[54]

Another element defining region, and one becoming more and more important, is that of gender. Even though feminist critics such as Aritha van Herk claim that Prairie literature is above all a male and masculine domain, a "compliant archetype for the erotics of male space," and even though they wonder "how to re/appropriate the prairie, this prairie with its tinge of west, its male visage,"[55] there are quite a number of female prairie writers, even among the early classics of prairie realism. For example, Martha Ostenso describes in *Wild Geese* the archetypal *vertical man* Caleb Gare who is defeated and swallowed up by the nature he had tried to conquer.[56] Margaret Laurence creates the unforgettable literary region of Manawaka in her prairie novels. The fact that Manawaka, although based on Laurence's native Neepawa, is a literary construct is made clear in the first instalment of the Manawaka Cycle, *The Stone Angel,* where we see the

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[53] Robert Kroetsch, *Seed Catalogue* (1977; Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1986) 15, 11-12.

[54] David Williams, *The Burning Wood* (Toronto: Anansi, 1975); *The River Horsemen* (Toronto: Anansi, 1981); *Eye of the Father* (Toronto: Anansi, 1985).

[55] Aritha van Herk, *In Visible Ink: Crypto-Frictions* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1991) 85.

[56] Martha Ostenso, *Wild Geese* (1925; Toronto: McClelland and Stewart-NCL, 1989) 299.

Prairies as they are reconstructed in the memory of old and bitter and dying Hagar Shipley.[57]

This tendency away from purely topographical definitions of region also finds its expression in the proceedings of a lively conference that took place at St. John's College at the University of Manitoba in 1998 under the title "Defining the Prairies." In the introduction to the conference proceedings, Robert Wardhaugh, asks "How does one define a place? How does one define a region?" His answer is that while "geography plays a major role in determining a society's economic development, as well as its resulting social and cultural structures," cultural patterns, the economy and politics also have a shaping influence: "Gradually, societies come to identify and be identified with particular locales, and likewise, a region becomes identified with particular societies."[58]

The concept of region thus is finally also determined by social, economic, political and even cultural and literary influences. This can also be illustrated by reference to another region, the North. As Sherrill Grace writes in her introduction of the drama anthology *Staging the North*, the North is "a topos rich in imagery, story, history, living myth, legends, and ghosts...."[59] Here, too, and even to a larger extent than for other regions that have clearer demarcations, topoi other than topographical ones become important. The true North strong and free of the Canadian national anthem is often only the North as it is imagined by Southerners, just as the Prairies are to a large extent and – in Henry Kreisel's words – a "state of mind."[60]

One might even go so far as to claim that there are "regions of the mind" which have lost any connection with geographical reality. For example, Robertson Davies claims in his last novel, *The Cunning*

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[57] Margaret Laurence, *The Stone Angel* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964).

[58] Wardhaugh, Introduction.

[59] Sherrill Grace, "Degrees of North: An Introduction," *Staging the North: Twelve Canadian Plays*, ed. Sherrill Grace, Eve D'Aeth, and Lisa Chalykoff (Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 1999) xix.

[60] Henry Kreisel, "The Prairie: A State of Mind (1968)," *Essays on Saskatchewan Writing* 41-54.

Man, that there are within the metropolis of Toronto certain village-like quarters that have their own identity coined by the national origin of the immigrants living there.[61] Another example of a "region" that loses its geographical anchor is described by the B.C. author Brian Fawcett. In his short story "The Huxley Satellite Dish," he constructs a special case of Marshall McLuhan's global village: By chance the TV cable system of a small town in British Columbia is hooked up to that of the American city of Detroit, and this leads to quite far-reaching consequences in the daily life of this globally wired village. For one, Detroit lies in a different time zone than the Pacific Coast, so that the rhythm of daily life shifts ahead by three hours. In addition, the Huxleyites now see the racial tensions between white and Native Canadians in their home town in the light of those between white and black Americans portrayed on TV. When one day the community's satellite dish is destroyed, life in this "region" disconnected from its geographical base is in turmoil –until the reception of the Detroit channels is restored.[62] Here one is tempted to agree with Frank Davey, who claims in a provocative essay that region and regionalism should be seen "not as locations but as ideologies."[63]

A similar direction is indicated in the incident that first made me consider regionalism as an interesting proposition in Canadian Studies. During a Canadian Literature symposium at Marburg several years ago, a heated discussion arose between our Canadian guests – writers and critics most of them. In the course of this discussion, some of them spoke in favour of the concept that Frank Davey called post-nationalism, while others were, in the words of my colleague Wolfram Keller, "emphasising the responsibilities of the ... Canadian writer, whereby the theoretical debate about regionalism could amount to detaching the concept from geographical location to

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[61] Robertson Davies, *The Cunning Man* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart,1994) 15.

[62] Brian Fawcett, "The Huxley Satellite Dish," *Cambodia: A Book for People who Find Television Too Slow* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1986) 144.

[63] Frank Davey, "Toward the Ends of Regionalism," *A Sense of Place* 1.

imaginary realms."[64] During this discussion the above-mentioned feminist novelist and critic Aritha van Herk insisted that the concept of region, as it is used in Canadian literary discourse today, was no longer tied to any geographical base. Even, she claimed, feminism could under these circumstances be defined as a region, and in fact, in one of the most recent publications on regionalism, one critic mentions "the problematic relation between a hegemonic masculinist discourse and the region of [van Herk's] female identity."[65]

Still, although we have seen that the concept of region in regional literature is not a case of geographical determinism, I think it would not be a good idea to completely disregard its topographical overtones. What I think most critics would agree on is that we have overcome the old determinism and would no longer accept any condescending classification of regional literature as second-rank or parochial. In this sense the concept of the "regions of the mind" means a distinct progress.

My conclusion from my musings today about region and regionalism and about regionalism in Canadian literature thus lies somewhere between a traditional, environmentally based but not environmentally determined position and a position that speaks in favour of a "region of the mind." The latter perhaps runs the danger of being easily replaceable by other concepts like that of "cultural space," but we should by all means take leave of the traditional point of view that a regional concern in Canadian literature justifies condescending prejudices that disqualify some literary texts as second-rate and only of local importance (whatever that may mean in the global village). One might argue, however, that such an attitude has been out of date ever since Faulkner created his Yoknapatawpha County.

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[64] Wolfram Keller, "From Reception to Region: Notes on the Fifth Annual Canadian Literature Day at the University of Marburg," *Ahornblätter* 14 (2001): 60.

[65] W.M. Verhoeven, "West of 'Woman,' Or, Where No Man Has Gone Before: Geofeminism in Aritha Van Herk," *A Sense of Place* 65.

New perspectives will arise, I think, above all, in approaches that take into account different or even contradictory definitions of region. For example, normally regions are seen as parts of a single country: here region seems to be to nation what in former times nation was to empire. But there are of course also other definitions. In the first quotation by Lothar Hönnighausen at the beginning of my paper, I left out a couple of words post-qualifying the concept of region: He mentioned "regions, both sub-national and supra-national ones."[66] As far as the latter are concerned, as Europeans we have become used to regions straddling borderlines between countries, and this not only since the idea of the Euregio was developed in the context of a united Europe. But there are also approaches seeing the North American regions of the Prairies or the Pacific Northwest as regions crossing borders and belonging to two different countries. If one looks at the American Wallace Stegner's description of the Prairie in his *Wolf Willow*, it would be very difficult to tell whether he is describing Canadian or American landscape, when he writes,

> The rest of the country is notable primarily for its weather, which is violent and prolonged; its emptiness, which is almost frighteningly total; and its wind, which blows all the time in a way to stiffen your hair and rattle the eyes in your head.[67]

Although he is American, Stegner grew up on both sides of the border and is able to point out the differences between American and Canadian versions of Prairie. But still, these two versions have a lot in common, at least as far as the geographical base is concerned. The distinctions lie above all in the field of human geography, in the way in which they were settled: either as part of the American Wild West or within the context of peaceful settlement under the vigilant eyes of the Northwest Mounted Police. This comparison of American and Canadian views of the Prairies is, for example, also incorporated into

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[66] Hönnighausen 283.

[67] Wallace Stegner, *Wolf Willow: A History, a Story, and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 3.

the structure of Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Englishman's Boy*, which in its various storylines shows the quite different approaches American 19th-century wolf hunters and 20th-century film producers on the one hand and Canadian Mounties and script writers on the other take to ostensibly heroic exploits in the West.[68]

Still, for all the differences, parallels abound, and of course they have been and continue to be studied by Americans and Canadians alike in contexts such as the *Crossing Frontiers* conference in the late 1970s.[69] Comparatist studies of regions in this vein are of course especially interesting for European Canadianists who bring a slightly different preconception of regionalism along with them in their analyses of North American regions, and so I hope they – and thus we all – can contribute to innovative approaches to Canadian literature in the fascinating field that is opening up between continentalism and nationhood.

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[68] See my "'A Mythic Act of Possession': Constructing the North American Frontier(s) in Guy Vanderhaeghe's *The Englishman's Boy*," *New Worlds: Discovering and Constructing the Unknown in Anglophone Literature*, ed. Martin Kuester, Gabriele Christ and Rudolf Beck (Munich: Vögel, 2000) 277-292.

[69] Dick Harrison, ed., *Crossing Frontiers: Papers in American and Canadian Western Literature* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1979).

Sinclair Ross and the Literature of the Canadian Prairies in their Agrarian Period

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The Canadian prairie region has from its discovery by Europeans always elicited disparate reactions. For instance, in 1872 William Francis Butler, a military officer, wrote the following:

> "No ocean of water in the world can vie with its gorgeous sunsets, no solitude can equal the loneliness of a night-shadowed prairie: one feels the stillness, and hears the silence, the wail of the prowling wolf makes the voice of solitude audible, the stars look down through infinite silence upon a silence almost as intense... One saw here the world as it had taken shape and form from the hands of the Creator. Nor did the scene look less beautiful because nature alone tilled the earth, and the unaided sun brought forth the flowers."[70]

And an anonymous poet campaigned for the West in 1879 with the lines:

> "Let us hie to the West - to the far distant West!
> The mountains beyond it lie covered with gold!
> On east of these mountains there millions can rest,
> Where railroads in motion they'll shortly behold.
> Away to the West, the far distant West.

[70] In: Ken Mitchell (ed.), *Horizon. Writings of the Canadian Prairies.* Toronto (OUP), 1977, p.5.

Away to the lands, that are verdant and green!
Saskatchewan Valley has lands of the best
Where rivers run slowly the valleys between."[71]

Another unknown versifier, however, had different experiences:

"It was way out west in Alberta
Where the coyotes howl and sing
Where it rained and hailed all summer
And we never raised a thing.

Oh, I came out here one summer
A way out in the West
I think I'll turn and go back
Or I will starve to death.

I built a little log cabin
With a roof of natural clay
Dear friends, I'm sorry to tell you,
But I'm bound for the USA.

Farewell to the poor homesteader,
Farewell to the land so free,
Farewell to sunny Alberta -
She's too damn cold for me."[72]

While the Eastern regions of Canada can rely on traditions that may reach back as far as the 17th century the country's prairie region lacks such roots. Travelling writers had – mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries – occasionally depicted this region as a pastoral landscape, as a new home for a new society and a modern Garden Eden. "The first time I ever felt the necessity of inevitableness of verse, was in the desire to reproduce the peculiar quality of feeling which is induced by

[71] Ibid., p.13.

[72] In: *The Waterloo Folk Songs of Canada*, ed. Edith Fulton Fowke and Richard Johnston. Waterloo/Ont. (Waterloo Music Company Ltd.), 1967, pp.122f.

the flat spaces and wide horizons of the virgin prairie of Western Canada",[73] wrote T.E. Hulme, an English poet, still in 1906, one year after Saskatchewan and Alberta had been founded as provinces.

For other writers, though, it was less nature which tempted people to write about this region, but the contrast of landscape and society. According to Dick Harrison "Canadian prairie fiction is about a basically European society spreading itself across a very un-European landscape. It is rooted in that first settlement process in which the pioneer faced two main obstacles: the new land and the old culture... like all unsettled territory it had no human associations, no ghosts, none of the significance imagination gives to the expressionless face of the earth after men have lived and died there. The prairie, in effect, lacked the fictions which make a place entirely real."[74]

Despite such a *tabula rasa*, the Prairies, especially after 1914, saw the rise of a literature, which became a genre in itself. Authors like Laura Salverson, Robert Stead, Martha Ostenso, Frederic Philip Grove and above all Sinclair Ross created the Canadian prairie novel, whose realism mirrors the situation of early immigrants and their elementary problems in the face of antipodes like ideal and reality, man and society, guilt and fate, men and women. This strange land and its new inhabitants simply challenged some people to write about everything they saw and experienced, thus giving the seemingly formless surface a man-made shape in the form of novels, short stories and poems. In his book *Vertical Men - Horizontal World* Laurence Ricou also points at strong contrasts as the key to the understanding of prairie literature: "Most authors show an unusual interest in the physical landscape. Their approach to the relationship between man and landscape is usually a variant of the primitive geographic contrast between vertical and horizontal. Prairie man, we have seen, may seem insignificant or immensely self-confident; he

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[73] In: George Woodcock, *The Meeting of Time and Space. Regionalism in Canadian Literature.* Edmonton (Ne West Institute for Western-Canadian Studies), 1981, p.3.

[74] Dick Harrison, *Unnamed Country. The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction.* Edmonton/Alta. (The University of Alberta Press), 1977, p.IX.

may feel free or inescapably trapped; he may be deeply religious or a rebel against all authority; his imagination may be stifled or stimulated. In each case, however, his nature or outlook will be linked to his curiously abrupt position in a vast and uninterrupted landscape."[75]

Man's contrastive reactions in the light of a relentless nature therefore characterize prairie fiction, especially in the first half of the 20th century. The problems that the settlers were confronted with were still aggravated by the world economic crisis, which began in 1929, and which in Western Canada was accompanied by a period of drought that lasted for 9 years. It threatened to turn the whole region into a dust desert. In 1931 and 1932 agricultural incomes in Saskatchewan were calculated in minus figures and there were plans to relocate the population to Northern Ontario. The bread basket of the country, even of the world, was slowly turning into a dust bowl and people's dreams of wealth and progress evaporated in a nick of time. Most farmers and townspeople, however, clung to their soil and refused to give up their newly won homes, into which they had invested so much toil.

Such dust bowl farmers and townspeople are the characters in many of Sinclair Ross's novels and short stories. He is the literary documentalist of the dust bowl years, or dirty thirties, which haunt the minds of Canadians as much as the two World Wars haunt the minds of Europeans. Sinclair Ross was born in 1909 on a farm near Prince Albert in Northern Saskatchewan. His parents separated after his father had suffered an accident, which affected his whole personality and made life with his wife and family intolerable. Sinclair's mother then worked as a housekeeper on various farms and always took great care that her youngest son who she had taken with her never missed school. Generous farmers would lend him a horse to ride to school, but when the animals were needed in the fields at

[75] Laurence Ricou, *Vertical Man/ Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction*. Vancouver (The University of British Columbia Press), 1973, p.173.

harvest time, the young boy was stranded. His mother finally spent all her savings on a horse for her boy, who never forgot what she had done for him and who supported her for the rest of her life. This was also the reason for Ross's not becoming a freelance writer and remaining with the Royal Bank of Canada until his retirement: he simply needed a regular income.

The country school he attended went up to grade 11. Right after leaving school he started work at a bank, was sent to various branches in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and finally ended up at the headquarters of the Royal Bank of Canada in Montreal. From 1942-46 he served with the Canadian army, stationed in England. After his retirement in 1968 Ross lived for several years in Greece and Spain, later he moved to Vancouver where he passed away in 1996. Because of his lack of further education Ross always felt uncomfortable among established writers and academics. He was rather shy and withdrawn and shunned the limelight of public attention.

Nonetheless, his first novel *As For Me and My House*, published in 1941,[76] has become an icon among Canadian literature in the 20th century and can rightfully be regarded as the epitome of the Canadian Prairie novel. It tells the story of Philip Bentley, a minister, and his wife, who live in a small town called Horizon, somewhere in the Canadian prairies during the dust bowl years. It is narrated through Mrs Bentley's eyes, who keeps a diary into which she enters events, observations and comments. *Frustration*, *Failure* or *Vanity* may also be appropriate titles for this novel, as both protagonists have come to some end in their lives. Philip has spent 12 years in 3 small towns, always trying to find roots but always running away from people and problems he could not put up with. Horizon is now his last attempt. It is a small town, too, with a church and a Main Street, whose stories boast false fronts, which hide the fact that there are only primitive ground floors behind them. The people in town have also put on false fronts, they are full of hypocrisy, are conceited, intolerant, limited in their intellect, stubborn and reactionary. They expect Philip

[76] New York (Reynal and Hitchcock).

to preach a fundamentalist religion that he himself no longer believes in. He is the illegitimate son of a waitress and a theology student and his greatest wish had been to become a painter. A scholarship for the study of theology helped him to go to university, after which he had to get married and accept any ministerial position available. His wife, too, had to give up a dream, namely to become a professional musician. Both live under this tension of dream and reality, they have to pretend that everything is in good shape, pose as the model couple among the congregation and emanate love and understanding. Mrs Bentley cannot conceive another child after their first was stillborn, the marriage is barren just as the land around them. When Philip commits adultery with a singer in the church choir his wife senses what is happening, yet both of them adopt the child after its mother's death. In this way and with the help of a little money Mrs Bentley has saved, they wish to start a new life, save their marriage and live free of hypocrisy and guilt in a big city in Eastern Canada.

As mentioned above, the events in this novel are presented by Mrs Bentley in diary form, which allows room for diversions and comments. The many 'false fronts' in Horizon make up the topic of this novel. There is first of all Philip who cannot live up to the theme of his first sermon "As For Me and My House We Will Serve the Lord."[77] The same applies to his wife and *mutatis mutandis* to their friends Judith and Paul. They all have to live under social pressure, which hampers their creative powers. For Philip there was abouve all "the discrepancy between the ma and the little niche that holds him."[78]

The existence of a different world, a world without drought and dust, bigotry and backbreaking labour, hailstorms and endless winters, a world marked by artistic endeavours, creativity, intellectual achievement and civilisation turns up in many of Ross's short stories, too. They also reveal the author as a master of internalising the existence of the external world, the prairie during the dust bowl years.

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[77] Josua 24,15.

[78] *As For Me and My House*, Toronto (McClelland and Stewart), 1982, p.4.

Landscape is always a metaphor for a man's mind and soul. In the stories as well, the plots are often rendered through the perspectives of women, who suffer most in such hostile and depressing environments.

John and Martha in "A Field of Wheat"[79] live with their children Joe and Annabelle on a farm somewhere in the prairies. Their hope is pinned on a huge field of wheat, which gives them new hope after a series of bad harvests. Martha dreams of sending the children to school, of having music lessons for Annabelle and new clothes for herself. A sudden hailstorm smashes her dreams and reduces the family to a subnormal existence. She is ready to move away, to discontinue a life under such conditions, but when she discovers John, otherwise a model of courage and physical strength, "pressed against one of the horses, his head pushed into the big hollow of his neck and shoulder, one hand hooked by the fingers in the mane, his own shoulders drawn up and shaking"[80] she relents and takes new courage although "this winter they would not have so much as an onion or potato."[81] This hope against all hope is mirrored by a masterful description of the sun and the clouds in the sky after the storm.

"No Other Way"[82], "The Painted Door"[83] and "The Lamp at Noon"[84] are also stories that count among the best that Ross ever wrote. In "The Painted Door", Ann, a farmer's wife, is afraid of being left alone when her husband decides to visit his ageing father despite an oncoming snowstorm. Her lonesomeness, her lack of fulfilment in life and the monotony of her daily chores make her depressed. When her neighbour Steven, a good-looking, self-confident man comes for a visit at the outbreak of the storm she succumbs to her feelings for

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[79] In: *The Lamp at Noon and Other Stories.* Toronto (McClelland and Stewart), 1968, pp.67-76.

[80] Ibid., p.75.

[81] Ibid., p.76.

[82] In: *The Race and Other Stories*, Ottawa (University of Ottawa Press), 1982, pp.23-36.

[83] In: *The Lamp at Noon*, pp.93-112.

[84] Ibid., pp.7-17.

him, as he is just the opposite of her stubborn and taciturn husband. The next day John is found frozen to death near his home, with a rest of white paint on his palms, the paint his wife had used to decorate their home the day before. When finally she realizes that "John was the man. With him lay all the future",[85] it is too late. She has to face a future full of guilt and remorse.

Five years of superhuman toil show their effects on Paul and Ellen in "The Lamp at Noon". A new sandstorm now seems to turn their land into a desert. Ellen is full of desperation, yet her husband is unable to realize the situation she is in. When she flees with her baby into the storm she loses her mind and the child is stifled. Here again Ellen sees all the wasted years and an unpromising future, but Paul refuses to give up. The lamp, lit at noon, symbolizes darkness and desperation. Paul finally discovers that "vision and purpose, faith in the land, in the future, in himself, it was all rent now, stripped away. 'Desert', he heard her voice begin to sob. 'Desert, you fool - the lamp lit at noon.'"[86]

A more optimistic tone can be found in his last novel *Sawbones Memorial*, which, however, like his other novels, never reaches the density, atmosphere and general narrative quality of his first. Humour and satire can be felt in some of his short stories, too, e.g. in "Comet at Night", but it is his portraits of people in the dust bowl years that have made him famous. Ross is a literary regionalist in the best sense of the word. He treats basic problems of human existence in a clearly defined and realistic frame, the Saskatchewan prairie at the time of the

[85] Ibid., p.112.
[86] Ibid., p.16.

Depression. Man and landscape correlate with each other and reveal their many-sidedness.[87]

[87] See also: Gerhard Düsterhaus and Rolf Franzbecker (eds.), *Canada - Regions and Literature.* Students' Book. Paderborn (Schöningh), 1987, pp.89-109 and Teacher's Book, 1989, pp.210-234.

Alistair MacLeod's Magic Configurations of Cape Breton

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Since the late 1970s magic realism has been hailed by some critics as a characteristically, though not exclusively, Canadian mode of writing. More specifically, the Canadian West, especially British Columbia, has been pointed to as the quintessential „magic space" giving rise to works in which realism merges seemlessly with magic occurences to contest the notions of the logic and linearity of history and to deconstruct the world view based on hierarchical binarisms. Geoff Hancock went so far as to call British Columbia „less a state of nature than a state of mind" (32), and hence so magically productive, while Stanley McMullin approached the problem from a less emotional perspective of cultural history suggesting that the „eccentric" genre epitomises „hinterland experience" („`Adams Mad in Eden`" 3) and is a medium through which the marginalized region, the true hinterland of Canada that has never enjoyed the heartland status, tries to assert its identity. The aim of my paper is to examine the „magic configurations" of Cape Breton in selected short stories by Alistair MacLeod in order, partly, to counter the „critical" western location of Canadian magic realism. I am following here in the footsteps of Jennifer Andrews, who in her article on Ann-Marie MacDonald's novel *Fall on Your Knees* (also, incidently, placed in Cape Breton) asserts that East-Coast writers, as well as ethnic minority and women writers are marginalized in critical discussions on magic realism in

Canada (7). Although this paper refers specifically to some of MacLeod's short stories, most of my conclusions are valid also for his recent novel *No Great Mischief* (1999), which concerns the themes and problems discussed in the stories, and shares the same setting with them, although it relies less on the magic of the supernatural kind.

By resorting to magic realist techniques and the Celtic lore, Alistair MacLeod infuses Cape Breton as the setting of his stories with a mythic quality. At the same time, by relying on realistic detail, and stressing the deep link between character and place, the author endows his setting with a strong local identity, thus making a case for the importance of regionalism and cultural rootedness. As Joyce Carol Oates puts it, „the mythic human drama defines itself by way of such localized and lovingly rendered worlds. ... If there is a single underlying motive for MacLeod's art," she continues, „it is perhaps the sanctification of his subject – a sense both primitive and 'modernist' that, if one sets down the right words in the right order, the purely finite (and local) is transcended, and the voiceless is given a voice" (vii-viii). Cape Breton history and landscapes, often alluded to as echoes of the islands of Scotland, provide the essential underpinning of the stories. The landscapes, the ocean, cliffs, weather, being specific, but at the same time reiterating Scottish patterns give many of the stories an aspect of timelessness. The fictional space created in many of his stories can, in fact, be described as that of spacialized memory, as events are described from a distance of both space and time or, even when experienced in the „here" or the „now" of the story, they are infused with recollections of the past, with which the present is intextricably intertwined. It is always the type of hybrid space defined by Rawdon Wilson as „one world [lying] hidden within another. ... The hybrid construction emerges from a secret, always already contained within, forming an occulted and latent dimension of the surface world" (225).

It is, however, not necessarily magic occurences or magic causality that produce the magical aura in MacLeod's stories, though these do abound, but rather skillfully choreographed realistic descriptions of landscapes, weather phenomena, events and

characters. Such stories can still be defined as magic realist, as they constitute attempts „to seize the mystery that breathes behind things" (Leal 123), which, according to Luis Leal, is one of the essential features of the genre. The story „In the Fall", for example, relies for its effect on the complicated interplay of color patterns (of gray, black, white and red) and echoed images, producing a sense of deep underlying interdependence of the human characters, animals and natural surroundings.

The plot of the story is simple: the narrator recollects the day when his mother finally managed to force the father to sell their old horse, Scott, that had become old and useless, but to whom the father is emotionally attached. As the horse is being sold „for mink-feed", David, the narrator's younger brother, driven by powerless rage kills the young, useful, anonymous capons his mother raises for profit. All that is acted out on a gray, rainy, windy November day with the „sullen" gray Atlantic in the background. The personification of the ocean in the second paragraph introduces the theme of the story and one of its key images: the „roiled and angry" Atlantic, the reader is told „hurl[s] up ... the shreds of blackened and stringy seaweed that it has ripped and torn from its own lower regions, as if this is the season for self-mutiliation—the pulling out of the secret, private, unseen hair" (*The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* 20-21). As the story progresses, it becomes clear that it is, indeed, a story of emotional self-mutiliation, of bending to the grim necessities of life.

The image of the hair, as well as the gray and blackish hues of the ocean and seaweed, are picked up in the next two paragraphs that offer descriptions of the parents: the mother dark, with „very long and very black hair ... coiled in a bun at the base of her neck where it is kept in place by combs of coral" (21); the father gray-haired, and gray-eyed, his eyes, in the midst of despair „the gray of the ocean" (26), „their grayness," the reader learns later, „[reflecting] fear and pain and almost a mute wonder at finding himself so painfully trapped by what seemed all too familiar" (26). Another coating of blackness and darkness is provided by allusions to the „caverns of the coal mine" (21) where the father used to work and where he

encountered Scott the horse saving him from blindness, from „the darkness that would make him like itself" (22). Scott's coat, once black and shiny like coal and like mother's hair, is now gray, mirroring the colouring of the father and the natural surroundings. The whiteness of the star on his forehead, contrasted with the original blackness of his coat is echoed in the description of the lustrous white-and-black feathers of the capons.

The redness of the capons' combs, which bring to mind the combs that keep in place mother's hair, are flecks of scarlet on this grey background, soon replaced by the flecks of blood on capons' white feathers: an image parallel to an earlier one; that of „a scarlet trail of bloodied perforations on the whiteness of the snow" (32), in a description of Scott working with the father many winters before, the whiteness of the snow contrasting with Scott's black coat. Just like the horse is finally devoured by the blurry grayness of the rainy day (29), the capons after David's rage attack lie on the floor „like sad, gray wadded newspapers that had been used to wipe up blood" (33). The scene, the white bloodied feathers swirling in the air, melts into the description of „the swirling whiteness" (34) of the first snow. The story closes with an image of the parents embracing in the wind, supporting one another. As the father embraces his wife

> she reaches up and removes the combs of coral from the heaviness of her hair ... it stretches out now almost parallel to the earth, its shining blackness whipped by the wind and glistening like the snow that settles and melts upon it. It surrounds and engulfs my father's head and he buries his face within its heavy darkness, and draws my mother closer toward him. I think they will stand there for a long, long time, leaning into each other and into the wind-whipped snow and with the ice freezing to their cheeks (34).

As this scene brings together the essential colour images of the whole story, it also harks back to an earlier image of the father burying „his face in the hoarfrost mane [of Scott and standing] quietly for a long, long time, his face in the heavy black hair and the ice beading on his

cheeks" (23). That earlier scene explains the nature of the relationship between the father and the horse, stressing the loyalty of the animal, waiting for the man throughout the night as nobody had waited for him before. The final scene, through the echoes of the images of the capons, the horse, the darkness of the mine, not only provides the story with an explanatory framework of the family relationships, but also redeems the image of the mother as created earlier in the story.

While the father and the children are described within an affective, emotional framework, the mother is common sense personified, providing the unquestionable though cruel rationale leading to the selling of the horse, forcing the father to betray his friendship with the animal; she is the woman feeding numerous capons to be killed with monotonous regularity and to be replaced by their replicas, which, the narrator suggests, precludes emotional attachement. She is the only one in the family at ease with the birds that are doomed to death. The final image, though, by mirroring the scene which provides the emotional anchor for the father's love for Scott, stresses the deep, though unspoken love and understanding between the parents. They „are facing and leaning into each other with their shoulders touching, like the end-timbers of a gabled roof" (34), providing a synecdoche for the house and family unit, harking back to the narrator's realization that being an adult means yielding to life's „awful reality" (30): a theme which weaves through many MacLeod's stories.

The emotional space of the family that dominates this story is in many other works by MacLeod broadened to embrace generations, or the whole community. The secret underside of the fictional space is provided by traditions, Gaelic folklore and folk believes of the Cape Breton community. The magic layer of life is often validated through spectral appearances, intuitions, repetition of experiences, gestures, even words through time and generations. Thus, in „As Birds Bring Forth the Sun" the sons who visit their dying father in hospital acknowledge, in spite of their modern upbringing, the family belief in „the big gray dog of death" that appears to announce death to the family members. The belief was born when one of the men's

ancestors was savaged by six dogs, „sons" of the gray bitch whom he loved and whose life he had saved. As the narrator comments: „with succeeding generations the specter had become *ours* ... in the manner of something close to a genetic possibility" (*The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* 140). The phrase rings with interesting connotations in the space of the story when one recalls that the narrator's ancestor killed by the dogs had played an essential role in the process of the insemination of the bitch, actually guiding the male dog's "blood-engorged penis" and thus symbolically „fathering" the dogs that were to kill him. The image of the six gray dogs has its analog in the narrative present in the image of the six gray-haired brothers visiting their dying father, „fearful to the gray hair rising on [their] necks" (142), thus suggesting that the „the big gray dog of death" constitutes a spectre of the change and continuity of generations. In many other stories, references to sexuality and the sexual act similarly underscore the theme of the genetic, deep interrelatedness not only of the family and community, but sometimes also the animals and landscape. Sex, like spectral appearances, uncanny events, and tradition often indicates an essential and instinctive aspect of life that remains beyond human control: the stories „Second Spring" and „Island" are good examples. The magic of these stories is often the magic of everyday life and an unspoken sharing of beliefs and modes of behaviour, resigning oneself to the necessities of life and realising that one is never completely free.

The characters of „As Birds Bring Forth the Sun", like many other protagonists of MacLeod's stories, confirm the continuity of generations and their own participation in the communal/familial context through time by their belief in the „big gray dog of death" even though they „are aware that some beliefs are what others would dismiss as 'garbage'" (141). Thus they subscribe to the model of subjectivity characteristic, according to Lois Parkinson Zamora, of magic realist fiction, and manifested in it through the presence of ghosts understood as „a spiritual force" („Magical Romance/Magical Realism 498). Zamora describes this model of subjectivity as "a model of the self that is collective: subjectivity is not singular but several, not

merely individual and existential but mythic, cumulative, participatory" (498). This model of subjectivity prevails in MacLeod's stories, even though the realisation of the interconnectedness of the generations and community comes to the characters most often in retrospect, as is the case in „Vision" with its uncanny repetitions of the fate of one generation in another, and intertwining images of blindness and the second sight; or in „The Road to Rankin's Point." In the latter, the young protagonist, incurably ill, wants to „go farther and farther back through previous generations ... back to anything rather than to die at the objective hands of mute, cold science" (*The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* 203).

MacLeod's stories concern most often individuals and communities in quiet crisis and describe a traditional way of life recognized as essential and valuable, but nevertheless slowly disappearing. Therefore, they are permeated by what Colin Nicholson calls „an abiding note of loss and regret, with the Scottish allusions seeming to operate like a kind of choric threnody" (98). These features again make the stories rest comfortably within the boundaries of magic realism, defined not only as a mode negotiating a clash of the knowable and the unknowable, but also as an attempt to „negotiate rapid modernization" (Connell 108). At the same time, the firm grounding in the local tradition and mythology makes them characteristic of hinterland/marginal writing as defined by McMullin („A Matter of Attitude" n.p.). As Hancock asserts, and MacLeod's fiction seems to confirm the statement, „magic realism reminds us that our memory is in a state of crisis" (33). The crisis is never successfully resolved in MacLeod's fiction, as the protagonists often find the locus of memory and tradition in themselves, at the same time realising that what they know and feel might persist for a while, but cannot be fully communicated to others: neither to the outsiders nor to many of the younger members of the community. Hence many of the stories explore patterns of isolation and loneliness. When life becomes „folklore," its vitality is diminished though it is not necessarily lost. The protagonist of „The Closing Down of Summer" suggests that, even though a lot is lost „in translation", and spectators

are not able to understand the culture they do not live, the essential truthfulness of Gaelic songs retains the ability to touch and express „inarticulate loneliness" of individuals. In that story, Gaelic songs stand for the traditional culture, but they also become a metaphor of private, inaccessible worlds that nevertheless shine through (*The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* 220). In fact, Cape Breton itself, as created in MacLeod's stories, is such a world. It might be described as a place where, to use the words of a character of „The Lost Salt Gift of Blood," „there are only walls of memory touched restlessly by flickers of imagination" (74).

Magic realism has long been recognized as a mode of writing preoccupied with geography, land and landscape. What is more, some critics, following Carpentier, have claimed that there are landscapes that somehow naturally give rise to the magic realist discourse, or the discourse of the marvellous. The claim is highly disputable. Nevertheless, while in Canada this priviledged locus is usually located by critics in the West, MacLeod's stories suggest that Cape Breton is capable of being as productive as a setting of magic realist fiction as British Columbia is. The fact that MacLeod's fiction is usually not classified as magic realist, even though it apparently satisfies most of the generic criteria, might be then the consequence of the choice of the setting. Another reason is perhaps the fact that while many of his stories are magic realist, they can hardly be clasified as postmodern stories, while the generic positioning of magic realism has relatively recently changed and the mode is more and more often defined as postmodern; in the words of Theo L. D'haen it is, in fact „the cutting edge of postmodernism" (201). If anything, MacLeod's stories rest more comfortably within the framework established by Liam Connell, who links magic realism with modernism conceived as „a type of literature dealing with modernisation" (98).

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Part III.
Conclusion: Continentalism and Nationhood

CONTINENTALISM AND NATIONHOOD -- THEIR LINGUISTIC ASPECT[88]

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The concepts of continentalism and nationhood in a literary, historical, as well as in a linguistic context are fascinating subjects to be examined in connection with Canada.

In the case of the linguistic situation in Canada and in that of linguistic research, the question is whether we consider the variety, or rather, the varieties of English spoken in Canada as a variety of North American English of minor importance struggling in the shadow of U.S. English and doomed to be submerged by it (that is, denying the existence of a 'Canadian English'—I would call this the 'continentalist' approach), or treating it as a variety of North American English which is autonomous, distinct, and viable (that is, recognising the existence of a 'Canadian English'—I would refer to this as the 'national' approach). It has to be stressed here that either way the English of Canada has to be treated in the context of North American English, as its linguistic features are the closest to the ones found just across the border in the U.S. This is understandable, as it has been clearly shown by linguists that the English spoken in Canada goes back to the same roots as the English of the so-called middle

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states of New England (i.e. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Vermont) (Chambers, 1991: 91; Brinton and Fee, 2001: 422). This is due to the fact that late 18th-c. American immigration on a mass scale (because of the War of Independence) laid the basis for most of the varieties of English spoken in Canada today.

To formulate our question more precisely: what aspirations does Canada have towards claiming an autonomous, viable variety of English for herself, and to what extent can these aspirations be substantiated and maintained?

This question can be approached from the purely descriptive linguistic point of view, and from a broader socio-cultural perspective. I would like to start with the first approach.

Here the questions of the linguistic distinctiveness of the English(es) spoken in Canada and that of the existence of an accepted standard have to be raised.

Taking all linguistic levels into consideration, it becomes obvious that the vast majority of the forms of the English spoken in Canada are identical with those used in International English (that is, the body of English that is common to all native varieties). Of course, there are some individual features that are not; however, in most of these cases "they agree with either the predominantly British English or US English forms" (Görlach, 1991b: 110); and in most cases where both forms are permitted, usage differs within Canada, "either regionally (e.g. Eastern vs. Western provinces) or is related to social class or age" (*ibid*). (See also Brinton and Fee, 2001.) Such variables are, for example, **schedule, lieutenant** and **either**, where both the standard British and standard American pronunciation can be heard in Canada (Wells, 1982: 497); or the variability in certain vocabulary items such as for example **station** and **depot** for 'bus station' (Görlach, 1991b: 114; examples taken from Bähr, 1981). (The existence of such variant forms is due to the dual influence of the US and British norms in Canada. The intensity of these influences has varied according to historical, cultural, and political factors.)

The literature agrees on the fact that as far as pronunciation is concerned, "a typical Canadian accent agrees with GenAm [General

American] rather than with RP at almost every point where these reference accents differ from one another" (Wells, 1982: 491). There is only one distinctive feature that marks off the speech of Canadians from the rest of North America: and this is the pronunciation of the RP diphthongs [aɪ] (as in **right**) and [aʊ] (as in **house**). The first element of both of these diphthongs is articulated higher and in a more central position before voiceless consonants than in RP or in most US accents. This will give [ʌɪ] and [ʌʊ] respectively. This linguistic phenomenon is referred to as 'Canadian Raising' (CR) (*ibid* and Brinton and Fee, 2001: 426-427).

As for morphology and syntax, there is a general consent among linguists that there are no features in the English of Canada that distinguish it from its North American neighbour. However, there are a large number of vocabulary items that are considered to be specifically Canadian. The first scholarly dictionary attempting to describe Canadian vocabulary, the *Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* published in 1967, contains *c.* 10,000 items. In the Introduction to this dictionary, the editor-in-chief, W. S. Avis defines the term 'Canadianism' in the following way:

> "A Canadianism ... is a word, expression, or meaning which is native to Canada, or which is distinctively characteristic of Canadian usage though not necessarily exclusive to Canada." (cited from Gregg, 1993: 33.)

Of course, the number of items contained in *DCHP* is quite respectable and would justify the recognition of the existence of a distinctively Canadian lexicon.

One more thing that is thought to be distinctively Canadian should be mentioned here: and this is the frequent use of the discourse marker **eh** /eɪ/.

So far we have seen that most features of the English of Canada agree with either International or US English (or both) as far as its phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary are concerned; a fewer with British English; and even fewer are those features that can

be safely called distinctively Canadian. Görlach actually raises the question whether "a single phonological feature [that is, CR], or a few lexical items [are] enough" for considering a certain speech variety an independent regional variety of its own (Görlach, 1991b: 110). These might actually be not enough; however, there is one more linguistic factor to be taken into consideration. This factor is emphasised by some experts in answer to the view expressed by certain scholars that the English of Canada is nothing more than a combination of British English and US English features.

W. S. Avis (1973: 43) comments on this problem in the following way:

> "CanE is a fairly recent hybrid which resembles AmE in some respects and BrE in other while exhibiting much that is singularly Canadian. It is, in fact, the composite of these characteristics which gives CanE its unique identity."

E. McConnell in her *Our Own Voice. Canadian English and How It Is Studied* (1979: 9) says the following concerning the same problem:

> "Most of the language features of CanE are found in either BrE or AmE, and sometimes in both. It is the particular combinations of these features which set apart CanE."

I would also like to cite here the American linguist, Bailey (1982: 161):

> "What is distinctively Canadian about CanE is not its unique linguistic features (of which there are a handful) but its combination of tendencies that are uniquely distributed."

Furthermore, Bailey also states in the same article that

> "CanE, though diverse in communities and variable in the speech of individuals, is not a composite of archaic or rustic features or a

> potpourri of British and American speechways but a true national language." (ibid: 152)[89]

Note that in the last quotation not the commonly used expression in linguistics, 'national variety', but 'national language' is used.

These three opinions all recognize that the English of Canada does not boast of a large number of unique features; however, they also point out that there is a uniqueness in the way linguistic features also present in other varieties of English are combined in Canada, which, according to these experts, justifies the use of the term 'Canadian English'.

The second problem concerning the definition of a national variety of a language is the following: does a homogeneous, accepted, standard variety of English exist in Canada?

Quite a number of linguists emphasise the fact that as far as morphology, syntax, and pronunciation in general are concerned, there is a certain variety of English in Canada that is extremely homogeneous. It is generally agreed that there exists what is now called a "'general Canadian English' which extends from Ontario westwards to British Columbia" (Gregg, 1993: 30). And according to Woods (1979: 33), "A uniform Canadian dialect covers a larger landmass than any other one dialect in the world." (Cited from Pringle, 1983: 121.) This of course means that "there is usually no possible way to localize a Canadian urban speaker within Canada" (Pringle, 1983: 115). Of course, this does not mean that the English spoken in the cities of Canada is absolutely uniform; rather, it means that there is one variety (urban, middle-class, educated) that can be heard all over the country in major agglomerations and enjoys the highest social prestige within Canada.

However, a great deal of variety is displayed in spelling, where both the US and British norms can be followed, and in some aspects

[89] These four citations are all taken from Görlach, 1991b: 110. The emphasis was added by me.

of the vocabulary and the pronunciation of certain words referred to earlier.

So far I have discussed the first approach to the problem—that is, the purely linguistic one, and now I would like to continue with the socio-cultural perspective.

Here the factor to be taken into consideration is the question of linguistic independence, and this depends mostly on the attitudes and perceptions of the speakers themselves, and to some extent on those of linguists. No matter how many or how few distinctive linguistic features a certain language variety may have, if its speakers do not feel that their speech is different from their neighbours across the border, then it will not be considered a separate variety by them. However, attitudes and perceptions in the public concerning language can be strengthened or weakened by linguists—and some believe that this was done so in the case of Canada, as we will soon see.

The ideological framework for aspirations towards a national variety is partly given by the fact that for decades now, linguists have been using the terms 'British English', 'American English', 'Scottish English', 'Irish English', 'Australian English', etc. Of course, we know that language varies from place to place; this variation is, however, gradual, and of a nature that its extent is usually directly proportional to distance. In this way, one can talk about linguistic continuums. Thus, for example, linguists talk about the North American linguistic continuum (or North American English). As far as the definitions of linguistic entities versus linguistic continuums are concerned, it should be taken into consideration that historical and political factors also play a part in these. It has to be acknowledged that the cutting up of the North American linguistic continuum into two sections, namely Canadian and American (US) English, is in a way purely arbitrary, and has more to do with historical and political factors than with linguistic ones. Of course, the other side of the coin is that political boundaries do separate groups of people from one another, and this in time will lead to different linguistic developments in the communities. (A good example of such a situation is the English-Scottish border and the linguistic developments in late medieval

times.) In fact, acknowledging the factor of arbitrariness in terminology of this kind, Algeo went so far as to state that "all linguistic varieties are fictions", and that "a language system, such as English, is a great abstraction, a fiction, analyzable into large areal varieties – American, Australian, British, Canadian, Northern Irish, Scots, Welsh, and so on. But each of those is in turn an abstraction, a fiction, based on more limited varieties ..." (Algeo, 1991: 3). Algeo believes that this fictionality is due to the constantly changing nature of language; however, he also argues for the usefulness of these 'fictions', as according to him, "without such fictions there can be no linguistics, nor any science. To describe, to explain, and to predict requires that we suppose there are stable things behind our discourse" (*ibid*: 4).

The term 'Canadian English' was first used by the Rev. A. Constable Geikie in an address read before the Canadian Institute in 1857 to denote the speech of native speakers of English in Canada in order to distinguish it from that of speakers in other English-speaking countries. Ironically, Geikie used this term with negative connotations, and speaks of "lawless and vulgar innovations". (Chambers, 1993: 2.)

When the scholarly research into the English language spoken in Canada started after the second World War, most scholars embraced the term 'Canadian English', and have used it ever since. Let me cite only a few examples here in chronological order: M. Orkin's book is entitled *Speaking Canadian English* (1971); J. K. Chambers was the editor of *Canadian English: Origins and Structures* (1975); M. H. Scargill's book bears the title *A Short History of Canadian English* (1977); R. E. McConnell's book is entitled *Our Own Voice. Canadian English and How It Is Studied* (1979); the *Oxford Companion to the English Language*, edited by T. McArthur, contains the entry 'Canadian English' (1992); *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, edited by D. Crystal, has a section on 'Canadian English' (1995); the latest comprehensive study on the subject, which appeared in Volume VI of the *Cambridge History of the English Language* bears the title 'Canadian English' (Brinton and Fee, 2001); and in the past decades a great number of scholarly

articles have been published where this term is used when talking about the English language as spoken in Canada.

It is obvious then that serious scholars and publishers recognise the existence of a variety of English spoken in Canada that is autonomous and distinctive enough from its southern neighbour. But perhaps the most influential person (and one of the first ones) to promote this view was W. S. Avis, the already mentioned editor-in-chief of *A Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles.*

The appearance of a dictionary attempting to contain the lexicon used by a certain community is of huge significance not only from the linguistic, but also from the cultural point of view. According to Görlach, Noah Webster's *An American Dictionary*, published in 1828, can be regarded as another Declaration of Independence (1991a: 38). In his analysis of dictionaries of 'New Englishes', Görlach states that scholarly dictionaries of these varieties started to appear only in the 1960s, Canada's being one of the first. He strongly believes that the appearance of such a dictionary is a sign of confidence in cultural independence. I think that this is a key concept here, and it is not by accident that *A Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* appeared in 1967, when things Canadian were being celebrated all over Canada. The *Gage Senior Dictionary* was also published in the same year, and Jaan Lilles argues that both of these dictionaries openly recognise that their publication is not only a linguistic and cultural, but also a political act, and in order to prove this he cites the following from the conclusion of the Foreword to the *DCHP* by W. R. Wees:

> "[T]he publishers hope that, as a contribution to Centennial thinking, the *Dictionary of Canadianisms* will assist in the identification, not only of Canadianisms but of whatever it is that we may call 'Canadianism'" (1967: v; cited from Lilles, 2000: 6)

Thus Lilles concludes that the first wave of dictionary publishing, which arrived in the late 1960s, was definitely connected to politics (*ibid*). This first wave also includes Paikeday's *Compact Dictionary of*

Canadian English (1970), containing *c.* 65,000 entries, and the abridged paperback edition of *DCHP*, *A Concise Dictionary of Canadianisms*, which was published in 1973 (OCEL: 178-179). Lilles identifies the second wave of dictionary publishing in Canada as coming in the early 1980s with the revised edition of the *Gage Senior* Dictionary, now bearing the title *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. He connects this wave to the increasing manifestations of nationalism in Quebec, and points out that in the Foreword the triumphalist remark concerning the Centenary had been replaced by a concern about Canadian identity *(ibid)*.

Paikeday's *Penguin Canadian Dictionary* (published in 1990, with 75,000 entries) can probably be regarded as the end of the second wave of dictionary publishing. The latest big enterprise was Oxford University Press's *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, published in 1998, which claims to be "The foremost authority on current Canadian English" on its cover (*English Today* 55, 1998: 36).

All the evidence presented above indicates that there seems to be a general agreement both among linguists and among the public that Canadian English does exist (presuming that dictionaries would not be produced if large numbers of people were not willing to buy them). So it is interesting to examine the other side of the coin and cite the opinions of people who have expressed their doubts concerning the existence of such a linguistic entity. According to my research, these people are in a minority. One of them is the German linguist Dieter Bähr, who wrote a book which summarizes the 'Survey of Canadian English', which was carried out in 1972. Significantly enough, the title he gave his book is not *Das kanadische Englisch* (i.e. 'Canadian English'), but rather *Die englische Sprache in Kanada* (i.e. 'The English Language in Canada'); I believe that this could be taken as the indirect expression of such a doubt.

Perhaps the most prominent person to have expressed serious doubts about the matter is incidentally another German linguist, Manfred Görlach, one of whose serious challenges to the idea of the existence of a Canadian English has already been cited earlier. In another article of his he expresses the opinion that

> "The Canadian example shows that the very existence of a national variety is bound up with scholars – such as Avis who believed in a distinct Canadian variety, and put out the dictionaries to prove its existence." (Here the reference is to the *DCHP.*) (Görlach, 1991a: 36.)

Görlach actually criticises this dictionary on the following grounds:

> "1. Many lexical items listed are either obsolete/archaic, or regional, or both; others are (and always were) restricted to the jargon of certain trades.
> 2. Many of the words are not of Canadian origin, but are included because one meaning, or their frequent use, has connected them with Canadian culture.
> 3. Other words are unquestionably Canadian (or at least northern North American), but have become 'Americanized' or internationalized so that they have lost their Canadian flavour (some borrowings from Inuit, such as *kayak* (1770), or *igloo* (1832), are such words)." (Görlach, 1991b: 117)

This is a serious challenge to the existence of a substantial amount of specifically Canadian vocabulary. Its significance lies in the fact that the greatest differences in the different varieties of any language are manifest on the level of the lexicon and on that of pronunciation—and we have seen that as far as pronunciation is concerned, there is only one distinctive Canadian feature. One wonders how many words would the above-mentioned dictionary be left with if Görlach sifted the items, and would only leave in those that would "qualify as true and full 'Canadianisms'" (*ibid*). Again, the question as to how important the number of distinctive features in a given speech variety is when it comes to identifying it with certain regions or countries has to be raised.

According to my knowledge, the latest controversy surrounding Canadian English was sparked off by the appearance of the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary.* Lilles claims that "there is no such thing as a

distinctively Canadian variety of English" (2000: 3). Similarly to Görlach, he also expresses his doubts concerning the existence of a large, distinctively Canadian vocabulary, the existence of a unified Canadian variety; and sees political intentions behind the several waves of dictionary publishing in Canada. He argues that language, or a certain variety of a language, is very often equated with the concept of nation, hence the ideological drive behind those who would like to prove the existence of Canadian English (the country of Canada exists—so they should have their own language, or at least their own distinctive variety of English) (*ibid*). He also argues that a statement such as Chambers' in the Foreword of the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, which declares that

> "In the living language there is a reflection of where we have been and where we are likely to go next, and what we have considered important on the way. It is the codification of our common understanding." (Chambers, 1998b: x)

amounts to a conflation of political history and the history of the language (Lilles, 2000: 6).

However, ultimately it is not linguists who decide about the existence of a certain variety, but the speakers themselves. Speakers of a certain type of English can influence the picture outsiders formulate about their speech: for example, they can deliberately cultivate some features that are distinctive from those found in neighbouring varieties, just to make their identity more pronounced. So the question is the following: do Canadians want to have a Canadian English? According to Pringle (1985: 183-184):

> "Canadian views of their English have a separatist function: they serve to assert the reality of a Canadian linguistic identity which, Canadians sometimes fear, is not as obvious or even as real as they would like it to be. This they do by exaggerating the differences between Canadian and American English (...)",

and

> "It is important to many Canadians to insist that Canadian English is different from American English. It has to be different, because Canadians are different." (*ibid:* 187).

During most of the 20th century, the two most stereotypical linguistic marks of Canadianness were Canadian Raising and the use of the word **chesterfield** for 'sofa'. It seems that both were enjoying this status already in the 1920s, and usage surveys indicate that both were in decline by the 1970s (Chambers, 1998a: 269-270). According to Chambers, the heyday of these two features coincided with strong Canadian nationalism. Indeed, in usage surveys conducted in the past couple of decades, it has been shown that the only marker of Canadian identity as far as pronunciation is concerned (that is, Canadian Raising) is not deliberately cultivated by Canadians; Görlach (1991b: 116) states that on the contary, this linguistic feature "appears to be considered as increasingly old-fashioned by younger urban speakers", who are becoming more and more 'Americanized'. This means that these Canadian diphthongs are becoming more and more like the corresponding diphthongs in the speech of young US speakers.

And indeed, the question is this: how are things going to develop? In the usage surveys of recent decades in the case of spelling and pronunciation it has been shown that there has been a shift towards US norms. (See for example De Woolf, 1990: 8, Clarke, 1993, and Woods, 1993.) At this stage we can not tell to what extent this is going to continue—it is up to Canadians to decide. The homogenising effect of television and the cinema is quite significant—will the feeling of national identity be enough to counterbalance this? Or, should language be a mark of national identity at all? Maybe for a Continental European, for whom language is inextricably bound up with national identity, the tendency towards homogenisation is difficult to grasp. However, it seems that somewhat different rules are at work in English-speaking countries; for example, on the island of Ireland, language has long lost this distinguishing function. Still, an identity crisis can be seen in the

competition of American and British linguistic norms in Canada, and the search for a linguistic identity is also reflected in conference titles, such as 'In Search of the Standard in Canadian English', organised in 1985 (Pratt, 1993: 45). This search for a Canadian linguistic identity is probably strongly influenced by the fact that Quebec has managed to link its own identity to language.

The English speakers of Canada are under a lot of pressures: those coming from the United States, from the large French-speaking minority, and from the massive number of immigrants. These last two factors make Canada a former British colony with one of the lowest percentages of native speakers of English (barely over 60% according to data from the 1996 Census). Moreover, because of the promotion of multiculturalist policies in Canada, the retention rate of the immigrants' own language is very high—about 50% (Chambers, 1998a: 265, 267). For more than a decade now, about 25-30% of the population of the major urban centres of Canada have been non-native speakers of English. Thus Canadian English is beginning to come under pressure from ESL (English as a Second Language) varieties, and it is expected that it will soon be affected by them (*ibid*: 271). This makes it understandable that even what can be termed General Canadian is changing fairly rapidly. Let me cite here two more opinions that refer to the fact that 'Canadian English' is changing quite rapidly:

> "But the inconsistencies themselves are symptomatic of the fact that [...] Canadian [...] English [is a] new configuration[.] of the variables available in international English. The inconsistencies are part of the real flux of usage, as the details of [a] new regional standard[.] are being forged." (Peters and Fee, 1989: 146)[90].

> "For Canadian English doesn't really exist: it is still coming into existence. Or rather, there are an undetermined number of Canadian Englishes--and perhaps thousands of them. They are

[90] The original citation talks about both Australian and Canadian English, this is why so many changes had to be made in grammatical number.

> linked by the fact that, in their different ways, they are all reflections and embodiments of aspects of a shared, if complex and subtle, cultural unity (whose existence, however much insiders may doubt it, has always been perfectly clear to outsiders). They can be distinguished by the different accommodations and compromises they represent between what they started from and what they are becoming." (Pringle, 1983: 119)

It is my conviction that the crisis in linguistic identity is simply parallel to that found in literature and history, for example. Ultimately, it is up to Canadians to decide what will happen to Canadian English: whether it is going to become more distinct and more stable, or less distinct and less stable; or even less distinct but more stable in the future.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AmE	=	American English
BrE	=	British English
CanE	=	Canadian English
DCHP	=	*Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* (see Bibliography under Avis)
OCEL	=	*The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (see Bibliography under McArthur).

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The 1996 Census Data from www.statcan.ca

Good Fences Make Good Neighbors?

Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (University of Vienna, Austria)

One can imagine the irritation of Canadian writers, and nationalist critics, when Joel Garreau (1948-), a journalist with the *Washington Post*, in his 1981 best-selling volume *The Nine Nations of North America* provocatively subsumed the bulk of Canada in several regions centred on US cities, and thus eliminated the border between Canada and its southern neighbor.[91] Garreau was probably a descendant himself of immigrants from Quebec / French Canada – his mother's maiden name was Nadeau – and he is from Rhode Island, which in the early 20th century was, according to S. E. Moffett,[92] the state with the second-highest proportion of Canadian-born population in the US. In his *Nine Nations* he included Atlantic Canada in a region called 'New England', placed southern Ontario in another region termed the 'Foundry', put the Coastal region of British Columbia together with northern California, Washington, Oregon, and parts of Alaska into so-called 'Ecotopia', joined the prairie provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (together) with the Dakotas, Iowa etc. to form a unit called 'The Breadbasket', and ignored the border between Alberta and the Rocky Mountain states in the US by designating a so-called 'Empty Quarter', reaching from the Arctic to Denver and Las Vegas. Only Quebec was granted a separate identity.

Half a decade before this publication the problems associated

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[91] *The Nine Nations of North America*, New York 1981.

[92] Cf. Samuel E. Moffett, *The Americanization of Canada* [1907], introd. Allan Smith, Toronto, 1972, cf. esp. p. 12.

with US involvement in the Vietnam War, which had alienated many Canadians, had ended, not without leaving a rich heritage of literary statements in poems, short stories and novels. Canadian writers dissociated themselves emphatically from the imperialism of the great neigbor and from the more than dubious military and political 'achievements' in Southeast Asia. They also opposed the influence and power wielded by gargantuan American companies. So widespread was the anti-American mood among intellectuals that an anthology entitled *The New Romans: Candid Canadian Opinions of the U.S.* was edited by Al Purdy.[93] It contains excerpts from the poetry and prose of many major Canadian writers giving vent to their anger at the US – especially at the napalm bombing of Vietnam by the 'Empire'. In the preceding two decades prominent Canadian historians had frequently addressed the dangers and risks of the American power for the Canadian nation. In spite of their scholarly disagreements about the basic factors shaping Canadian history, W. L. Morton and Donald Creighton agreed on this issue.[94] They articulated their concern and referred to the American threat to the Canadian national identity precarious enough anyway due to the difficult coexistence of the Anglo- and Francophones.[95] As Joel Garreau apparently ignored these Canadian sensitivities, it would seem that George Grant's Cassandra-like warning in *Lament for a Nation* (1965)[96] had been of no avail, and that the Canadian provinces had become so marginalized as to be simply subsumed into regions centred on American cities. Had the broad coalition which had been formed in

[93] The book appeared in Edmonton in 1968.

[94] Cf. William Lewis Morton, *The Canadian Identity,* [Madison, WI, 1961], rpt. Toronto, 1972, and Donald Creighton, *The Empire of the St. Lawrence*, Toronto 1965, and *Canada's First Century, 1867-1967*, Toronto 1970, where a pessimistic assessment of the influence of the U.S. on Canada is provided.

[95] W. L. Morton pointed to the dangers of the American proximity for the Canadian nation and praised the Canadian Identity as the worthy product of a great civilization developed 'in the grimmest of the environments'.

[96] George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: the Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, Toronto, 1965.

Canada between vehement critics of the liberal establishment (under Prime Minister Lester Pearson with its pro-American leanings), a coalition from the (far) left of the political spectrum and from the conservative right completely failed? – On the left, the 1978 denunciation by Robin Matthews of imperialist trends in the US and of its assumption of the role of a guardian of the northern neigbor[97] had similarly been in vain.

In the 1960s many Canadian poets and critics expressed their anxieties about the domination of their country by political and economic forces from the south and lamented the failed opportunities, the 'sell-outs' in their country, the take-over by American big business, as, for instance, poet Dennis Lee, who in *Civil Elegies* (1968) maintained: 'we are a conquered nation: sea to sea we bartered.'[98] Margaret Atwood meanwhile gave memorable expression to such sentiments, e.g. in her novel *Surfacing*, where her anonymous female protagonist senses a kind of cancer spreading from the south, endangering nature and damaging the ecology, but also affecting national culture.[99] Though it is significant that some allegations and assumptions concerning the barbarity of the fundamentally male civilization intruding from the south are proved wrong in this novel: The perpetrators of a barbarous act – the crucifixion of a heron – turn out to have been fellow Canadians.[100] Margaret Atwood's by now classic book *Survival* – with all its provisional simplifications which she was the first to admit in various presentations –[101] focused on the preoccupations and dominant themes in Canadian culture and

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[97] Cf. Robin Matthews, *Canadian Literature: Surrender or Revolution*, Toronto, 1978.

[98] Cf. his *Civil Elegies*, (1968), rptd in *Civil Elegies and other Poems*, Toronto, 1972, p.56.

[99] Cf. *Surfacing*, Toronto 1972, from chap. 1 onwards.

[100] Cf. chap. 14 and the disclosure of the identity of the killers in chap. 15.

[101] Cf. *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, Toronto 1972. Cf. her retrospective analysis in the 1980s given in a lecture at Princeton, 'After *Survival*...', reprinted in F. K. Stanzel and W. Zacharasiewicz, eds., *Encounters and Explorations: Canadian Writers and European Critics*, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1986, pp. 132-8.

literature, thus juxtaposing them with the blander and more self-confident concerns in the USA. Her thematic criticism continued a line of thought taken by Northrop Frye, whose famous 'Conclusion' to Klinck's *Literary History of Canada*[102] offered metaphors which in their contrast distilled the essence of the collective experience of Canadians vis-à-vis that of Americans: garrison vs. frontier. This distinction between the master narratives of the two neighboring cultures on the same continent has been questioned[103] but its assertion clearly implied a cultural border, which Canadian national critics in the 1960s and 70s were eager to preserve.[104]

Hugh MacLennan was one of the leading Canadian writers of the post-war era who by the (late) 60s was determined to control and delimit the influence of the USA on Canada. Not only was he fully familiar from his years of study at Princeton with American institutions, lifestyles and mentalities, but he had also been married to Dorothy Duncan, an American woman from Chicago, herself an accomplished writer with award-winning books.[105] – In his earlier fiction he had shown himself inclined primarily to draw a line between Canada and the mother country, from which the emancipation of his own country – a former colony – as part of the New World seemed necessary. By the late 1960s, however, he was aware of the new imperial center south of the border, and so he articulated his view in a statement – which itself was borrowed from

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[102] Cf. a reprint of this essay in *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*, Toronto, 1971, pp. 213-51.

[103] Cf. the critical debate to which Helmut Bonheim and others have contributed. Cf. his 'Models of Cannadianness' in: *New Worlds: Discovering and Constructing the Unknown in Anglophone Literature*, presented to Walter Pache, Martin Küster et al., eds., München 2000, pp. 51-71.

[104] Cf. the historical analysis in various essays in Peter Easingwood, Groß, Konrad and Lutz, Hartmut, eds., *Informal Empire? Cultural Relations Between Canada, The United States and Europe*, Kiel, 1998.

[105] On Hugh MacLennan and his (symbiotic) relationship with his first wife, cf. esp. Elspeth Cameron, *Hugh MacLennan, A Writer's Life*, Toronto, 1981, esp. pp. 65-77 and 133ff. On his experience in Princeton see esp. pp. 56-99. Cf. also T. P. MacLulich, *Hugh MacLennan*, Boston, 1983.

the well-known poem 'Mending Wall' by Robert Frost. With the addition of a question mark this phrase has provided the title for this paper. MacLennan advocated a 'good fence', a border to protect the endangered Canadian national identity especially in the field of culture.

Hugh MacLennan, who forms the focus of this essay, seems to have lost the optimism and self-confidence which had still characterized his attitude to the USA in the early fifties, when his own experience had frequently prompted comparisons of the collective identities of the two neighboring societies. When, in 1969, he participated in an 'emergency symposium' on 'The Americanization of Canadian Universities' – at Sir George Williams University, i. e. Concordia in Montréal – he was, however, ready to support Robin Matthews and James Steele in their exposure of the very problematical practice of recruiting primarily Americans for Canadian universities.[106]

To compare and contrast national lifestyles had been a particular interest of his, even at the beginning of his career as a writer when a fictional mode related to Ernest Hemingway's fiction appealed to him[107] and when he adopted themes reminiscent of late 19th century authors like Henry James and W. D. Howells. Two still unpublished novels, whose manuscripts are kept at McGill, furnish episodes on both sides of the Atlantic for which his years as a Rhodes Scholar in Oxford had provided inspiration. The first novel entitled 'So All Their Praises' juxtaposes settings in the Maritimes, New York and in Germany, while the second unpublished book,'A Man Should Rejoice', uses environments in the Mid Atlantic states – Pennsylvania

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[106] He felt that he had himself experienced a parallel situation in the 1930s when he failed to get employment at his own Alma Mater in Halifax as an Englishman from Oxford was preferred to him. The subjective perception of this act of discrimination is pointed out by E. Cameron, p. 72. The draft of MacLennan's contribution to the symposium is contained in the Hugh MacLennan Papers, Special Collections Division, University of Calgary Library.

[107] Cf. Cameron, p. 82ff.

and NY plus Princeton – and Nova Scotia as well as Austria.[108] In these two novels MacLennan dramatizes the search for personal identity of young males (Americans, Englishmen and Germans) confronting foreign milieus. In both novels the writer from Cape Breton, who after his time in Oxford had studied in Princeton, also projects fairly negative pictures of American society during the Prohibition era and exposes the social injustice rampant there. In the second novel, e.g., the young painter David Culver, the son of an industrialist, is involved in a strike in his father's refinery and is then made to pay a severe price for this action. He has to serve a term in prison before he can return to his love, a young American woman, Anne Lovelace, who together with her father has been involved in a progressive socialist experiment in Austria, David tragically loses his wife and as he is exiled from America with no relationship to his father – he can only find hope in returing to the author's native soil in Nova Scotia.[109] As David Staines has shown in a very perceptive essay in *Mosaic* the US settings (especially New York in the first novel and the environs of Princeton in later books) remain fairly vague while vivid glimpses are given of Nova Scotia in both unpublished novels, though there is a tendency towards placing idyllic scenes there.[110]

It was only after the failure to get his first two novels published

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[108] Cf. Cameron, pp. 83-7 and 107-12.

[109] There are distinct echoes of Karl Marx in these early texts, which reflect MacLennan's break with the conservative and presbyterian convictions of his family, especially his forceful father, physician Dr. Sam MacLennan, whose shadow is everywhere in MacLennan's fiction. In the plots of his unpublished novels utopian projects are being developed and implemented by radical social reformers e.g. in a fictitious Styrian village named Lorbeerstein, in which Marxist dissidents from various countries have come together and have built housing cooperatives on a large scale and have eliminated unemployment. On the intriguing question of the author's familiarity with the region cf. my essay 'The Art of Living and of Dying From a Transatlantic Perspective: Glimpses of Styria and Austria in Canadian Literature', in: Claus-Dieter Ertler and Martin Löschnigg, eds., *Canada 2000: Identity and Transformation*, Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 19-30.

[110] David Staines, 'Mapping the Terrain', *Mosaic* XI.3 (1978), 137-51.

that MacLennan, encouraged by his American wife, consistently turned to Canadian environments and launched his big project. He composed what became a national trilogy in which Canadian settings serve as the primary background for the search of individuals for identity and self-knowledge. Both works of fiction and a growing number of essays reflected an optimism about the potential of his country, and a degree of self-confidence, which made the author the leading voice of Canadian cultural nationalism from the 40s through the early 60s.

It is significant that in *Barometer Rising* (1941) and his award-winning two books of fiction which followed (in the form of the national novel) *Two Solitudes* (1945) and *The Precipice* (1948) MacLennan also provided lyrical descriptions of his country, its majestic landscape and the great human potential within ist borders. The most extensive passages of this kind occur in *Barometer Rising.*

In returning secretly to Halifax the young war veteran Neil Macrae is deeply affected by the vision he has in the darkened city:

> The sun had rolled on beyond Nova Scotia into the west. Now it was setting over Montréal and sending the shadow of the mountain deep into the valleys of Sherbrooke Street and Peel; it was turning the frozen St. Lawrence crimson and lining it with the blue shadows of the trees and buildings along its banks, while all the time the deep water poured seaward under the ice, draining off the Great Lakes into the Atlantic. Now the prairies were endless plains of glittering, bluish snow over which the wind passed in a firm and continuous flux, packing the drifts down hard over the wheat seeds frozen into the alluvial earth. Now in the Rockies the peaks were gleaming obelisks in the mid-afternoon. The railway line, that tenuous thread which bound Canada to both the great oceans and made her a nation, lay with one end in the darkness of Nova Scotia and the other in the flush of a Britsh Columbian noon.

Excitement constricts his throat when he visualizes 'this anomalous land', extending from Nova Scotia to the still lit peaks in the Rockies:

> this sprawling waste of timber and rock and water where the only living sounds were the footfalls of animals or the fantastic laughter of a loon, this empty tract of primordial silences and winds and erosions and shifting colours, this bead-like string of crude towns and cities tied by nothing but railway tracks, this nation undiscovered by the rest of the world and unknown to itself, these people neither American nor English, nor even sure what they wanted to be, this unborn mightiness, this question-mark, this future for himself, and for God knew how many millions of mankind![111]

This striking passage in the middle of his first published novel may remind the reader of the vision in Archibald MacLeish's panoramatic poem of 1930 'You, Andrew Marvell' with its grand cosmic sweep.[112] But instead of the shadow of the night encroaching upon the world and evoking a sense of the precariousness of the moment in the poem, there is a jubilant awareness here of the potential of this sublime expanse of the landmass for a young nation.

The terrible explosion in the Narrows flattened part of Halifax, and, together with innumerable other victims, eliminated some of the opponents of the protagonist such as Neil's unscrupulous uncle Geoffrey Wain, as well as uniting him with Penelope. After this tragedy Neil Macrae is offered another opportunity to reflect optimistically and emotionally on the national task. MacLennan shows how this returnee, a veteran from the Great War, in contrast to his uncle Colonel Wain, embraces Canadian patriotism and nationalism. Abandoning a colonial perspective he looks forward to a significant mission of his country in the world, which is separate from that of the mother country Britain and also distinct from that of the neighboring nation.

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[111] *Barometer Rising*, Toronto 1941, chapter 'Tuesday'. Quoted from New Canadian Library pb. ed. 1982, p. 79.

[112] MacLeish's poem, which is often anthologized, opens with the line, 'And here face down beneath the sun'.

> [...]he was young enough to see a great country move into its destiny. It was what he felt inside himself, as a Canadian who had lived both in the United States and England. Canada at present was called a nation only because a few laws had been passed and a railway line sent from one coast to the other. In returning home he knew that he was doing more than coming back to familiar surroundings. For better or worse he was entering the future, he was identifying himself with the still-hidden forces which were doomed to shape humanity as certainly as the tiny states of Europe had shaped the past. Canada was still hesitant, was still ham-strung by men with the mentality of Geoffrey Wain. But if there were enough Canadians like himself, half-American and half-English, then the day was inevitable when the halves would join and his country would become the central arch which united the new order.[113]

MacLennan's 'paean of praise' is, of course, not as direct, naive and even crude as the optimistic rhetoric employed by Robert G. Haliburton more than two generations before. In Montréal in 1869 he had praised *The Men of the North and Their Place in History*,[114] and had celebrated the young country briefly after Confederation, also advocating a renaming of British North America as 'Norland'. The eldest son of the author of the Sam Slick narratives had extolled the muscular strength of the new Confederation and had linked its future to the invigorating climate and the favorable racial composition of its settlers, who had allegedly mainly come from the northern parts of Europe and had drawn on its desirable gene pool. Thus the early wave of nationalism after Confederation did not favor continentalist visions and assumptions but trusted in the favorable effects of the climate and the desirable qualities of a homogeneous immigrant population. For many Canadians of that era the venerable theory of climate in its then current form and distinct racial notions provided

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[113] *Barometer Rising*, chapter 'Monday Night', p. 218.

[114] On the context of Robert Grant Haliburton's speech see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867 - 1914*, Toronto, 1970, esp. pp. 50-5.

support for the exaggerated claims of the members of the 'Canada First' movement. The existing ties with northern Europe were more welcome than the less desirable influence of less healthy regions in the south, also in the USA, which in the eyes of the members of the 'Canada First' movement did not recommend a closer alliance with the more southerly part of the continent.[115] In fact there was anxiety in Canada about potential annexation by the US. Canadian cartoons from the 1840s to the 1890s which depict Unlce Sam's or Brother Jonathan's advances and attempts to seduce 'Miss Canada' reflect this concern.[116]

As Carl Berger has shown in his instructive study of such statements by early nationalists in the late nineteenth century[117] Canadian writers extolled the sturdy race and the northern strain in the population of the new Dominion, which included both French and Anglophone settlers. The superabundance of ozone in the Canadian atmosphere, associated 'with soundness of mind and body', was praised by poet Charles Mair, who elsewhere emphasized the antagonism between Canada and her southern neighbor. There were, indeed, advocates of closer ties and a continentalist perspective in the economic sphere. Montréal businessmen, for instance, as early as 1849 called for the annexation of Canada to the U.S. but their voices were silenced by the members of the 'Canada First' movement.[118]

The continentalist assumptions were most memorably and emphatically put forward by the historian and journalist Goldwin Smith, who from the early 1860s onwards gave many reasons why a

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[115] It was felt that the U.S., which attracted vagrant populations from less favorable places of Europe, was clearly at a disadvantage.

[116] Cf. the 20 cartoons in Laurence Cros, 'Le Canada et la peur de l'annexion américaine à l'époque victorienne, à travers les dessins politiques canadiens', *International Journal of Canadian Studies 23*, (Spring 2001), 157-86.

[117] Cf. the chapter 'The Canadian Character' in The *Sense of Power*, pp. 128-52.

[118] On the ramifications of the debate connected to the search for a national Canadian literature, cf. Carl Ballstadt, ed., *The Search for English-Canadian Literature: An Anthology of Critical Articles from the 19th and early 20th Centuries*, Toronto, 1975.

union was not only desirable but inevitable.[119] Goldwin Smith, who had been a professor of Modern History at Oxford, England, and had then taught at Cornell University in New York (State), had already aired such opinions during the American Civil War, that is before Confederation. Responding to the nationalism of the 'Canada First' movement, he found in the geographical facts, in the assumed impracticability and the lack of cohesion in a thinly populated country spanning a huge continent, but also in the shared Anglo-Saxon heritage of the two neighboring countries important reasons for advocating a union of Canada and the USA. His most detailed statement was contained in his monograph of 1891 *Canada and the Canadian Question.*[120] It is true, he thought of a federal system, which would allow diversity, and referring to the union of England and Scotland, he offered it as a model for a potential fusion on the North American Continent.[121] In another context he countered, almost facetiously, the argument of those eulogists who traced the straight thinking and moral purity of Canadians to the clear and frosty air by pointing to the heat of the stoves inevitable in their cold country.

What Goldwin Smith had advocated, was presented by some observers in the first decades of the twentieth century as a indisputable fact and reality. Several writers who diagnosed a rapid process of homogenization in the New World claimed that the two countries on the North American continent had already become indistinguishable – that 'continentalism' was already basically achieved. The most detailed claim based on evidence of the extent to which Canadian society had been affected and shaped by the new

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[119] Cf. Konrad Gross, 'America and Canada: Continentalist Approaches', in: Roland Hagenbüchle & Josef Raab, eds., *Negotiations of America's National Identity*, vol.ii, Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2000, pp. 590-607.

[120] *Canada and the Canadian Question*, Toronto 1891. Cf. also A. M. Smith, *The Book of Canadian Prose, Vol. II: The Canadian Century: English-Canadian Writing Since Confederation*, esp. pp. 40-50.

[121] There is also a touch of racism, a fear of Chinese irruption on the Western Coast, and there is direct reference to a hierarchy of races, for he says explicitly that the two 'Anglo-Saxon countries' are inhabited by a 'higher race than China'.

imperial power in the New World was contained in Samuel E. Moffett's *The Americanization of Canada*,[122] in which technology, communications and the flow of culture were studied. It seems significant that the original title of this volume written by an American was 'The Emancipation of Canada' – emancipation was thus regarded as synonymous with 'Americanization'. Full integration of the two neighbors on the continent was also related to another favorite political theme of those years, that of the desirable Anglo-Saxon solidarity. A fusion of Canada and the USA would help to enhance and expand the beneficial effects of their power in the world, from which Britain would also benefit.

That not every Canadian intellectual was happy with this trend and that the claim that modernization equaled Americanization was not supported by everybody can be inferred from a statement by Frank Underhill, who in 1929 polemically described the US as 'government of the people by big business for big business'.[123] This dissatisfaction with capitalism is also apparent in Hugh MacLennan's unpublished fiction but the Marxism he had been temporarily interested in was abandoned during or after a visit to the Soviet Union in 1937 at the latest.

After his apprenticeship work, however, he seems not to have excessively worried, for two decades, at least, about the national culture of his country, though he continually noted differences in lifestyle and mentality between his fellow Canadians and their American neighbors.

In *Two Solitudes* (1945), which thematically continues the fictional exploration of the national issue by focusing on the emergence of a new Canada, the author establishes hope for the future of the country

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[122] On Moffett's analysis cf. Allan Smith, *Canada – An American Nation? Essays on Continentalism, Identity, and the Canadian Frame of Mind*, Montréal and Kingston 1994, esp. pp. 65-87.

[123] Cf. Paul Goetsch, 'Das Bild der Vereinigten Staaten in der anglokanadischen Literatur der Gegenwart' in: *Festschrift für Rudolf Haas: Die amerikanische Literatur in der Weltliteratur*. ed. Claus Uhlig and Volker Bischoff, Berlin, 1982, pp. 476-97, esp. p. 487.

in the marriage of Paul Tallard and Heather Methuen. After the tragedy of Athanase Tallard, arguably the book's most complex and most subtly imagined character, whose poignant fate in the course of the composition of the book came to dominate the writer's attention, these two representatives of the younger generation unite the two founding nations. The writer Paul and his wife Heather also come realize that he should set the scene of his next novel in Canada.

Having in the marriage of the two representatives of their ethnic groups ensured this promise for the national future MacLennan evokes in the concluding paragraphs a panoramic picture of the whole nation (from the Maritimes through the heartlands and then the prairie provinces to B.C.) engaged in the necessary preparation for the war: with the country – soberly and, as it were, maturely – moving 'into history as into matter-of-fact.' Previous to this, the voice of the authorial narrator also introduces some of the landmarks in the 'golden weather' of the fall of the year which saw the beginning of the War, and dwells on the aesthetically appealing diverse vegetation and fauna of the vast country.

> In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick the moose came out of the forests on October nights and stood in silhouette against the moonpaths that crossed solitary lakes. In Ontario people looked across the water from their old river-towns, and seeing the lights of moving cars in the United States, remembered again that they lived on a frontier that was more a link than a division. On the prairies the combines rolled up the wheat, increasing the surplus in the granaries until it was hard to believe there were enough human mouths in the world to eat it all. In British Columbia the logs came down the rivers; people separated by mountains, plains and an ocean remembered English hamlets, pictured them under bombs, themselves islanded between snow-peaks and the Pacific. The Saint Lawrence, flowing past the old parishes, enfolding the Ile d'Orléans and broadening out in the sweep to Tadoussac, passed in sight of forests that flamed with the autumn of 1939: scarlet of rock maples, gold of beeches, heavy green of spruce and fir.

It is significant that he suggests the fact that Canadians in the old river towns perceive 'the lights of moving cars' in the United States and remember that they live 'on a frontier that was more a link than a division'.[124]

While other Canandian writers in the years preceding US entry into the War hinted at a (concealed) weakness in the big southern neighbor which refrained for years from joining the battle against the common enemy, MacLennan, possibly aware of the decisive role of the USA later on, offers no such allusion, but instead stresses the openness of the border, implying the ground the two cultures share. It was only long after the war was over that the metaphor of the appropriate fence appealed to him.

In the third of his national novels *The Precipice*, which was less successful in Canada than in the USA, MacLennan looked south and examined and contrasted the culture of the southern neighbor. Using symbolic landscapes and individuals who encapsulate dominant ideologies and mentalities MacLennan again chose a love romance for his plot. A Yankee businessman from Cleveland who visits a small backward Canadian town, Grenville in Ontario, fascinates and wins Lucy Cameron, one of three unmarried sisters, with his boyish charm so that she elopes with the divorcee and breaks with the strict lifestyle enforced by a staid and extremely 'proper' elder sibling who is a true daughter of a severe Calvinist.[125]

As an 'authentic American' – his face 'larger and bolder than the faces of most Canadian men she knew' (*The Precipice,* p. 23) – Steve Lassiter can thus uproot Lucy Cameron, who has been restrained and restricted in her movements and actions by the heritage of her rigidly Calvinistic father and her elder sister, who assumed this role after his death.[126] The self-confident, brash, athletic Stephen together with his

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[124] MacLennan, *Two Solitudes* (1945), chapter 59, quoted from MacMillan pb. ed. 1986, p. 411.

[125] *The Precipice*, Toronto 1948, esp. part 1, p. 170ff.

[126] It is significant that the representative of America is a male while the Canadian is female. On this aspect cf. E. Cameron, 'Will the Real Hugh MacLennan Please Stand Up: A Reassessment', in: Frank M. Tierney, ed., *Hugh MacLennan*, Ottawa

cynical friend and later boss Bratian, who unscrupulously exploits people and drops them afterwards, represents the more advanced and more 'aggressive', money-oriented society of the U.S.A., the obsession with success related to the American dream which is here exposed as a sham and empty quest. The failure of Lucy's love romance and of her marriage in New York, the appropriate contrast to the humble Canadian town, brings out virtues and strengths which the ostensible losers from the northern country can draw upon. Lucy, who has temporarily returned home, eventually remains true to her ideals and responsiblity even for her unfaithful spouse.[127]

While exploring the lives of these and other individuals – one of them is a mere observer figure, the Canadian Bruce Fraser, himself a natural loser but also a sensitive poet and writer – MacLennan in this book also explicitly investigates in many dialogues between various figures and in many reflections of individuals the connections between the societies in the U.S.A. and in Canada, their parallels and contrasts.[128] Through his exploration of the burdens of the past (especially of dominant father figures the characters have to bear) and a constant sense of guilt and through his 'rhetoric of fiction' the author suggests that both Americans and Canadians share a puritan ancestry and a secularized puritan mentality, but that they cope differently with this heritage, with Canadians being better able to manage. At any rate the author seems to advocate joint action and to argue the complementarity of the two neighboring countries and societies. Inevitably, MacLennan also allows a character, in this case a subsidiary figure, i.e. Bruce Fraser, a neighbor of the Camerons, an innocent and naive Canadian, to express patriotic feelings and to extol

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1994, pp. 23-36. On MacLennan in the context of cultural politics cf. the first monograph on him by Paul Goetsch, *Das Romanwerk Hugh MacLennans: Eine Studie zum literarischen Nationalismus in Kanda*, Hamburg, 1969.

[127] Eventually Lucy goes to Chicago, where Stephen has taken shelter after his dismissal by his boss, Carl Bratian.

[128] Cf. for instance *The Precipice*, pp. 26, 106ff, 341, 345ff, 359ff.

the sublime aspects of his country.[129]

He continued to refer to the seamy sides of life in the USA and showed the dangers of the pursuit of wealth and success in the fortunes of Canadians transplanted there. In *Each Man's Son* (1951) he opened the novel with a description of the plight of Mollie MacNeil, whose husband Archie had been enticed away from Cape Breton to enter the ring as a prize fighter in the USA, away from the colliery town of Broughton and its strong (Gaelic-speaking) highlanders turned Canadians. He is brutally exploited and taken advantage of by unscrupulous managers and trainers until he is an invalid and almost blind. His fate is implicitly symptomatic for young men from Cape Breton who are cheated in the U.S.A. The tragic outcome of his case – when the goliath returns a defeated man only to find the wife he had deserted (and his son) in the arms of a Frenchman, violence and murder follow.

After producing these novels MacLennan still felt relatively optimistic about the prospects of his country, that it could hold its own on the North American continent. While he originally defined the passage from colony to nation as Canada's empancipation from the mother country, he embraced the notion of Canada as 'a golden hinge' between Britain and the USA. The initiatives of the late 1950s, such as the foundation of the Canada Council and programmes to foster Canadian culture, strengthened his sense of confidence and the accolade of the five Governor General's Awards he received did not fail to consolidate that feeling. In his essay entitled 'Where is my potted palm?', MacLennan calls Canada 'one of the most self-conscious nations in the world' and claims maturity for his country.[130]

By 1960 MacLennan felt a growing unease at American control of Canadian resources and at the American influence on the Canadian

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[129] There are several lyrical passages on the Canadian landscape in the novel, cf. pp. 49f, 53f, 133f.

[130] In 'Der literarische Nationalismus in Kanada seit 1960' in: *Literaturen in englischer Sprache* ed. H. Kosok and H. Priessnitz, Bonn, 1977, pp 129-40. Paul Goetsch (p. 124) refers to the essay 'Where is My Potted Palm?' by the author included in *Thirty and Three*, a book of essays, Dorothy Duncan, ed., Toronto 1954, pp. 53f.

lifestyle. Essays and open letters, e.g to J. F. Kennedy mirror this feeling[131] and suggest an awarenes of the need of anglophone and francophone Canadians to jointly resist Americanization. By the late 1960s MacLennan's concern was fully articulated in the essay for the symposium mentioned earlier.[132]

In the decades since the publication of MacLennan's trilogy of national novels and the character novels that followed but which still mirrored MacLennan's preoccupation with such national issues, as well echoed the debate about national and continentalist positions, the interests of Canadian writers have shifted. Thematic criticism has long been outdated and many Canadian intellectuals have rather debated problems of multiculturalism. They have engaged in discussions on feminism and transcultural phenomena and of postcolonialism. Moreover, they seem to accept the absence of a national canon and the existence of several distinct canons. Canadian content in the media which is demanded by the regulator as a protective measure cannot easily be identified. But aspects of the themes dealt with in MacLennan's fiction also surfaced also in the 1990s as political developments which have made the public aware of the gradual loss of sovereignty of national states like Canada.[133] Recent trends have prompted a re-thinking of some points. It appears as if a revision of the views of writers and critics who seemed to stand aloof from almost parochial concerns redolent of national cultures is a distinct possibilty. We have heard at this conference that in a world of globalization there appears to be a renaissance of the concept of region, of regional culture. But there are also some interesting shifts

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[131] Cf. Cameron, *Hugh MacLennan*, pp. 310ff.

[132] His sympathy and understanding for Quebec nationalists, later abruptly shattered by the violence it involved, was aided by his belief that francophone culture needed the support of Anglo-Canada against the encroachments of the dominant power from the south.

[133] The continuity of distinctive sociocultural patterns which differ north and south of the 49th parallel has been especially studied by Martin Lipset in a number of books. Cf. *Continental Divide. The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada*, New York, 1990.

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

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

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

Burke's argument in a forthcoming volume[136] there seems to be a gradual convergence in terms of the presentation of urban space which Canadian writers were relatively late in including in their fiction while in US literature it has often been depicted as a nightmare. Contemporary Canadian cities are undergoing processes of transformation – as the cityscapes are affected by the waves of new immigrants especially from East Asia – Toronto and Vancouver have been the subject of incisive analyses by human geographers and cultural critics, also by imagologists.[137]

There can be no doubt that the political realities of a globalized world are also affecting the perspectives of writers and cultural critics. Wilfried von Bredow in 'Ironic Myths of Sovereignty', has analysed the erosion of the concept of sovereignty of nation states in the current climate and has taken note of the gradual decline of its power in the cultural and economic spheres, a phenomenon enhanced, no doubt, by the NAFTA agreements.[138] These issues have not escaped the attention of Canadian literary and cultural critics, some of whom have for a long while downplayed the role of a national identity. Among them Frank Davey has in various essays in a study of 16 novels from the late 1960s to 1990 noted a lack of nationalist discourses and signs and has suggested that the (national) state seems

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136 Cf. 'Urban Space: The City as Viewed By Canadian and American Writers', in: Peter Kirsch and W. Zacharasiewicz, eds., *Interculturality in Canada and the U.S.A. – A Comparison,* Budapest 2002, pp. 20-34.

137 Cf. the essays by Roland Vogelsang 'Die neue ost-asiatische Einwanderung nach Kanada: Sozioökonomische und kulturgeographische Aspekte', and Eva-Marie Kroeller 'Urban transformations: Vancouver and Berlin', both in: *Canada/Europa: Chancen und Probleme der Interkulturalität – Canada/Europe: Opportunities and Problems of Interculturality*, W. Zacharasiewicz and F. P. Kirsch, eds., Hagen: ISL-Verlag, 2000, pp. 81-108 and 59-80.

138 He considers external and domestic threats to Canadian national unity and discusses processes of mutual interdependence. Cf. Wilfried von Bredow, 'Ironic Myths of Sovereignty – Summing Up At the Millennium', in: *Canada and the Millenium: Proceedings of the 2nd Canadian Studies Conference in Central Europe*, Anna Jakabfi, ed., Budapest 1999, pp. 18-31.

to have become invisible to its own citizens.[139] Davey has underlined the gradual reduction of the importance of national identities as the regional, or rather, the local appears in the foreground, while the global community is invoked by references to numerous remote places.

That an intellectual like Frank Davey who is a known internationalist, however, cannot help becoming involved in national political issues – like the Free Trade Agreement – is apparent in his meticulous analysis of this debate in his *Post-National Arguments* of 1993. There Davey subjects the two contrasted statements pro and con signed by many Canadian writers and artists to a close reading and explores the subtexts, tacit implications and contradictions in the two statements, in November 1988, both by the opponents of what was polemically called the 'Mulroney-Reagan Trade Deal' and the supporters. He discusses the 'blind spots', for instance, of the advocates of NAFTA who were in favor of a 'level playing field' – while they seem to have neglected the economic factor and questions of art distribution.[140] An observer might argue that processes of concentration in publishing, the power of multinational companies can surely affect the fortunes of communities of intellectuals and writers. Yet the advocates of NAFTA were against regulations, ostensibly showing no fear of international competition, regarding protective measures as being unnecessary. The eloquent opponent of nationalist conceptions of Canadian literature thus expresses concern, and becomes repoliticized, showing his awareness of literary power.

Will there be a renewed interest in the concerns of Hugh MacLennan?

David Staines has on various occasions stressed the mediating role assumed by Canadians and by Canadian literature and culture between the first and third worlds and especially between the United

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[139] Frank Davey, 'The Canadas of Anglophone-Canadian Fiction 1967-90', in: Peter Easingwood, Konrad Gross and Lynette Hunter, eds., *Difference and Community: Canadian and European Cultural Perspectives*, Amsterdam 1996, pp. 3-12.

[140] Cf. Frank Davey, *Post-National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone Canadian Novel since 1967*, Toronto, 1993, esp. pp. 10-24.

States and the developing countries.[141] He has drawn attention to cosmopolitan practices apparent in Canadian culture, such as the large number of awards, the Governor General Awards and Giller Prizes, given to relatively new arrivals. He has plausibly argued that writers like M. G. Vassanji and Rohinton Mistry can turn back to and explore their own pasts, their countries of origin – in Africa or South Asia – as the paradigmatic question referred to by Canadian critics in their vast country 'Where is here?' has lost its urgency or even major significance. In turning back to their own countries these new contributors to a diversified Canadian literature can in their fictional works pose the question 'What is there?' and can expect a readership that is sufficiently, perhaps even keenly interested in their fictional worlds.

If this trend continues and the policy of multiculturalism works, the (renewed) controversy over the alternative *national* or *continental* may soon again lose much of its significance. Joel Garreau's provocative construction of regions cutting across the national border in North America may be supplanted by the emergence of cultural (and perhaps even economic) units extending across oceans, a phenomenon aided by the breathtaking pace with which the means of communication and cooperation develop. But it seems plausible to assume that both writers and readers will go on having an interest in 'good fences' so that they can continue discovering themselves in the fictional worlds created in their midst.

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[141] Cf. David Staines, 'Canadian Literature at the Millennium', in: *Canada and the Millenium: Proceedings of the 2nd Canadian Studies Conference in Central Europe,* Anna Jakabfi, ed., Budapest 1999, pp. 32-44.

Continentalism and Nationhood: Morley Callaghan and Hugh MacLennan

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The often quoted Northrop Frye question definition „Where is here?" is not a problem for either Callaghan or Maclennan, but it is an affirmation in the oeuvre of both writers, however, in a different way.

Hugh MacLennan turned towards his homecountry for inspiration at the suggestion of his American wife, Dorothy Duncan, a writer herself, and became a classical writer advocating nationhood in Canada. Morley Callaghan turned outside Canada first to Paris then later to New York literary and artistic centres for inspiration and became a Continentalist writer of North America, and a Canadian classic in his lifetime.

So as the two writers' example indicates whether they advocate Canadian nationhood or Continentalism in their artistic approach is of secondary importance from the point of view of their artistic merit.

The determining factor is the personality of the writer, his way of looking at life which make them sense and look at the world in order to portray it by their imagination.In the case of both Morley Callaghan and Hugh MacLennan, prominent writers of Canada in the mid-20th century the impact of the American writers Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway had been decisive on their work. Hemingway

represented for both Hugh MacLennan and Morley Callaghan „the heroic self-image of the lone, self-reliant, upward striking individual, sharing equal rights and opportunities with all and the liberated from the shackles of tradition and authority, is possibly the single most dominant value in the cultural cosmos of the Americans".[142]

Hemingway had left America for Europe, yet he carried the spirit of individualism along with him paired with a great amount of disillusionment in American society, and a great deal of alienation from many of his compatriots.

Hugh MacLennan lived with an American, his wife, studied at Princeton University, and stayed a few times also in New York. Hugh MacLennan considered Hemingway „the greatest and most influential novelist of the 20's... with a miraculous style and a flawless sense of art. His work was the expression of a unique personality, gentle, yet fascinated by violence..."[143]. MacLennan never had any personal friendship with Hemingway. However, Hugh Maclennan was also a Nova Scotian with a strong Conservative background and a late Canadian loyalist who saw his country's and his own place in the world as follows: „..it is Canada's national function to stand halfway between the Old Country and the United States, and to be a hostage for their mutual friendship... Canada is American because it is on this continent, British because it is part of the Empire, and yet manages to remain itself. There is no reason why we cannot be loyal to all three aspects of our destiny. Most of us are."[144] This attitude reminds also of Stephen Leacock's attitude of his own place in the English speaking world. This definition of Maclennan sums up best also his own ars poetica, which in a simpler way means that Hugh MacLennan is a highly society and community conscious Canadian writer, Edmund Wilson, the American critic calls Hugh MacLennan „the

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[142] Wilbur ZELINKSKY: *The Cultural Geography of the United States,* New York, Harper and Row, 1973. 41.

[143] Cited in Elspeth CAMERON: *Hugh MacLennan – A Writer's Life.* Goodread biographies, University of Toronto, 1981. 83.

[144] C.f. 2. 142.

secretary of society".[145] He remained loyal to the principles advocated at the start of his writing career in his 20's. Also Hugh MacLennan seems to have become a 'more typical' Canadian author in his capacity of having written community conscious books.

Each MacLennan book focuses on a community of one particular place and/or area e.g. *Barometer Rising* (1941) takes place in Halifax, *Each Man's Son (1951)* in Cape Breton Island, *The Watch That Ends the Night* (1958) mostly in Montreal over a span of several decades in the mid-20th century, *Return of the Sphinx (1967)* in Montreal and Ottawa. All the novels acquaint the reader with particular places in Eastern Canada.

The community /society consciousness of Hugh MacLennan stemmed from both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible. The idea of many Canadian critics that Canadian literature is similar to the Bible in the sense that both are the collections of family and/or community stories is amply proven by Hugh MacLennan's oeuvre.

Hugh MacLennan conveys ideas through his books and the characters carry and represent those ideas. The central idea is the love of Canada, the homecountry and its future which means in other words nationhood. At times MacLennan can be so eager to convey his ideas based on deeply felt convictions that he can be didactic.

Morley Callaghan drew a different conclusion from Hemingway's personal friendship in 1923 and art.[146] All of Morley Callaghan's fiction is centered around the characters and their concern for survival in a personal/individualistic sense. It is never society at large, let alone society in Canada at large, but the individual that is confronted with other individuals or a moral problem and/or the protagonist pursues a personal quest. Even families consist of individuals and never appear as one unit, as the smallest entity of the community. Morley Callaghan's oeuvre can best be characterised by

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[145] Edmund WILSON: O Canada – An American's Notes on Canadian Culture. The Nooday Press, 1966. 68.

[146] Gary BOIRE: Morley Callaghan – Literary Anarchist. EC W Press, Toronto, 1994. 31.

his three writing periods: a) the 1920's and 30's when he tackled moral questions, b) the 1950's and 60's when he was a literary critic in broadcasting, and c) the last few decades of his life the 1970' and 80's when he returned to depicting the individual facing unusual moral dilemmas.

Each of the early novels contained a moral question: can an ex-convict, Kip Caley restart his life and become a go-between of law-abiding citizens and ex-fellow prisoners for the latters' benefit in *More Joy in Heaven (1937)*, can a priest Father Dowling in *Such is my Beloved (1933)* change single handedly the life of two pitiful young prostitutes, can an indifferent alienated young unemployed engineer Michael Aikenhead keep silent about his own role in the drowning of his half-brother while his own father is blamed for „the crime" and see his father's reputation and life go astray in *They Shall Inherit the Earth (1934)*, just to mention perhaps the best-known novels of the 1930's. These stories can also be looked upon as moral allegories of some Bible stories e.g. the good Samaritain.

The questions of crime and punishment, how far the rights and roles of social outcasts can expand among the so-called 'good people', the law-abiding citizens?! Aren't law-abiding citizens simply hypocrites? [147] Morley Callaghan certainly puts uneasy or at least unexpected question to the reader. These issues may seem to bother some of his critics and some of his readers. Is the customary standpoint, our socially accepted and expected behavior towards social outcasts morally all right? Aren't we responsible for each other as human beings as preached by the Bible? [148]

In most of Morley Callaghan's fiction – longer and shorter – action takes place in 'the city'. The city is somewhere in North America – we know from the author's biography that it must be Toronto, his beloved hometown that Callaghan left only few times in

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147 Hugo McPHERSON: *Introduction – Morley Callaghan: More Joy in Heaven.* NCL McClellland and Stewart, Toronto, 1960. vi.

97 Robin MATTHEWS: Canadian Literature – Surrender or Revolution. Steel Rail Educational Publishing, Toronto, Canada, 1978. 96.

his life time – but no hints are given of the whereabouts of 'the city'.[149] Particular and identifiable places are rarely mentioned and even if they are, they seem to relate to places in the United States except in his later novels, where the places are specified: see e.g. *Our Lady of the Snows (1985)* – Toronto, or *A Time for Judas(1983)* – Jerusalem. However these are more exceptions than the rule for Callaghan. Few books contain nature descriptions. No admiration expressed for Canada's many beauty spots: e.g. characters from 'the city'- let us assume that it is Toronto the writer has in mind – might go to admire and feel awe at Niagara Falls, yet that hardly ever happens in the Callaghan books.

A most unusual approach to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas is provided in *A Time for Judas*, one of his later novels. In Morley Callaghan's version of the Bible story Judas loves Jesus so much more than his other disciples that he is asked by Jesus himself to betray him so that Jesus could sacrifice himself for humanity. The moral question of who loves best another human being and what one human being is willing to do for his close friend is the dilemma that is presented in *A Time for Judas.*

The mirror Morley Callaghan holds up to his readers are of very peculiar and rather unusual approaches of everyday occurrences in human life, and are never tackled on a society level. The liberal minded individual somewhere in North America is faced with a moral dilemma.[150] This is the way Hemingway treated his characters, and Hemingway told Callaghan at the time when both were correspondents on *The Toronto Star* in the 1920's „You're a real writer. You write big-time stuff. All you have to do is keep on writing."[151] It was along these lines where they must have exchanged their views on art when remeeting in Paris during the summer months of 1929 when they often had boxing bouts to keep physically fit.

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[149] C.f.7. 100.

[150] C.f. 7. 96.

[151] Cited in Elisabeth WATERSTON: *Survey – A Short History of Canadian Literature.* Methuen Canadian Literature Series, Methuen Toronto-London-Sidney-Wellington, 1973. 122.

On a personal level Hemingway disppointed Callaghan due to a boxing match when Fitzgerald as referee let the time run out with one minute which was enough for Morley Callaghan to knock out Ernest Hemingway. This seemingly minor incident put eventually an end to Hemingway's and Callaghan's friendship as it was aired by some New York critics and not Morley Callaghan – who took it for what is was, a minor thing – but as Hemingway was an oversensitive macho, took it badly and never met Callaghan again as long as he lived.[152] However he followed his Canadian friend's writing career up to his untimely death in 1961.

Hemingway's and Morley Callaghan's personal lives took different turns, and so did their writing careers. Hemingway's characters increasingly became alienated from their natural environment and very often from each other as well, whereas Callaghan continued to use used the characters to deal with moral questions brought upon them by everyday events and presented them in an unusual light and from and unexpected angle.

Conclusion: Continentalism versus Nationhood – Morley Callaghan and Hugh MacLennan – two contemporaries (Morley Callaghan born in 1903 and died in 1990), (Hugh MacLennan born in 1907 and died in 1990), two excellent writers of the 20th century who can be discussed in different terms. Their examples serve as illustrations to the two counterpoints of the literary scene, to two poles of attitude writers and artists of Canada took in the 20th century: Continentalism and Nationhood.

[11] Morley CALLAGHAN: That Summer in Paris Memories of a Tangled Friendship with Hemingway, Fitzgerald and some Others. Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 1963. 254.