Nordic and Baltic Perspectives in Canadian Studies

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Northern Spaces Narratives

Sara Bédard-Goulet & Christophe Premat (eds.)

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Nordplus

Introduction

Sara Bédard-Goulet & Christophe Premat

What is the purpose of Canadian Studies? This was the question that was investigated in 1975 by the Commission of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada to understand how the government and the universities could work together to strengthen a better understanding of the diversity of cultures in this country. At that time, the notion of area studies began to raise certain attention among scholars and for the government these studies would contribute to disseminating knowledge on the specificities of Canada. Most of this report is about the self-knowledge of Canada which means the way the Canadian universities and colleges covered the question of Canadian identity from a multidisciplinary perspective. There is also a section devoted to Canadian Studies abroad that updates some of the conclusions of the Massey Commission in 1951 on 'the projection of Canada abroad' (Symons, 1975, p. 246) which is one of the most important report on the relation between Canadian identity and culture.

Vincent Massey (1887–1967) devoted his life to working to develop a form of modern cultural patronage with, among other things, the creation of a foundation. 'In politics he was broker, consultant, at best a frustrated leader; in the arts and education he was originator, director, publicist, critic, and, occasionally, practitioner, as well as patron' (Bissell, 1981, p. 195). Massey can be considered as the pioneer of a Canadian cultural diplomacy projecting the image of an open country. As a Canadian representant in the international conference of the Commonwealth in 1934, he declared:

> We are small, we are young; but Canada has a prestige in the international sphere out of proportion to her size or her youth. We are happy in having no enemies. We can be accused of no ulterior purpose. We can approach international questions with an obvious disinterestedness and with the force which that rare quality lends. Our participation should be no perfunctory matter (Massey, 1934, p. 823).

At the time he was chancellor of the University of Toronto (1847 and 1953) and chairman of the National Gallery of Canada (1948–1952), he became chair of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences known as the Massey Commission. In his final report of 1951, he proposed the foundation of a Canadian Council, the National Library of Canada and a national festival of the arts (Granatstein, 2018). Beyond his action in the arts, Vincent Massey was an ardent defender of Canadian identity by avoiding accentuating the conflict between French Canadians and English Canadians (Massey, 1928, p. 5; Massey, 1948).

In line with the primary thoughts of Vincent Massey, the notion of Canadian Studies addresses the question of cultural diplomacy as the image of the nation is at stake (Finlay, 2016). However, how can we be assured that we treat this object in a scientific way with the necessary distance that critical thinking requires? It would be possible to describe a collection of museums, libraries and universities that devote some time and research to the complexity of this identity. In Europe, it is also possible to find many institutions and associations that focus on Canadian Studies to make scholars and practitioners meet to understand the development of this fascinating country (Brooks, 2019, p. vii). Working with and on Canadian Studies implies understanding the genealogy of this nation which is enrooted in a conflictual relation between two colonial powers and the social erasure of Indigenous cultures in the background.[1] 'Canadian society is a complex social formation: it is

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[1] Vincent Massey's views on Canadian history is a striking example of the invisibilization of the First Nations. 'What I want to do – not, I hope, at too great length – is to give you some idea of how Canada grew from a few scattered hamlets of French and English settlers in the primitive "bush" into that something which we call a nation' (Massey, 1928, p. 5). Thobani

considered part of the "new" world from a European perspective, yet indigenous people have been here since before recorded history' (Clement, 1990, p. 3). Further, when examining the genealogy of Canada, the successive waves of migration from multiple countries require attention, as they have shaped the image of a multicultural country. Birk and Gymnich noticed that the myth of a multicultural nation dates back to the 1920s when the writer John Murray Gibbon distinguished the mosaic from the image of the melting-pot that suits to the United States (Birk & Gymnich, 2016, p. 516). He used the metaphor in the title of his book *The Canadian Mosaic* published in 1938 (Gibbon, 1938). The success of the metaphor contributed to a more differentiated perception of Canada, especially when it is compared with the American 'melting pot'. The myth of a tolerant country integrating different waves of migration is often dealt with when it comes to the elaboration of a cultural model reinforced by federal social policies that Brodie identified with the notion of 'Pan-Canadianism' (Brodie & Trimble, 2003, p. 23). Afterwards, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor built his own philosophy of recognition on the learnings of Canadian history. He defended the perception of the identity in a dialectic way:

> the thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Taylor, 1994, p. 25).

For Taylor, the recognition of others is a fundamental principle in social pacts as we learn to accept ourselves. The discourses on social erasure can be avoided with a philosophy based upon dignity, authenticity and respect of cultural differences. This philosophy echoes the concept of hospitality developed by Jacques Derrida

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criticized this founding myth by showing that the capture of the territory created second class citizens without very limited possibilities to have their voices heard (Thobani, 2007, p. 40).

where the action of hosting implies an empowerment of the other with a risk of losing a preconceived identity (Shepherd, 2014, p. 55). The recognition could also be illustrated by a translation of cultural spaces where the donor and the recipient share something in common (Shepherd, 2014, p. 55). Hence, the philosophy of Taylor opens new horizons for those who are ready to go over fixed identities and who refuse to be reduced to the location of their birth.

> The monological ideal seriously underestimates the place of the dialogical in human life. It wants to confine it as much as possible to the genesis. It forgets how our understanding of the good things in life can be transformed by our enjoying them in common with people we love; how some goods become accessible to us only through such common enjoyment. Because of this, it would take a great deal of effort, and probably many wrenching break-ups, to *prevent* our identity's being formed by the people we love (Taylor 1994, p. 33).

It is one thing to honor our ancestors and our traditions, it is another one to welcome other states of mind and question ourselves. Multiculturalism is not the simple observation of a diversity of cultures, it is based on the recognition of a multiplicity of encounters that shape the Canadian society.

In addition to the important multicultural dimension of Canada, the country's northern location must be considered when attempting to understand its identity. This is even more relevant when studying Canada from the perspective of other northern countries such as the European Nordic and Baltic countries, which, because of their location, share common characteristics, interests and challenges with Canada, and can offer a relevant point of view on their circumpolar counterpart. The book *Nordic and Baltic Perspectives in Canadian Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Northern Spaces Narratives* is a way of concretizing a dialogue between spaces of the North that may counterbalance the number of Southern discourses on the North. We believe that such a transnordic travel contributes to understanding the multiplicities of nordicities (Davis, 1994, p. 12; Cedergren, 2019; Cedergren & Premat, 2020). Daniel Chartier described the concept of *nordicité* as a system of signs that includes sometimes contradictory

discourses on the North (Chartier, 2020) whereas Briens high-lighted the difference between the imagined North and the situa-tion of the southerner's perception with the concept of borealism (Briens, 2020). As a form of exoticism that impose stereotypes on the northern areas of the planet, borealism requires critical exam-ination to recomplexify representations of the North and identify forms of self-exoticism. In Canada, nordicity is deeply connected with the perception of the Canadian North and, in that respect, it shares similarities with its European perception.

> The Canadian North is also more than a geopolitical entity. It is a highly constructed reality that became the centre of the multifac-eted discourses of the North. Regardless of geographical, histori-cal, political, and socio-cultural differences, the Canadian North – just like the Orient – is commonly portrayed as Europe's other. Constructed by and in relation to the Europeans who explored it, the North came to be known as the contrasting image and idea of the colonial elite (Rüdiger, 2009, p. 38).

This attention to how images of the North are constructed reminds why the Nordic and Baltic perspectives on Canadian Studies should be done with a permanent concern on avoiding any kind of essentialization. The North is related to latitude but not only, it is a cultural construct that evolves over time and space. As Sherrill E. Grace pointed out,

> what Canadians mean by such enigmatic phrases as 'the North' or the 'true north strong and free' is constantly changing, and we have located North almost everywhere within our national bor-ders; even Vancouver, where I sit writing and facing north, is now as often called Hollywood North as it is Lotus Land. For any-one living in Montreal in the 1860s or 1870s, North was the *pays d'en haut*; by the turn of the century, the discovery of gold in the Klondike had extended our northern reach and led to a reshaping and renaming of a part of the country. And it has always been this way: North is an idea as much as any physical region that can be mapped and measured for nordicity (Grace, 2001, p. XII).

The aim of this book is to propose a transnordic journey by inves-tigating the multiple voices of the North, focusing on Canada as an important actor of this region. Even though there are obvious

similarities in landscapes, spaces and social problematics in the northern countries, it is not possible to serve a discourse merging the different Norths. Furthermore, Louis-Edmond Hamelin showed the ambiguities of the polarization North/South in Canada, emphasizing the fact that in the case of the province of Quebec, the North was often associated with the First Nations whereas the *Québec méridional* reflected the ambitions of the settlers (Hamelin, 1998, p. 97). In this vein, transperipheral connection between the spaces of the North contributes to highlight some of the challenges faced by Canadian society with the integration of recent waves of migration on the one hand and the recognition of the Indigenous populations on the other hand. A challenge that the Nordic and Baltic countries experience in a lesser degree, regarding Indigenous communities such as the Sami, and migrant populations. This transperipheral perspective also proves useful when it comes to bilingualism as there are similar situations in the Nordic and Baltic countries, like in Finland with the officialization of the Swedish language besides Finnish (Thomsen & Korkka, 2019, pp. 227–228). It explains also why there was an interest for Canadian Studies among Nordic and Scandinavian scholars, who gathered around the Nordic Association for Canadian Studies (Thomsen & Korkka, 2019, p. 229). The transperipheral approach is also significant for the Baltic countries, where societies had to fight to protect a cultural specificity during the different occupations of the region, the Soviet one being the latest and most known. Some historical events like the cultural expressions of the Singing Revolution in the Baltic countries strongly echo the pacific *Révolution tranquille* of Québec in the 1960s (Smidchens, 2014, p. 318). We believe that this trans-North perspective, which pays attention to the specificities of the northern countries, is important for exploring Canadian Studies and better situate Canada in regard to the Nordic and Baltic countries. This is why *Nordic and Baltic Perspectives in Canadian Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Northern Spaces Narratives* presents a collection of articles from several fields in the humanities that introduce major topics of Canadian studies, as they are examined in the Nordic and Baltic countries, with a focus on how the Canadian northern area can be narrated and compared with the European northern countries.

In this collection, Canada is considered as a cultural area that is built by discourses as well as by the direct experiences that can be made of this place. Following Chartier's notion of 'idea of a place', the Canadian space 'exists first and foremost as a discursive network, as a series and an accumulation of discourses that determine and form its limits, components, history, parameters, etc' (Chartier, 2013, p. 15). The discourses that collect to form the idea of Canada include fiction and documentary and are not limited to written ones but include all media, whether they are recorded or not. The discursive existence of this place accompanies its phenomenological one, so that they both contribute to the 'construction, interpretation and acknowledgement of the place' (Chartier, 2013, p. 16). Thus, acknowledging a place like Canada is an individual matter, as each person builds their own idea of this place through the discourses that they have encountered and, eventually, through experiencing its materiality by living there or visiting it. This individual construction, comparable to the 'reader's text' elaborated from the 'work's text' through the reading encounter (Mazauric, Fourtanier, & Langlade, 2011), is a work in progress, with the 'idea of Canada' continuously qualified by the discourses encountered and new experiences of this place. The idea of Canada, just as any idea of a place, is culturally influenced, a phenomenon highlighted by studies in imagology (Barkhoff & Leerssen, 2021). The notion of idea of a place thus appears particularly relevant within the scope of cultural studies and formulated from a geographically distant perspective such as the Nordic and Baltic countries one on Canada. Being aware of this discursive construction allows to examine how it is elaborated, sometimes to the point of forming a stereotypical image, especially when there is no direct experience of the place. Conversely, the discursive construction of a distant place generates a reflective posture on the comparable construction of the local and deconstructs the commonplace of the granted. In this context, the borders of a place are not limited to geographical ones but instead pertain to 'parameters utterly discursive, that is density and coherence' (Chartier, 2013, p. 18), so that the borders are relative to the accumulation of more or less consistent discourses.

In parallel to this Aristotelian and constructivist perspective of world-making, a new materialist approach of space and place suggests that borders are 'produced and iteratively reconfigured in the materialization of phenomena and the (re)making of material-discursive boundaries' (Barad, 2007, p. 179). By insisting on the 'mutual constitution of entangled agencies' (Barad, 2007, p. 33), the agential realist framework states that matter is not a linguistic construction but a discursive production itself, since 'matter is a dynamic intra-active becoming […] a dynamic articulation/configuration of the world' (Barad, 2007, p. 151). Materiality's 'constant process of shared becoming […] tells us something about "the world we inhabit"' (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 1) and is thus opened to be read as a text and in texts, as suggested by material ecocriticism. Since matter and meaning go together, this ecocritical approach aims to 'analyze the interlacements of matter and discourses not only as they are re-created by literature and other cultural forms, but also as they emerge in material expressions' (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 6). Such a 'diffractive' reading, applied to the field of cultural studies, conceives textual interpretation as reading nature and culture through one another rather than separated:

> Instead of concentrating on texts and seeing how they 'reflect' the world's phenomena […] such an interpretation reads world and text as an agentic entanglement. This involves a reconceptualization of both the idea of a text (as distinct from other nontextual material formations) and the idea of world (as "the outside of text") (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, pp. 9–10).

Such a perspective is comparable to the one adopted in biosemiotics, with which it shares an 'attentiveness to the connections between the physical realm and meaning processes' (Maran, 2014, p. 141). When it comes to approaching the idea of Canada, such a relational ontology of becoming (Nieuwenhuis, 2016) provides a dynamic apprehension of this area since 'space is not a collection of preexisting points set out in a fixed geometry, a container, as it were, for matter to inhabit' (Barad, 2007, p. 180). Rather, spatiality is continuously produced and reconfigured through iterative intra-actions that differentiate and thus enact

boundaries as material demarcation of space. In this democratization of relations and agency, 'humans are not the sole producers of geography, no longer the sole "geo-graphists"' (Nieuwenhuis, 2016, p. 306). Thinking Canada within the circumpolar space in terms of 'differential relations' lends temporary consistency to a heterogenous milieu, thus 'spacing' (Doel, 2000) or 'worlding' (Thrift, 2012) the area.

In this collection, we pay specific attention to the materialization of the Canadian space through cultural productions and practices, keeping in mind that this northern area as long being imagined and represented from a more southern point of view. As pointed out by Daniel Chartier, it is crucial that when considering the 'imagined North', we put into perspective the often-simplified external Western view and the overlooked internal Nordic views, so as to 'recomplexify' the cultural North (Chartier, 2018). Chartier argues that the external representations of the North and the Nordic cultures do not meet often: they are 'placed as differentiated discursive layers, even though they are both connected to the same territory of reference' (Chartier, 2018, p. 74). Therefore, approaching the Canadian cultural area from a Nordic and Baltic perspective appears a relevant way to multiply the northern views on this northern area, views that are perhaps more attuned to the specific challenges of this place through a comparable experience of circumpolarity. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary perspective adopted in this book, attentive to multilingualism and multiculturalism (including Indigenous cultures), provides a more complex understanding of Canada, based on various material examined with different methodologies.

Major notions in Canadian studies are approached from different angles by the coming chapters, which, by addressing specific topics (such as language teaching, landscapes, native art, etc.), provide a wide perspective of the current challenges faced both by Canada and the respective fields that examine this cultural area. Although this book is based on cultural studies as a theoretical background, opposing a diplomatic perspective and arguing that there is a specificity of Canadian culture that requires attention from academia, each chapter builds on theories and methods specific to the different fields of the humanities involved to address

narratives (understood broadly and including visual narratives) of this northern space.

The first chapter of this collection offers a literary and native perspective on Canada, as Christophe Premat examines First Nation writer Bernard Assiniwi's masterpiece *The Beothuk Saga* (2000), a historical novel written in French in 1996. In this novel, Assiniwi incorporates oral stories in the written genre of historical novels to present the history of a nation that was destroyed by colonizers with the help of rival clans. By introducing a chronology on the history of this nation, Assiniwi adds a literary style to enlighten the cultural specificity of Beothuk. He uses the origins of the novel to deal with the disappearance of Beothuk, described as a cultural genocide. The chapter focuses on the notions of magic realism to analyze the voice that is given to ancestors and the Beothuk traditions. Magic realism reflects the relation between facts and dreams where the characters project themselves into possible futures connected to the land. This first chapter contributes to the overarching goal of this book to investigate Canadian narratives through a Nordic and Baltic perspective by offering an important analysis of a First Nation literary view on a genocide foundational to the establishment of Canada. Fiction comes to partially repair the invisibilization of Canadian subjects towards whom the Canadian government belatedly recognized a marginal identity (Thobani, 2007, p. 42).

In the second chapter, Kristina Aurylaitė investigates how some of Canada's Indigenous writers elaborate a cultural resistance with the use of textual remix. She studies the particularities of two poetry books, *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me* by Dënësųłinë́ and Métis Matthew James Weigel and *Injun* by Nisga'a Jordan Abel. Kristina Aurylaitė proposes a very stimulating interpretation of these elaborations which aim at reworking and rewriting some historical sources. By playing with the texts and using patchwriting strategies, these Indigenous writers use art as a decolonial resistance to avoid the imposition of the winners' narrative. The postmodern style is here adapted to break the foundationalist perspective that is at the heart of the settler colonial archives. In other words, 'the decolonial gesture' is characterized by the attempt to re-member some fragments of the past which were totally erased.

This chapter highlights the discrepancy between settler and native narratives of the Canadian territory and identity.

The third chapter of this collection takes into account the larger context of Francophone culture in some of the predominantly English-speaking provinces of Canada through a focus on literature. It examines the Francophone presence as a theme in a selection of French-language texts published outside of Quebec, to elucidate the questions of narrative identity, spatial relationships and the role of the English language. To do so, theoretical notions such as *exiguïté, scénographie* and transculturality are used, and the works studied are discussed in relationship to both Canadian and Francophone literature. The corpus includes *Sauvage-Sauvageon* by Marguerite Primeau (British Columbia, 1984), *Pas pire* by France Daigle (New Brunswick, 1998) and two plays by Manitoba-born author Marc Prescott, *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains* (2001) and *Fort Mac* (2009). This chapter offers an insightful view on the connection between language and space and how they are articulated in narratives to build a place.

The fourth chapter of this collection builds on contemporary critical theory and its reflection on how modernity has alienated humans from the Earth, underlining a 'return' of the neglected planet. In this context of ecosystem destruction and new planetary awareness, a revision of the human connectedness to the biosphere is taking place, involving, among others, the notion of landscape. The chapter questions the possibility of 'nonhuman landscapes' in two recent video artworks that present landscapes in Quebec using aerial views provided by a drone. It argues that the technological possibilities offered by the drone encourage to imagine a nonhuman or less human gaze on the environment that raises the possibility of a less anthropocentric landscape or nonhuman landscape. This hypothesis is based on several notions, such as wilderness, the landscape genre, camera embodiment. While the chapter focuses on *Blanc* (2017) and *Stem* (2020) by Quebec artist Nelly-Eve Rajotte, it also refers to comparable video artworks that use robotic cameras, *La Région Centrale* by Michael Snow (1971), a seminal work in Canadian landscape, and *In the Land of Drought* by Julian Rosefeldt (2015), which shows post-apocalyptic landscapes with a drone. This chapter contributes

to the understanding of the Canadian landscape and its contemporary construction, influenced by past narratives.

In the fifth chapter of this collection, Rūta Šlapkauskaitė focuses on environmental concerns and colonial history, which contribute to building Canadian culture and identity. Her new materialist approach to contemporary English Canadian literature brings our attention to the fragile entanglements between human and nonhuman agencies and the discursive, physical, and biological substratum supported by the land. In *Curiosity* by Joan Thomas and *Minds of Water* by Ed O'Loughlin, she examines how the meaning of oikos is challenged and the boundaries between human and nonhuman historicities are rethought. Concentrating on the human embeddedness in the biotic world, she maps the literary ecologies of the two novels, unearthing the ethics of movement in *Minds of Water* and the poetic of compost in *Curiosity*. Her chapter provides a timely example of material-semiotic ramifications in the Anthropocene, made visible in the geopolitics of the polar regions and the petropoetics of industrial modernity, addressing challenges of northern countries facing the neoliberal postindustrial modernity.

In the sixth chapter of this collection, Tatjana Bitjutko addresses bilingual education in the 20th century, which became a researched practice in a changing historical context that questioned monolingual nation states. The author examines bilingual education in Canada, Latvia and Estonia with a special focus on immersion, interrogating the suitability of Canadian immersion program in the two Baltic countries. This contrastive approach builds on a comparable linguistic context between, on the one hand, Canada, officially bilingual, and, on the other hand, Latvia and Estonia, where the Soviet legacy has left more than a fourth of the population speaking Russian as their native language. It offers an important perspective on the co-existence and teaching of languages in Canada and in the Baltic countries, underlining the advantage of studying the circumpolar area as a connected yet diverse whole. The chapter contributes to the aim of this book of examining Canadian narratives by examining the important practice of bilingualism that has shaped and keeps shaping the country.

The final chapter of this collection focuses on the practice of riddling in Newfoundland, where it is a social activity that requires an ethnographic attention that goes beyond the collections of printed riddles. Drawing from fieldwork undertaken in the eastern province of Canada, Jonathan Roper attempts to identify the rules that guide this practice, paying attention to the etiquette determining how riddles are posed and solutions proposed. Among other points, he describes the opportune situations in which double-entendre riddles can be introduced during a riddling event. This chapter offers an important perspective on the oral culture of eastern Canada based on the scholarship in folklore studies that exists in the Nordic and Baltic countries, highlighting the benefits of a transnordic approach to Canada. It also shows how vernacular culture studies contribute to the understanding of the geographic and historical significance of a given place and its traditions.

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1. Remembering the spirit of the Beothuk: *The Beothuk Saga* by Bernard Assiniwi

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Abstract

Bernard Assiniwi wrote a complete novel on the history of the Beothuk based on ethnographic works. He paid tribute to the nation of the Beothuk with the novel illustrating a counternarrative on this history, taking the point of view of the natives. The narrator is presented as a voice of 'living memory' pursuing the goals of the founder of the nation, Anin. The novel does not begin with contact with colonisers, the major part is about the precolonial history of the Beothuk. The spirit and the imaginary of the Beothuk are presented in the actions, the representations and the dreams of some of important characters for the Beothuk. Moreover, the specific gender relations of the Beothuk are underlined in the novel. By analysing the characteristics of how Assiniwi remembers the history of the Beothuk, the chapter shows how the author deplores the absence of deep contact between the Beothuk and the colonisers. Finally, the chapter explains the originality of the novel compared to ethnographic studies that were made on the Beothuk. The analysis of the novel reveals the self-perception of the history of the natives as the destiny of the Beothuk is highly representative of the devastating effects of colonialism on Native populations, even to the present day.

Keywords

Native studies, Beothuk, Remembering processes, nation-building, gender.

Introduction

Bernard Assiniwi was a well-known First Nations writer whose masterpiece was the historical novel, written in French in 1996, *The Beothuk Saga* (Assiniwi, 2000).[1] Divided into three parts (The Initiate, The Invaders and The Genocide), Assiniwi incorporates oral stories in the written genre of historical novels. The aim of the novel is both ethnological and cultural as the author presents the history of a nation that was destroyed by colonisers with the help of rival clans.[2] By introducing a chronology on the history of this nation, Assiniwi puts emphasis on the cultural specificity of the Beothuk. Some researchers in native studies focused on the role of ethnopoetics (Feld, 1982) in order to catch the language and the spirit of the First Nations, whereas others prefer to introduce a form of comparative poetology (Miner, 1990; Beaujour, 2017, p. 19). The comparative poetology avoids ethnocentric illusion and creates the possibility of translating and understanding the cultural and artistic productions of the First Nations. Hence, the historical novel is here an interesting genre as it contributes to the collection of fragments of oral tradition into a continuous narrative. Unlike comparative poetology, the focus is on how the author remembers some important actions from unknown ancestors to describe a forgotten genealogy. The concept of 'remembering' is used here to show how the text recollects some former fragments of the Beothuk nation (Premat & Sule, 2016).

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[1] For the complex question of categorisation of First Nations' writers in Québec, see Chapman (2013: 179).

[2] This chapter is the result of an oral presentation given on Bernard Assiniwi's work during the 20th International Baltic Conference on Canadian Studies on 10 October 2020 at Vilnius University (Premat, 2020; see the abstract on https://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid =diva2%3A1474952&dswid=-2876, last visit 10 June 2023).
A similar presentation was also given in Swedish during a seminar of the Department of Romance Studies and Classics (Premat, 2021).

The word 'remember' is sometimes written 're-member' to insist on the process of recollection of memories mixed with the literary imagination (Premat & Sule, 2018, p. 75). The book of Assiniwi is a fiction, which means that literature fills out what is not said in history. The living memory of the Beothuk is in fact reinvented.

It seems that Assiniwi describes an ancient form of *métissage* that was possible in the genealogy of the Beothuk. In previous studies on *The Beothuk Saga*, the hybridity of the narrative was analysed as well as the founding myths (Jeannotte, 2010; Gatti, 2010). The author wanted to tell the story of the Beothuk from the native point of view by revealing the details of their ways of living and thinking. Moreover, by being inspired by the origins of the novel or the founding myths or history of the Beothuk, Assiniwi reverses the aesthetic canons of the literary colonial tradition. The remembering process is all the deeper as it reintegrates parts of the colonial traditions. How does Assiniwi remember the Beothuk? Assiniwi is one of the few native writers who adopted the historical novel to tell the story and the tragedy of the Beothuk. The beginning of the novel is reused to transmit stories from the oral tradition as if the Beothuk's story was not that different from other early European nations. Some of the characters embody this sense of living memory, as with the old man who inaugurates the second part of the novel: 'He was the clan's Living Memory, charged with keeping the past alive; he had been instructed to do this by his ancestor Anin, the first Beothuk to travel around the whole land now occupied by the Beothuk Nation' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 137).

Assiniwi chose the genre of saga to tell the story of the Beothuk from the mythological origins of the nation to their disappearance and elimination by colonisers.

To address the research question, the chapter will focus on the description of Beothuk from an ethnological point of view. There were a few works made on the description of this Nation that can be compared with the details that Assiniwi gave (Marshall, 1996, p. 240). The exogenous tradition has to be presented in order to contextualise the originality of Assiniwi's work. Second, the genealogy of the ancestors will be studied in terms of lineages and *métissage*. They are connected to the spiritual drives of

an environment that is quite hostile. The relationship between the spiritual drives and the genealogy of the clan structures the first part of the novel. Then, the style of the saga will be analysed. There is no idealisation of the ancestors although there is a different chronological perspective for the ancestors. The chronology is linear whereas the story of the ancestors follows the natural cycle.

> For the first time since he had set out on his journey of initiation, Anin was undecided. Should he cross the forest in the direction shown to him by Woasut, to rejoin his people, or should he continue and complete his circumnavigation of their land, as he had given his word he would do? (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 27).

Assiniwi used the historical novel to make the reader enter a new imaginary world in order to understand the beliefs, the dreams and the thinking of this former Nation as he imagined them to be. After a study of the background and a presentation of previous studies, the chapter will focus on the spirit of the Beothuk nation in the novel before analysing how gender relations are imagined by the author. Then, the collective dreams of the Beothuk nation will be highlighted before describing the characteristics of colonialism in the novel. Even if there are many historical sources in the novel, Assiniwi reconstructs and reimagines the relations of the Beothuk with other clans.

Background of *The Beothuk Saga*

The Beothuk are an indigenous people who lived in Newfoundland for thousands of years until their extinction in 1829 (Holly, 2000, p. 79). They were mainly fishers and hunters and the archaeological investigations showed that they have shared the island with other native groups such as the Innu and the Mi'kmaq (Holly, 2000, p. 80). They were in contact with the European colonizers after the arrival of John Cabot in 1497. The decline of the Beothuk is directly linked to the population increase of the settlers who in fact gradually destroyed the Beothuk way of life (Marshall, 1996, p. 25). In his novel, Bernard Assiniwi relies on historical figures like John Peyton known as the 'Indian killer' who captured many Beothuk (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 288), Cormack (Assiniwi, 2000,

p. 308), a scientist and the last of the Beothuk, Shanawdithit (Holly, 2000, p. 79).

Bernard Assiniwi (1935–2000) was a writer from the First Nations (Cree/Algonquin) and specialist in native studies (history, anthropology and literature). He was also a curator of ethnology and researcher at the Canadian Museum of Civilization at Hull. Bernard Assiniwi's work could be classified as history, cultural anthropology, linguistics and literature, as he wanted to write about the First Nations. He belongs to a tradition of cultural mediators and cannot thus be reduced to a single role of writer in the Western tradition (Premat, 2017, p. 96). In this regard, the role of cultural mediator is much broader and consists in transmitting traditions and a way of thinking and living (Cedergren et al., 2015, p. XIII; Premat & Sule, 2011).

This is why it is important to analyse the work of Assiniwi instead of relying on perceptions that are dealt with in dominant discourses (Retzlaff, 2012, p. 9). Assiniwi wrote thirty four books, *The Beothuk Saga* being his last. *The Beothuk Saga* was published in French in 1996 and translated into English in 2000. Assiniwi received the France-Québec prize for *La Saga des Béothuk* in 1997. Publishing house Leméac has published most of Assiniwi's works.[3] Assiniwi's interested in the story of the Beothuk, using a structure that is similar to *The Beothuk Saga*, began in 1973–1974 when he published *Histoire des Indiens du Haut et du Bas-Canada*. This book had three parts, '*Mœurs et coutumes des Algonkins et des Iroquois*', '*Deux siècles de civilisation blanche, 1497–1685*' and '*De l'épopée à l'intégration, 1685 à nos jours*' (Assiniwi, 1973–1974). In fact, the rupture between the traditions of the Algonkins and Iroquois and the invasion of colonisers can also be found in *The Beothuk Saga*. Other books dealing with the First Nations in the Americas also emphasised this rupture prior to the colonisation of the Americas (Mann, 2011).

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[3] Leméac is a publishing house that specialises in contemporary novels in Québec, publishing for example the works of Michel Tremblay and Marcel Dubé. See 'La maison d'éditions Leméac célèbre ses 50 ans d'existence cette année', *La Presse Canadienne*, 5 September 2007 and '"Literary video" takes poetic peek at Montreals of Michel Tremblay', *The Globe and Mail*, 23 December 1989. The sources were accessed through the platform Nexis Uni.

In 1988, Bernard Assiniwi spent eight months in Newfoundland studying the cultural characteristics of this nation which disappeared. The book is not only about the Beothuk nation, it is about the current tragedy that all First Nations are experiencing in contemporary societies. This is why Assiniwi wanted to write the story of the Beothuk in order to show how they developed as a nation: 'Suddenly, I found how to tell the story of the Beothuk. … Instead of playing a violin and making people cry over that, I decided one morning I had to tell the story of Beothuk people when they probably formed "the people", when they formed the first groups.'[4]

In other words, Assiniwi did not want to write about the Beothuk when they only were disappearing, he wanted to show the power of this nation from the beginning with the description of the ancestor Anin, the founder of the Beothuk. 'Anin was neither a liar nor a trickster. He feared nothing and no one. At least he had never allowed himself to show fear' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 5). The Beothuk, as Assiniwi describes them all through the novel, had an openness and did not fear other communities and other people. The saga is about how to control the fear to gain self-knowledge: 'Anin, the first warrior to explore the entire Beothuk territory and the uniter of clans, cautioned against Geswat, the fear of not knowing what will happen: "if you allow Geswat to control you, to determine your daily actions necessary for survival, she will slowly rob of your reason"'.[5]

The book is not only about a forgotten identity, it is also an example of spiritual strength that readers can have by following the journey of Anin and the Beothuk.

The genre of the book is worth a comment as it echoes the origins of the European novel with the *faits et gestes* of Anin and the ancestors.[6] Remembering the Beothuk means here re-empowering this nation by giving a stronger voice to the ancestors. In the

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[4] Paul Gessell, *The Ottawa Citizen*, 6 September 2000.
[5] 'A people long gone but not forgotten', *Calgary Herald*, 14 October 2000.
[6] The reception of *La Saga des Béothuks* pointed out the notion of *faits et gestes*. In a recension of the book in 1997 for the newspaper La Croix, Frédéric Potet highlights the fact that the book is not a simple critic of colonisation, it reveals how the Beothuk could live in harmony with other people. Frédéric Potet, 'À la découverte des écrivains indiens. La chanson de geste d'Anin le Béothuk', *La Croix*, 23 June 1997. The sources were accessed through the platform Nexis Uni.

interview quoted by *The Ottawa Citizen*, Assiniwi expressed himself in the following way: 'every bit of knowledge I have must be written somewhere so people can remember. Whether we like it or not, our culture is dying. People say, "Oh, yes, our culture is oral". That is an excuse not to read today. We can all read today. If we don't write it, it will be lost.'[7]

This quote is all the more important as it reflects the positioning of Assiniwi in a tradition of native studies. According to him, it is not enough to engage people in native studies through the idea of oral traditions. The history of the First Nations has to be written so that it really gives a stronger voice to these nations that were destroyed. It is always a challenge to write about a cultural genocide in a colonial context (Coulthard, 2014, p. 28; Fanon, 2008; Kuper, 2003, p. 390; Premat, 2019, p. 76). Assiniwi is aware of the Canadian context of recognition of the First Nations, although this still does not mean that colonial thinking vanished. There is also an autobiographical aspect with the suicide of John Assiniwi, who was the adopted grandson of Bernard Assiniwi. John Assiniwi was an Innu from the Newfoundland community of Davis Inlet.[8] The destiny of young Beothuk illustrates the current difficulties faced by young generations of natives (Premat & Sule, 2012).

Wayne Grady was the English translator of this book. Grady is a well-known Ontario writer and translator interested in natural history, ecology and extinction (Grady & Damstra, 2011). There is certainly a personal journey into the understanding of this cultural genocide for Grady even if some critics were eloquent about his personal style of translation (Kydd, 22 October 2000).

Previous studies and theoretical perspective

The Beothuk Saga is not only a sad history, or a complaint about the cultural genocide of the Beothuk, it expresses the need to create a counter-narrative for the indigenous communities by revealing the details of their spiritual energy and vitality (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66). There is a will of rewriting the history of the Beothuk, which

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[7] Paul Gessell, *The Ottawa Citizen*, 6 September 2000. The source was accessed through the platform Nexis Uni.
[8] Paul Gessell, *The Ottawa Citizen*, 6 September 2000.

was erased by the invaders (Jeannotte, 2010, p. 300), by converting the oral narratives of the Beothuk into a written novel (Gatti, 2010, p. 282). Assiniwi is aware of the image of the Beothuk which is always associated with a form of ethnographic curiosity. Henri Jouan (1827–1901), who was a famous sea captain, wrote the following text about the Beothuk, mentioning 'Red Indians'.

> One should not see in these small tribes, coming from outside, the remains of the aborigenes of Newfoundland, the Red Indians, or Bethuk, as they were called (Boeothicks, Beothucks following others), with whom Cabot was in contact when he discovered the island in 1497 (Jouan, 1841, p. 430).

The colonial narrative is characterised by the neutralisation of the context as if the contact with these populations is reduced to the discourse of discovery. All the colonial narratives are similar, with the emphasis on the arrival of John Cabot, such as was the case with the notes of Richard Hakluyt (1522–1616) (Hakluyt, 1966). In the 19th century, the geographer Élisée Reclus mentioned the extermination of the Beothuk and their sense of hospitality (Reclus, 1890, p. 655). The other descriptions refer to the objects that are present in museums. The *Annual report of the Bureau of American ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian institution* says:

> Beothuk. Newfoundland. From colored drawings of ancient bone disks attributed to the Beothuk, and presented to the United States National Museum by Lady Edith Blake, of Kingston, Jamaica, it would appear that this tribe may have used gaming disks resembling those of the Micmac (Holmes, 1907, p. 97).

If the references to Hakluyt, Jouan, Reclus are not mentioned by Assiniwi, there is a bibliography at the end of the novel with all the sources that he consulted. Assiniwi based most of his ethnographic studies on the works of Ingeborg Marshall (Marshall, 1996).[9] This is why he could easily invent the past of the Beothuk with this specific knowledge (Sládek, 2014, p. 7).

The decolonial paradigm that is used here to understand the counter-narrative on the Beothuk is not only characterised by

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[9] In the bibliography, the edition of the *History and the Ethnography of the Beothuk* used is the one of 1996 (Assiniwi 2000: 340).

a deconstruction of a Western narrative (Vizenor, 1991, p. 5). It is rather an attempt to give a strong voice to the origins of the Beothuk. The start of the story cannot be the arrival of John Cabot, there is a long and decisive part about the ancestor Anin, who discovered the entire territory of the Beothuk.

> Decoloniality denotes ways of thinking, being, and doing that began with, but also precede, the colonial enterprise and invasion. It implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class that continue to control life, knowledge, spirituality, and thought, structures that are clearly intertwined with and constitutive of global capitalism and Western modernity (Mignolo et al., 2018, p. 17).

The idea is not only to decolonise the history of the Beothuk, but to re-empower the First Nations by writing them. The notion of 'nation-building' is thus illustrated by the classical choice of the literary genre 'novel'. There is a rupture here with ethnopoetics that tends to create a form of mimesis of oral narratives. The poetology where these oral narratives are transcribed is not used by Assiniwi who prefers to write a historical novel. Ethnopoetics is rather guided by the idea of lexicalizing cultural gestures and habits (Feld, 1982). The novel captures the flow of the oral narrative, it reintroduces another chronology and breaks the legacy of the colonial patterns. In addition to this, it re-members the forgotten parts of the history of the Beothuk. The notion of re-membering is characterized by the assemblage of forgotten pieces of texts (Premat & Sule, 2016).

The spirit of the Nation

Because the history of the Beothuk is written by those who killed them, there is a need to produce a new collective memory so that the First Nations can also perceive themselves as nation makers. As Frantz Fanon wrote, 'reality, for once, requires a total understanding. On the objective level as on the subjective level, a solution has to be supplied' (Fanon, 2008, p. 4). It is possible to define Assiniwi's aim as an act of reconnecting the history of the Beothuk to a subjective tone according to which the real heroes are people from the First Nations. Consequently, the dramaturgy is built with the following scheme:

The history of the Beothuk
- The Beothuk nation (ancestors - *faits et gestes* of Anin, the founder of the unity of the Beothuk)

The imaginary cells of the nations
- Family/village/clan/enemies

The colonial breakout
- The colonial invasion (John Cabot) and the beginning of the extinction of the Beothuk

The extinction of the Beothuk and the fight for a decolonial view on the history of the Beothuk
- Ethnographic works between colonial and decolonial paradigms

Figure 1. The construction of the Beothuk narrative in Assiniwi's work (Premat, 2020).

Source: own work (Premat, 2020; Premat, 2021).

The first part of the book is about the *faits et gestes* of Anin and his women as he has to know the limits of the territory of the Beothuk and prove to others that he can raise his spirit to the level of an ancestor. Anin has the difficult task of consolidating his leadership by coming back from his odyssey. Assiniwi used the origins of the novel to illustrate how the odyssey of Anin contributed to building the nation of the Beothuk.

> He was a wise man, who saw his people expand their territory until they occupied the whole island, so that they could protect their land and keep it intact. He withstood great hardships and much danger, which until that time had been unknown to the Red-Ochre people. Protected by Gashu-Uwith the Bear, he had established his own clan and the Beothuk nation (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 240).

By choosing the historical novel, Assiniwi restructures the Beothuk's mindset and reintroduces a form of equality between the colonisers and the First Nations. He consulted the works of

Oxenstierna on the Vikings (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 341; Oxenstierna, 1976) with the result that the style of the book is inspired by some very ancient sagas, illustrating the story of the ancestors in a realistic and chronologic manner. There is a relationship between saga studies and oral cultures with two literary traditions, one privileging the 'bookprose' approach based on the different versions of vernacular texts related to the sagas, and the other, 'freeprose', reflecting the Romantic view of equivalence between sagas and popular culture (Clunies & Ross, 2020, p. 40). A strong connection between the written novel and the idea of nation appears. In other words, Assiniwi writes the First Nation of Beothuk by illustrating the spirit of the ancestors and following subsequent genealogical investigations.

The ancestor of the Beothuk, Anin, is presented as a traveller who circumnavigates in order to explore the limits of the territory of the Beothuk: 'If he crossed overland to his village, he would never know if the earth were round, like an island, or just a long, narrow spit of land that stretched endlessly out to sea. And he would be going back on his promise not to return until he had found out' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 27).

Anin is presented as the founder of the nation, the one who reflects on the cultural characteristics of the Beothuk. The first part of the book is written as if Anin had assimilated a spiritual force that allowed him to accomplish this journey of initiation. The odyssey is here necessary as the founder of the nation is not the first man of the clan, but the first man who accepts the challenge to survive alone for a few cold seasons in order to explore the island.

> He could easily have travelled a few days' journey from his village, kept himself hidden for a time, and when he returned, told everyone that he had visited all the regions of their vast land. His uncle had tried that. But one day, fishermen from the village had ventured from their usual fishing grounds and discovered the trick: they had seen his uncle's camp and found several objects belonging to him (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 5).

The book has a humorous opening with some of Anin's previous attempts to endorse the privilege of being the founder of the nation. Anin's goal is to accept the implications of the odyssey by

facing the coldness of the winters and meeting new challenges and people on his way.

The internal focalisation creates a feeling of empathy between the reader and the character as the reader has access to the feelings, doubts and desires of the character. The implicit contract with the reader follows the principles of transparency and authenticity. At the same time, the author interferes with the reader by commenting on Anin's actions: 'If he followed the edge of the round Earth, it was clear that he would end up at the place of his departure. And so Anin would return; older, certainly, perhaps too old to find a companion with whom he could add to the number of his people, but he would return' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 6). His journey is also guided by the will to understand Gashu-Uwith, which is supposed to be the protective spirit of the Beothuk. Many passages show that Anin finds it difficult to interpret and decipher properly the apparitions of Gashu-Uwith, who is embodied in a bear (Assiniwi, 2000, pp. 41–42). There is no idealisation of this spirit as Woasut and Anin do not perceive it in the same way. Some passages are comical, such as when Woasut wondered if they could kill the bear to have enough meat before the cold season: 'Woasut said nothing, understanding her error. She had forgotten that Anin thought of Gashu-Uwith as his spirit protector, which made the bear a member of his immediate family, equal in status to his brothers and sisters, uncles and cousins' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 43).

Woasut is also frightened by the presence of Gashu-Uwith, with the novel describing her feelings and her point of view. Woasut's emotions are presented in a detailed manner showing how she can question the presence of this weird imaginary entity. 'She did not dare to suggest another fat-laden animal, such as Appawet the Seal, for fear of re-igniting Anin's anger' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 43). Woasut deeply respects the fact that Gashu-Uwith is a spirit protector for Anin who offered meat to him (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 18, p. 39). Gashu-Uwith guides the actions of Anin and provides some very useful indications so that Anin can survive. When Anin presents himself to people from other clans, he names Gashu-Uwith. The diplomatic relations with other clans are important to determine the borders of the Beothuk nation.

But I am Anin, chief of the Clan of Gashu-Uwith, and I have no connection with any other clan. I therefore do not know where to land so that I may not offend one clan or the other. I and the other members of my clan will stay in our tapatooks until the village has resolved this dilemma (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 103).

Contrary to the history of European countries (the colonisers), the Beothuk did not have to make war in order to define their territory. An agreement was made with the other clans to protect the peace among the different clans. 'The villagers had thought of everything in advance, with but one exception: on which side of the river the newcomers should disembark' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 104).

The Beothuk's perspective on gender

The first part of the book is the more significant, with 134 pages devoted to the narrative of the Beothuk during the precolonial age. The size of the nation is the mythical village of Baétha (Laporte, 2013). Anin rescued another Beothuk (the name Addaboutik is also used instead of Beothuk) during his journey. Her name is Woasut (which means woman) and she escaped the clan of the enemies of the Beothuk, the Ashwan. 'I am Woasut, Beothuk woman. I have heard of the Addaboutik. They are our cousins and live on the other side of the land, two moons towards the setting sun, along the rivers and lakes' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 25). Woasut has a knowledge of the surroundings and began a journey to explore the world much earlier than Anin. If Anin is the one who re-empowers the Beothuk nation, this shows a wilful breaking of the common narrative of the great man. In fact, the novel illustrates premodern conceptions on feminine leadership among the Beothuk. Woasut is the real leader in the narrative: she teaches Anin how to paddle and survive. Assiniwi insists here on the notion of *métissage*, the Beothuk nation is in fact the product of transcultural relations with other clans. The women in the novel show this openness to other lineages, which constitutes the strength of the Beothuk.

The switch of hero is in fact an interesting break in the masculine narrative. Woasut also remembers other clan people in order to connect them to the life of the nation. 'She remembered her

mother, her father, and all the young people of her village, not as she had last seen them, but as they had been when they were alive' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 31). Assiniwi points out the fact that the Beothuk had women leaders, such as Great Iwish (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 153).

There are some other mentions of feminine leadership towards the end of the book with the presence of a council composed of women (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 242). The women are even the last ones who take decisions in order to save the Beothuk nation:

> the female movement had grown from the despair of the nation's males. Broken and demoralized, the men had let themselves become soft, and were afraid to make the smallest decision. The women saw this and got together to form a new council. They did not elect a chief, saying that the people had fallen into the habit of relying too much on one person, and of therefore neglecting their own personal responsibilities to the community. They decided unanimously to govern by consensus, as all the councils of the nation had done since the creation of the Beothuk people (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 243).

The women show a particular ability to govern the affairs of the Beothuk when the nation is endangered, making collective decisions and criticising single masculine leadership. By sharing difficult decisions, they can reinforce the cohesion of the community and propose concrete alternatives. 'The elders worried, but the women were young and had an unshakeable faith in the human spirit' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 243).

The women tried to establish good relations with the colonisers to preserve peace and harmony on the island. They are also ready for *métissage* as the Beothuk always had this multicultural background, which is quite unusual for the First Nations. For instance, in the first part of the book, the Beothuk are presented in their openness to strangers like the Vikings. The strangers in the first part are the 'Bouguishamesh', the white men who are reluctant to encounter other people. 'The beings with the pale skin and hair the colour of dried grass were still following him, but he was young and agile, and his endurance allowed him to go many days without eating' (Assiniwi, 2000, pp. 13–14). Those Bouguishamesh who are the Vikings have similar life conditions (Gatti, 2010, p. 292). The

specificity of the Beothuk is in fact characterised by the hybridity of the clan. They accepted the presence of 'Bouguishamesh' in order to sustain the growth of the nation. The colour of the skin is here commented on when Anin and Woasut met the woman. 'Woasut regarded this strange woman critically. She was not bad-looking, but she was as pale as a trout's belly' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 57). There are some erotic initiations as Anin has to satisfy both women, but the polygamy is totally accepted, due to a rational consideration on the population. 'Beothuk women had long ago learned to accept one another and to share their men; between men, however, there was always rivalry and conflict over women' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 59). Women and men share common views among the Beothuk, they are not under the control or the possession of men. For example, Anin cannot translate the word 'slave' into the language of the Beothuk; as a matter of fact, he expresses a code of conduct:

> in this country there are no slaves. There are only males and females. Males are stronger than females, but females are very useful and good companions. No one gets down on their knees to beg. Knees are for coupling, or for wrestling, for satisfying our needs among ourselves (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 68).

The critics of European habits prevails here as Assiniwi points out how women were progressively enslaved and subject to the power of men. At the same time, Assiniwi does not resist a form of *self-exoticism* (Lüsebrink, 1996, p. 57) when he presents the mindset of the Beothuk. Scottish slaves are then adopted by the Beothuk, who show an interesting sense of open-mindedness. They assimilated these slaves and gave them a new liberty. Anin has four wives in order to sustain the growth of the nation, Woasut, Gudruide, Gwenid and Della. The comparison of cultural habits is here made by Della, the Scottish slave who was adopted by the Beothuk.

> "In our land," she thought, "a man can have only one wife when he is at home, but when he is voyaging he takes mistresses. The woman Freydis, who tried to have us killed, was the bastard daughter of Erik the Red, and the illegitimate sister of Lief, Erik's son. Our men behave much like the Addaboutik, but they are hypocritical about it. They do not act openly, and they are often

jealous of their women. I prefer the way things are done here"
(Assiniwi, 2000, pp. 76–77).

This is a value judgement on the habits of the Vikings. Bastards
reveal the problems of nations that do not recognise polygamy.
In the case of the Beothuk, they did not perceive polygamy as an
absolute rule, it depended on the size of the population. Anin has
to share time with his wives and has to ensure the prosperity of
the clan. There are no predatory feelings of possession in these
relations. 'The affection we feel for each other does not come from
any desire to possess each other to the exclusion of others, does it,
Della?' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 119).

In the novel, Anin's four women initiate him into erotic games,
they teach him how to behave. Furthermore, Assiniwi describes
scenes of lesbian love between the women. 'For the first time in
Beothuk and Addaboutik memory, two women loved each other
passionately and yet tenderly' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 100). The rela-
tions of love and loyalty are important for the women of Anin to
reach a certain stability. Other scenes of lesbian love appear towards
the end of the novel. 'That night, Wobee te Malouin watched Ooish
and Obosheen making love-between-women while he was honour-
ing the tall dancer, Badisut. Everyone went to sleep feeling happy'
(Assiniwi, 2000, p. 199). The passage illustrates the perception of
female love in the eyes of Wobee te Malouin. The voyeuristic per-
spective is quite unusual in the literature of the First Nations, an
aspect that shows how Assiniwi renews the traditional views on
native studies by including a modern reflection on gender issues.

Finally, Anin clarifies the institution of Beothuk rules and customs:

> a clan chief may choose one woman one sun and another the next.
> Only the first wife is given preference, according to our custom. If
> the number of women becomes less than the number of men, then
> the first wife would be the only wife. And second and third wives
> must also attend to the needs of other men, so that there will be
> no disputes among brothers or other male members of the clan
> (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 81).

There is a rational perception of natality as women have to ensure
the reproduction of the clan. The institutions have to be adapted
to this reality; this is why Assiniwi gives clear edicts about the
code of conduct of the clan.

Dreaming the destiny of the First Nation

The remembering style is expressed by the accurate description of Anin's dreams. The reader understands the way the ancestor projected himself into the future: 'He dreamed of expanding the clan, of the creation of new villages in order to take better advantage of the resources of the island. He saw people living again on the coast of the rising sun, where there was plenty of game and berries' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 95).

Anin had in mind a vision of the development of the Beothuk given the resources of the island. The relationship between the journey and the dreams is important. The first human dream of using the resources of the island was not a coloniser but a Beothuk who imagined the destiny of his nation. The dream is a projection of the spirit of the nation with an inclusion of *métissage* with other clans. It is possible to analyse the description of these dreams with the help Carl Jung's theories on the relationship between images and unconsciousness: 'all the contents of our unconscious are constantly being projected into our surroundings, and it is only be recognizing certain properties of the objects as projections or images that we are able to distinguish them from the real properties of the objects' (Jung, 1986, p. 50).

The dream is characterised by the presence of the spirits. Anin sees Gashu-Uwith in his dreams and Gashu-Uwith warns him about the possible dangers that he might encounter (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 107). The spirits are important in the mental mindset of the Beothuk; they are also projections of deep drives that can help or threat the existence of the nation. In the novel, there is also a mention of Washi Weuth, which Woasut perceives as a threat to the Beothuk.

> She was as afraid as she had been the first time she heard Washi Weuth, the night spirit, the god of thunderstorms. Washi Weuth the unknown one, the mysterious one, he without body who could smother thought on long sleepiness nights. Washi Weuth, the enemy of female Beothuk children, whom even the male children hated. Washi Weuth whose name no one dared say aloud for fear of calling forth his dreaded apparition (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 44).

The anaphora puts emphasis on the construction of the curse for the Beothuk. The nation is here consolidated by the rejection of

this night spirit that embodies the possibility of destruction. This passage illustrates how imaginary significations are built for the Beothuk. The notion of imaginary signification was elaborated by Castoriadis when he analysed the way societies were created in a constant flow of significations. From these significations, the institutions are built, deconstructed, questioned and renewed. 'The social imaginary is, primordially, the creation of significations and the creation of the images and figures that support these significations' (Castoriadis, 1987, p. 238). The assemblage of core representations of the nation is also the purpose of the first part of the book. Anin collects all the images that have meaning for the Beothuk as they constitute the principles of organisation. Castoriadis refers to the Greek notion of *teukhein*, 'assembling-adjusting-making-constructing' (Castoriadis, 1987, p. 238) when it comes to the elaboration of the social institutions. This is indeed a culturalist approach as specific imaginary significations are linked to specific institutions. An imaginary signification is an assemblage of actions that provoke representations, emotions and intentions. For someone outside the Beothuk nation, Anin's odyssey can be perceived as meaningless, but for the Beothuk, the journey is crucial. In addition to this, the dreams connect generations of Beothuk with each other. 'He learned that his dreams could very well remain dreams, and that to realize them would take longer than the lifetime of one man' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 116). Assiniwi describes and invents the *ethos* of the Beothuk throughout generations; Anin embodies this *ethos*, which is why he is the founder of the Beothuk nation.

Colonialism, invasion and genocide

The climax occurs in the second part of the book with the arrival of John Cabot, spelled 'Kapitan Jon Kabot' in the text. This is a turning point in the narrative as there is a contrast between the hospitality of the Beothuk and the disloyalty of the invaders who dominated and progressively eliminated the Beothuk.

> The young people did not remember this lesson, and so the Living Memories of each clan were charged with reminding them of this sorrowful incident, as well as telling them of all the dangers

experienced by their ancestor Anin during his voyage around the land of the Beothuk (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 144).

The notion of 'living memory' is dealt with in several passages in this second part of the book, illustrating the perpetuation of the heritage of the Beothuk. In other words, the 'living memory' is a part of the Beothuk re-membering process, it is the transmission of oral narratives throughout times that support the survival of the nation (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 165). The use of the future in the past echoes to the experience of time (Koselleck, 1985, p. 11) where the future is described by Anin as a perfect harmony between the Beothuk and their island. The invasion of colonisers is presented as a traumatic rupture that broke the dreams of the Beothuk.

The dramatisation of the chronology at the end of the book shows different commentaries in which historical facts are compared to those of the historian Ingeborg Marshall (Assiniwi, 2000, pp. 323–330; Marshall, 1996, pp. 250–253). Table 1 illustrates some of the quotes from both books.

Table 1. Comparison of some commentaries on the history of the Beothuk (Premat, 2020).

Quotes from Assiniwi	Quotes from Marshall
'1497, June 24, 5.00 a.m. John Cabot (Jean Cabot, Giovanni Cabotto) sails into Bonavista Bay. When he returns to England, he takes three Beothuk with him and presents them to King Henry VII […]. 1534, May 10 – Jacques Cartier sails into Catalina Bay, which he names Sainte-Catherine. He also visits Port de Rapont (Quirpont), where he finds Beothuk habitations covered with sailcloth, but does make contact' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 323, p. 324).	'1497 Discovery of Newfoundland by John Cabot' (Marshall, 1996, p. 251) No mention of Jacques Cartier. '1560s–1700s Conflict between Beothuk and Inuit' (Marshall, 1996, p. 251).

Table 1. *(Continued)*.

'1768, August – some trappers encounter another Beothuk woman and her six-year-old child. She trips while trying to run away and is killed. Her son is taken prisoner and displayed in Liverpool that winter, for a fee of two cents. He is called John August, making the month of his capture. Much later he returns to Catalina to seek the men who murdered his mother, and dies in 1785. It is known whether he succeeded in avenging his mother's death' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 327).	'1768 Furriers capture the Beothuk boy and kill his mother' (Marshall, 1996, p. 252).
'1803, September 17 William Cull captures a Beothuk woman near Gander and is given a reward for jot killing her. At a former ball she is exhibited to the island's upper-class inhabitants, who admire her light hair and pale skin. She prefers the company of children, with whom she plays' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 328).	'1803 A Beothuk woman is captured by William Cull and returned to the Exploits River the following year' (Marshall, 1996, p. 252).
'1829, June 5: Shanawdithit dies of tuberculosis' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 30).	'1829: On June 6 Shanawdithit dies of pulmonary tuberculosis. Though some of her people would still have been alive, either in the interior of Newfoundland or in Labrador, the Beothuk tribe as cultural entity has become extinct' (Marshall, 1996, p. 253).

Table 1 makes it possible to measure the change of tone between the historical novel and the history book. Marshall uses neutral words ('discovery') and a factual description whereas Assiniwi gives details on what the colonisers observed and did when they came to the island. Assiniwi introduces Jacques Cartier and shows how the colonisers perceived themselves as the first people by giving names to the different geographical locations. Assiniwi insists on the capture of Beothuk by colonisers such as Gaspard de Corte Real: 'Gaspar de Côrte Real returns to Lisbon with seven Beothuk, who are painted red. His second ship arrives two days later with fifty more Beothuk. All are sold as slaves' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 323).[10] This mention is all the more important as the Beothuk would be identified as red skins by the colonisers. Assiniwi gives specific details on the capture of the Beothuk and describes the way the Beothuk were exhibited in human zoos in Europe: 'he was the first Beothuk child to be exhibited in England like an animal in a zoo' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 238). The human zoo is presented here as an extreme period of loneliness where the individual experiences a radical cultural exclusion. The comments of Assiniwi here are overwhelmingly sad: 'At the age of seventeen, he had had six years of freedom, eight years of captivity, and three years of hell. A hell worse than death, a hell of not knowing who he was, of never seeing his own family, of losing even his language, of having no friends in whom to confide' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 238). Cultural erasure was achieved by colonisers who wanted to see the Beothuk as a savage close to the animal condition, deprived of any social and cultural contact. The anaphora 'a hell' illustrates the terrible conditions of these human zoos where the last descendants of the Beothuk lived.

Some researchers worked on the exhibitions of these human zoos for the Inuit of northern Labrador and underlined how the cultural objects of these nations were exhibited in museums (Rivet, 2018, p. 138). If the Inuit are not among the First Nations, the First Nations were also victims of these human zoos. Assiniwi described

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[10] In historical writing captain Gaspard de Corte Real is presented as a merchant interested in sea expeditions (Harrisse, 1883, p. 28). There seems to be a variation in the spelling of the name as Assiniwi wrote Côrte Real.

the tragic, brutally humiliating end of the Beothuk: 'Thus died the last descendant of the hero of the island of Newfoundland, Anin the Voyager. John August was the final chapter in a sad family saga, a family that had influenced the whole culture of the island for nearly eight hundred season-cycles' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 238).

The contrast between the initiatory journey of Anin and the captivity of John August is striking here and reflects the social condition of most of the current young generation of the First Nations. Assiniwi inserted his own judgment on the treatment of Beothuk by the colonisers.

> What I find the strangest thing of all, however, as the Living Memory of my people, is that the colonists of the island of Newfoundland did not try to use these two young men as go-betweens, or even as interpreters, when they sent their military expeditions into the interior of the island to establish contact with our people (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 238).

The author condemns the absence of curiosity and the disappearance of the Other in colonial thinking. There was never a real encounter between the Beothuk and the colonisers, which is why it is important to tell the story of this First Nation. Remembering the spirit of the Nation is a duty for First Nation writers, who have to reinvent a future after the cultural genocide of the past.

However, Assiniwi makes a distinction between the attitude of the English and the French colonisers in the novel. He tells the story of Jean le Guellec, who married a Beothuk woman. Jean le Guellec was a sailor serving under Jacques Cartier who came from Brittany. He was given the name Wobee when he decided to live with the Beothuk. Le Guellec was also impressed by the sophistication of Beothuk culture, which is why Assiniwi shows that some European people could be welcomed and live among the Beothuk (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 196, p. 204). There is this transcultural aspect in Assiniwi's novel when he described the possible *métissage* with the Beothuk (Laporte, 2013).

Assiniwi describes the destiny of a Beothuk child, Ou-Bee, who was sent to England to learn a new language and new rules. Ou-Bee resisted the acculturation process.

> Ou-Bee was sent to England, where she was adopted by a family named Stone. They tried to give her an English name, but she

steadfastly refused to respond to it. She responded only when they called her Ou-Bee. Whenever Mr. Stone was alone with Ou-Bee he tried to kiss her, but then she would scream like a terrified animal (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 246).

The acculturation process seems to be prevailing here as the child is compared to 'a terrified animal' resisting the aggression of the colonisers. The child survived the treatment of the Stones and the colonisers. She learned English quickly and taught a Reverend how to speak some Beothuk words.

> He said she learned faster than any English child her age, and that after only two years of instruction the English language held no secrets from her. In fact, Reverend Clinch even began to learn the Beothuk language from Ou-Bee, and compiled the first collection of Beothuk words. Ou-Bee lived until the year 1788, when she died of tuberculosis, a disease to which native people have no resistance (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 247).

Ou-Bee proves her intelligence and her ability to adapt to a different culture. The end of the sentence illustrates the generalisation of Beothuk conditions in relation to the diseases that killed so many native people. Assiniwi transcribes a story that was reported to him. 'Her story was later told to the Paul family in Bay d'Espoir by a soldier who had met the Stones, and I heard it directly from Mary Paul herself' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 247). The author inserts these snippets of individual stories in the novel, recalling the testimonies in order to remember the end of the Beothuk.

The end of the Beothuk began when one of them, Bawoodisik, committed suicide by eating poisonous mushrooms.

> No Beothuk had committed suicide in the hundreds of season-cycles known to the Living Memories of the community of the Red Men, because our instinct for survival was too strong. Bawoodisik's death brought darkness to the heart of the survivors of the Beothuk nation (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 242).

The presence of the possessive adjective 'our' reveals the empathy of the author for his people. The suicide is a strong gesture showing the loneliness of the Beothuk.

> It is said that at the end of the eighteenth century there was one man who came to the defence of the Beothuk. His name was

G. C. Pulling, a lieutenant in the English navy. He apparently wrote a report in which he strongly denounced the atrocities and acts of barbarism that had been committed by the colonists, fishermen, and fur trappers in the northeast quadrant of our island (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 251).

Ingeborg Marshall shows that Pulling was the first who tried to be impartial by investigating the behaviour of the fishermen and the settlers (Marshall, 1996, p. 76, p. 97). Pulling had collected all the stories from the settlers on their relations with the Beothuk. He 'reported that not everyone was hostile towards the Beothuk' (Marshall, 1996, p. 105). For Assiniwi, Pulling is a coloniser who could have distance to all the settlers' stories. The last part of the book gathers all the reports and the stories of the colonisers who met the last Beothuk. The author describes the shift of power between the first French and the English colonisers.[11] 'It seems that the English took over this region without the permission of the French, and there was much ill feeling between them, although not as much as there was against us' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 262). The resistance of the Beothuk against the English colonisers is highlighted by Assiniwi as there is a difference made between the French and the English in the book. The English are described without compassion: they never tried to understand the way the Beothuk lived, whereas the French had more openness. The author refers to the 'Beothuk killers', the mercenaries who took advantage of the situation: 'If George Cartwright and Buchan and Glascock had been honest soldiers, and if John Peyton Jr. was a humanitarian, why did they come to us in the company of people who could never be trusted by the Beothuk?' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 276).

The author elaborates on a counter-narrative by remembering the point of view of the Beothuk.

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[11] The author did not try to question the sources related to the first colonisers. If John Cabot was presented as the first, some writers highlighted alternative narratives of previous meetings with travellers from the Basque country (Lavolle, 1974, p. 19). Lavolle is well-known for her youth literature books and so it is interesting to see how she tried to promote this thesis in her novel *L'Expédition de l'Intrépide*.

The author interferes by rehabilitating the point of view of the natives at the end of the novel when he inserts a table illustrating the perception of facts for the natives.

> That is how the last survivors of the proud race of Red Men saw things. They had lived on this island since the beginning of time, longer than memory. The elders said that non-native people have always been afraid of wolves, and tell many stories about those animals in Europe. Their wolves seem much different from the wolves we know on our island. Here the wolves feed on caribou and other animals. They do not eat Beothuk. Non-natives have always been afraid of Beothuk, and they have killed almost all of us (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 276).

There is an inversion of judgements in this sentence which is a condemnation of the genocide made by the invaders (Vizenor, 1991). The subjective point of view is eloquent when the author mentions 'the proud race of Red men' and he shows how the invaders were much worse than the animals. The invaders were afraid of this new culture and never made an effort to understand its characteristics and peculiarities. 'I knew that the Beothuk would live forever because there are still real men on the earth even if they do not have red skins' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 322).

Conclusion

There is a strong legacy of the Beothuk with many historical works on their culture. For Assiniwi, remembering the Beothuk means incorporating the living memory of diverse clans that had a fair deal when they shared territory. This agreement was broken by the invaders who colonised the island and completely eliminated the Beothuk. Assiniwi perceives his role as a transcription of the 'Living Memory of the Beothuk people' (Assiniwi, 2000, p. 286). He has to elaborate a historical novel for the counternarrative of native people, and this is why the novel is built around the idea of a living memory circulating among characters who are Beothuk heroes. Then, in the last part, the author connects himself to all the stories and became a voice for the last Beothuk. The captivity of Beothuk, their humiliation when they were shown in human zoos, reveals the cruelty of the invaders, who missed the

opportunity of a real encounter. Assiniwi wanted to present the multiplicity of cultural representations of the Beothuk and defend the point of view of the Beothuk. The last part of their story was never told by a native writer and the use of the historical novel serves to balance most of the ethnographic and historical works that were based upon the narratives and reports of European colonisers. From this perspective, the work of Bernard Assiniwi contributes to studies of 'Americity' focused on living archives and on the survival of the First Nations (Durand, 2014, p. 271). At the same time, Assiniwi shows that the natives have very similar concerns and representations to the European colonisers. Had the colonisers had some interest in this nation, they would have learnt a lot. The French are described in a more positive way, as one of them became Beothuk in the novel whereas the English never showed the slightest interest in meeting and knowing the Beothuk. On the whole, the novel reflects this dramatic encounter between the Beothuk and the Europeans, and for contemporary readers might be the opportunity to reflect on this cultural elimination. In reality, this counter-narrative shows that the Beothuk were a very ancient civilization present long before the arrival of European settlers. Revealing this point of view allows them to be reinscribed as main subjects in Canadian history (Thobani, 2007, p. 238). Assiniwi's novel is an important contribution to the fight against the invisibilisation of the natives and their exclusion from Canadian history. Since this novel, other works have affirmed this wish to assume the history of the First Nations as a properly Canadian history (Béchard & Kanapé Fontaine, 2018).

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2. Contemporary Indigenous Remix: Poets Matthew James Weigel and Jordan Abel Sampling from Settler Colonial Archives

Kristina Aurylaitė

Abstract

This chapter discusses two poetry books by Canada's Indigenous writers, *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me* (2020) by Dënësųłinë́ and Métis Matthew James Weigel and *Injun* (2016) by Nisga'a Jordan Abel, as different examples of textual remix. Each of them, albeit in different ways, responds to and exploits the contemporary accessibility and materiality of language, which results from its availability in the digital space and on the Internet, and which, in turn, inspires a series of appropriative procedures (such as copying-pasting, sharing, and remixing, for example) to which language – seen as matter – is then subjected. Critics have referred to contemporary culture, which is dominated by new media technologies, as 'remix' culture (Manovich, 2015; O'Neil, 2006; Navas, 2012; Goldsmith, 2010; Dworkin, 2010), in which every Internet user re/produces cultural content, even if they often do so mechanically and uncritically. The poets discussed in this chapter engage in reflective and critical dialogues with the textual material they select, appropriate, and transform—that is, remix, often radically and provocatively—for their own works. Both Weigel and Abel sample from settler colonial archives rather than Indigenous sources, revisiting versions of the past as constructed by colonial sources. However,

they do not engage in revisionist rewritings of the sources or their messages. Instead, both poets undertake a series of what Walter Mignolo (2014) theorize as 'decolonial gestures.' Their poems foreground investigation of and dialogue with the sources as processes to open the source texts for unlimited re-readings and allow them to arrange and articulate their own space within the formulas and structures of settler colonialism, whose ongoing effects on Indigenous land and being both seek to expose and address.

Keywords

Settler colonialism, Indigenous poetry, remix, conceptual writing.

Introduction

'I have acquired and used this photograph without permission. / It has been digitally altered to suit my needs,' writes Dënësųłinë́ and Métis poet Matthew James Weigel (b.1985) about the photograph of the throne room at Windsor castle in England, which was taken in 1867 by André Adolfe Eugène Disdéri and subsequently acquired by Queen Victoria (Weigel, 2020, p. 9). These lines conclude an early poem of Weigel's collection *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me* (2020). Weigel titles the poem '1870: Queen Victoria acquires *ad nauseum*,' and the same verb 'acquire' provokes a comparison between the British Empire's colonial appropriations and Weigel's creative practices, driven by decolonial principles. Weigel begins the poem with a digitally remastered reproduction of the photograph and a description of the luxurious throne and the room in which it is located (Weigel, 2020, pp. 9–10). The modified photograph and the lines quoted above foreground several motifs that are central to Weigel's book, namely, colonial appropriations, archival documents, access to them as well as appropriation and then remastering of appropriated material, through which past and present become linked and these linkages examined.

Weigel is not Canada's only contemporary Indigenous poet or artist to have engaged in such processes of working with pre-existing material, which establish connections between past and present. Others include, for instance, Nisga'a poet Jordan

Abel, Oji-Cree poet and writer Joshua Whitehead, Cree poet and scholar Billy-Ray Belcourt, Cree visual artist and performer Kent Monkman, Deshkaan Ziibing Anishinaabeg visual artist Jay Soule, Wolastoqiyik performer and composer Jeremy Dutcher, Wuikinuxv and Klahoose multimedia artist Bracken Hanuse Corlett, multimedia collective Skookum Sound System, to name a few. This chapter discusses two poetry books, the aforementioned *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me* by Matthew James Weigel and the Griffin Poetry Prize winning *Injun* (2016) by Jordan Abel (b. 1984). Abel's work is already well-known and recognized for experimentations with form and method, strongly relying on various appropriative procedures, facilitated or even inspired by digital technologies and digital media, which he uses to explore the various workings of settler colonialism and their impact on Indigenous being. Weigel has just recently published his first full length poetry collection *Whitemud Walking* (2022), which includes poems from and develops his brief collection *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me*, discussed in this chapter. Nonetheless, Weigel's chapbook, too, offers a thought-provoking, albeit much less radical example of using found texts to uncover the ways in which colonial institutions and documents did and continue to exert their power over Indigenous land and peoples. My focus in this chapter is the ways these two poets engage in reflexive and critical dialogues with pre-existing textual material which they select, appropriate, and transform – that is, remix, sometimes radically and provocatively. In these books, both Weigel and Abel sample from settler colonial archives rather than Indigenous sources. Thus, instead of foregrounding cultural continuity, they choose to revisit versions of the past as constructed by colonial sources – a strategy that could compel an Indigenous writer to construct narratives countering those of the original sources. However, neither Weigel, nor Abel engages in revisionist rewritings. Instead, both poets foreground investigation of and dialogue with their sources. I examine how these processes open selected source texts for unlimited re-readings and allow the poets to arrange and articulate their own space within the formulas and structures of settler colonialism, whose ongoing effects on Indigenous land and being they both seek to expose and address.

Settler colonialism and the erasure of the Indigenous presence

Settler colonialism is driven by what Patrick Wolfe terms 'the logic of elimination': this form of colonialism 'destroys to replace,' to create a new social and spatial structure in the invaded and gradually appropriated territory (Wolfe, 2006, pp. 387–388, p. 390, pp. 392–393). In this project, the Indigenous presence is an obstacle impeding the appropriation and exploitation of the land, and, therefore, 'Indigenous people must be erased, must be made into ghosts' (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 6). Complete elimination of the Indigenous presence is the ultimate end point of settler colonialism, which seeks to 'extinguish' the relation between settlers and the settler colonized in order to proceed as a nation state, undisturbed by internal tensions over Indigenous rights (Veracini, 2011a, p. 3, p. 7). Erasure does not necessarily have to be enacted only through physical elimination, such as killing or displacement and confinement to specially designated spaces, such as reserves. Wolfe shows that biocultural and social assimilation – what Glen Coulthard labels as 'social engineering,' achieved, for example, through education or intermarriage (Coulthard, 2014, p. 184) – as well as discursive practices, such as renaming or stereotyping, are effectively part of the same project and foreground the adaptability of settler colonialism to changing circumstances and ideological climate (Wolfe, 2006, pp. 402–403).

Discursive erasures are also at work in settler colonial archives, the target of both Matthew Weigel's and Jordan Abel's poetic projects. In their discussion of Canadian state archives, Crystal Fraser and Zoe Todd maintain that 'it is essential that we continue to recognise archival spaces, especially state archives, for their original intent: to create national narratives that seek to legitimise the nation state by excluding Indigenous voices, bodies, economies, histories, and socio-political structures'; thus, when included into historical records, Indigenous people are consistently denied agency and relegated to passive roles (Frazer & Todd, 2016, p. 39, p. 37; Hodes, 2020, p. 63). Melissa Adams-Campbell et al. point out that settler archives have to contend with the fact that Indigenous communities are always 'internal to the nation-state,'

and thus the information about their dispossessions, removals, and deprivations needs to be '*subsumed* within the story of the state'; however, they argue, such information tends to be 'obscured through collecting practices that prioritize settler history and belonging' in order to gloss over or disguise the non-righteousness and violence of settler colonial dealings with Indigenous peoples (Adams-Campbell et al. 2015, p. 110; original emphasis). Such obscuring can take several forms: preferencing documents produced by non-Indigenous people (Frazer & Todd, 2016, p. 35); 'generically lumping together all Native knowledge as "Indian" and casting this knowledge in the past, for example the "Vanishing Indian" narrative'; and presenting 'discussion of Indian heritage and difference […] as "cultural," rather than legal,' which 'simultaneously acknowledges Native existence even as it denies Native peoples' sovereignty and rights to land' (Adams-Campbell et al., 2015, p. 111). Moreover, as shown by various scholars, the very access to archival material related to Indigenous people can often be complicated and restricted, sometimes deliberately, even today; among the most frequent factors are, for instance, bureaucratic procedures at work in the archives, the distances at which archives can be located from certain communities, the lack of clear organization or digitalization of archival material, or even unwillingness of authorities to provide access (Adams-Campbell et al., 2015, pp. 112–113; Frazer & Todd, 2016, pp. 34–35; see also Hodes, 2020, pp. 159–160 and Griffith, 2019, pp. 3–4 on difficulties accessing archival material necessary for legal proceedings involving Indigenous people).

These practices of archival violence are consistent with other forms of elimination of Indigenous presence and can be seen as manifestations of what Lorenzo Veracini describes as a settler colonial 'non-encounter,' defined as 'a circumstance fundamentally shaped by a recurring need to disavow the presence of indigenous "others",' even when actual contacts do take place (Veracini, 2011a, p. 2; Veracini, 2011b, pp. 5–6). In the settler state of mind, thus, not even a negative relationship with Indigenous people is conceived as possible, and no mutual future can be imagined. As a result, 'everything indigenous can be reduced to reminiscence (a conceptual move that restricts actually existing presences to pockets of past surrounded by

future, the narrative equivalent of territorial indigenous reserves)' (Veracini 2011b, p. 6). What is also important in this concept of non-encounter is Veracini's emphasis on how the need to construct Indigenous people as no longer present in the settler space is recurrent and persistent. In this he echoes Wolfe's foregrounding that settler colonialism is not an isolated 'event' rooted in history, but a 'structure,' whose 'history does not stop' but develops continuously, adapting to changing circumstances and remains 'relatively impervious to regime change,' even that of the liberal democracies of contemporary settler countries, such as Canada (Wolfe, 2006, p. 392, p. 399, p. 402; Wolfe, 1999, p. 163; Coulthard, 2014, p. 139; Mignolo, 2014). As Taiaiake Alfred contends, settler colonial structures shape-shift, turning into a 'fluid confluence of politics, economics, psychology and culture,' to pervade and affect all aspects of human existence (Alfred, 2005, p. 30; cited by Coulthard 2014, pp. 455–456; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, pp. 597–598).

Under such regime, Indigenous survival and persistence are 'the weapons' of the settler colonized as they prevent the ultimate triumph of settler colonialism by 'keep[ing] the settler-indigenous relationship ongoing' (Veracini, 2011a, pp. 3–4) and thereby complicating the attempts of contemporary politics of recognition and reconciliation to 'manage and neutralise indigenous difference,' which are just another way of denying Indigenous people participation on their own terms (Veracini, 2011a, p. 8, see also Coulthard, 2014). 'I'm an Nishnaabekwe and so everything I do is political,' states Canada's Nishnaabeg writer, performer, scholar, and activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in an interview (Simpson, quoted in Winder, 2014). She voices the same idea that an Indigenous person's insistence on their distinct status in a settler state exposes such state's colonial nature grounded in the impulse to extinguish Indigenous presence and disturbs the rhetoric of successfully implemented multiculturalism which marks contemporary settler states. Indigenous art, too, in its various manifestations, works to underscore the persistent vitality of Indigenous cultures: as Jarret Martineau and Eric Ritskes maintain, 'Indigenous art is inherently political,' as it works to 'break the vow of silence and invisibility demanded of Indigenous Peoples by settler society' and 'marks the space of a returned and enduring presence' (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. 1, p. 3). In their poetry books

discussed in this chapter, Matthew James Weigel and Jordan Abel also make contemporary Indigenous presence manifest on their own terms. Moreover, they seek to reassert Indigenous presence in the settler colonial 'non-encounters' of the past as described and enacted by settler colonial sources, namely, Canadian governmental documents from between 1870 and 1921 (Weigel) and old American Westerns (Abel). Weigel composes his chapbook as a collage of digitalized archival images, quotations sampled from old governmental records, and his own lyrics and diagrams. Placing them next to and in contact with one another, Weigel invites a dialogue between them, allowing each piece to speak for itself but also in connection to one another, across time. Abel's book offers a more radical reworking of the source material. He uses a collection of ninety-one novels of the Western genre, digitalized and accessible on Project Gutenberg, whose texts he copy-pastes into a Word file and isolates sentences containing the word 'injun,' used for the title of his book. He then cuts up these sentences and recombines the cut-ups to construct a series of individual poems of various formats and saying very different things than the original sentences and novels. Thus, selecting, sampling from, repurposing, and reworking – that is, remixing, albeit in different ways, – archival documents and old Westerns, both poets insist on the importance of revisiting the past. Doing this, they do not undertake revisionist projects, which, when practiced by Indigenous or postcolonial writers, usually seek to 'undermine the legitimacy of white settlement and assert Other(ed) versions of history' (Gilbert, 1998, p. 53; see also Huggan, 2008). As will be shown in the later sections of this chapter, Weigel's and Abel's excavations of old texts and engagements with them effectively foreground how the past continues to affect the present in the form of encounters, dealings, relationships, and, notably, erasures.

Remix as a practice and a discourse

The links to the past established and exploited by such poets as Weigel and Abel, their engagements with pre-existing material have a quality differentiating these engagements from more familiar techniques which rely on borrowing, such as intertextuality, pastiche, or parody. Their poetry, albeit in different ways, is

informed, directly influenced, or even made possible by digital information technologies, which have transformed language into material substance – quantifiable, movable, pliable, and mutable, – and valued not only for what it says but also – or even rather – for what it 'does': as poet and critic Kenneth Goldsmith puts it, '[w]ords very well might be written not to be read but rather to be shared, moved, and manipulated' (Goldsmith, 2010, p. xxi, p. xviii, p. xix; see also Dworkin, 2010, p. xxxvi, p. xlii); poets Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman similarly suggest that words are to be seen as 'objects' and treated as such (Place & Fitterman, 2009, p. 16). Notably, the newfound materiality of language invites an approach that entails essentially physical acts when engaging with pre-existing texts; Goldsmith calls these acts 're-gestures,' such as re-sharing, re-blogging, re-tweeting, or re-posting, but also, and more importantly, re-formatting and re-arranging the material accessed and obtained online (Goldsmith, 2010, p. xix, p. xviii; Dworkin, 2010, p. xlii).

The term that has become central in describing the various appropriative procedures undertaken in the digital environment is 'remix.' As a practice, remix consists of selecting, sampling from, and reworking pre-existing material, undertaken using digital tools in order to 'create particular aesthetic, semantic, and/ or bodily effects' (Manovich, 2015, p. 142). Differently from the more familiar intertexts or collages, contemporary remixes thrive on the unprecedented availability of material in the digital form, which has replaced retyping with copying and pasting, facilitating the act of textual appropriation (Goldsmith, 2010, p. xix). The question then is to what 're-gesture/s' to subject the material appropriated this way: merely to re-post or re-share it, or to engage with it in ways that involve critical scrutiny and transformation, which is what the writers discussed in this chapter undertake.

The concept of remix is, of course, much broader than describing computer-inspired writing techniques rooted in appropriation and is closely linked to the recent advancements in technologies of mechanical reproduction (Navas, Gallagher, & Burrough, 2015, p. 1; Navas 2012, p. 4, pp. 17–27). In fact, it is precisely when it comes to literature that such practices, because they unsettle

deep-seated ideas about originality and authorship, can still be viewed with suspicion as 'controversial' or 'unacceptable,' despite being well established in the field of arts and music, from which they stem (Dworkin, 2010, pp. xl–xli). The origins of remix are usually traced back to the New York City disco and hip hop music communities of the 1970s, specifically DJ producers' experiments on the turntable, which soon spread to major cities worldwide; starting with the late 1990s, remix practices developed into 'an organic international movement,' linked to the Internet and, later, to Web 2.0 and social media, with their emphasis on user-generated content and collaboration (Navas, Gallagher, & Burrough, 2015, p. 1, p. 2; see also Navas 2012, p. 4, p. 20, pp. 35–63; Manovich, 2015, p. 138). Of importance here is the emphasis on the increasingly active role of the Internet and media user, who becomes crucial in 'activating the material' online by incessantly filtering, sampling, and re-sharing it (Navas, 2012, p. 75). Lev Manovich similarly notes that new media has replaced the traditional pattern of cultural communication according to which information moved 'in one direction,' from a source to a receiver, with a more fluid one, in which the reception point has become 'just a temporary station on information's path' before it is further re-shared (Manovich, 2015, p. 145). This change foregrounds new forms of interactivity and collaboration in communication, with recipients of information vigorously rejecting the finiteness of messages delivered to them. At the same time, these tools have also engendered new behavioural patterns and social norms, such as those of 'constantly staying connected' as well as compulsively sampling and re-sharing content (Navas, 2012, p. 75, pp. 124–125; see also Manovich, 2015).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, remix has become a term to describe many 'cultural trends in digital media' (O'Neil, 2006, p. 19) but also various effects that digital technologies and the Internet have 'upon how culture is made' (Lessig, 2005, p. 7). Eduardo Navas sees remix as an attitude, an aesthetic, and a discourse, rather than merely a practice:

> Once a specific technology is introduced it eventually develops a discourse that helps to shape cultural anxieties. Remix has done and is currently doing this to concepts of appropriation. Remix

> has changed how we look at the production of material in terms of combinations. This is what enables Remix to become an aesthetic, a discourse that, like a virus, can move through any cultural area and be progressive and regressive depending on the intentions of the people implementing its principles (Navas, 2012, p. 126).

Hence, while the mechanism of reworking pre-existing material to create something different is not an invention of the late 1990s or the early 21st century, it is during this period that its application becomes ubiquitous and is no longer limited to artistic practices (e.g. Dada, Conceptual art, Pop art, etc) or those controlled by economic elites (e.g. media or advertising). As a discourse, remix foregrounds how naturalized and mechanical various appropriation, recombination, editing, and modification practices have become, altering our perception of the issues of legality (see Lessig, 2008; Manovich, 2015) and originality (O'Neil, 2006; Navas, 2012; Greaney, 2014), but also our sense and experience of self as well as our engagement with the material, the digital, and the social (Biederman & Callaghan, 2006, p. 6; Manovich, 2015).

Many users yield to the technological seductions of networked culture without much contemplation; in this case, remix is an obedient response to what technologies entice us to do and is thus, to use Navas's phrasing, 'regressive' and 'parasitical,' merely ensuring a constantly 'regenerated' data flow (Navas, 2012, p. 73), without users' critically scrutinizing the information received and re-shared. However, remix also opens space for more critical and creative reflection on source material but also on the practice of remix itself. Navas calls such instances 'reflexive' and 'regenerative' remix. Reflexive remix seeks to challenge the original by reworking it through various methods, for instance, deleting certain elements or adding other material, but allowing it to remain recognizable (Navas, 2012, p. 66). Taken even further, in a more advanced form, when it undertakes a more fundamental transformation, sometimes rendering the original recognizable or even present only in the form of citation, and simultaneously generating a new product, remix can be 'regenerative,' at which point it is no longer merely a practice, but a manifestation of a set of principles and a discourse (Navas, 2012, p. 67). Jamie O'Neil also foregrounds 'a radical transformation of identity' of the pre-existing

entity in remix, but, notably, one that is not conclusive and does not aim at constructing a finite new identity; rather, remix is its 'single enunciation' (O'Neil, 2006, p. 20, p. 23), potentially inviting its audiences to imagine other possible ways of reworking the source material. In each case, Navas emphasizes the allegorical nature, that is, the meta-level of remix and its dependence on the 'authority' of the source material in order to foreground that

> the originality of the remix is non-existent, therefore it must acknowledge its source of validation self-reflexively. [...] The material must be recognized, otherwise it could be misunderstood as something new, and it would become plagiarism (Navas, 2012, p. 67).

Remix cannot be read on its own, but always in relation to its sources, and it is this relationship that creates the two levels which characterize allegory: in remix, samples are placed in new contexts and combinations, and, as a result, can be endowed with new meanings, quite different from and unintended by the originals. Yet, these new meanings are persistently haunted by those of the original sources, and it is these connections and tensions that remix thrives on. Through remix, thus, one insists on a palimpsestal effect as any remix always establishes itself in relation to the source and deliberately so. As O'Neil puts it, the source 'is not lost, there is a co-presence of the past and the present in this embodiment, which mediates between the past and the future via a new vector of the eternally changing' (O'Neil, 2006, p. 20). Crucial here thus is not only the end-product, but the process of engaging with and challenging the source: selecting it as well as devising and implementing procedures to transform it but also to acknowledge it, thereby also making manifest the remixer's relationship to and stance on the material referenced in this way.

Remix has been mainly discussed in the context of culture, media, music, and art, not literature (see *The Routledge Companion to Remix Studies* edited by Navas, Gallagher, and burrough for a survey of the field (2015)). Nonetheless, contemporary conceptual writing, based on the use – and, notably, 'strategic misuse' – of pre-existing texts (Dworkin, 2003, p. 5), offers examples of precisely reflexive and regenerative remix.

A conceptual writer's engagement with the source texts is typically organized by an appropriative procedure such as erasure, 'transcription, citation, "writing-through," recycling, reframing, grafting, mistranslating, and mashing' (Perloff, 2012, § 15), frequently inspired, facilitated, or driven by digital technologies. The procedure does not 'substitute for the writing,' but works to coordinate it: the procedure a writer selects is determined by an underlying idea, the concept for a conceptual text (Dworkin, 2010, p. xxxvii). The procedure challenges the finiteness of the source texts as it reworks and transforms them, often radically. Navas, too, argues that when remix is regenerative, 'its principles are at play as conceptual strategies' (Navas, 2012, p. 67). They govern the relationship between the source and its new enunciation as well as the shape in which that relationship will become manifest. For Navas, 'Remix finds its real power in the realm of ideas. This is the space in which the regenerative remix is best at play, as it combines material according to specific needs' (Navas, 2012, p. 85). In some cases, the focus on the idea and the procedure behind conceptual texts can overshadow the textual product itself: Place and Fitterman call such instances 'pure conceptualism' and contend that 'one does not need to 'read' the work as much as think about the idea of the work' (Place & Fitterman, 2009, p. 27).

This form of conceptualism, which prioritizes the idea and the procedure over the product but also over the source material, has caused several controversies, specifically involving work by Goldsmith and Place. Goldsmith's remix of Michael Brown's autopsy report (2015) and Place's sampling from African American characters' lines from Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (2015) provoked angry criticism about the two artists reenacting their white privilege and reinstating racist hierarchies in their appropriations of the material related to African Americans: a victim of police violence Brown and black slaves in Mitchell's novel, widely seen as racist (for a detailed discussion, see Calder, 2015, and a frequently reposted analysis by Keene, 2015). Even earlier, Kay Rozynski (2014) pointed out that focusing exclusively on the materiality of language in its digital

form and various 'uncreative' and mechanical ways to 'manage' it, such theorizing of conceptualism tends to discount the writer's subjectivity in relation to the sources. She argued that conceptualism needs to be seen as 'the material, embodied event of composition,' attentive to the context as well as the subject position of the writer and the source material, whose potential 'to speak back' should not be disregarded (Rozynski, 2014, p. 102, pp. 105–106). Thus, even if conceptual texts and remixes can be deliberately unreadable in the traditional sense, the reader is enticed to examine the mechanics and aesthetics of the procedure selected and explore how it has strategically transformed the sources (Dworkin, 2010, p. xxxvii). At this point, the writer's subjectivity and position in relation to the source material become foregrounded because it is they that guide his/her 're-gesturing' of the text and the procedure on the whole: as Dworkin points out, 'impersonal procedures tend to magnify subjective choices' (Dworkin, 2010, p. xxxix).

Remix entails a form of physical contact, engagement with, and reshaping the selected material, through which the remixer articulates his/her own subjectivity: as O'Neil puts it, remix 'inherently' presupposes 'a form of critical dialogue with the 'original' or overarching context' (O'Neil, 2006, p. 22). In his earlier book *The Place of Scraps*, which also uses appropriated material, Abel says in a similar vein, '[c]ontact is precisely the investigation' (Abel, 2013, p. 171). Relying on appropriative procedures and 're-gestures' to repurpose and remix the settler colonial material they have sampled from, Weigel and Abel initiate precisely such contact – as an investigation and critical dialogue with the settler colonial sources – to counter the dynamics of settler colonial 'non-encounter,' as theorized by Veracini (2011a, 2011b), and its insistence on denying Indigenous people participation. Their 're-gestures,' discussed in the subsequent sections, are thus decidedly decolonial, akin to what Walter Mignolo describes as 'decolonial gestures,' that is, bodily moves and movements which 'carr[y] a decolonial sentiment or decolonial intention' and which make decolonial 'attitudes, options, and turns' directly perceivable (Mignolo, 2014, n.p.).

Matthew James Weigel's *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me*: Indigenous treaties, procedural writing, and quotational practices

Matthew James Weigel's poetry chapbook *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me* (2020) is constructed as a combination of his own lyrics and samples from archival documents, piecing together the personal and a selection of the found. Archival samples, in the form of textual quotations and digitalized images, are a way Weigel chooses to speak about the past: his chapbook traces the history of acquisition by the Confederation of Canada of Rupert's Land, then controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company, and the subsequent Numbered Treaties, eleven in total, signed between the British Crown and the Indigenous peoples of the territories between 1871 and 1921. Indigenous treaties in Canada are constitutionally recognized agreements which detail exchanges between Indigenous peoples and the Crown. By way of these agreements, the former consent to 'cede' and 'surrender' some of their rights to their ancestral lands in return for various compensations (Hall, 2011). Through the Numbered Treaties, the Canadian government sought to legitimize the appropriation of the land it needed for the newly arriving settlers as well as agricultural and industrial development, but also for such federal projects as the construction of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway (McIntosh & Smith, 2019; Filice, 2016; Dickason, 1992, pp. 273–290). For the Indigenous peoples of these territories, the treaties, just like other federal Indian policies implemented at the time, were products of encounters with settler colonialism as a structure, markedly different from the previous encounters with explorers, individual settlers, or traders of the Hudson's Bay Company: Veracini foregrounds that settler colonialism supersedes previous colonial orders, usually characterized by more mutual relationships, in which Indigenous people have and can assert more agency (Veracini, 2011b, p. 5). The settler colonial regime's 'logic of elimination' (Wolfe, 2006, pp. 387–388) seeks to remove both that power and Indigenous presence altogether: among the provisions of the treaties were the creation of reserves, which effectively excluded Indigenous people from the settler space and became spaces of confinement, as well as

provisions about education and encouragement of settled agricultural practices to accelerate the assimilation of Indigenous people into colonial culture and thus their disappearance as distinct nations and cultures (Filice, 2016; Krasowski, 2019; Hall, 2011; Dickason, 1992, pp. 273–290).

Weigel's focus in his chapbook is precisely the workings of settler colonialism in what is now Canada's North-West and their lasting effects on Indigenous land and being. These effects are explored through the autobiographical first-person voice of the contemporary Indigenous speaker, who is rooted in the territory, now fundamentally transformed, and who is haunted by the past: one poem begins, 'I wake up at 6am to a weight on my chest. / I massage it until it says the word treaty' (Weigel, 2020, p. 15). The physical sensation of a burden, which translates into a legal term, referring to the signing of the treaties, but also glossing over the complexities and tensions of settler-Indigenous relationships, speaks of the need to revisit the past. This motif further implies that certain actions and events cannot be isolated in it: the relationships and other structures they produce can continue to affect those that are involved, generations after the event, as suggested by Weigel's poem. Elsewhere, his speaker says, addressing an Indigenous signatory of a treaty, 'did you know that when you wrote this down/ the river would remember it?' (Weigel, 2020, p. 11). Again, the question speaks of the enduring impact produced by the act of signing, even if the impact itself is not specified. Moreover, the question underscores how profoundly this act has affected not only humans but also the place whose reordering the treaty legitimated. The place is evoked synecdochically, through the image of the river, which implies flow, movement, and change; yet, in Weigel's poem, even the river, like the human body in the previous quotation, is said to be carrying traces and records of the past, more than a century old. This reiterates the same refusal to understand events as frozen in time, and the two quotations thus link the body and the place. This motif punctuates Weigel's book to foreground Indigenous people's rootedness in and relationship to the land: 'so clearly does the land, in fact, own me,' says the speaker in another poem, and continues, 'I am a flesh bound manuscript of what this place might say' (Weigel, 2020,

p. 10), foregrounding the transgenerational aspect of memory but also how large-scale processes, such as those launched by settler colonialism, are always experienced and lived through by individual human beings. It is also implied that not all experiences are acknowledged, recorded, or deemed worthy of consideration.

Neither the speaker nor the place reveals much in Weigel's chapbook, echoing the erasures of Indigenous versions of the past in official records. Despite its very physically felt presence, the past in Weigel's book is typically evoked by relying on more technical language as well as on *déja dit*, which clash with the metaphorical passages of the first-person speaker. As Weigel says in an interview, 'with a background in science I have a fondness for figures and diagrams that can be quite poetic in how complex ideas are explained elegantly and succinctly. It's important to tell these stories in ways that resist "conventional" methods and poetics, it's a form of resistance in its own way' (Weigel, quoted in Mclennan, 2021). Thus, the opening poem of his book, titled 'Acts Respecting Violence to the North-West,' begins with what looks like a chart, devoid of the subjectivity of the lyrical voice and quite similar, for instance, to an archival database index, or to the chart Michelle Filice provides in her article 'Numbered Treaties' for *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Filice, 2016): the first stanza of the poem consists of the list of dates and the numbers of the Numbered Treaties, thereby providing a summary of the settler colonial takeover of the territory:

1870	Rupert's Land Transfer
1871	Treaty No. 1
1871	Treaty No. 2
1873	Treaty No. 3
1874	Treaty No. 4
1875	Treaty No. 5
1876	Treaty No. 6
1877	Treaty No. 7
1899	Treaty No. 8
1905	Treaty No. 9
1906	Treaty No. 10
1921	Treaty No. 11 (Weigel, 2020, p. 6)

The stanza is compact and minimalist. There are no details uncovering and exposing the violence which is unambiguously referenced in the title, only the dates and document numbers, separated from one another by spaces and arranged in neat columns and lines. They gloss over the many particulars surrounding the treaty signing process, such as the territories on the agenda; the preparations, including the survey and mapping of the land; the participants in the negotiations and the signing; the sometimes lengthy negotiation processes and the Indigenous ceremonies accompanying them; the stipulations negotiated and agreed as well as the differing interests of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants (for specific details regarding the Numbered Treaties, see Dickason, 1992, pp. 273–290; for a detailed account of signing Treaties 1–7, see Krasowski, 2019). The list that forms Weigel's stanza and the spaces between each date and document title create regular cadence, which evens out the differences in how much time passed between the signing of each document and creates an impression of a smooth and unproblematic but unrelenting process, which developed very consistently over five decades and affected, as estimated by Olive Dickason, 'a little more than half' of Canada's Indigenous population (Dickason, 1992, p. 273). Coincidentally, several treaty numbers repeat the last digit of the year when they were signed, and the repetition creates internal rhyming in some lines when read out loud:

      1871   Treaty No. 1 […]
      1873   Treaty No. 3
      1874   Treaty No. 4
      1875   Treaty No. 5
      1876   Treaty No. 6
      1877   Treaty No. 7 (Weigel, 2020, p. 6)

The rhymed syllables of the treaty numbers, which end each line, further enhance the energetic rhythm of the iambics in the right column, which slows only in the last, conclusive, line, identifying Treaty Eleven. Therefore, were it not for the title of the poem, which speaks of violences behind the list, the stanza and its chronological sequencing could be read as foregrounding the vigorous

progression and achievements of the settler colonial project, accomplished through legal measures: Anthony J. Hall explains that, '[h]istorically, non-Indigenous treaty negotiators believed treaties were inexpensive and convenient ways to strip Aboriginal title (i.e., ownership) from most of the lands in Canada so that resources could be used by settlers,' an interpretation that persists in contemporary times, when treaties are seen as finished 'real estate deals' (Hall, 2011, § 6). Such interpretation centers the settler regime of private property, which sought to and did supersede Indigenous spatial and social organizations. However, as emphasized by Nick Blomley, 'the establishment or redefinition of regimes of property is often predicated upon the mobilization of violence,' both corporeal and discursive, and legitimated by state apparatuses and documents (Blomley, 2003, p. 126). And it is precisely the violence of the transformation of Canada's North-West through dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their lands to replace their spatial and social structures with those of the settlers that Weigel refers to with the phrase 'Acts Respecting Violence to the North-West' as the poem's title. The way the stanza quoted above excludes any details of this violence works to underscore how the damage to as well as grievances of the Indigenous peoples were – and sometimes continue to be – dismissed or obscured in the descriptions of the treaties when interpreted from within the settler colonial mindset, governed by the 'logic of elimination,' to use Wolfe's phrase, and its 'foundational disavowal' of Indigenous people, as Veracini puts it (2011b, p. 5; 2011a, p. 2).

But there is more to the list of years and document numbers. The numbering of the treaties, which eventually came to be known as the Numbered Treaties, points to their repetitiveness as well as the cumulative effects of the repetition. In his detailed account of the signing of Treaties One to Seven, Sheldon Krasowski points out that the text of a specific treaty was typically modelled upon a 'template,' already used for earlier ones; this also includes the text of Treaty One, based on the Manitoulin Island Treaty (1862) and Robinson Huron and Superior Treaties (1850), signed earlier in other territories, although significant changes were made for Treaty One (Krasowski, 2019, p. 25, p. 70, p. 118, p. 162, p. 169, p. 225). He indicates how, for instance, the text of Treaty Three is 'very

similar' to that of Treaty One and Two, with many clauses 'identical' to the clauses formulated in the text of Treaty One provisions (Krasowski, 2019, p. 118). Changes and additions would sometimes be made after the negotiations with the Indigenous groups, usually on the insistence of the latter, resulting also in templates for subsequent treaties becoming more detailed, but unchanged in their fundamentals: thus, to negotiate Treaty Six, the treaty commissioners brought 'a template with blank spaces left for dates of the negotiations, land descriptions, the size of reserves, the amounts of the one-time present and annuity, as well as the value of ammunition and twine' (Krasowski, 2019, p. 225). However, progressively, the negotiations were subdued; for instance, the commissioner appointed to sign Treaty No. 11 was given instructions from the government officials to follow 'the terms set forth [in the treaty] and…no outside promises should be made by you to the Indians' (quoted in Tesar, 2016, § 13). The repetitions of the keywords and formulations thus reveal the consistency of the settler colonial project in its dealings with the Indigenous groups, adhering to the same established procedures in order to achieve the same result, the clearance of the land. Moreover, these repetitions also show how the treaty texts themselves are manifestations of procedural writing, relying on appropriative procedures of recycling pre-existing texts and patterns, but also on erasures and eliminations. Krasowski's account of the treaty signing processes reveals discrepancies between agreements made during the oral negotiations and the formulations in treaty texts: he maintains that, on the part of treaty commissioners, '[t]he main strategy was to discuss only the benefits of treaty and to ignore the liabilities,' although the latter would nonetheless be included into the treaty text, written in English (Krasowski, 2019, p. 2). Notably, it is the written – and then printed – text that will be subsequently relied on as proof of the agreements, sometimes disregarding statements and promises made orally (Krasowski, 2019, p. 2, pp. 8–9; see also Tesar, 2016). Bilingual, the negotiations relied on the services of translators, and Krasowski argues that treaty commissioners selected translators supportive of the government's project, who then consistently 'softened,' obscured, or did not mention the surrender clause, the gist of all the treaties, which required

the Indigenous people to 'cede' and 'surrender' the land completely (2019, p. 272, p. 224, p. 236, p. 275). He also cites distrust on the part of some Indigenous chiefs of the translators, the treaty commissioners, and the treaty texts, as evidenced by some chiefs' demanding copies of the treaty documents (Krasowski, 2019, p. 225, p. 228, p. 261). Krasowski's examination of the eyewitness testimonies seeks to counter the established narrative of cultural differences which sees Indigenous people as incapable of understanding the Western concepts of land ownership. He maintains that the elimination of the surrender clause from the negotiations 'casts doubt on the validity of the complete surrender of Indigenous Lands' (Krasowski, 2019, p. 2, p. 272, p. 276).

Because of these repetitively employed methods, such as reliance on the templates, recycling of the same phrases, consistent obscuring and omissions, the treaties can be seen as instances of language organized procedurally, – as any legal document is, but also not unlike conceptual writing, guided by appropriative procedures (Perloff, 2012, n.p.), – and employed to enact power. The strategies described by Krasowski reveal how the Indigenous people were consistently erased from the negotiation processes, transforming these processes into settler-colonial 'non-encounters,' as theorized by Veracini (2011b, p. 5; 2011a, p. 2). The way Weigel calls the treaties 'acts respecting violence' in the title of his poem is thus not only to underscore how the diplomatic principles of nation-to-nation agreements were defied and subsequently violated, but also to foreground the performative aspect of the treaties, not only as individual acts, but also highlighting the cumulative effects of the appropriative procedures which the treaties both relied on and set off.

In the rest of his chapbook, Weigel resorts to a series of appropriative acts of his own: he samples lines and images from the treaties and other archival documents to allow the samples to speak for themselves, but delinked from their original contexts and structures. Instead, they are placed in relation to one another and to the first-person lyrics of the contemporary Indigenous voice, constructing a palimpsestal structure made through a combination of different material. Weigel's strategy thus follows the principle of remix as discussed by Navas, which 'thrives on the relentless combination of all things possible' (Navas, 2012, p. 6).

In his chapbook, Weigel combines his own text with textual quotations and digital images, thereby regenerating and re-actualizing the data in the samples as they are placed in a different environment and in a potential dialogue with it and with one another. The samples do not have to be numerous to generate this effect: as argued by Navas, on the level of discourse, remix operates 'in the realm of ideas,' as a conceptual strategy, organizing the sampled material according to the agenda of the remixer (Navas, 2012, p. 85, p. 67). The dialogue Weigel's chapbook initiates is meant to traverse time: the archival samples offer an opportunity to revisit and explore specific moments of the past, including those of signing the treaties, in order to address their lasting effects on a contemporary Indigenous person.

The second stanza of 'Acts Respecting Violence to the North-West' is a diagram, elaborating a little on the earlier list of years and treaty numbers. This stanza consists of five rectangles of different size, each representing an event from the previous timeline and accompanied with a caption, such as 'In which The Company sells/ land it does not own,' referring to Rupert Land's Transfer of 1870 (Weigel, 2020, p. 7). This was the transaction whereby the territory was sold to the Canadian government by the Hudson's Bay Company, which subsequently necessitated the signing of the treaties (see McIntosh & Smith, 2019; Dickason, 1992, pp. 267–270), and Weigel's caption points out the unfairness of the deal. The last two of the captions in this section are quotations: one from Treaty No. 6 and another from a report of the Commissioner for the final Treaty No. 11; the sources are indicated immediately after each quotation. The first quotation is part of the surrender clause, which captures the main goal the Canadian government pursued by initiating the treaties and metonymically evokes its source:

> **… surrender   and   yield up to the**
> **Government of the Dominion of Canada,**
> **for Her Majesty the Queen and Her**
> **successors forever…**
> **– *Treaty No. 6***
> **(Weigel, 2020, p. 7)**

Weigel refers to a specific treaty as his source, although the surrender clause was included in the previous treaties and by the time of signing Treaty No. 6 had become formulaic. Weigel thus repeats it once again without modifications, except that he does not quote it in full, which is emphasized by the ellipses. He omits the first two verbs in the series, 'cede' and 'release,' which reiterate the same idea as the others. More importantly, he also omits both the subject of the clause, the Indigenous peoples of specific territories, and the direct object of the surrender, 'all rights, titles and privileges to their hunting grounds' (quoted in Krasowski, 2019, p. 69, p. 72, p. 99, p. 224, p. 266). However, he retains the indirect object, which identifies the recipients and beneficiaries of the surrender, and the emphasis on its permanence, the word 'forever.' Weigel's omissions coincide with and thereby highlight settler colonial erasures of Indigeneity, legitimated through the treaty: in the new settler spatial order, which is meant to stay 'forever,' Indigenous people are constructed as intruders to be rejected. Veracini similarly cites 'the recurring perception that sees indigenous peoples *entering* the settler space (when obviously and historically the opposite is the case)' (Veracini, 2011b, p. 6; emphasis added).

Moreover, the omission of the subject of the clause is also suggestive of silencing the Indigenous negotiators and signatories, reducing them to a non-entity in this encounter. The next quotation, which concludes the poem, reinforces this effect. The text is from forty-five years later and from a document accompanying the final of the Numbered Treaties:

> **…whether they took treaty or not, they were**
> **subject to the   laws of the   Dominion.**
> **– *Report of the Commissioner for***
> ***Treaty No. 11***
> **(Weigel, 2020, p. 7)**

The quotation does not contain a full sentence, either, and its source is not the text of Treaty No. 11, in which the main formulas would be repeated, including the surrender clause, but some terms are 'vaguer than others, particularly in relation to agriculture and education' (Tesar, 2016). In this case, the quotation is from

a source which would be unknown to the Indigenous signatories. Omitted from the quotation could be a phrase identifying a speech act undertaken by the commissioner, such as 'I explained,' but what is quoted is enough to imply complications during the negotiations. In his account of the signing of Treaty No. 11, Alex Tesar notes that several Indigenous chiefs were initially 'hesitant' or even 'dismissive' of it, aware of the grievances of Indigenous communities which had signed treaties earlier (Tesar, 2016, § 14, § 20). The quotation Weigel uses exposes the disregard for Indigenous people's positions as well as how completely settler colonial procedures had overridden and superseded Indigenous voices over the course of fifty years, and how the treaties were progressively reduced to a mere formality. Placed one after another, these samples expose what Veracini describes as settler colonialism's 'foundational disavowal' of Indigenous presence (2011b, p. 5; 2011a, p. 2). A treaty presupposes the presence of and agreement between several parties, and Indigenous nations did and continue to interpret the treaties signed with representatives of Canada's government on behalf of the British Crown as nation-to-nation agreements (Hall, 2011). However, the procedures enacted by the treaties, as exposed by Weigel through his choice of the quotations, consistently stage a settler colonial 'non-encounter,' to use Veracini's phrase (2011b, p. 5; 2011a, p. 2).

Notably, there is no commentary to the quotations in Weigel's chapbook. He merely displays them and allows them to speak for themselves and to each other, and it is the combination in which they are placed, together with the omissions Weigel introduces, that helps elicit the meaning bestowed by the poem's title, 'acts respecting violence,' not recognized in the original documents at the moment of their signing. In his discussion of quotational practices in literature and arts, Patrick Greaney argues that '[q]uotation's transformation of its sources is allegorical. It takes away and endows meaning as it places texts in new contexts' (Greaney, 2014, p. 3). Navas similarly emphasizes allegory in remix, its meta-level, whereby the remixed version challenges the original through the reworkings performed on it, but simultaneously always acknowledges the original and exists in relation to it and its meaning (Navas, 2007, pp. 66–67). Weigel's chapbook exploits

precisely this doubling of meaning – treaties turned 'acts respecting violence' – which the quotations generate and which allows him to foreground the ongoing grasp the past acts and deeds have on the present. His careful documentation of the sources of his quotations also suggests how complicated extricating from the structures which these documents created to last 'forever' would be.

The pattern of refraining from commentary and allowing the quotations to speak for themselves is used with all the archival samples which Weigel includes, except for the two photographs, which are followed up with lengthy descriptions. He does not integrate the quotations into the text of his own poems, either, setting them off through formatting and thereby establishing distance between the voices from the past and the first-person voice in the poems. Notably, too, the textual quotations all are from the colonial sources, further highlighting the silencing of Indigenous voices in archival documents. As a preface to the poem 'pêhonân,' he quotes the treaty commissioner Alexander Morris promising to make a copy of the Treaty No. 6 to the Indigenous signatories (Weigel, 2020, p. 11). The source of two remaining quotations is Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister (1867–73, 1878–91), 'the nation builder,' and the one orchestrating Canada's settler colonial expansion into the North-West (see Johnson, 2013). These quotations are related to the Pacific Scandal of 1872–1873, when Macdonald and several members of his cabinet were accused of accepting money from a shipping magnate in exchange for the contract to build the Canadian Pacific Railway, which was one of the reasons the government needed to appropriate the Indigenous land (Johnson, 2013, § 14; McIntosh et al., 2006). Weigel quotes the telegram in which Macdonald demands another payment as well as his evasive and rather incoherent explanation of the demand when he testified in front of the parliamentary committee, which deposed him from the office, the post he resumed five years later (Weigel, 2020, p. 11, p. 12, p. 13). Selecting and singling out these quotations, which are given a separate page each and introduced by titles and brief contextualizing introductions, Weigel reduces the figure of 'the nation builder' Macdonald to his corrupt dealings, erasing even his role as Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1878 to 1887. The quotations are not arranged

chronologically: Treaty No. 6 was signed after the scandal and when Macdonald was not the prime minister, but this arrangement only highlights that settler colonialism as a structure is not dependent on individual figures, deeds, or incidents.

Each of these three quotations foregrounds an act performed through language: a promise by Morris, a demand, and an obfuscation of facts by Macdonald. Morris's promise to deliver the Indigenous chiefs a copy of the treaty, which could be seen as a benevolent act, was not fulfilled, as Weigel explains in his earlier chapbook, citing personal communication with L. Quirk (Weigel, 2019, p. 5). In *It Was Treaty/ It was Me*, he quotes only the promise, but the subsequent quotations of Macdonald's words, revealing the government's machinations, and the context which the previous quotations have built, are enough to imply the breaking of the promise and point out another form of erasure, that of the Indigenous community being denied access to the document which fundamentally transformed their lives. With each quotation, Weigel revisits the past, having chosen to speak about it in the words of settler colonial officials rather than in the voices of Indigenous participants in the events. This is suggestive of the fact that their words were not always recorded in writing, except reported in the accounts by treaty commissioners and other officials; thus, they are not always possible to retrace, as argued by, for instance, Adams-Campbell et al. (2015, p. 110), Frazer and Todd (2016, p. 35, p. 37, p. 39), or Hodes (2020, p. 63). Weigel does not attempt to recreate the voices of the Indigenous people in order to counter this form of archival violence, not even in the poems which speak about Indigenous participants in the events or to them, as, for instance in the following lines, in which he imagines an Indigenous signatory during the negotiations and signing:

> *touch the pencil*
> *make your mark*
> *negotiate*
> *agree* (Weigel, 2020, p. 11; original emphasis)

Touching the pen of the clerk, who would then put an X on the document, or making a mark on the parchment or chapter were the ways Indigenous Chiefs signed treaty documents: these

replaced the earlier practice of drawing their totems or seals (Krasowski, 2019, p. 70, p. 75, p. 268, p. 269; Tesar, 2016). Krasowski argues that touching the pen was Canada's usual negotiating strategy 'to distance the Chiefs and headmen from the written version of the treaty,' another move suggestive of sequestering information and denying Indigenous people equal participation, but also erase their presence from the manuscripts of the treaties (Krasowski, 2019, p. 9).

Nonetheless, it is signatures that are Weigel's way of marking Indigenous presence. Two poems, '1876: Treaty No. 6' and '1921: Treaty No. 11' are preceded by digitalized images of signatures copied from the treaty documents; each image is placed in the middle of the page preceding the relevant poem and identified as signatures of 'my uncle' and 'Grandfather' (Weigel, 2020, p. 15, p. 17). In the first case, the signature is that of James McKay, a Métis politician, fur trader, and guide, who had also worked for the Hudson's Bay Company; he was a commissioner for Treaties No. 1, 2, and 5, and assisted with negotiating and interpreting Treaties No. 4 and 6 (Krasowski, 2019, p. 221, especially pp. 175–227 on MacKay's role in the signing of Treaty No. 6). Another signature is by Métis J. A. R. Balsillie, who signed Treaty No. 11 as a witness, as Weigel explains in an earlier poem (Weigel, 2019, p. 3). In both poems, Weigel describes the act of signing very briefly. '1921: Treaty No. 11' begins:

> my lungs are full of spruce trees
> but otherwise I am empty,
> I am here to witness:
>
> 1921 and Grandfather working for the Company in Fort Providence
> it is June and that far north the sun would not set on the British Empire
> he signs the treaty with a heavy ink (Weigel, 2020, p. 17).

The lines offer only external focalization on Grandfather, but merely on the act of signing. There are deliberately no attempts to imagine the moment from his perspective and include his thoughts or emotions of signing the treaty. The contemporary speaker acknowledges being able to assume only the role of a witness. Nonetheless, the description and particularly the signature

itself, albeit silent, assert a very real presence of Balsillie in that moment, as they do in the case of McKay (Weigel, 2020, pp. 14–15). That Weigel centers two Métis witnesses rather than signatories is suggestive of how diverse and complex the participation of Métis and Indigenous peoples in the dealings with settler colonial structures was. Neither McKay nor Balsillie was a member of the Indigenous communities whose territories were covered by the respective treaties, yet the first-person speaker's reference to the family lineage as well as the absence of signatures by the Indigenous negotiators place the focus on the two men. Weigel's emphasis in selecting the archival samples seems to be specifically on the physical marks left by the people themselves: their own words or, like in this case, signatures; he does not resort to listing, for instance, the names of the Indigenous signatories, which were written down by the clerks. He seeks to uncover traces of very real physical presence to undo the numerous erasures of Indigenous presence during the process.

To enhance this effect, on the next page, Weigel also includes a family photograph of the Balsillies, digitally remastered as is the photograph of Queen Victoria's throne room on an earlier page (Weigel, 2020, p. 8, p. 18). The two photographs are different precisely in how they mark human presence. The photograph of the throne room is devoid of people and the focus is on the luxury of the objects in it, which Weigel's digital alterations obscure, erasing the details and generating the effect of an abstract picture; Queen Victoria, in whose name the majority of the Numbered Treaties were signed, is evoked metonymically, through the image of the throne. By contrast, the photograph of Balsillie's family asserts the very physical presence of the persons, two adults and four children, whom it portrays, although very similar digital alterations which Weigel executes defy the curious gaze of the outsider. But even if their presence is reasserted, Weigel writes on the next page: 'I've never seen the photo. Neither has my father or anyone else in my family. I found it online. The image has an item number and subject taxonomy links to "Family and personal life" and "Aboriginal Peoples." / I assume it sits in a box on a shelf' (Weigel, 2020, p. 19). Thus, although the inclusion of the photograph emphasizes the continuity of the family line, Weigel points out another act of erasure, echoing that of not delivering a copy

of Treaty No. 6 to the signatories and showcasing how Indigenous people are deprived even of items of personal history. The lines about the photograph also recall a previous poem, which recounts the speaker seeing the original parchment of Treaty No. 6; like the family photograph, this document is also in the possession of the archives of the University of Alberta:

> Dreamt I was in a library again,
> walking down the stairs into the basement
> walking down the stairs into the earth.
> I see the treaty parchment on a wooden table,
> it comes as no surprise the land herself holds this knowledge.
> (Weigel, 2020, p. 15)

In both cases, Weigel foregrounds the restricting of the items to the archival holdings and complicating access to them in their physical form. He also shows how the labelling and classifying of items in archival database indexes reiterate the casting Indigenous difference as cultural and generic – 'Aboriginal Peoples' – obscuring individual stories and experiences, but also their legal rights, as Adams-Campbell et al. emphasize (2015, p. 111). These forms of depersonalized and depersonalizing archival violence are contrasted with the speaker's father's visceral reaction to its effects when shown the photograph: 'he got quiet, tears in his eyes and with his hand held to his face'; the same contrast is also implied by the speaker's recurrent dreams of being in the library which contains these archival documents (Weigel, 2020, p. 15, p. 17, p. 19).

Greaney argues that 'quotational works reveal more than the repeatability of this or that text or image; they also indicate the repeatability of the moment of emergence of the original, the moment of the original's origination'; in other words, '[q]uotation reopens cases that seemed closed' (Greaney, 2014, p. 6, p. 7). Assembling and combining the archival samples related to the history of signing the Numbered Treaties, Weigel, too, seeks to reopen the deals between Canada and Indigenous nations, which are frequently seen as finished but whose effects are ongoing and disquieting: they are metaphorized in Weigel's poems as physical discomfort, which needs to be addressed. However, quotation prevents revisioning and restricts one from launching into speculative scenarios of alternative pasts. Weigel does not attempt that. The

principle of remix followed in his book, that of 'combination of all things possible,' to use Navas' phrase (2012, p. 6), allows Weigel to reassemble some of the participants of the treaty processes in the space of the book, observed also by a contemporary figure as a witness. This assembly is neither full nor conclusive: remix is never finite, and a specific configuration that is produced is but a 'single enunciation' of how the sources might be sampled and arranged (O'Neil, 2006, p. 20, p. 23). Weigel's chapbook, too, does not propose any resolution. Instead, it initiates an uncovering what settler colonial structures – officials and archives – have obscured, erased, or glossed over, and gestures towards the need, now, to fill in the gaps.

Jordan Abel's *Injun*: DJing with pulp fiction

Jordan Abel's poetry book *Injun* (2016), a reworking of a collection of American Westerns, also navigates the space encroached upon by settler colonialism, but the title presupposes centering the racialized Indigenous figure. The setting in this book is not as specific as the one constructed in Weigel's *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me*, in which he carefully documents dates and, implicitly, places. In Abel's *Injun*, sparsely used placenames, namely Nevada and Yuma, link the poems to the western parts of the American Southwest (Abel, 2016, p. 8, p. 27). Together with such words as 'discovery' or the reiterated 'frontier' (Abel, 2016, p. 3, p. 8, p. 26, p. 32, p. 38), these placenames metonymically evoke the white settlement of the territories west of the Mississippi River after the American Civil War, when the white settlers, aided by the US cavalry, subdued the Indigenous people and appropriated their lands (Britannica). The poem labeled f) in the first section of Abel's *Injun*, closes with these lines, focused on unidentified 'them':

    if they had dreamed of nights
    if they had eyes over fists

    no free knotted nevada
    in the pockets of soldiers

    or grubbed up injuns
    in the glean of discovery[8] (Abel, 2016, p. 8)

z)

sp ru ng sh or e

by the mu d

e xasp   erat e   d
wild ey ed and
and lea ves m e

o f the riv er

th e fing ers
th at br eak s

of title[27] and po   ssess i o n[28]
an   interc our se

a   n d w earines s
p lay of p rinci ples
a s tea mham mer

Figure 1. visualization of the poem of Abel (Abel, 2016, p. 28; image reproduced courtesy of the writer).

Despite the negative determiner 'no' at the beginning of the third line, the imagery in the stanzas evokes the history of the territory: its discovery and appropriation – its 'pocketing.' The binary of soldiers and 'injuns' is suggestive of a violent clash between a state sanctioned military force and civilians and recalls the history of Plain Wars. The motif of violence is further developed in the last couplet, which speaks of physical removal – digging up – of 'injuns' from the earth like leftovers after the harvest, in this case, that of discovery, which is emphasized by superscribing the word with an endnote mark: 'discovery'.[8] Differently from the title of the book, the poem – like many others in the section – uses the plural form 'injuns,' which implies the repetition of violent acts rather than a single story and reiterates the same motif of the compulsion to eliminate the Indigenous presence that drives settler colonialism.

The final poem labeled z) in the same section, – turned upside down by Abel, as are several other poems, – reinforces the motif of the appropriation of the land, the ultimate goal of settler colonialism (see Figure 1). The poem speaks unambiguously about

violence inflicted on the land: the image of 'break[ing]/ the fingers/ of the river,' enhanced by words themselves broken up in ways that defy familiar structures such as syllables, is suggestive of torture. The river is personified to foreground its vulnerability, contrasting it with the opening image of a steam hammer, which implies crushing force, but also industrial processes, mechanical, depersonalized, and repetitive. Through the parallel structure used in the first two stanzas of Abel's poem, the image of the steam hammer is also linked to 'an intercourse/ of title[27] and possession'[28] and the violence they visit on the river. That the two nouns, 'title' and 'possession,' are superscribed with endnote marks further highlights their status as keywords in the poem. The poem thus underscores how the property regime and law work together and persistently to rearrange the land that has been appropriated. These are the same motifs Weigel focuses on in his exploration of the Indigenous treaties and the legal procedures accompanying them. In Abel's poem, too, the image of the steam hammer metaphorizes the workings of the settler colonial machine, its 'play of principles' and its relentless procedures, which leave the first-person speaker-witness, 'wild eyed and/ exasperated,' unable to interfere. This is the final poem in the sequence, and it does not gesture towards a possible way of halting or countering them.

Imagist and metaphorical, Abel's poems are also much more explicit about the acts of violence performed onto Indigenous land and body than Weigel's poems, in which the latter exposes the various obfuscations undertaken by settler colonial structures to cover up their dishonesties and violent acts. But Abel's descriptions, too, are restricted by the material he uses: all poems in *Injun*, including the two discussed above, are, in their entirety, composed of found language: their vocabulary is from the source material Abel appropriates and 'repurposes,' to borrow Dworkin's phrasing (Dworkin, 2010, p. xliii). While Weigel works with samples from legal and governmental documents, Abel selects his data from a different type of archive, a literary database. Like in his previous book *Un/Inhabited* (2014), in *Injun*, Abel reworks the same collection of ninety-one popular novels of the Western genre, accessible on Project Gutenberg, which he data-mines and

then subjects the findings to a series of cut-ups and mash-ups, or, put otherwise, textual remixes. *Un/Inhabited* explores the processes of the settler take-over of Indigenous lands (for a more detailed discussion of the book, see e.g. Ritter, 2014; Aurylaite, 2017), and Abel uses rather mechanical procedures of erasure to expose the violences behind the creation of what is now North American space. In *Injun*, on the other hand, Abel relies on methods which allow for more attention to textual details and specific experiences navigating the transformed space. For *Injun*, as Abel explains in the section of the book 'Process,' he copy-pasted the texts of the novels into a single file to come up with a bulk of text, obliterating the borders between individual works, and then used Ctrl+F to isolate the sentences containing the racial slur 'injun.' It is these sentences sampled from the novels that are the material – both textual and physical – out of which Abel shaped *Injun*: he copy-pasted the sentences into a separate file, printed the resulting twenty-six pages, and then cut them up in various ways, and moved separate words, phrases, or letters around, arranging them into particular combinations to construct twenty-six lyrics as well as the section 'Notes' to them and 'Appendix' (Abel, 2016, p. 83). In this transformation of multiple prose narratives into poems, Abel thus can be seen as DJing with the samples from the source texts – isolating them and physically moving them to recombine into lines and stanzas according to a series of poetic conventions as well as his own ideas. The result is a remix of the sources, so radical that the poems he composed could be read as completely original texts were it not for the sections 'Sources' and 'Process' in his book (Abel, 2016, pp. 79–82, p. 83).

The main part of the book is a poem sequence with the same title, 'Injun,' which consists of a series of twenty-six individual lyrics. While Weigel's book is punctuated with dates, linking present experiences to moments of the past, Abel labels each poem with a letter instead of a title, arranging them alphabetically, from a) to z), and seemingly imposing an order onto the poems which is more fixed than Weigel's narrative present continuously interrupted by flashbacks into the past. The alphabetical order chosen by Abel has ideological implications: as Jacquelyn Ardam notes in her analysis of the ways the alphabet is used in conceptual writing,

'[i]n almost all literary texts, the [alphabetical] sequence functions as a metaphor for order or power, the symbolic register, or even for civilization itself' (Ardam, 2014, p. 138, p. 139). Employed in Abel's 'Injun,' the English alphabetical sequence could be expected to expose its familiar metaphorical load, particularly since the Westerns, out of whose samples 'Injun' is composed, celebrate the advancement of settler colonial culture and establishment of its structures (Mardsen, 1978; McMahon & Csaki, 2010). These included language, along with its categories of thought: under the settler colonial regime, English was imposed upon Indigenous peoples through a series of assimilationist policies, glossed as the 'civilizing mission' (see e.g. Dickason, 1992). On the other hand, the a) to z) labels seemingly entice the reader to fall for the promise of the ABCs to explain the basics of the subject matter at hand, the 'Injun.' However, this is a tease: although labelled alphabetically, the lyrics do not yield to the familiar metaphorical meanings of the sequence. Unlike popular Western novels, the sequence does not develop a traceable storyline, which would include a resolution of conflicts and tensions, nor does it construct a recognizable character or characters, whose development could be followed, and a culmination or resolution identified. There is not even a consistent narrator as the speaking voice shifts from the third to first person. Moreover, due to Abel's methods of rearranging his samples, some lyrics are not even readable in the traditional sense, composed merely of separate letters or their clusters which are impossible to arrange into readable sequences (Abel, 2016, pp. 18–21). As a result, the alphabetical structure is imposed upon a series of texts which defy conventional coherence as well as refuse to provide a transparent and unproblematic description, thereby escaping the grasp of the alphabet's metaphorical ordering.

Nonetheless, there is a structure to Abel's sequence of lyrics, but it is not linked to the alphabet, which is deprived of its power to set hierarchies and mark progression and is reduced to merely labelling the lyrics. The sequence is thus alphabetized, but not alphabetical, and the function of the alphabet is metonymical, that of 'pure form' devoid of hierarchical structures, to use Ardam's phrasing: 'Z isn't worth more than A is. It's just further along' (Ardam, 2014, p. 139).

p)

g

cl   f

b loody[20]
te eth

o

kr   sc   out

p aleface   a

n a

c   r

s

si   lvertip

b

g   e
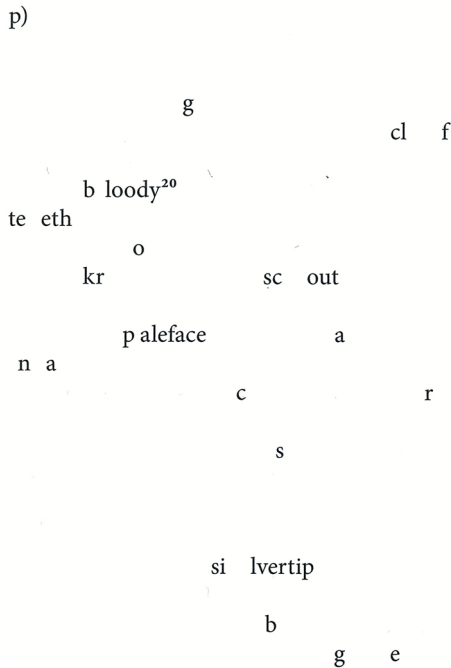
Figure 2. visualization of the poem of Abel (Abel, 2016, p. 18; image reproduced courtesy of the writer).

The structure that Abel creates in his sequence is, too, the most evident in the forms and shapes of the poems, ranging from compact and conventional stanzas to letters dispersed all over a page, when the text itself falls apart. The sequence opens with several poems made of five neat couplets each, often employing parallel structures and rather regular rhythm (e.g. the poem f) discussed earlier), and focusing on the nameless 'he.' It is only with the poem g) that Abel starts playing with format by indenting some lines and introducing spaces within them, or later adding more lines to stanzas; with the poem m), some words start breaking up into arbitrary clusters of letters – not syllables, – and with n), the poems turn into concrete poetry, with words broken apart into clusters of or mere letters, which are dispersed on pages, as for instance in the poem p) (see Figure 2).

Sometimes, not a single word can be pieced together in an entire poem as, for instance, in the poem q) (Abel, 2016, p. 19). Thus, while the alphabetical sequence progresses, the poems increasingly

disintegrate until they are reduced to bare sounds and become completely unreadable. Moreover, starting with the poem r), that is, almost two thirds of the way into the sequence, the reader has to turn the book upside down, as some lines, and then entire poems are printed upside down. Notably, for these inverted poems, the letter labels are placed below the text, where they are reduced to the status of follow-ups rather than guiding signs. Notably, too, despite the inversion, starting with the poem t), the letters and syllables in the remaining poems can be connected back to words, and thus read, although individual words remain broken up into clusters of letters. More importantly, it is in this inverted part of the sequence that the third person voice, describing the nameless 'he,' 'them,' and 'injuns,' gives way to the first-person speaker: instead of remaining an object of description, as is typically the case in the Western, the 'injun' acquires a voice: '*he* heard snatches of comment / going up from the river bank' turns into 'black hair frontier / *i* hear your / dead heroes' (Abel, 2016, p. 4, p. 26; emphasis added). With this move, the shapes of the poems also start clinging back, and the layout of the final poem z), albeit with spaces within lines and printed upside down, once again resembles that a poem, composed as it is of six stanzas. Nonetheless, the poem itself, describing 'a steam hammer/ play of principles,' discussed earlier in this section, does not offer any resolution or conclusion. The letter labels given to the individual lyrics prove not to be suggestive of or responsive to these changes in shape and form, and thereby devoid of their organizational power, reduced to an arbitrary marker: the alphabetization fails to deliver the ABCs of the title subject.

Simultaneously, Abel implies that his is but one way of reconfiguring the samples from the novels: as is always the case with remixes of appropriated material, neither the images in, nor the formatting of his poems is necessarily finite: the sampled sentences can be further rearranged into new combinations or subjected to still other methods, including by Abel himself. In 'Process,' he himself acknowledges the arbitrariness behind his compositions:

> Sometimes I would cut up a page into three- to five-word clusters. Sometimes I would cut up a page without looking. Sometimes I would rearrange the pieces until something sounded right.

Sometimes I would just write down how the pieces fell together (Abel, 2016, p. 83).

Abel chooses to 'repurpose' the language that is not his own, extricating it from its familiar structures – a popular narrative genre – which seem finite and fixed when printed on a page, but which can become suddenly malleable when taken apart. Doing this, he opens the source texts for new re-readings, but deliberately limits what he might say by choosing to be a re-arranger, a DJ, and thus restricted by the amount of the source material as well as by the methods used, instead of undertaking a free improvisation on the motifs the genre hosts and perpetuates. Abel's thus is a much more radical reworking and repurposing of the sources than Weigel's, who sets out, identifies, and documents each borrowed sample, making the structure of the combination of items in his book clearly visible. Abel's poems are composed out of sampled sentences which have been reduced to textual mater, which in turn, has invited a series of physical and rather violent gestures and manipulations in dealing with it, akin to what practitioners and theorists of conceptual writing such as Goldsmith and Dworkin espouse (Goldsmith, 2010, p. xxi, p. xviii, p. xix; Dworkin, 2010, p. xxxvi, p. xlii). As a result of these manipulations, not only are the sampled sentences divorced from their contexts, meanings, and authors, but also completely transformed, reduced to words and phrases, sometimes mere letters.

Because Abel formats many of these poems in rather conventional ways and because many are readable in the traditional sense, it is rather easy to yield to the pleasures and frustrations of close reading them as individual – and original – texts. However, recognizing the source is essential in remix, and the rearranged texts need to be read through a palimpsestal presence of their source(s) in order to expose linkages and tensions between them, implicitly or explicitly suggestive of the remixer's agenda (O'Neil, 2006, p. 20; Navas, 2012, p. 67). Abel, too, dutifully lists the sources, all the novels used for the project, as well as the sampled sentences, a compilation of which is included as an 'Appendix' in his book (Abel, 2016, pp. 61–78). Notably, he works with a body of source texts rather than focusing on a specific novel, which

allows him to foreground how genres are driven by patterns and repetitions. Steve Neale famously states: 'genres are instances of repetition and difference' (Neale, 2021, p. 61). However, the way Abel reduces the appropriated novels to textual matter disregards the aspect of difference. He searches for reiterations, those of the word 'injun' as well as of some other words, such as 'frontier,' 'discovery,' 'scalped,' 'squaw' or 'West,' which he highlights with endnote marks in the poems and whose concordance lines, also sampled from the same novels, he collects in the section 'Notes' to foreground the contexts in which they appear (Abel, 2016, pp. 29–58). Moreover, Abel frequently uses more than one novel by the same writer, sometimes even more than ten, as is the case with B. M. Bower's and Zane Grey's texts. This way, not unlike Weigel in *It Was Treaty/ It Was Me*, who uncovers the repetitive procedures of legal writing, Abel, too, foregrounds repetition, over time: the novels he uses were published over the period between the last decades of the 19th and the middle of the 20th centuries, when the genre's popularity in the format of the novel was at its peak (Abel, 2016, pp. 79–82; Britannica). Abel's emphasis is thus on the genre as a repository of serialized and patterned stories, types, words, and images – a literary archive, which can be data-mined in very technical ways and the found data can then be subjected to various analyses and rearrangements.

In her discussion of genres, Wai Chee Dimock notes how genres amass and recycle: she foregrounds 'the activity here as cumulative reuse, an alluvial process, sedimentary as well as migratory. The field is profoundly unoriginal in this cumulative sense' (Dimock, 2007, p. 1380). Abel's tracking of specific vocabulary in the texts published over almost a century points out exactly that, underscoring how such reiterations and repetitions solidify into recognizable and congealed phrases, images, and representations. Moreover, as argued by John Frow, through repetitions and accumulations, as repositories of images, motifs, and storylines, genres 'actively generate and shape the knowledge of the world' (Frow, 2007, p. 2). Frow sees genre as 'a form of symbolic action: the generic organization of language, images, gestures, and sounds makes things happen by actively shaping the way we understand the world' (Frow, 2007, p. 2). Addressing the Western specifically,

Michael T. Mardsen underscores precisely the fantasy which the genre constructed and has perpetuated: in the Western, the West is shown 'not as it was won, but as it should have been won'; he also emphasizes persistent repetitions within and of the genre narratives when he speaks about 'the ritualistic retelling of the winning of the West' in order to bolster the foundational narrative of the settler colonial country (Mardsen, 1978, p. 203). Operating within the frame of the settler colonial culture, the Western produced, as Jennifer L. McMahon and B. Steve Csaki highlight, 'a polemical representation of the changing landscape of American political life,' a representation, which, 'captivat[ing] the popular imagination,' encouraged and fueled the settlement ideologically (McMahon & Csaki, 2010, p. 7) and was 'instrumental in nullifying guilt related to [Indigenous] genocide,' as Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz argues about the genre's predecessors, James Fenimore Cooper's novels (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, p. 107). In the world constructed by the Western, the focus is on the emerging and developing settler society, and 'the final outcome is never in question, only the means to reach the outcome are,' as Mardsen puts it (1978, p. 205). This world is shaped by and perpetuates the structure of the settler colonial 'non-encounter,' to use Veracini's term, in which the Indigenous figure is an unwanted intruder in the settler space or already 'reduced to reminiscence' (Veracini, 2011a, p. 2; Veracini, 2011b, pp. 5–6). The Western is thus another 'story of America that depends upon vanishing the Indian as part of its denouement,' a story in which the central role is assumed by settlers and various subsequent arrivals (Byrd, 2014, p. 55).

Abel's *Injun* undertakes to counter such reductions and erasures, centering the Indigenous figure, whom settler colonialism seeks to eliminate and whom the conventional Western, accordingly, subjects to 'purely formulaic treatment,' as Mardsen puts it, again underscoring the repetitiveness of the representations and noting that, in these texts, the Indigenous figure is 'both maligned and beatified but not understood' (Mardsen, 1978, p. 212, p. 213). Abel's book seeks to contest these representations in the Westerns, but his strategy is not to engage in a revisionist rewriting of them or propose alternatives. In his analysis of *Injun*, Alois Sieben (2021) makes a similar point about Abel refusing to

produce any new representations of Indigeneity for the settler-colonial gaze; Sieben argues that, instead, Abel's book engages in a mediation between Indigenous and settler 'modes of vision' as it is constructed out of colonial sources but refuses both to yield to their logic and to uncover the Indigeneity that settler colonial fabrications, manifest in the Westerns, concealed and worked to erase (Sieben, 2021, n.p.).

Defying the expectations of the readers enticed by the alphabetization of the poem sequence, seemingly promising the ABCs of the subject matter, the 'Injun' of its title, Abel sets out to destabilize the formulas surrounding the Indigenous figure, perpetuated by the genre of the Western. This becomes clear with the very first poem a) of the sequence, which opens with the motif of the 'imaginary Indian,' which Westerns participated in constructing and popularizing:

> he played injun in gods country
> where boys proved themselves clean
>
> dumb beasts who could cut fire
> out of the whitest[1] sand
>
> he played english across the trail
> where girls turned plum wild
>
> garlic and strained words
> through the window of night
>
> he spoke through numb lips and
> breathed frontier[2] (Abel, 2016, p. 3)

The poem focuses on the nameless 'he' and centers the contrast between the acts of 'play[ing] injun' and 'play[ing] english.' This underscores how the former phrase is a strong collocation and conjures up a set of familiar stereotypical images, whereas the latter combination of words, grammatically identical, is neither habitual nor informative on its own, assembled by Abel precisely to expose the constructedness of both. 'Playing Indian' is a performance undertaken by non-Indigenous persons (on the concept and practice of 'playing Indian,' see Deloria, 1998; Francis, 1992). For his poem, Abel took the phrase 'played injun' directly from one of the

sentences he had sourced, easily traceable in the 'Appendix,' which contains all sampled sentences, with the word 'Injun' erased, retaining the gap. The first instance of the phrase in the Appendix, likely to have been used for this first poem of the sequence, also focuses on a non-Indigenous person: 'He talked to the horses; he sang songs; he *played* ; and that Christmas was a merry one, for the debt was paid and our little widow had beef to throw to the dogs' (quoted in Abel, 2016, p. 61; emphasis added). The sentence creates the atmosphere of simple but 'merry' domesticity in a settler space cleansed of the disturbing Indigenous presence, which is now safely reduced to a child's play. In Abel's poem, however, the nameless 'he,' who remains unidentified in the poem sequence, performs both 'injun' and 'english' with apparent ease, disturbing the conventional understanding of the concept, for the poem does not focus on a non-Indigenous character. Moreover, the performance disturbs the racialized binary opposition, also perpetuated in the Westerns, which construes the two categories, Indigeneity and Europeanness, as incompatible in the space of settler colonialism: this split is also shown through the image of the trail across which the poem's 'he' assumes a different role. Moreover, by juxtaposing the racial category 'injun' and the nationality 'english,' the poem also foregrounds how the former itself is a fabrication created by settler colonialism: a slurred alteration of 'Indian,' it derives from a misnomer attributed to Columbus, manifesting the refusal to acknowledge differences between and thus the existence of distinct Indigenous nations and cultures as well as their rootedness in specific places (see e.g. Younging, 2018, p. 61). As such, the label is a manifestation of discursive violence, an erasure of individual differences and denial of Indigenous nationhood. By contrast, creating their own national identity is one of the goals settler societies pursue. It is also against this label of the 'Indian' that the settler society consolidates and defines itself, and therefore insists on reinstating the binary structure (Wolfe, 1999, p. 179). Notably, in addition to persisting in colloquial usage in contemporary North American societies, the label 'Indian' has also been used in Canadian federal government's legal documents, such as the Indian Act, which is still in force today, under the same name (see e.g. Younging, 2018, p. 61).

'In fact, there may well be no such thing as an Indian,' as Daniel Francis aptly puts it, arguing that the 'Indian' is a projection of settler 'hopes, fears, and prejudices' (Francis, 1992, p. 4, p. 5). Francis' discussion of the 'Indian' as a fantasy is in line with what Patrick Wolfe terms 'repressive authenticity,' defined as a form of romantic stereotyping of Indigeneity, transposing it to the pre-contact past, which renders real 'historical Indigenous people who do not embody the construction' as '*in*authentic' (Wolfe, 1999, p. 179). The way the nameless 'he' in Abel's poem performs both 'injun' and 'english' can be indicative of the two modes settler colonialism allows Indigenous people to inhabit, that of the 'Indian' as a spectacle, which extends to contemporary practices of commodifying Indigenous imagery, as Alois Sieben points out (Sieben, 2021, n.p.), and that of assimilation into settler society. However, both modes are 'play' for Abel's character, which suggests that the 'he' cannot be contained by either category or construct. Indeed, other images in the poem foreground physicality: 'boys proved themselves clean'; 'girls turned plum wild'; 'he spoke through numb lips/ and breathed frontier[2]' (Abel, 2016, p. 3). Just like 'he played english,' most words in these lines do not collocate, and the phrases are deliberately opaque, yet they target familiar imagery: for instance, the girls turn 'plum wild,' disturbing the stereotypical linking of Indigeneity and savagery, which would reign beyond the frontier; the nameless 'he' breathes the latter, which, rather ambiguously, can suggest both taking in its air and the impression of it that the 'he' gives. It is this image of the frontier, another recurrent image in the Western, that disturbs the potentially empowering reading of the motif of playing as a refusal to be contained by the categories of settler colonial thought. The reference to the frontier evokes the clash between Indigeneity and settler colonial advancement, and the physical violence accompanying the process. The endnote number added to the word – 'frontier[2]' – leads the reader to the 'Notes' section, in which Abel lists eighteen concordance lines sampled from the sourced sentences; most lines comprise only fragments of sentences, but each contains the word 'frontier,' highlighted and centered to form a column on the page (see Figure 3).

2)

ige. San Antonio at this time was a **frontier** village, with a mixed popu
s and asked none in return. In this **frontier** village at a late hour one ni
passing glance. Interesting as this **frontier** life was to the young man,
the work before them. There was a **frontier** on the south and west of ov
edit due for guarding this western **frontier** against the Indians and ma
e soil, as a boy the guardian of the **frontier** was expert in the use of fir
ds. In the use of that arbiter of the **frontier**, the six-shooter, they were a
near to hear him. His years on the **frontier** were rich in experience, th
ave it to the stronger republic. This **frontier** on the south has undergon
unties in Texas while it was yet the **frontier**, and by industry and econc
n the early days usually graced the **frontier** towns with their presence.
inner said that he had been on the **frontier** some little time, and that t
at the Ford was quite a pretentious **frontier** village of the squatter type
lassify him at a passing glance as a **frontier** gambler. As we turned awa
ern trail. On coming opposite that **frontier** village, Parent and I took t
another trail drover. Sutton was a **frontier** advocate, alike popular wit
d had grown into manhood on the **frontier**. Sponsilier was likewise ple
ad herd. It was a unique posse. Old **frontier**smen, with patriarchal bea

Figure 3. visualization of the poem of Abel (Abel, 2016, p. 32; image reproduced courtesy of the writer).

In this way, the endnote mark used in the poem guides the reader to the contexts in which the target word operates in the original sources. Formulated from the perspective of settlers, most speak about the temporariness of the frontier, implying the inevitable settler take-over, as in 'San Antonio at this time was a **frontier** village, with a mixed popu' or 'in Texas while it was a **frontier**, and by industry and.' Some, however, speak directly about the clash with Indigenous people, perceived as a threat, for instance: 'due for guarding this western frontier against the Indians and ma' (Abel, 2016, p. 32; original emphasis). In these contexts, the poem's last line 'he breathed frontier,' preceded by such phrases as 'strained words' and 'numb lips,' suggestive of tension and physical discomfort, complicates the earlier 'play.' The frontier is construed as a lived physical experience, disquieting, dangerous, and exhausting due to its precarious state, rather than romanticized, as is typical in the Western (Mardsen, 1978, p. 204).

The motif of the play is reiterated in several other poems, with explicitly darker connotations. For instance, poem l) concludes:

> *you can see it for yourself*
>   *lets play   injun*
>
> *and clean ourselves*
>   *off the   land*
>
> same old   gun handed business[16]
>   served up
>
> on the hunt tracks
>   of strangers
>   (Abel, 2016, p. 14; original emphasis)

Here, in the words of the unidentified speaker, 'play[ing] injun' is directly linked to physical removal rather than an exoticized performance. The violence of the act is further enhanced in the last stanza, in which 'same old gun handed business' foregrounds the repetitiveness of the practice, which construes the Indigenous body as a target 'served up/ on the hunt tracks,' exposed to hostility. In an even earlier poem, 'playing injun' is very directly turned into a deadly practice: 'dirty tenderness[4] / that stiffened into / that low-brow ice / that dead injun game' (Abel, 2016, p. 5).

Images of violence abound in Abel's sequence of poems, often very disturbing, as in the lines 'a partial injun tongue/ steady in an old mans fingers,' where the focus in on details, and the act itself almost personal (Abel, 2016, p. 10). Elsewhere, the procedures are depersonalized and mechanical, as in the 'steam hammer / play of principles' (Abel, 2016, p. 28). Sometimes, Abel allows for a degree of ambiguity, opening the poem o) as follows:

> injun s   mu   st   hang
>
>   straigh   t
>   bl   ck arrows
>
>   o ff   their
>   sh   oulders (Abel, 2016, p. 17)

Here, the double syntax resulting from the lineation allows to undo the incitement to kill formulated in the first line. Yet, even though the later lines speak about the weapons belonging to and thus empowering the 'injuns' themselves, the first line, spaced out to make it more prominent, retains its own separate violent message. Even when a nameless speaker is overheard saying, '*all of them injuns is people first* / and *besides for this buckskin / why we even shoot at them*' (Abel, 2016, p. 4; original emphasis), the questioning of the rationale does not halt the shooting, but drowns in the chorus of other, more disquieting comments: 'and *time to pedal their eyes/ to lean out and say the truth[3]/ all you injuns is just white keys*' (Abel, 2016, p. 4; original emphasis).

In her study of homophobic violence, Gail Mason proposes to define violence as 'a way of looking' at individual subjects rather than merely a practice inflicted upon them: she speaks of 'the capacity of violence to shape the ways that we see, and thereby come to know, certain things. In this way, the act of violence itself is a spectacle. This is not so much because violence is something that we observe, but, more, because violence is a mechanism through which we distinguish and observe other things.' (Mason, 2002, p. 11) The context Abel construes in his poems foregrounds just that: having exposed the constructedness of the figure of the 'injun,' he proceeds to show how the construction guides the settlers to view Indigenous people and, as a result, subject them to the acts the poems describe. By the sixth poem in the sequence, the nameless 'he' from the opening poem is replaced with plural pronouns and the plural form 'injuns,' which highlights the repetitiveness of these acts so that they turn into a pattern, as implied by '*why we even shoot at them*' (Abel, 2016, p. 4; original emphasis). Even halfway through the sequence, where some poems are composed of separate letters, which seldom cohere into readable phrases, the words that can be pieced together do signal racialized binary opposition and the violence it begets, as, for instance, 'bloody,' 'teeth,' 'scout,' 'paleface,' 'silvertip' (Abel, 2016, p. 18) or 'scalped,' 'fort,' 'injun,' 'colonel' (Abel, 2016, p. 22). These words, again, inevitably remind the reader of the palimpsestal presence of the sourced material, the Western novels, out of which Abel constructed his poems and which perpetuate the

i nto the hollow   r   ampage
      int   o the flagstaff br   each
wit h my w   inter confiden   ce
boi ling the ambush fa   ith[26]

Figure 4. visualization of the poem of Abel (Abel, 2016, p. 27; image reproduced courtesy of the writer).

motif of extinguishing Indigenous presence from the newly created settler space. Nonetheless Abel does not close his poem sequence with a scattering of these words, but proceeds to cohere clusters of letters into phrases and stanzas. Even more importantly, in the last several poems, he gives voice to the first-person speaker, which is suggestive of survival, confidence, and endurance (see Figure 4).

Having uncovered and exposed a significant amount of racist and violent imagery in the samples from his source texts, Abel's poem sequence does not offer any optimistic resolution to the settler colonial violences enacted upon Indigenous land and being that the poems describe. Abel does not seek to revise the messages formulated by the genre of the Western, nor can he do that, having chosen to remix rather than rewrite the sources. As a rearranger, he is dependent on and restricted by the material available to him, although there are almost endless possibilities for what specific combinations can be constructed. This also implies that any representation constructed this way would inevitably be arbitrary and provisional, rather than fixed or finite. Abel thus does not aim to construct a new revised image of the Indigenous figure, reclaimed from the familiar formulas; his point is precisely their undoing, which he enacts very literally, in a series of gestures akin to what Mignolo describes as 'decolonial gestures' of 'epistemic disobedience,' defined as acts of disentangling from Western 'categories of thought' and thus from the pervasive logic of the colonial 'matrix' (Mignolo, 2011, p. 45, pp. 47–48). Simply put, the claims of the colonized are not to be articulated in the jargon of the colonizer. Mignolo and Vazquez propose a close analysis of the various concepts and terms behind Western categories of thought to reveal how they have worked 'to erase, silence, denigrate other ways of understanding and relating to the world': the decolonial option lies precisely in 'opening to' and recovering these erased

and discredited ways (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013; Mignolo, 2011, p. 45, pp. 47–48; Mignolo, 2014). Abel undertakes to open up several such categories: the genre of the Western, the construct of the 'Injun,' and the English alphabet, its letters being the material out of which the former two are made.

For this undertaking, the procedures to which Abel subjects his sources and the processes of their execution are no less important than the resulting texts. His poems thus both reveal settler colonial violence and inflict a series of violent acts – real and physical – upon a settler colonial literary archive. Thus, through the remix that it engages in, Abel's book can be seen as a process comprised of a series of decolonial gestures, as well as a site in which this specific textual arranging takes place and shape, and in which the reader is to participate in related processes of piecing cut-ups together or turning the book upside down to proceed. However, unlike Weigel, who creates his book as a site for a potential dialogue between his samples and his own lyrics, Abel is not interested in his sources interacting between themselves or with his own words. Instead of constructing Indigenous characters to counter the fiction of the 'Injun,' Abel employs the very language that created this figure, subjects it to scrutiny, and remixes it, making it say things the original authors did not intend and expose acts that the novels may obfuscate, thereby destabilizing the fixed formulas and mobilizing a self-reflexive relationship between the originals and his remix. Notably, the destabilization is achieved both textually, by assembling new texts out of the words from the sampled sentences, and physically, by literally cutting the sentences up and breaking them apart – an act of violence, which Abel describes as 'something very satisfying' in an interview (quoted in Borsuk & Dowling, 2019), and which further enhances the violence exposed in his poems. This strategy also underscores the defiance of any expectations readers might have about the 'Injun.'

In a final gesture, Abel undertakes a very different action: in 'Appendix,' he collects all the five hundred and nine sampled sentences that he had cut up, broken up, mashed-up, and rearranged, thereby destabilizing their contents and subjecting them to scrutiny (Abel, 2016, pp. 61–78). In 'Appendix,' these sentences thus seem to be arranged back to their original structures, except for the fact

The boys from the other herds—good men, too—kept shooting them into the water, and inside fifteen minutes' time we were in the big   Territory. Early the next morning I sent one of my boys out on the highest sand dune to   around and see what they were doing. As we passed out George turned back and apologized to the girls, saying, 'He's a good   . He proved himself clean strain that night, the whitest little   on the reservation. I had a little experience over east here, on the cut off from the Chisholm trail, a few years ago, that gave me all the   I want for some time to come. Well, that Texan wasn't looking for any particular   that day to give six of his own dear horses to. Mr.   came up to the fire and professed to be very friendly, shook hands, and spoke quite a number of words in English. The letter concluded with the   ction, in case we met any one, to conceal the ownership of the herd and its destina- tion. He talked to the horses; he sang songs; he played   ; and that Christmas was a merry one, for the debt was paid and our little widow had beef to throw to the dogs. The message was from Mike Sutton, stating that a fourth member of the ring had arrived during the fore- noon, accompanied by a United States marshal from the federal court at Omaha; that the officer was armed with an order of   ctive relief; that he had deputized thirty men whom Tolleston had gathered, and proposed taking possession of the two herds in question that after- noon. I was pained to hear that you and Tom have both gone plum hog-wild, drinking out of cowtracks and living on wild garlic and land-terrapin, just like   s. But when the hearing came up, Sutton placed Jim Reed and me in the witness-box, taking the stand later him- self, and we showed that federal court that it had been buncoed out of an order of _   ctive relief, in favor of the biggest set of ringsters that ever missed stretching hemp. "   -bit," "Man-afraid-of-his-horses," were some of the terms applied to us,—yet the practical plainsman knew enough to take warning from his dumb beast. Order was soon restored, when we proceeded, and shortly met the young German com- ing back up the road, who merely remarked on meeting us, "Dem   s shot at me." I'm going back to God's country,—back where there

Figure 5. visualization of the poem of Abel (Abel, 2016, p. 61; image reproduced courtesy of the artist).

that Abel erases the word 'injun' from each, along with completely different words that share the same root, such as 'injunction' and 'injunctive.' The erasures are marked by the gaps (see Figure 5). Placed one after another in prose format, they form a substantial mass of text, undisturbed by other kinds of formatting. However, the lack of coherence between the sentences, the disjointedness

and rather jarring moves from one to another, uncharacteristic of texts labeled as popular literature, such as the Western, as well as the ruptures from within by the blank spaces from which the word 'injun' is erased disturb the unity and prevent the sentences, seemingly restored, from getting the final say, the danger of which Patrick Greaney warns: '[i]n fact, quoting another author may reinforce that quoted author's authority' (Greaney, 2014, p. 3). This does not happen, but 'Appendix' reminds the reader that Abel's remix subverts but does not replace the sources, and foregrounds how the structures and categories of thought implemented by settler colonialism continue to persist, adapting to the new circumstances and making Mignolo and Vazquez's (2013) urge to look for ways of disentanglement from them very pertinent. Nonetheless, the way Abel erases all instances of the word 'injun' leaves the sampled sentences gaping: the settler colonial impulse to erase the 'injun' is achieved, but the textual structures collapse.

Conclusion

Constructed out of pre-existing sources, remix is a dual undertaking, both a return to the past, a form of remembering, and an attempt to open that past for new meanings and possibilities through various interventions on the part of the remixer. In their different projects, Indigenous poets Matthew James Weigel and Jordan Abel select their source material from settler colonial archives: their aim is not to stress cultural continuity against the erasures of settler colonialism, but to uncover the ways colonial texts worked to inform and shape attitudes to and relationships between the settlers and the Indigenous peoples. Relying on formulas and repetitions, both governmental documents and genre Westerns produced a vocabulary as well as sets of images and storylines perpetuating the motif of the settler colonial 'non-encounter' (Veracini, 2011a; Veracini, 2011b), which continues to inform the settler state's contemporary relationships with its Indigenous peoples. My analysis of the ways Weigel and Abel remix these texts foregrounds their attempts to unsettle settler colonial formulas and structures because merely exposing injustices and voicing grievances is not enough. Both poets make their

appropriations of these texts explicit and unambiguous, rather than indulging in a play with allusions, which would demand that the reader recognize the references. Both are engaged in investigations rather than creative rewritings or revisions of their sources, and their projects demonstrate little optimism or relief, albeit temporary, offered by the practices such as revisionist parody or speculative alternative histories.

Reactualizing the settler colonial sources in their remixes, Weigel and Abel uncover the principles at work behind legal and genre writing, and simultaneously subject these texts to a series of similar procedures: delinking from original context, omissions and erasures, lumping individual texts into one amalgam of textual matter as well as radical and violent gestures of cutting up and mashing up to radically repurpose the sources and produce a completely new structure. These procedures purposely echo settler colonialism's 'logical of elimination,' which 'destroys to replace' (Wolfe, 2006, pp. 387–388), and the poets thus undertake a series of decolonial gestures by remixing their sources this way. Nonetheless, they respond to Mignolo's call not to rely on the jargon of the colonizer (Mignolo, 2011, p. 45, pp. 47–48) in a different way: instead of rejecting it, they appropriate and repurpose that jargon to destabilize the formulas it engenders. Theirs thus are attempts to 'hack the system' from within, targeting its two manifestations, legal and genre writing. Considering that remix is never conclusive but invites endless ways of reworking and regenerating the sources, Weigel's and Abel's projects gesture towards the potential for destabilizing even the most rigid structures – over time and through repetitive attempts – and opening cracks in them for new configurations.

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3. Exiguity and Narrative Identity in Canadian French-language Literature Outside Quebec: Marguerite A. Primeau, France Daigle and Marc Prescott

Svante Lindberg

Abstract

This article studies samples of French-language texts produced in Canadian provinces outside Quebec, the aim being to elucidate the questions of narrative identity, the relationships with place and with the English and French languages as these evolve in the literary works. Expression of a fragile and exiguous literary condition, the texts are also narrations of a state beyond the question of dominant and dominated linguistic cultures. The following works are studied: *Sauvage-Sauvageon* (1984) by Marguerite A. Primeau; *Pas pire* (1998) by France Daigle; *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains* (2001) and *Fort Mac* (2004) by Marc Prescott. Different geographical corners of Canada are represented: the West, the Atlantic East and the Prairies. In *Sauvage-Sauvageon*, the spatial insertion is complex. The story moves between a place of the present (the Canadian West coast in British Columbia) and a number of places of the past: Quebec, Alberta and Europe.

Keywords

Introduction

The point of departure of this chapter is the presence of French speakers and Francophone culture in predominantly English-speaking provinces in Canada, i.e. in areas outside of Quebec. The focus will be on a sample of French-language texts produced in these provinces, the aim being to elucidate the questions of narrative identity, the relationships with place and with the English and French languages as these evolve in the literary works. Being part of a minority literature, the texts can be seen as the expression of a fragile and exiguous literary condition. However, I will also look upon them as a way of overcoming this state in order to see this writing as narrations of a state beyond the question of dominant and dominated linguistic cultures, and as texts of general/global relevance.[1] Moreover, my study is to be seen in relationship with the notion of *américanité*, a concept launched in the literary discourse in Quebec in the 1980s which will be revisited here. The notions of *exiguïté* (Paré, 1992), *scénographie* (Moura, 1999) and transculturality (Imbert, 2012) will be keywords in the theoretical introduction and in the analyses of the literary texts. The study is a modest attempt at a 'pan-Canadian' look at Francophone literary writing and inscribes itself in a context where for example Viau (2000) and Hotte (2010) have contributed with important studies. The chapter also owes a great deal to the perspectives developed in the book *Impenser la francophonie : recherches, renouvellement, diversité, identité...*, edited by Pamela Sing and Estelle Dansereau (2012).

Of the approximately 7 million Francophones in Canada, around 6 million can be found in Quebec, the only French-majority province. Approximately 21% of the Canadian population is French-speaking, according to the 2016 Canadian Census. Approximately 1 million Francophone speakers live outside Quebec, distributed in the following way: 490,715 people in Ontario, 231,110 in New Brunswick, 36,680 in the other

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[1] For further reading on this topic, see for example Thibeault et al. (2016). For Acadian literature, see also Boudreau (2010), who proposes the term *literature of resilience* in order to go beyond the somewhat reductionist ring that exiguous literature has (p. 246).

three Atlantic provinces and 185,195 in the four provinces west of Ontario. French mother-tongue speakers are the majority in Quebec (78% of the provincial population), whereas they are the minority in the other nine provinces (0.50% in Newfoundland, 3.40% in Nova Scotia, 3.60% on Prince Edward Island, 31.90% in New Brunswick, 4.00% in Ontario, 3.40% in Manitoba, 1.50% in Saskatchewan, 2.00% in Alberta and 1.40% in British Columbia).[2] Literary texts in French are nevertheless produced in provinces where French is a minority language, albeit the literary production is sometimes fragile and fragmented. The first example to be studied here is a novel from British Columbia, *Sauvage-Sauvageon* by Marguerite A. Primeau (1984). The second is New Brunswick author France Daigle's *Pas pire* (1998),[3] a novel that deals with the mythical territory of Acadia (*Acadie*), originally located in parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The last samples included are two plays by Manitoba born author Marc Prescott: *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains* (2001)[4] and *Fort Mac* (2004). The choice of texts is motivated by factors that are partly due to the pedagogical objectives of the present publication. They represent different geographical corners of Canada: the West, the Atlantic East and the Prairies. Secondly, the authors chosen reflect different generations. Primeau was born in 1914, Daigle in 1953 and Prescott in 1971. Finally, the samples studied are examples of prose as well as of drama.

   It is well-known that nationalist aspirations and the idea of a national text in French have been crucial to the idea of a French Canada since the beginning of the 19th century. In the case of Quebec, a similar idea was important in the evolution of this province from the time of the Quiet Revolution[5] and onwards. In the

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[2] The number of French mother-tongue speakers according to the 2016 Canadian Census, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/index-eng.cfm. Consulted on 25 March 2021.

[3] References to the book in this article will be to the English translation by Robert Majzels, published in 1999 (Daigle, 1999).

[4] The play was published for the first time in 2001, but the 2013 edition will be referred to here.

[5] For more information about this time of socio-political and cultural change in the 1960s, see chapter 6 in this volume.

transition that Quebec has undergone towards becoming a multicultural society, the identity aspect of French still is essential, since it is in this language that the migrant and cross-cultural literatures from the 1980s were written. If Francophone multiculturalism and migration are phenomena that challenge the idea of a monocultural Quebec, the American myth is another such challenge. From the 1980s the *américanité* literary tendency made it clear that Quebec literature had a great deal in common with American English-language literature (cf. Morency, 1994). One example is that in Quebec and American literary studies, the relationship between literature and space is often close. America is space to conquer and from the European point of view it is often seen as a continent 'discovered' by Europeans. America and *américanité* is also, among other things, a certain rhythm, as Yannick Gasquy-Resch (1994) observes, meaning that America and its space provide a certain lyricism. The route to the West is mythical, it is a passage to constantly renewable possibilities. This can be seen in both the English- and French-language literatures of the continent, in Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne in the case of American literature, but also in Quebec literature in texts by authors such as Jacques Poulin and Victor-Lévy Beaulieu (see Morency, 1994). But in French Canada another interest rivals that of the conquering of the vast continent, the previously mentioned question of the French-speaking nation and the creation of a 'national' text in French. It was during the Romantic era that national patriotism was born in French-speaking Canada (read the present Quebec), especially in the press and in political speeches with the journalist Étienne Parent as the primary name. Newspapers, for instance *Le Canadien*, urged the educated classes to detach themselves from the established power and overcome the memory of the Conquest. Publications of historical texts on the French-Canadian past would follow and soon the literary period in French Canadian literature known as *le roman du terroir* was initiated. However, literary evolution in French Canada will be slow and lag behind French literature in France. It was not until 1945, with Gabrielle Roy's *Bonheur d'occasion*, that the theme of the metropolis (Montreal) appeared as a subject in French-Canadian

literary writing. The manifesto of the *Refus Global* by Paul-Émile Borduas[6] in 1948 was a text that symbolised the Francophone movement that led to the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. It was also at this time of cultural revival that French Canada was to change names and become Quebec. No longer a 'France in Canada', French speakers prefer to look upon themselves as living in a hybrid French-speaking territory located in North America. This will be followed by referendums on Quebec's independence (in 1980 and 1995) and the transformation of Quebec society into a multicultural society. French becomes the only official language in Quebec in 1974 but the province remains in federal Canada, despite the referendums and in spite of the *Parti Québécois* and its periods in power. But if Quebec has often looked upon itself as French America, how should one look upon the fact that the French language is also used in other provinces in Canada? How does coexistence with the English language create a specific understanding of space and of narrative identity in these literatures? How is this fragmented space seen from the 'inside' in texts and are there traces of a new self-confidence that would make it motivated to talk of a state beyond an exiguous minority condition?

As far as the continental dimension of francophone literature is concerned, the notion of *américanité* can deepen our understanding. In *Volkswagen Blues* (1984) Jacques Poulin recounts the American journey of the writer Jack Waterman in search of his brother Theo. The journey will extend from the Gaspé Peninsula in northern Quebec to California and Waterman and his fellow traveller will cross America together, following the itinerary of the first French colonisers. During their American travels, a French palimpsest of geographical names appears. Behind names like Detroit, Louisiana, etc., a French language reality become partly visible. The written data about the French-speaking explorers and knowledge of the itineraries of the so called *coureurs des bois* will serve as their guide, be it in an associative and unpredictable way. Beneath the English language surface, which at first seemed to be an irrevocable

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[6] For an English translation, see: http://www.conseildesarts.org/documents /Manisfeste/manifeste_refus-english.htm.

nomenclature, French and Amerindian language elements bear witness of other realities. The French language is thus part of the *américanité* both of the literatures of Canada and of the United States.

However, it is not only about language. Jean Morency (1994), who was inspired by the anthropological research of Mircea Éliade and Gilbert Durand, explores the 'mythical background' present in American and Quebec literatures and observes surprising thematic similarities in these literatures:

> La littérature québécoise présente des analogies souvent étonnantes avec les autres littératures du Nouveau Monde, particulièrement avec la littérature américaine (entendu ici au sens d'états-unienne [...]): le sentiment de l'espace, la thématique de l'errance, la volonté de rupture avec le groupe, la méfiance à l'égard de la culture, l'attrait ressenti pour la nature, l'entrecroisement des rêves prométhéens et dionysiens contribuent à rapprocher de toute évidence, certains textes québécois des textes fondateurs de la littérature américaine et de l'américanité en général (Morency, 1994, pp. 9–10).[7]

Morency (1994) raises the issue of French as a continental American language and discusses the situation of Francophones in English-speaking provinces as a sort of repressed part of Canadian nationality. Quebec literature as well as French-language literature in Canada's so-called English-speaking provinces would then be part of the same French-language North American literature, a literature with close affinities with the literature of the United States.

François Paré and exiguous literatures

In his influential books *Les littératures de l'exiguïté* (1992)[8] and *La distance habitée* (2003), François Paré attempted to identify the uniqueness, challenges and possibilities of literatures existing in the cramped and restricted conditions of what he calls *exiguïté*

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[7] Québécois literature often has surprising analogies with other New World literature, especially with American literature (understood here as US literature): the feeling of space, the theme of wandering, the desire to break with the group, the distrust in culture, the attraction felt for nature, the intersecting of Promethean and Dionysian dreams. This obviously contributes to the bringing together of some Québécois texts with the founding texts of American literature and with Americanity in general.

[8] The references in this article are to the English translation from 1997.

(exiguity, smallness, crampedness). This applies to French Canada but also to areas elsewhere in the world. Clearly influenced by Deleuze and Guattari's emblematic work *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure* (1975), Paré (1997) discusses the several meanings of the notion small/minor literatures. It can refer to colonial literatures (Maghreb), island literatures (Iceland), small national literatures (Quebec), etc. According to the author, Québécois literature is in fact a rather atypical case:

> Modern-day Quebec provides many of my examples, but it must be remembered that the vast financial resources available to the Quebec literary establishment enable it to rank as a national institution. Most *small* literatures have nowhere near the wherewithal to emerge as an institution on this scale. Most of them, their works dwindling in numbers, remain hidden away in the fabric of dominant national historiographies (Paré, 1997, p. 13).

If one were to choose a regional Canadian literature as an example of a typical 'small' literature, Francophone Ontario would be a more suitable choice, according to François Paré (see for example 1997, p. 15). This Francophone community is looked upon in relation not only to other French-language regions in Canada, but also to other Francophone areas worldwide with which it can be said to exist in a parallel relationship of global virtuality. Paré also discusses the question of transculturality and compares the migration of the French-speaking Canadian subject placed in an English-speaking context with the transcultural condition of Francophones elsewhere in the world (Paré, 2003). One of the chapters deals with the region of Acadia, a vaguely contoured Francophone 'island' in eastern Canada, which is looked upon as a universe characterised by its anti-melancholy making it resemble the Caribbean. Linking Acadia to the philosophical thinking of Édouard Glissant, one can see that it appears as part of a world of islands, the characteristics of which are to be both closed in on itself and constantly open to the world (Paré, 2003).

Lucie Hotte and Guy Poirier (2009, pp. 7–8) note that *Les littératures de l'exiguïté* was published at exactly the right time in the evolution of literary theoretical discourse, i.e. the 1990s, and that it is an essential work for the study of minority or marginal literature. They also conclude that the second book provides a

natural continuation of the first: 'Si l'essai *Les littératures de l'ex-iguïté* a confirmé l'existence du corpus des petites littératures et revendiqué pour elles le droit de devenir objet d'étude, il fallait aussi donner une genèse et une densité à ces récits. C'est ce défi qu'a relevé avec succès *La distance habitée*'[9] (ibid., 2009, p. 9).

According to the authors, Paré was able to isolate some concepts that are operational in order to grasp the identity issue of minority communities, i.e. diaspora, homelessness, accommodation and creolisation. In his second book he focused more precisely on the creation of a corpus of texts written in the minority contexts in question. Since then, attempts have been made to see beyond the condition of the exiguity of small literatures in Canada, since one possible effect of this categorisation could be that these literatures are in fact limited to a mere political role (see for example Thibeault et al., 2016, p. 7).

Narrative identity and transculture

Narrative identity and transculturality are two other key concepts in this literary context. The notion of narrative identity as described by Paul Ricoeur in *Temps et récit* (1983–1995) and *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990) is useful in order to analyse the identity processes in the literary works, a process which, as Muriel Gilbert points out, differs from that of traditional phenomenologists:

> Contrairement aux phénomènologues qui nourrissent l'idée d'un accès direct au temps, le philosophe contemporain [Ricoeur] souligne en effet son caractère indirect. Ainsi est-ce par la médiation des signes, des symboles, des textes et parmi eux des récits que Ricoeur se propose de penser l'inscription temporelle du sujet. C'est en nous racontant que nous aurons accès à la temporalité de notre existence (Gilbert, 2001, p. 17).[10]

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[9] If the essay *Les littératures de l'exiguïté* confirmed the existence of the corpus of small literatures and claimed for them the right to become an object of study, it was also necessary to create a genesis and density to these narratives. It is this challenge that has been successfully met.

[10] Unlike the phenomenologists, who feed the idea of direct access to time, the contemporary philosopher [Ricoeur] emphasizes its indirect nature. It

In Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity, the pronoun *se* (-self) is crucial. It is by telling and refiguring that one inserts oneself in time, and by means of telling that the two aspects of identity that Ricoeur uses, *mêmeté* (sameness) and *ipséité* (selfness), can manifest themselves. Identity as *mêmeté* ensures permanence over time, while identity as *ipséité* designs changing, dynamic identity (see also Lindberg, 2005, p. 56). This question acquires yet more complexity if seen in connection with the notion of transculturality. In the debate on migrant literature in Quebec, Moïsan and Hildebrand (2001) introduced the terms *multicultural, intercultural* and *transcultural*. While the first one merely expresses the coexistence of several cultures in a certain space, the second emphasizes the contact between these cultures. *Transcultural*, however, is used to designate true encounter, fusion, alteration of culture and also the fact that cultures, when they co-exist, tend to develop new narratives. According to Patrick Imbert one important aspect of transculturality is the *desire of the Other*:

> Le désir de l'autre dans son entier complexe est plus efficace que l'amalgame ou le composite, comme le souligne la différence entre l'hybridité qui est une combinatoire d'éléments relativement disparats et le métissage qui renvoie à la production d'un élément totalement nouveau dans sa multiplicité (Imbert, 2012, p. 43).[11]

This means that Imbert stresses the influence of the Other rather than the mingling and mixing of two cultures. And in the same way as Paré, Imbert underscores the importance of a global context for the development of knowledge in the minority environment:

> Tout va dépendre de la possibilité de sortir de l'exiguïté et d'avoir accès à un extérieur influencé par les reconfigurations mondiales […].

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is through the mediation of signs, symbols, texts, and, among these latter ones, stories that Ricoeur proposes to think the temporal inscription of the subject. It is by telling [stories] that we will have access to the temporality of our existence.

[11] The desire of the Other in his/her entire complexity is more effective than amalgam or composite. This is underscored by the difference between hybridity, which is a combination of relatively disparate elements, and *métissage*, which refers to the production of a totally new element characterized by its multiplicity.

Il est nécessaire d'avoir accès aux savoirs et au monde pour s'inventer dans le transculturel où les francophones, minoritaires dans un espace local défini, ont l'avantage de parler deux langues importantes dans le contexte des échanges internationaux (ibid., 2012, p. 43).[12]

Paratopie and scenography

As Dominique Maingueneau (2004, p. 191) has stated, the enunciator of literary discourse speaks from a paratopic place, which means that he is at the same time part of society and located outside it. According to the same theorist, the particularity of the communication of the literary work is that of a discourse made 'from the interior'. This idea, alongside the notion of *scénographie*, is particularily helpful when studying postcolonial literary texts. If the *scénographie* in its more linguistic dimension 'fait d'un discours le lieu d'une représentation de sa propre situation d'énunciation', i.e. 'makes a speech the place of a representation of its own situation of enunciation' (Maingueneau, 2004, p. 55), Jean-Marc Moura (1999) provides some clarification regarding the specific usage of *scénographie* when studying the literary text. Moura states about *scénographie* and Francophone literature:

> Les littératures francophones s'inscrivent dans une situation d'énonciation (réelle) où coexistent des univers symboliques divers dont l'un a d'abord été imposé et a reçu le statut de modèle (ou contre lequel on réagit : cas du Québec). Dans cette situation de coexistence, la construction de l'œuvre de son propre contexte énonciatif est à la fois plus complexe et plus importante que dans une situation de monolinguisme relative (par exemple, en France) […]. Pour l'auteur francophone, il s'agit d'établir son texte dans un milieu instable (et d'abord au plan linguistique), où les hiérarchies sont fluctuantes et mal acceptées. […] (Moura, 1999, p. 110).[13]

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[12] It will all depend on the possibility of getting out of the cramped condition and having access to an exterior influenced by global reconfigurations [...]. It is necessary to have access to knowledge and to the world to reinvent oneself in a transcultural reality where Francophones, who are in minority in a defined local space, have the advantage of speaking two important languages in a context of international exchanges.
[13] Francophone literatures are part of a situation of (real) enunciation where various symbolic universes coexist, one of which was first imposed and

The instability referred to by Moura is of a linguistic and cultural order above all. In the Canadian Francophone context studied in this article it is of importance to link this to Paré's discussion referred to earlier on migration within the language. Paré describes an unstable situation that is applicable both to Francophone writers in Ontario and to French language authors in many other places in the world. Moreover, it is enlightening to relate this to the description of place in Francophone minority texts from different areas of Canada. One example of a study of the instability of place is Raoul Boudreau's 2007 analysis of the role of the city of Moncton in Acadian literature.

Presentation and analysis of literary samples

In *Impenser la Francophonie: recherches, renouvellement, diversité, identité...* (2012), Pamela Sing and Estelle Dansereau brought together articles dealing with the French-speaking minority context and its identity dynamics in Canada. One key idea behind many of the chapters is the sociological notion of *unthinking* (*impenser*) launched by the historian and sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein in *Impenser la science sociale* (1995). In one of the chapters, Mourad Ali-Khodja (2012, pp. 3–23) focuses on Wallerstein's ideas of world systems and the minority setting. The author starts out by explaining that unthinking is not the same thing as rethinking; it is not a question of adding yet another way of explaining to those that already exist. According to Wallerstein, rethinking is not enough to explain today's social world, simply because this traditional method means continuous practice of the great rationalist models of explanation from the European tradition. According to Ali-Khodja, the idea of unthinking can be fruitful for the minority context, especially if linked to Paré's idea of *exiguïté*. If Paré mainly uses his term to refer to literature

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which received the status of model (or against which one reacts: the case of Quebec). In this situation of coexistence, the construction of the literary work in its own enunciative context is both more complex and more important than in a situation of relative monolingualism (for example, in France). For the French-speaking author, it is a question of establishing his text in an unstable environment (particularly on the linguistic level), where hierarchies are fluctuating and poorly accepted. [...].

being written in an environment of cultural precarity, Ali-Khodja believes that the notion in question can also be used when discussing the state of the humanities and social sciences in the same minority environment. In order to elucidate this question, it is important to remember that the minoritarian French-speaking communities have a common heritage which is composed of two elements: the French language and Catholicism. This combination is actually institutionally used to preserve certain ideas and to strengthen the idea of a certain cultural power, according to Ali-Khodja (2012, p. 14). In the Canadian case, it is primarily a question of the power relationship between the Francophone minority and the English-speaking majority, and secondly about the idea of a marginal Canada (the Prairies, for example) and a central Canada (Ontario and Quebec). To these linguistic, religious and socio-political factors, another one can be added of a spatial nature: distance. The minorities concerned can be found in *distant* positions. Ali-Khodja's point (2012, p. 19) is that these factors can be used in order to contribute to a change of perspectives that he believes must take place. Thus, the 'vision from afar' must be altered in favour of a *micrological* exploration, i.e. a vision from within, in the case of the French-speaking communities. This is to be done in order to identify their ways of *practicing* themselves, a notion that is here to be understood in its most concrete sense.

In his chapter of the same book, Pierre-Yves Mocquais (2012, pp. 125–138) takes the word *unthinkable* as a starting point in order to discuss the reappropriation of self-practices in the minority contexts. The author is inspired both by semantics and philosophy and begins by making an inventory of the meaning of the word *impensé* in French dictionaries. The adjective *impensable* means for example 'what has not been specified', and the noun *impensé* can designate, in a context of jurisprudence, the sum used for the preservation or improvement of something. *Impensé* is also something that benefits the owner, something which is kept at his or her disposal (the opposite of *spending*).[14] The author associates these semantic connotations with the key notions of

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[14] See for example the definition of the word *impense* in the *Littré* dictionary online: https://www.littre.org/definition/impense.

fragility and *exiguïté* as well as with those of memory, oblivion and imagination in the minority context. The *impensé* is in fact a resource, something unused that is waiting to be made use of. One of the aims of the textual studies here is to show in what way literary expression can show or suggest such cultural resources.

Marguerite A. Primeau: *Sauvage-Sauvageon*

Although British Columbia is a province with a strong English-speaking presence and a place where Asian influence is getting stronger today, there were nevertheless francophones in the area as early as the 17th century. However, the present-day French speakers are descendants of immigrants from much more recent dates.[15] Marguerite A. Primeau, originally from Alberta, studied at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and at the Sorbonne. Having returned to Canada, she became professor of literature at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She has published among other things the novel *Dans le muskeg* (1960), the collection of short stories *Le Totem* (1988) and *Sauvage-Sauvageon* (1984), the latter being the object of study here.

The novel moves within vast temporal and spatial entities. Maxine, the female protagonist, whose father is originally from Quebec, but who had chosen to go west, lives first in Alberta with her parents. We are told about her life since her childhood in Alberta, about the early death of her mother and the years spent in Europe, in Paris and on the French Riviera, and the return to Canada and British Columbia. The years in Vancouver are also described and we learn about the last summer of her father's life, which Maxine spends with him in a cottage on one of the islands in the Pacific. Towards the end she tries to commit suicide but eventually refrains from this. The book closes with a passage telling how she falls asleep and is left in a dream-like state, where past and present mix.

After the death of the mother her father initiates a new romantic relationship with a neighbour, and the life of the protagonist will be profoundly changed. Unable to really connect with anyone,

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[15] See Poirier et al. (2012) on francophone writing in British Columbia.

she describes her life as a perpetual quest for a mate, an individual who is associated with the idea of a magician, someone who could recreate the feeling of the childhood she spent in a magical relationship with her father: 'Car, qu'a été ma vie sinon une quête perpétuelle pour l'homme-magicien de mon enfance?'[16] (1984, p. 76). The novel is set in Anglophone Canada (Alberta and British Columbia), Quebec being a place of the past. It is the country of Maxine's father, a place that he had left but which continues to haunt him. Looking for a place to settle in the West, he chose a region in Alberta with forests, since it reminded him of the landscape of his childhood. He also chose this setting in order to regain his dimension as a human being. This landscape is the anti-thesis of the idea of the vast plains of western Canada:

–Et qu'est-ce qui t'a fait choisir l'Alberta ?

–Ses champs de blé, d'avoine et d'orge qui s'étendent de tous côtés. J'ai aussi choisi l'Alberta

parce qu'ici la plaine ondule; il y a des collines et des bouquets d'arbres, et parfois des forêts, qui nous ramènent à notre dimension d'homme. Qui nous sauvent de notre attirance d'un horizon sans limites (1984, pp. 79–80).[17]

Canadian landscape and topography play an important role, as does Canadian history, which is often associated with the protagonist's mythical childhood. History and storytelling intermingle in order to create a transcultural awareness. It is through her father's magical stories that the story of a French-speaking Canada will be passed on to her:

Le soir ! C'était encore l'heure vers laquelle je tendais. Par lassitude ou désir de paix, de quiétude, je me suis laissé reprendre par le charme d'autrefois. […]

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[16] For what has been my life, if not a perpetual quest for the man-magician of my childhood?

[17] – And what made you choose Alberta? – Its fields of wheat, oats and barley that extend on all sides. I also chose Alberta because here the plain ripples; there are hills and clusters of trees, and sometimes forests, which bring us back to our human dimension. That save us from our attraction of a horizon without limits.

> Maintenant j'écoutais mon père revivre son enfance au Québec, dans la ferme paternelle, […]
>
> Dans ses yeux, je voyais se dérouler toute une vie que moi, fille de l'Ouest, je connaissais mal. Et j'ai appris à mieux comprendre une autre histoire du Canada : celle d'avant 1760. Celle de Champlain, de Frontenac, de Montcalm et de Wolfe ; celle de Papineau en 1837 (1984, p. 7).[18]

The topographic theme remains an important one in the part of the novel talking about Maxine's travels in Europe. In Paris she has an affair with Marcel and becomes pregnant, but the child is stillborn, and she finishes by driving him out of her life. Checking out the booksellers along the Seine, she finds a copy of *La Carte du Tendre*. This 17th century map, inspired by the novel *Clélie* by Madame de Scudéry, depicts an imaginary landscape, a topography that represents the different stages of a love relationship. Looked upon by Maxine as a beautiful object of remembrance at first, she will eventually tear it up. The topography of precious lovers is a subject that has nothing to tell her. Her next stop in France is the French Riviera, where she works as an English language assistant. Here she will be witnessing, among other things, the morbid spectacle of the Nice carnival, where the ascension of the Carnival Queen and her killing after the festive period is staged. It is a paradoxical performance which will resonate within the protagonist. She also experiences the death of her friend Angela in a car accident on the curved roads above the city. Eventually, she leaves Nice and France, convinced that she will never return. Back in Canada, she is attracted by nature again: it is mainly the indifference of the wilderness that makes an impression on her. Yet, beneath the surface another view of nature lurks.

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[18] In the evening! That was still the time I was reaching out to. Through weariness or desire for peace, tranquillity, I let myself be taken back by the charm of yesteryear. [...]

Now I was listening to my father relive his childhood in Quebec, on his father's farm, [...].

In his eyes, I could see a lifetime unfolding that I, a girl from the West, knew little about. And I learned to better understand another history of Canada: the one before 1760. Champlain's, Frontenac's, Montcalm's and Wolfe's history; Papineau's history in 1837.

Nature seen through Romantic poetry and the influence of the English Romantic poets never ceases to colour her emotional life. Throughout the story the protagonist remains a solitary being, and the presence of the father remains as important as ever: he is the poet and the teller of the poetic story of Canada. He is also looked upon as the only one who was able to reveal her proper identity and her true nature. And she has remained faithful to this image of herself all her life. Her father used to call her *Sauvageon* rather than Maxine, and when asked why, he replied: 'Un sauvageon, c'est une jeune plante qui a poussé comme ça, sans qu'on se soit occupé d'elle. Contrairement aux fleurs de notre jardin que ta maman et moi, nous cultivons soigneusement, ce sauvageon pousse tout seul et survit tout seul, sans l'aide de personne'[19] (1984, p. 32).

Maxine will remain a *sauvageon*, and after Marcel's departure she concludes: 'Sauvage, je l'étais, sauvage je le resterais. Inutile d'essayer de me domestiquer' (1984, p. 108).[20] How could one describe the transcultural narrative identity expressed through the main character in *Sauvage-Sauvageon*? The protagonist is a girl from the Canadian West, but of 'French origin'. The West is primarily Anglophone territory and the abandoning of the first (Francophone) community is a recurrent theme in the text. Since the immediate topography is an English language one, in order to have access to French toponymy, one has to go beneath this immediate surface. This access is made possible through a sort of magic; the French language topography is transmitted by the magic of the father giving her access to her true selfness (*ipséité*). But the question of language is also seen on other levels in the novel. In France, she will work as an English language assistant in Nice, although her true cultural identity as she understands it herself is primarily 'French'. However, in France, she realises that her spoken French is a language full of Canadianisms; it is barely tolerated on the French Riviera. In real life she also

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[19] A sauvageon is a young plant that has grown like this, without anyone caring for it. Unlike the flowers in our garden that your mother and I grow carefully, this sauvageon grows on its own and survives on its own, without anyone's help. You're just like it.[...].
[20] Wild, I was, wild I would remain. No need to try to domesticate me.

has a tendency to associate with things and persons English: her boyfriend in Nice, Johnny, is indeed an English Canadian. Having returned to Canada, she starts a relationship with Shaun, an Irishman who specialises in English Romantic poetry. Maxine's cultural belonging is depicted as paradoxical, a characteristic that is valid in several ways. As has been seen, paradox is also a feature in the passage talking about the Carnival in Nice where the protagonist is both celebrated as a queen and killed by the same spectators. Maxine is a Francophone but at the same time of English culture. She is under the influence of her father, which is an ambiguous relationship. At the same time as she is enriched by the magic contact with the Francophone past through the father, she has not succeeded in freeing herself from the image of her childhood and the search for the lost magic goes on through her life. This state of mind is further emphasised by the references to English Romantic poetry. The poets of the English Romantic era (the literature of the imperial 'mother country') are decisive for her spiritual state of mind. This becomes particularly clear at the end of the novel. When the protagonist discovers that her father in fact loves poetry too, and that he engages in conversation with Shaun on the topic, she runs away while realising that she has a secret: the love of nature as depicted by the Romantics (1984, p. 188). As far as the idea of the *ipséité* of the protagonist is concerned, it is interesting to read Pamela Sing's (2004) observations about the very end of the novel, where the narrator, having given up the idea of suicide, starts dreaming:

> Depuis le début du roman, le 'je' narratif, étendu sur une chaise longue dans une des îles de la côte du Pacifique, se remémore son passé vécu dans différents espaces allant de la prairie albertaine jusqu'à la Méditerranée. Le texte opère des va-et-vient entre l'espace de l'énonciation et les espaces énoncés jusqu'au moment où, par la magie des paroles et de la mémoire, l'espace de l'enfance fusionne avec celui de la narration, c'est-à-dire l'île et l'infini sur lequel elle s'ouvre. Du coup, l'ailleurs n'est plus culpabilisant, parce qu'il ne signifie plus l'abandon de la première communauté : le sentiment indestructible de celle-ci, Maxine-Sauvage-Sauvageon le portera en elle où qu'elle aille. Ainsi, à la toute fin du récit, plutôt

que de disparaître dans la mer, la protagoniste "rêve", mot qui au
sens étymologique signifie "vagabonder" (Sing, 2004, pp. 9–10).[21]

What is expressed here is thus her dynamic and hybrid cultural
condition. Through the act of 'dreaming' the different starting
points of her life are allowed to co-exist. The English and French
cultural identities are also given space to co-exist and by means
of onirism the abandoned French identity regains its importance
without being flawed by guilt. Primeau conveys a transcultural,
condition defined by the continental (pan-Canadian) historic
and cultural belonging of the protagonist. This condition is con-
stantly in motion and allows parallel belongings. Another obser-
vation that can be made is the solitude of the main character, a
typical feature in American literature according to Jean Morency
(see *supra*).

France Daigle: *Pas pire*

The term Acadian literature refers to the French language liter-
ature published in the Maritime provinces of Canada. The his-
tory of this territory has known other paths than the history of
Quebec. During the conquest in 1759, the French areas in New
Brunswick and Nova Scotia were conquered by the English and
then there was the deportation of French speakers from Acadia to
various US cities or back to France. It was in the English language
that the Acadian spirit was captured in literature for the first
time. In 1847, the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
published *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie*, an epic poem about the

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[21] Already in the beginning of the novel, the narrating 'I', lying on a chaise
longue in one of the islands of the Pacific coast, recalls her past lived in
different spaces ranging from the prairies in Alberta to the Mediterranean.
The text moves back and forth between the space of enunciation and
the spaces enounced until, through the magic of words and memory, the
space of childhood fusions with that of the narration, i.e. the island and
the infinity on which they open. As a result, the 'elsewhere' no longer is
associated with guilt, because it no longer means abandoning the first
community: the indestructible feeling of this community, Maxine-Sauvage-
Sauvageon will carry it with her wherever she goes. Thus, at the very end of
the story, rather than disappearing into the sea, the protagonist 'dreams', a
word that in the etymological sense means *wandering*.

search for Evangeline, an Acadian girl who disappeared during the great deportation. Although it was in fact in this area that the first literary texts in French had been written in North America, modern French language Acadian literature was slow to evolve. This is due both to political reasons and to the power of assimilation that the French-speaking area called Lower Canada (later Quebec) had on other areas. *Acadian literature* was a term that began to be used following the Quiet Revolution in Quebec in the 1960s and it was not until the success of Antonine Maillet's novel *Pélagie-la-Charette* (1979) and her play *La Sagouine* (1971) that Acadia took place on the literary map. The poets Herménégilde Chiasson and Gérald Leblanc are two key authors in this contemporary literature. Leblanc's semi-autobiographical novel *Moncton Mantra* (1997) tells the story of the coming into being of contemporary Acadian literature in the 1970s. Another key event in the history of Acadian literature was the attributing of the Goncourt prize to *Pélagie-la Charette* in 1979. France Daigle (1953–)[22] is one of the best-known contemporary Acadian authors. Her novel *Pas pire* (1998) is a collage in which the autofictional voice of the author intermingles with other types of story: local episodes from Moncton, descriptions of deltas in the world, the characteristics of diamonds, the evocation of the different houses of the Zodiac (places that affect the fate of a human being), the telling of the love story between Terry – the pilot of a tourist boat in Moncton – and Carmen, who works in a Moncton billiard lounge. The novel also tells the story of the project of writing the novel *Pas pire*. It describes the trip that the fictive narrator ('France Daigle') makes to Paris, in order to participate in the legendary French literary TV show *Bouillon de culture*, hosted by Bernard Pivot. The I narrator is sometimes called France Daigle, sometimes there is a narrator called Steppette and the novel can be said to be partly autofiction – the trip to Bernard Pivot in Paris undertaken by 'France Daigle' never happened.

François Paré (2003) defines Acadian literature as the expression of a space of fragmentation, where the knowledge of the

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[22] For further reading on female voices in Acadian literature, see Thibeault et al. (2020).

islets, which is piece-meal knowledge, is conveyed. The importance of space is clearly indicated in the novel itself, in which the book project described is in fact about seizing and conceptualising a certain space:[23]

> The project was to write a book dealing very loosely and freely with the theme of space: physical space, mental space, and our ways of moving in them. Of being moved. For space is not a strictly physical notion. […] To exist legitimately, a space requires only one thing: that something move within it. It can be a proper physical space, according to the definition of three axes and six directions, or it can be psychic and represent the universe of potentialities. These two dimensions, one internal and the other external to the human being, confer on space a doubly incommensurable expanse. In both dimensions, there is a dilation toward infinity and a problem locating a centre (Daigle, 1999, pp. 35–36).

The uncertain space referred to is Acadia. In order to know oneself and to know one's territory, the model of a hero is needed and for this purpose Daigle chooses Hercules. One of the 12 deeds that he had to undertake took place in a place called Arcadia, 'an idealized place where people lived in harmony with nature and where song and music flourished' (1999, p. 31). Daigle also notes that in psychoanalysis, Hercules' work symbolises the long and painful process of self-education in order to attain wisdom and serenity (ibid.). The word Acadia is sometimes believed to be a distortion of Arcadia and from this it follows that the former term has a literary and mythical ring to it, but also that it is connected to identity and self-knowledge. The territory of Acadia is associatively linked to other (Francophone) topographies and other mental forms and structures in *Pas pire*. This is done in order to make Acadian space real. The concrete place spoken about in the novel is the city of Dieppe, a predominantly French-speaking urban agglomeration located just off Moncton. But it is also about a sort of displacement of cultural and linguistic space, a stressing of an atopic space relationship. Through the communication that is done in French right in the middle of shops and urban

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[23] See Doyon-Gosselin (2012) for a comprehensive study on space in France Daigle.

structures that are mainly English-speaking, and through communication between social classes done in Acadian French, sometimes in *chiac* (the hybrid French-English language used in the area), a virtual space is created. This is both paratopic and transcultural, since it functions as a parallel space that is coloured by the two official languages in Canada. The city of Moncton is interesting here both in the context of Acadian literature and in Daigle's literary production. Raoul Boudreau, discussing Gérard Leblanc's importance in order to convey Moncton as paratopic space in Acadian literature, states about France Daigle's relationship to the city:

> cette écrivaine a plutôt commencé par ignorer Moncton. [...] Il a fallu attendre le septième roman de France Daigle, *La vraie vie*, publié dix ans après son entrée en littérature, pour trouver une simple mention de Moncton. Néanmoins, dans ce dernier roman publié en 2002, la consécration fictionnelle de Moncton comme centre culturel acadien doté de pouvoirs d'attraction sur un grand artiste étranger occupe une place centrale (Boudreau, 2007, p. 49).[24]

Acadian territory is also referred to as being part of a delta. It is described as one of the small streams forming the delta, a recurrent theme in the novel. Comparing the Rhône delta and the Ganges delta, Daigle gives the following explanation of the phenomenon:

> A delta generally forms when the sea fails to redistribute over a wide area the sediment and particles transported by a large river. This transported material is gradually deposited at the mouth of the river, eventually creating small islands or accumulations that impede the water's free flow. To attain the sea, the river breaks up into several smaller rivers, the main branches of which appear to form the sides of an isosceles triangle when seen from the air (1999, p. 12).

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[24] [...] this writer began by rather ignoring Moncton. [...] It wasn't until France Daigle's seventh novel, *La vraie vie*, published ten years after entering literature, that a simple mention of Moncton was found. Nevertheless, in this most recent novel published in 2002, Moncton's fictional consecration as an Acadian cultural centre with powers of attraction over a great foreign artist occupies a central place.

If one looks upon Acadia from a distance, i.e., if one performs what Franco Moretti (2005) calls a distant reading of the space in question, Acadia is one of those small, irregular and unpredictable streams in a delta in a Francophone river system. But this is just one of the possible perspectives on Acadia, since the other obvious reading is one done from the inside, on the local level. In the Acadian microcosm there is in fact a single river (not a delta) in the centre of Moncton. The Petitcodiac, which flows through the city, is the opposite of a delta, if looked upon from a close distance. And if we consider this microcosmic perspective, a space that is completely different from the great North American spaces appears: a small, local space. This idea of smallness and of close readings of space becomes even more tangible when regarded in connection with the idea of agoraphobia, another key notion of the novel. In fact, 'France Daigle' claims to be agoraphobic, something she states when interviewed by Bernard Pivot in Paris. Not being able to tolerate open spaces means that one prefers the small and the local and it is in this light, among others, that one should look upon the spatial dimension expressed in *Pas pire*. But agoraphobia is not just about preferring spatial limitation.[25] The confrontation with open space also causes a sort of delirium and a free floating of the spirit. And this dizziness and instability stimulate poetic creation, which is a positive dimension of agoraphobia. According to 'France Daigle', the disorder in question should in fact be democratised, since generally women suffer from it (1999, p. 108). Agoraphobia is thus a spatial attitude that can have effects on creativity. It is also the opposite of spatial expansion towards the West; it strengthens the wish to stay in the local surroundings, in the village, which is the opposite of the traditional American dream about going West.

As has been said, the setting of the novel is bilingual, with the Francophone narrator moving for example between Anglophone restaurants such as the Palm Lunch and the Marsh Canteen while

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[25] This can be compared with Primeau's novel in which Maxine's father had chosen a forestry area in Alberta, and not the vast prairies, in order to keep his 'humanity'.

keeping her 'French' identity. One characteristic of this identity is its dual relationship to space. On the one hand this space does not have a precise cartography, but on the other hand there is a subjective mapping going on. When 'France Daigle' makes her trip to Paris, she and her companion are often mistaken for Americans and people address them in English (1999, p. 106). But the Anglophone influence is also seen on a deeper level, for example when 'France Daigle' talks about Doris Lessing and about her desire to read more of this author. Just as Maxine in *Sauvage-Sauvageon* is fascinated by English Romantic poetry certain ways of life English are attractive for the protagonist in Daigle's novel. This could be seen as an example of desire for the other as developed by Patrick Imbert (see *supra*):

> Recently, for example, I thought of London. I often think of London since I read Doris Lessing's collection of short stories The Real Thing. It's not a genre I care for but I truly enjoyed the atmosphere, what's said and left unsaid, everything surrounding English teatime. And I, whom subways turn to jelly, enjoyed touring London via the Underground with her. I enjoyed seeing through her eyes the many neighbourhoods we crisscrossed above ground. The book survived a recent housecleaning of our bookshelves. It's a book I'd like to read again if I don't take that trip, if ever I don't make it to London, or if ever I do (Daigle, 1999, p. 121).

France Daigle's novel paints a subjective cultural geography, an Acadian space with blurred contours. France Daigle knows how to 'traiter des sujets complexes avec subtilités, humour et une bonne dose d'autodérision' (Boudreau, 2009, p. 27) and the novel offers a constant sliding between perspectives.

The space described is in many ways a loca space, although emerging in many versions at the same time as it has numerous connections with a wider, global, Francophone context. But it is also to an extent a hybrid space, the English element being present on several levels, mixing with the French. The novel is also an example of what Jeanette den Toonder (2010, p. 77) points out, namely that Acadian literature expresses a condition which is amorphous, i.e. characterised by a lack of, or changing, form.

Marc Prescott: *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains & Fort Mac*

According to Pierre-Yves Mocquais (2012), utopian memory and utopian projections are important both in the first European colonisation of Canada and in the subsequent colonisation of the West. If the decision of the European explorers and colonisers to leave for Canada was based on utopia (the dream of a new world), a new collective discourse will appear after their settlement on the new continent, life there having proved to be hard and demanding and not the lost paradise sought for. Other myths will rise: that of the dispossessed French Canadian and another one underscoring the idea of a new start from nothing on the new continent. French Canadians will for example look upon themselves as actors in a story that begins with the idea that in the beginning there is 'nothing'. Towards the end of the 19th century, yet another utopian discourse appears, this time concerning western Canada, a place that will be described as a new Eden, thus replacing the previous utopian idea of North America seen from a European perspective. In eastern Canada an idealising narrative about the West, supported and encouraged by the Canadian government and the Catholic Church as well as by the major railway companies will appear and a narrative of a beginning in a 'nowhere' will be reinforced (2012, pp. 135–136). Moreover, the myth of a recreated individual, a new man who remains to be created in the West, arises. Yet another manipulation of self-perception will occur; the change from devaluation to valuation. According to Mocquais, this change of self-image embodies the refusal to admit that the settlement in Canada to a large extent was an error. But the new story replaces the idea of failure with the idea of the settlement in Canada seen as an act of voluntarism. A new way of conceiving the idea of a path to happiness is also conceived. This path is found, not in a utopian future, but in the enhancement of the present, of the here and now.

It is partly in this light that it is suitable to look upon the two western Canadian plays by Marc Prescott.[26] About Francophone

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[26] Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. The most important cities are Regina, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.

communities in the Prairies, it can be said that the Saint-Boniface area of Winnipeg plays the role of a Francophone centre, and in Edmonton there is a Francophone campus within the university of Alberta, the *Campus Saint-Jean*. Marc Prescott was born in Manitoba in 1971. Apart from the two plays briefly examined here, he has published for example *L'année du Big Mac* in 2005, and has collaborated with the *Théâtre du Cercle Molière* in Winnipeg and with the theatre company *Les Chiens du Soleil*. Marc Prescott's theatrical works should be seen in the context of a tradition of Francophone theatre in western Canada (see for example the essential study on this topic by Godbout, L. et al., 2012).

In *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains*, the three characters are *Elle, Lui* and *Him*. A burglary occurs on Christmas Eve at Nicole's home in Saint-Boniface in Winnipeg. The *Lui* character has tried to rob her house, but *Elle* (Nicole) manages to hit him and tie him to a chair. *Elle* goes to call the police but before doing so, she engages in a conversation with her prisoner. He is bilingual but speaks a French that is full of English words. *Elle*, on the contrary, represents linguistic purism. A teacher of French, she speaks the language correctly (even hypercorrectly). Nicole calls the police, an action that takes some time, since she insists on talking to a Francophone officer. In the second act *Lui* and *Elle* are both tied by ropes. A new burglar has arrived, this time an English-speaking person: it is the *Him* character. Although a unilingual English speaker, he uses a language which is full of grammatical errors. But somehow the language barrier is broken between *Lui* and *Him*, since they are colleagues in the field of burglary. When starting to remove everything that has value from the house, *Him* finds a book that proves to be Nicole's diary in which she has written in French about her difficulties with her ex-partner Paul. The text contains some rather daring parts and although he is not really able to read the book, *Him* becomes interested and makes an effort to translate it into English. *Him* wants to know the story, and *Lui* will read it to Him. However, in order to preserve *Elle's* intimacy, *Lui* translates wrongly. The (sexual) fantasy story in French becomes a gambling story in English. *Him* strips the house of everything valuable and leaves. The two Francophone prisoners are left alone. They are then able to talk about Nicole's emotional worries and lack of happiness. The

image of the Francophone fact in Winnipeg given in the play had emerged, until now, as a closed and narcissistic environment (and associated with a puristic nostalgia for something that had never existed in western Canada). It resembles the situation discussed by Nicole Côté (2010, p. 2016) in which the French fact is caught in the oscillation between cultural hyperconscience and forgetting. However, when *Elle* and *Lui* are left alone, the mode of the play changes. It is in the ensuing dialogue between the two (who have now got rid of their ropes) that the peripeteia of the play occurs and an act of liberation takes place.

In two tirades they now manage to express their own cultural ethos, with the language in which they do so being French. But it is a language which is conditioned by the bicultural environment, a natural setting for the two protagonists. The *ipséité* expressed is not about abandoning one language for another but about a greater freedom to choose languages according to the situation and to move between them. The communication that happens can be understood in the light of Yasemin Yildiz's discussion about the postmonolingual situation. Yildiz states, about a condition beyond the first language: 'The postmonolingual condition […] is not resolved by a one-time move beyond the mother-tongue, but requires constant reinvention and questioning of the underlying concepts of language and identity. It requires constant exit strategies' (2013, p. 142).

One of the exit strategies depicted in Prescott's play is about moving beyond linguistic normativity. *Elle*'s voice is freed both of the provincial, folkloristic constraints symbolised by the local *francophonie*, and of purism. The play also takes into account the natural hybridity of the cultural setting. From now on *Elle* expresses herself in a language in which not only the presence of the English language is felt but also the local (Canadian) variety of French. In addition, her status as a woman is also at stake. The lines pronounced by *Elle* now tell about her wish to get out of the well brought-up Catholic school-girl role that had been hers so that she can start doing 'ce qu'il lui tente de faire' (what I feel like doing). As for *Lui*, his bilingualism is expressed by the phrase 'Prenez-moi comme je suis'. The result is that *Lui* decides to stay at Nicole's house in order to spend Christmas's Eve with her. The linguistic liberation staged opens up to a here and now in which

transculture is important, and which has psychological and emo-tional resonances, also as far as personal evolution is concerned. It can also be seen as an illustration of a condition 'beyond' exiguity, which was referred to earlier. It is a state that can said to be one example of what Thibeault et al. (2016, p. 7) set out to investigate in their study of possible ways of moving beyond the exiguous condition. These authors set out to look into

> la possibilité d'aborder les [petites] littératures en sortant d'[une] lecture légitimante, politique, d'une collectivité en mal de recon-naissance et en ouvrant les réseaux de communication avec les autres communautés, minoritaires et majoritaires, en tentant de se débarrasser de [l'] angoisse du minoritaire qui a peur de se voir disparaître aux confins de la marge.[27]

In other words, it is a question, once again, about the link between, and interdependence of, the (politicised) minority condition and its global implications.

Fort Mac tells about Mimi, Kiki, and Jaypee, three Quebeckers who have come to work at Fort McMurray in the Athabasca region of northern Alberta, and about Maurice, a Francophone from the local area. The Athabasca oil sands are important depos-its of bitumen or crude oil and the largest deposit is the one at Fort McMurray. The play opens with a scene in which Kiki, dressed in her mother's wedding dress, is standing on a bridge determined to commit suicide. The lines herald the end of everything and declare that the things happening at Fort Mac are a crime against nature. Kiki's meditation is interrupted by Maurice, who talks her into interrupting the act she is about to commit, thus saving her life. The story continues in a wasteland, where Jaypee, Mimi and her sister Kiki have parked their camper van. Maurice arrives and a conver-sation about Francophones in Quebec and those in the West ensues. The utopian myth of a new life in the west mentioned before proves to be still alive today, since the three Quebeckers have been tempted

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[27] […] the possibility of addressing the [small] literatures by moving away from [a] legitimate, political reading of a community in need of recognition and by opening communication networks with other communities, minority and majority, by trying to get rid of the anguish of the minority who is afraid of disappearing at the edge of the margins.

by rumours and publicity announcing that happiness is to be found in the West and that there is money to be made at Fort Mac.

However, the three travellers are ill-prepared: their papers are not in order and they lack training. What is more, they have parked on land that belongs to a private owner and risk fines. Jaypee is under the influence of drugs and soon sees himself in debt without being able to repay the money. Kiki finally finds a job as a waitress at Tim Horton's coffee shop and Mimi becomes a dancer in bars and takes up prostitution. Kiki, who wants to help her sister pay off her husband's drug debts, ends up as a prostitute as well. Towards the end, Maurice finds Kiki outside the camp, dressed anew in the wedding dress. But this time she is severely mutilated, having gone to the camp to sell her body. The wedding dress is stained and when Maurice speaks to her she says she wishes to die. Maurice returns to the camp and announces Kiki's death to Mimi and Jaypee. In the penultimate scene Kiki reappears with a long cut on her neck, dressed again in the wedding dress which is immaculate this time. She speaks to Maurice, whom she calls her angel and who has come to deliver her. In the last scene the theme of nature's sadness returns and there is a parallelism between sadness, the rape of nature and the death of Kiki. Kiki's death is the expression of sadness, but it is also an act of sacrifice. After her death the sun rises, which indicates a possibility of hope somewhere. Did Kiki's death have a meaning? Could it be used for something? The mode of the play being one of inhumanity both in interpersonal relationships and in the behaviour towards nature, a glimpse of hope or of transcendence may be perceived in Maurice's gesture at the end, when he takes a handful of rose petals and launches them to Kiki's memory.

If one major topic in *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains* is the question of bilingualism and the acceptation of a transcultural 'hybrid' condition, this is something that remains in the background in the second play studied. Nevertheless, language continues to play an important role. At Fort Mac, English is the sole valid language, which is made clear in some passages. Maurice states for example that speaking English is above all a question of personal safety:

Maurice : Pis tu parles l'anglais ?

Jaypee :   Shit. Ben sûr que je parle anglais ! Toaster, Big-Mac, hot-dog, hamburger !

Maurice : Parce que c'est très important.

Jaypee :   Shit ! Le Canada, c'est pas un pays bilingue dans les deux langues ?

Maurice : C't'une question de sécurité.

Jaypee :   Qu'ils viennent pas me dire que je peux pas parler en québécois.

Maurice : C'est pas une question de droits, c't'une question de sécurité.[28] (2013, p. 24)

Using the English language is above all a pragmatic choice. It is the lingua franca of the vast North American territory in focus in the play, the question of the French language as a reflection of nation is no longer at the very centre. In this play the characters are confronted with one continental (and global) language, the question of cultural identity has become a question of cultural dominance and adaptation. As far as place is concerned, it is neither monolingual Quebec, nor transcultural Manitoba that are in focus, but a culturally rather anonymous, geographical and ecologically disturbed northern Canadian territory. What is really at stake here is the question of nature and so the play fits well into the ecocritical literary strain and to recent postcolonial theory. The abuse of nature is a sort of continued colonial activity, which is a theme analysed in contemporary postcolonial studies.[29] *Fort Mac* opens up reflections of a moral/ethic nature about the relationship between Man and his natural environment. It is the lack of respect for nature and the consequences of this attitude, both in the

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[28] Maurice: So, you speak English?

    Jaypee: Shit. Well, I'm sure I speak English! Toaster, Big-Mac, hot dog, hamburger!

    Maurice: Because it's very important.

    Jaypee: Shit! Is Canada not a bilingual country in both languages.

    Maurice: It's a question of security.

    Jaypee: Don't let them tell me I can't speak in Québécois.

    Maurice: It's not about rights, it's about security.

[29] See for example Tiffin's (2014) article on animals and environment in present and future postcolonial studies.

long- and short-term, that are dealt with. The question of dominance is central; dominance over nature but also linguistic dominance. One of the aims of the play is to show the immediate effects that an attitude of greed has on people: moral corruption, humiliation, prostitution, self-annihilation. It also raises the question of the long-term wounds that are inflicted on nature by referring several times to the *illness* of nature. Kiki's death at the end functions as a way of transcending a higher form of truth; in order for people to sense nature's suffering, it is necessary for a human being to die. The address to the spectator at the end of the play underscores the responsibility of the viewer. From now on it is up to him or her to commemorate and honour Kiki's death in the appropriate way, to ponder on its deeper meaning and to formulate a conclusion. Seen in the context of the discussion about exiguity and Francophone Canadian, it can be said that the play raises questions that go far beyond those of the exiguous community, since part of the central question at stake is of a global nature.

The two plays by Prescott demonstrate at least two ways of looking upon the question of cultural space. In *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains*, the narrative identity expressed towards the end of the play bears witness of a Francophone hybrid condition in which the English language has its natural place. In *Fort Mac*, the global aspect is at the forefront. The issues raised concern the lack of ecological balance and eco-colonialism. The question of power is crucial and the English language is closely connected to (national and global) dominance.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide a sociocultural context in order to elucidate some major themes related to language, space and narrative identity in a selection of Francophone literary writing in Canada's predominantly English-speaking provinces. A choice of theoretical approach was presented: *exiguïté*, narrative identity, transculturality, scenes of enunciation, *paratopie* and *scénographie*. Moreover, the aim was to find out whether the texts could also be seen as examples of a moving beyond a politicised, exiguous condition and, if so, whether their interest was to be

found in their global address. The question of the 'Americanity' of the texts was also to be reflected upon. The studied works show different approaches to cultural, topographic and linguistic space. They also express different *paratopic* relationships. Literature being a constituting discourse, it is relevant to consider Dominique Maingueneau's (2004, pp. 52–53) statement about the *paratopic* position of an enunciator in such discourses. The theorist stresses the importance of the oscillation between physical place and non-place in these texts: 'Localité paradoxale, paratopie, qui n'est pas l'absence de tout lieu, mais une difficile négociation entre le lieu et le non-lieu, une localisation parasitaire qui vit de l'impossibilité même de se stabiliser'.[30]

In the four samples examined this paradoxical position could be summarised as follows. In *Sauvage Sauvageon*, Marguerite Primeau tells a story that moves between a place of the present (the Canadian West coast in British Columbia) and a number of places of the past: Quebec, Alberta and Europe. The style is subjective and resembles a sort of intimate diary. The landscape described is often depicted in a 'romantic' way: idyllic at times, savage and threatening at other times. The lyricism of English Romantic poetry functions as a sort of background and provides a filter through which the narrator understands parts of her space relationship. Narrative identity is closely connected to lyricism and onirism. The protagonist formulates her *ipséité*, or authentic self, in a dream-like state where Romantic vision, the realistic savageness of the Canadian landscape and forgetting intermingle. Her singularity is underscored, according to Jean Morency: a typical feature in 'American' literature. In *Pas pire*, France Daigle sets out to define the amorphous place named Acadia in a personal and associative writing style. The logical links in the plot are conveyed by means of associations operating on several levels: historical, geographical, cultural and linguistic in order to visualise a certain Acadia. The space dealt with is partly an imagined territory that is set both in history and in the present.

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[30] *Paratopie* equals a paradoxical location. It is not the absence of place, but a difficult negotiation between place and non-place, a parasitic location that lives from the impossibility even to stabilise.

It is also about a place that constantly escapes fixing in writing, but at the same time it is the territory of a Francophone minority community and as such it shares common ground with other Francophone (unstable) minority areas of the world. This fact, along with the literary 'naming' of Acadia in the novel, contributes to transforming this region into a 'real' space, where the local dimension is emphasised. The importance of the local partly functions as a resistance towards the expansive American dream of vast spaces. The action of Marc Prescott's two plays *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains* and *Fort Mac* takes place in the Prairies. The thematic presence of the English language is much stronger here than in the two other texts studied. Another important theme is the difference between Francophones from different parts of Canada (Quebeckers and western Canadian Francophones), and the presence of a Canadian Francophone perspective originating from a position outside Quebec. The question is no longer about the famous Francophone 'we' in Canada. An important theme in the play is the reaching of a certain authenticity of the self, i.e. a transcultural and bilingual condition, and also a post-monolingual state. One of the facts that strengthens the American dimension is the presence of the English language. The question of Canadian identity operates in a different way in *Fort Mac*. The protagonists have transgressed linguistic and federal borders and by dramatising their experiences in the wilderness, the author brings out questions about our moral behaviour in relation to nature. If one looks upon how the Francophones 'practice' themselves in this play, the Québécois characters still appear as 'subordinates'. The English language and capitalistic interests emerge as symbols of power, in particular over nature, the unequal power relationship between English and French is still there.

As for the question of the widening of the exiguous condition, the texts express different ways of moving beyond the purely local. In Primeau's novel, narrative identity is constituted by the coexistence of different Canadian historic, cultural and linguistic realities. France Daigle stresses among other things the link between Acadia and other Francophone communities in the world, which makes the content relevant on a more global scale. One of the characteristics in Marc Prescott's two plays is the importance of

the partly atopic and global condition of the French language in Canada: the appearance of a transcultural, post-monolingual mode as in *Sex, Lies et les Franco-Manitobains*, or, as in *Fort Mac*, the addressing (by means of the French language) of ecological issues.

The analyses presented here open up for several important ways of continued study. They could be inserted in a context of pan-Canadian literary study, where linguistic, geographical, and historical diversity are seen as an organic, however diversified, whole. Another possible way of shedding more light on the works studied is to look upon them in a global francophone context and compare them with French language literature written in other countries outside France. A third area where they fit in is the recent field of translingual literature, where the focus is on translation, the juxtaposition of languages and a post-monolingual perspective.

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4. 'Nonhuman Landscapes' in Quebec Video Art

Sara Bédard-Goulet

Abstract

This chapter examines two video artworks by artist Nelly-Eve Rajotte that present landscapes in northern Quebec using aerial views provided by a drone, thus interrogating an anthropocentric representation of landscapes as a passive frame for human activity. The videos and their dehumanized perspective are a basis to reflect on the idea of nonhuman landscapes, i.e. non or less anthropocentric representations of the natural environment that open the possibilities of showing nonhuman elements as singular points of view. They contribute to deepen our understanding of northern spaces in Canada.

Keywords

Video art, landscape, drones, nonhuman, point of view.

> Vision is *always* a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices.
>
> Donna Haraway

Introduction

Contemporary critical theory has reflected on how modernity has alienated humans from the Earth, underlining, like Bruno Latour (2015), the current 'return' of the neglected planet.

Regrettably, the present neoliberal condition and its economic principles enhance the destruction of ecosystems despite a new planetary awareness (Latour, 2017). In this context, a conceptual revision of the human connectedness to the biosphere is taking place, involving, among others, the notion of landscape as 'the familiar domain of our dwelling' (Ingold, 2000, p. 191). Landscape, in the Canadian context, is closely connected to the notion of wilderness, 'a creation of the culture that holds it dear, a product of the very history it seeks to deny' (Cronon, 1996, p. 10). Wilderness manifests the problematic human relationship to the nonhuman as well as the colonial power that created this category to describe places that needed to be appropriated (Costantino, 2012). As both an actual location and a representation, landscape addresses the modern imperative 'to withdraw, to draw out by drawing back from a site' (Mitchell, 2002, p. viii) and questions the position of the human vis-à-vis the natural environment.

Landscape as an artistic genre has received considerable attention from art historians, who have shown how it offers an insight into the human positioning towards nature (Gombrich, 1966). In Canada, the Group of Seven, a group of landscape painters from the 1920s, are considered central to establishing a national art movement based on a direct contact with nature (Housser, 1926). They have also been criticised for supporting the modern idea of nature and wilderness by presenting landscapes that are seemingly untouched and uninhabited. Jonathan Bordo dedicates a chapter to the curious specularity that this kind of work displays: 'It exalts a picture that testifies to an unpicturable condition–the wilderness sublime–while simultaneously legitimating, as a landscape picture, terrain violently seized, dispossessed of its indigenous inhabitants, and reconstituted as territory' (Bordo, 2002, p. 294).

These artistic landscapes form a relevant material to examine how they encourage us to 'look at a view' and thus 'engage in a kind of conscious apperception of space as it unfolds itself in a particular place' (Mitchell, 2002, p. viii). In parallel to these modern landscapes, contemporary landscapes that renew a genre mainly associated with painting through various media are

particularly interesting when it comes to studying the human perspective on and place in 'nature' today.

In this chapter, I question the possibility of a *nonhuman landscape* in two recent video artworks that present landscapes in Quebec using aerial views provided by a drone. In *Blanc* (2017) and *Stem* (2020), Quebec artist Nelly-Eve Rajotte uses the robot's point of view to show northern areas mainly empty of direct human presence, interrogating an anthropocentric representation of landscapes as a passive frame for human activity. An increasingly common filming device, the drone, provides an aerial perspective comparable to those previously produced with the help of a helicopter. Yet, it creates a different effect due to the device's features: its size makes it more manoeuvrable and discreet and broadens the movement range, plus it is controlled from a distance and can be automated. It therefore provides a kind of embodiment for spectators distinct from other types of camera, 'troubling the subjective position defined by camera movement' (Bordwell, 1977, p. 24), and addresses, when it comes to landscapes, the modern aestheticising distance that retreats to a broader perspective. I argue that the technological possibilities offered by the drone encourage the viewers to imagine a nonhuman or less human gaze on the environment that, in turn, raises the possibility of a less anthropocentric landscape or nonhuman landscape. This device would thus offer an insight into other umwelts, described by Jakob von Uexküll (2010) as milieus centred around each living organism, and create 'what if' landscapes more or less devoid of humans. While this kind of reflection raises the question of a possible nonhuman appreciation of artistic landscape and aesthetic categories, this chapter focuses on the representational artifice that fosters a less human-centred approach to landscape. It builds on video art theory, artistic and other approaches to landscape, and refers to comparable artworks that use robotic cameras, namely *La Région Centrale* by Michael Snow (1971), a seminal work in the field of Canadian landscape and experimental film, and *In the Land of Drought* by Julian Rosefeldt (2015), which shows post-apocalyptic landscapes filmed with a drone.

From human to nonhuman landscapes

To define what could be a nonhuman landscape, one needs to first briefly present the concept of landscape, which goes hand in hand with conceptions of the natural environment and the human relationship to it. Landscape has received considerable attention in several fields of the human and natural sciences and varies greatly depending on perspective, but in this chapter we can build on two main trends that consider, on the one hand, in a realist sense, the real perception of a space and, on the other hand, in an iconist sense, its pictorial representation (Balibar, 2018, p. 11; Lefebvre, 2006, p. 20). In anthropology, for example, scholars have focused not only on the perception of the land but also on the human use of it, in an embodied perspective that considers that 'landscape is the familiar domain of our dwelling' (Ingold, 2000, p. 191) where humans are incorporated rather than inscribed. Similarly, if we consider landscape in a new materialist perspective for which the 'mode of being and knowing in which transcorporeal subjects grapple with "environments" that can never be external' (Alaimo, 2014, p. 13), we can tentatively describe landscape as a habitat that emerges from the relations taking place in a given location. Indeed, one living organism's habitat is always formed by the other organisms' weaving, and inhabiting is always cohabiting with other life forms (Morizot, 2020, p. 28).

In their *Iconography of landscape*, Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels define landscape as 'a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings.' (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988, p. 1) Focusing comparably on landscape in the visual arts, Anne Cauquelin (1989) describes it as space freed from eventhood, as a setting, and opposes it to a scene. These two approaches insist, as elsewhere Alain Roger (1997) or Michel Collot (1997), on landscape as a culturally informed experience of the land, made visible in a representation. Yet, it is impossible to establish such a clear separation between the land as physical and the landscape as cultural,[1] let alone limit the landscape to a background, despite a long artistic tradition that supports this

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[1] As demonstrated, for example, in Posthumus, S. (2012). Writing the Land/scape: Marie Darrieussecq's *Le Pays*. *FLS*, 34, 103–117.

idea. Admittedly, artworks have been made responsible for the indifference of humans towards the natural environment. While Ernst Gombrich (1966, p. 119) claims that the genre of the landscape became the source of our 'landscaping gaze', i.e. our sensibility to landscape in the world, Estelle Zhong Mengual and Baptiste Morizot (2018, p. 88) blame the 'landscape model' for structuring our appreciation of panoramic views, horizon and perspective effects as important elements of nature, for flattening the landscape and for inducing exteriority towards it, as it has to be appreciated from afar. For Allan Carlson (2015, p. 66), the landscape model acts as a screen between the living world and humans that should be substituted to provide new forms of attention to the other-than-humans.

While Carlson (2015, p. 78) recommends replacing the artistic landscape model with one based on scientific and common knowledge about the natural environment, Zhong Mengual (2017, p. 41) suggests that art also possesses resources that can help to reinvent the human relationship with the living world and oppose the idea that humans are the only ones to dwell in an environment that is homogenously composed of all the nonhumans. To reverse the inattention towards what has been considered décor, Zhong Mengual proposes that artworks should acknowledge nonhumans as *points of view*. Rather than suggesting that nonhumans should become actors emerging from the background, she recommends the concept of point of view, defined, following von Uexküll (2010), as a centre that configures its environment in a milieu endowed with meaning, secreting and transporting its own evaluations (Zhong Mengual, 2021). Being a point of view involves a singular existence, comparable to what Florence Burgat (2015) has described for animal lives as an active element rather than a passive unidentified background. In addition to being a fruitful philosophical concept, the point of view is profitable to art studies as it can be used to analyse artworks.

Recently, the idea of 'inhuman landscape' was opposed to the 'human landscape' defined by the European Landscape Convention (2000), which specifies, following anthropological and human geographical perspectives, that populations must be associated with the definition, the regional planning and the preservation of landscapes. In this perspective, inhuman landscapes are 'paradoxical

landscapes, landscapes that are or were inhabited, but in which the relationship of belonging between landscape and people seems to be broken, even more strongly and dramatically than in the "non-places" mentioned by Marc Augé' (LLSETI, 2019).

These inhuman landscapes are human-made and humans are the cause of their degradation and limited or impossible use. They can be associated with three types of surrounding: transit landscapes (such as encampments), toxic landscapes (such as sacrifice zones used for building nuclear weapons) and hurt landscapes (such as former war zones or places of massacre). They are an extreme example of 'hybrid natures', 'anthropogenic ecosystems' or 'transformed umwelts' (Mäekivi & Magnus, 2020) created by the global and all-encompassing human presence on Earth and increasing friction (Tsing, 2005) between humans and other biological species. A similar, although more positive, appeal for an alternative conception of landscape was made in a recent issue of the *Paysageur* journal (2020), dedicated to 'parallel landscapes': informal, pirate, hallucinated landscapes that invite us to look at the land differently.

In parallel to the notion of inhuman landscape and in connection with the current conceptual decentring of the human as well as with multiple contemporary artworks that reinvent the genre of the landscape (Matless, 2018) among the artistic production of the Anthropocene (David & Turpin, 2015), I wish to consider what could be a nonhuman landscape, i.e. a non or less anthropocentric representation of the natural environment. More specifically, I suggest that by providing an alternative point of view to that of the traditional camera, the drone's aerial view used in some contemporary video artwork generates another, non-anthropocentric, perceptual imaginary of the environment. Even if robotic cameras are controlled by humans (although this is not always the case, as some of them are automated), its impersonal presence offers more space for the natural elements, raising attentiveness to each, or at least some of them, which can be considered as singular entities with their own lived experiences. Even if the drone flies over the land at higher or lower altitude, it can participate in breaking the 'illusion of disembeddedness' (Plumwood, 2001) that usually comes with a distant point of view, as has been the case for instance with images of the 'Blue

Planet' taken from space (Cosgrove, 2001; Heise, 2008; Latour, 2015). Indeed, as Donna Haraway points out in her now seminal essay *Situated Knowledges*:

> The 'eyes' made available in modern technological sciences shatter any idea of passive vision; these prosthetic devices show us that all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building on translations and specific *ways* of seeing […] There is no unmediated photograph or passive camera obscura (Haraway, 1988, p. 588).

Needless to say, drone use varies greatly as do the resulting images that they produce, as well as the editing that is made from their recordings. Moreover, because of its inevitable connection with surveillance and war, the drone draws attention to the imperial appropriation of land, reinforced and legitimised by a withdrawn subject and a representation of an empty and hostile space. In this way it offers visibility to the modern construction of the landscape and can criticise a colonial legitimacy based on the idea of *terra nullius*, a land that belongs to no one, concealing prior settlement and land use (Costantino, 2012). Landscape could then express a form of anxiety in the face of the human impact on nature and the environmental catastrophe that it is causing, and mark the decline of the global capitalist empire (Barringer, 2018).

Nonhuman points of view

The drone's disembodied point of view is comparable to what Gilles Deleuze describes as a certain kind of camera in cinema: 'But the sole cinematographic consciousness is not us, the spectator, nor the hero; it is the camera — sometimes human, sometimes inhuman or superhuman'[2] (Deleuze, 1986, p. 20). Whether inhuman or superhuman, it is significant that robotic cameras provide a dehumanised point of view in which 'the camera movement […] block[s] an anthropomorphic reading, refusing it as an intelligible or likely surrogate for bodily movement' (Bordwell, 1977, p. 24)

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[2] 'Mais la seule conscience cinématographique, ce n'est pas nous, le spectateur, ni le héros, c'est la caméra, tantôt humaine, tantôt inhumaine ou surhumaine' (Deleuze, 1983, p. 34).

and create new modes of seeing. Reversing Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's proposal about material agency, I suggest that these new modes of seeing allow us to 'apprehend the environment disanthropo-centrically, in a teetering mode that renders human centrality a problem rather than a starting point' and insist on the fact that 'the inhuman is not ours to control, possesses desires and even will' (Cohen, 2013, p. xxiv). Drones used for filming landscapes can thus constitute ecocritical apparatuses that underline 'the relationship of the human and the non-human […] and entailing critical analysis of the term "human" itself' (Garrard, 2012, p. 5). The UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicle) used to film Rajotte's video works, although they fit into a 'drone vision [that] establishes its prominence as a trope in public culture' (Stahl, 2013, p. 664), and mainly include killing UAVs, refer more to a scientific imaginary that involves discovery, recording and surveillance, even if they also move away from this visibility regime with more contemplative moments. Despite the fact that landscape and territory imply different modes of relation to the spatial environment, the 'landscape gaze' and the 'tactical gaze' nevertheless share a common interest in the observation and possession of the land (Lacoste, 1995). This connection is made particularly tangible in the Canadian North, which has been considered since the beginning of colonisation both as pure wilderness and a resource to be exploited. Unsurprisingly, the two video works analysed here are reminiscent of this phenomenon.

These works by Nelly-Eve Rajotte both present landscapes from the northern Quebec. *Blanc* is a one channel 9:30 minute-long video with stereo sound produced in 2017 and presented that same year at the Truck Stop festival, projected on an abandoned drive-in screen in Drummondville. It starts with still shots of an abandoned drive-in screen and white trucks in snow before moving to travelling shots of a northern forest and lake and later of Inuit and sleigh dogs on the ice floe. Those travelling shots include shots taken from closer to the ground, over a path in the forest and closing in on the sleigh dogs, and from a higher altitude, so that they offer a wide view of the forest or the ice floe, where the Inuit are initially barely visible as small dark figures on the white background.
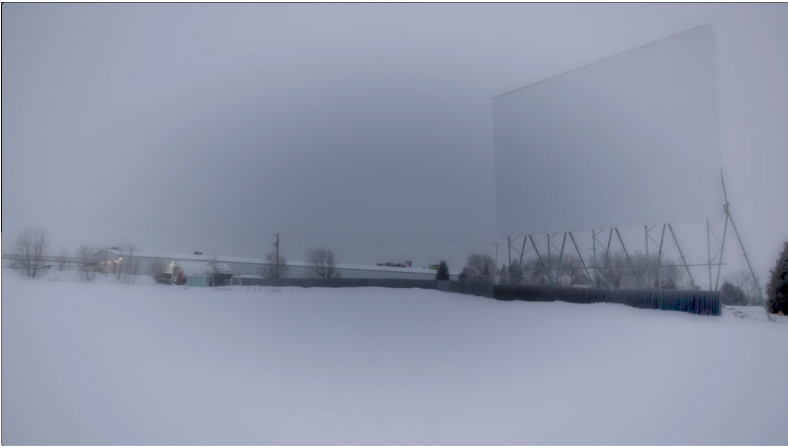
Figure 1. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound. Courtesy of the artist.[3]

Figure 2. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound.

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[3] All images from Nelly-Eve Rajotte are courtesy of the artist.

Figure 3. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound.

Figure 4. Nelly-Eve Rajotte.2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound.

Stem is a one channel 12:00 minute-long video with sound produced in 2020 and intended as an architectural projection, presented for the first time during the summer of 2020 at the Rencontres internationales de la photographie en Gaspésie. It only shows travelling shots of a northern forest and lake, at the Manicouagan reservoir, whose dam is visible for a short moment during the opening credits. The piece focuses mainly on one lake

Figure 5. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2020. *Stem* [Film still]. HD film, 12 minutes, sound. Hydro-Quebec collection.

Figure 6. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2020. *Stem* [Film still]. HD film, 12 minutes, sound. Hydro-Quebec collection.

shore, which forms a peninsula where a tree stands apart from the rest of the forest, with the camera closing in on that shore alternately from two sides. The UAV stays at relatively the same height over the water, at a distance that prevents any kind of human embodiment, but at one point its camera pivots as the UAV keeps relatively still, reminding the viewer about the apparatus.

   Both videos are filmed with a UAV[4] but with one major difference. In *Blanc*, the presence of the UAV is made visible and 'hearable': the soundtrack includes sounds reminiscent of communications between pilots and an airbase, and we can sometimes notice the propeller on the edge of the frame; in addition,

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[4] Seemingly with a human controlled UAV.

the video seems to end with the UAV landing, its camera looking down at the ground. In *Stem*, the UAV's presence is only palpable from the aerial point of view: it is not included in the soundtrack and we cannot see its propeller or legs. Therefore, in the first video, although the camera movement is not a likely surrogate to bodily movement, the spectator can still relate for instance to a drone pilot, while in the second video the point of view is more impersonal, nonhuman. The point of view in the first video is thus more reminiscent of an exploration or surveillance imaginary, especially when added enhanced contrast creates a moon-like landscape with the ice floe, where in the second video it gives more an impression of curious contemplation mixed with nature documentary. The second major difference between the two videos is the presence of humans and domesticated dogs in *Blanc*, whereas *Stem* shows a landscape devoid of direct human presence. Both videos are edited, presenting a careful selection of recordings and discernible added effects, such as overexposure in *Blanc* and fake snow in *Stem*. It is notable that both videos simultaneously create immersive and distancing effects. As respectively large and monumental projections with a unique camera point of view, they immerge the viewers in the environment that they present. At the same time, because of their robotic cameras, which prevent any anthropomorphic reading, they stop viewers from feeling that they are directly experiencing these environments. Although it can be claimed that UAVs provide an even more direct mediation of reality, being a mobile extension of human vision, in the two video works they display the inherent artificiality of any image capture and 'shatter any idea of passive vision'. The possibilities offered by this technological device reposition the human vis-à-vis the landscape by insisting on the presence of a nonhuman eye, which alters the idea of a human landscape, a landscape seen by and intended for humans only.

Shift of focus

The use of an 'automated' technical eye in video art is not entirely new, since the medium is itself part technological and has raised interrogations and experimentations from artists since its beginning. Predecessors such as Canadian artist Michael Snow have investigated this aspect before, specifically in connection with

Figure 7. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound.

remote northern landscapes. For his influential experimental film *La Région Centrale*, created in 1971 (190 minutes), Snow conceived, together with engineer Pierre Abeloos, a remote-controlled camera-activating machine that he set in an isolated location north of Sept-Îles, in Quebec. From the perspective of a mountain-top, this cinematic landscape features vast prospects and a rocky terrain recorded by a camera rigged for movement in any and all directions, including turning, rolling, and spinning – producing a landscape that defies gravity. The camera movement were composed in advance and the artist controlled the motion live by remote control from an off-screen position during filming. The camera-activating machine does not appear in the film, except occasionally as a shadow.[5]

When comparing Nelle-Eve Rajotte's videos and Snow's *La Région Centrale*, we can identify similarities due to the disembodied camera that creates moving images that cannot be observed by the human eye and affects the perception of the landscape. In *La Région Centrale*, it is impossible not to notice camera movement, which tends to attract attention to the frame edge causing it to lead the

[5] This machine was later recycled and adapted to become the central element and motive force of the kinetic video sculpture *De La* (1972).
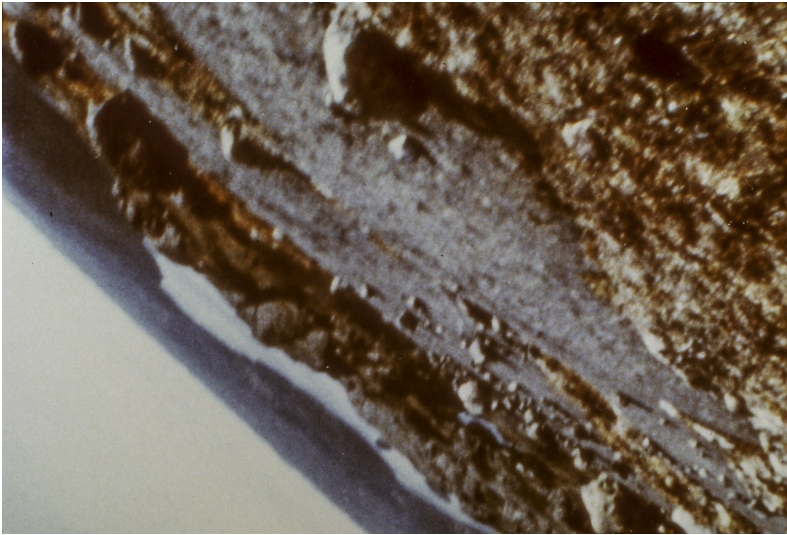
Figure 8. Michael Snow. 1971. *La Région Centrale* [Film still]. 16mm film, 190 minutes, colour, sound. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 9. *La Région Centrale* [Production still], 1971. 16mm film, 190 minutes, colour, sound. Photograph by Joyce Wieland. Courtesy of Michael Snow.

movement rather than the centre. This is not the case in *Blanc* or *Stem* because of the travelling shots, which are mainly forward and bring the focus in the direction of travel, distancing the work from the more traditional panning shots from the motion picture industry, which derive from painted panoramas (Barringer, 2018). In both artists' work, the more or less 'independent' camera, freed from traditional narration and its temporality, structures an alternative time and space. This spacetime is suggestive of how it can exist outside of the human realm, for different living beings, and it opposes a common association between landscape in films and *temps morts*, lulls in the story, which has contributed to connect landscape with death (Lefebvre, 2006). As described by von Uexküll (2010) for the tick, spacetime for nonhuman organisms can vary greatly, with some perceiving the world more slowly or more quickly and keeping within a limited perimeter during their lifetime, or, on the contrary, travelling great distances every year. By suspending human time and space the three works present the viewers with alternative umwelts and mark how the 'ecological project of thinking beyond anthropocentricity requires enlarged temporal and geographical scales' (Cohen, 2015, p. 9), while they 'stretch material intimacies across [those] scales' (Alaimo, 2016, p. 10).

In terms of representation, the shift of focus to landscape and its content can be described as a switch in the obvious and obtuse meanings defined by semiotician Roland Barthes (1982). While the obvious meaning refers to the symbolic addressed to the receptor within a sign system, the obtuse (or third) meaning exceeds it, being a signifier without a signified (Barthes, 1982). Landscape films would then reverse the usual balance between the two meanings and give the most space to the obtuse rather than the obvious one (at least until this type of film is no longer a novelty). Although this perspective prolongs in a way the traditional negative definition of landscape in art (landscape is a setting *without* action), it insists on how the nonhuman exceeds human apprehension, modelling and representation and is thus part of the indescribable. At the same time, human efforts to understand and translate the nonhuman are numerous and landscape videos contribute to these efforts by shifting the focus to the 'surroundings', the 'background' (Bonamy, 2013).

The presence of nonhumans in the moving image pieces, while contributing to create a landscape, echoes the three notions identified by Barthes to describe the obtuse meaning. First, the signifier 'is discontinuous, *indifferent* to the story and to the obvious meaning'[6] (Barthes, 1982, p. 55). Even if different genres (documentary, landscape, surveillance) structure Rajotte's videos, they partly escape the narrative form with natural elements that break away and introduce a counter-narrative. In *Stem*, this is made tangible, for example and paradoxically, with the fake snow added to the footage, which introduces an 'elliptic emphasis' that blurs the border between authenticity and disguise. Second, the signifier is incomplete, 'it is in a permanent state of *depletion*'[7] (Barthes, 1982, p. 55), it can never thoroughly name. This is the case, for example, in *Blanc*, where the final image of waves on a shore, which comes after numerous shots of snowy landscapes, is suggestive of climate change while displaying the impossible encompassing of the phenomenon, which belongs to 'deep time' (Chakrabarty, 2018) and involves 'slow violence' (Nixon, 2011). Third, the obtuse meaning 'can be seen as an *accent*, the shape of emergence itself, of a fold'[8] (Barthes, 1982, p. 56). As an anaphoric gesture, the obtuse meaning marks the sign system and the information it conveys. This is suggested in *Blanc* through the white surfaces of the screen and trucks and then the snow, which become projection and inscription surfaces, not only for human emotions, as was the case in modern landscapes, but also for vegetation. In short, the reversal of the obvious and obtuse meanings in Rajotte's video pieces goes together with a renewal of the landscape genre, as it attempts to distance itself from the human perspective.

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[6] 'le sens obtus est discontinu, *indifférent* à l'histoire et au sens obvie (comme signification de l'histoire)' (All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.)

[7] 'le signifiant (le troisième sens) ne se remplit pas ; il est dans un état permanent de *déplétion*'

[8] 'le sens obtus peut être vu comme un *accent*, la forme même d'une émergence, d'un pli (voire d'un faux pli), dont est marquée la lourde nappe des informations et des significations.'

Figure 10. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound.

Figure 11. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound.

Appropriate distance

Another notable contemporary production that uses a UAV to film an uninhabited land is *In the Land of Drought* produced between 2015 and 2017 by German artist Julian Rosefeldt. In this 43:15 minute-long 1-channel film with sound, landscapes seem to be part of 'an imagined future upon the post-Anthropocene',

visited by what looks like scientists or technicians investigating 'the remnants of civilisation after humanity has made itself extinct' (Lapper, 2018). More and more, 'figures dressed in white lab suits emerge to inspect the ruins of civilisation – which are in fact abandoned film sets close to the Moroccan Atlas Mountains [...] like alien visitors who were perhaps once familiar with this ruined wasteland' (Lapper, 2018). Midway through the film, we 'are transported to the comparably bleak Ruhr area of Germany where the remains of industrialisation lie' (Lapper, 2018). The same scientist-looking people 'prowl the abandoned mining region, wandering across lonely land before finally descending upon an amphitheatre' (Lapper, 2018). The whole video is filmed with a drone, giving the impression of a robot accompanying the scientists' expedition and recording their discoveries.[9]

When comparing Rosefeldt's video with Nelly-Eve Rajotte's, we notice a similar use of the UAV, with long traveling shots that create a space in which the viewer is invited, with the immersive effect of the monumental or very large projection so that 'the physical crossing of a spatial distance constitutes or conditions the work configuration'[10] (Davila, 2002, p. 10), just as is the case for works that involve walking. The UAV allows the spectacle to break away from the usual frontal and static landscape view and offers the engaged and immersed posture called for by Arnold Berleant in the field of aesthetics:

> The boundlessness of the natural world does not just surround us; it assimilates us. Not only are we unable to sense absolute limits in nature; we cannot distance the natural world from ourselves in order to measure and judge it with complete objectivity. Nature exceeds the human mind, not just because of the limits of our present knowledge, not only because of the essentially anthropomorphic character of that knowledge so that we can never go beyond the character and boundaries of our cognitive process, but by the recognition that the cognitive relation with things is not the exclusive relation or even the highest one we can achieve (1993, p. 236).

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[9] Information available on the artist's website: https://www.julianrosefeldt .com.

[10] 'le franchissement physique d'une distance spatiale constitue ou conditionne la configuration d'une œuvre, elle trace un signe d'équivalence entre marcher et créer.'

On the one hand, we can consider that immersive works prolong the anthropocentrism of art by creating a central place for the human viewer. On the other hand, in the case of Rosefeldt's and Rajotte's work, the UAV provides a point of view inaccessible to humans that offers an insight into nonhuman points of view. It also suggests that an impersonal, technological device can have a point of view, mirroring the modern distant perspective that, this time, includes the human along with the nonhuman, as if the land was considered from an alien point of view. From this outsider's perspective, the human and the nonhuman are no longer in opposition, in the common subject–object relationship that informs modern landscapes, but rather they share space and time, so that the videos display the entanglements that create a landscape without denying the malign effect that humans can have on nonhumans.

Returning the gaze

Rosefeldt's and Rajotte's works, like many contemporary artworks, are a meeting point of artistic and scientific practices that crystallise Anthropocene visual culture (Matless, 2018) and shape the current epistemological framework through an 'investigation effect' (Zenetti, 2019). Interestingly, in *In the Land of Draught*, *Blanc* and *Stem*, the surveillance or 'documenting effect' (Zenetti, 2017) created by the UAV bounces back, with the videos gazing at the viewers in return and breaking away from the usual subject–object paradigm. This is very tangible at the end of *In the Land of Draught*, where the amphitheatre resembles a large eye, with its all-seeing ability reflective of the aerial viewpoint, unfolding a dialogue between the two perspectives: the eye on the ground (like the Earth's eye) and the drone's nonhuman eye overhead. In *Blanc*, this specularity, revealing nonhuman points of view, is noticeable towards the end of the video, when the drone approaches the sleigh dogs, a few of which get interested and walk towards it carefully. This animal–machine interaction testifies of a nonhuman perspective that challenges the anthropocentric one and insists on defining those points of view from their encounter rather than in an essentialist way. In that sense, the videos call into question the nature of identity, 'troubling the assumptions that prop up the *anthropos* in the first place, including the assumed separation between "the human" and its others' (Barad, 2012, p. 27).

Figure 12. Nelly-Eve Rajotte. 2017. *Blanc* [Film still]. HD film, 9:30 minutes, sound.

Stem presents a subtler returning of the gaze by playing with the Romantic tableau of a single tree standing apart from the forest on a lake shore. Singled out, the tree becomes an individual that also insists, because of its disposition, on the presence of the other trees, in a known composition effect. It is tempting to consider, as is the case in Tom Thomson's *The Jack Pine* (1916–17), an influential painting for the Group of Seven and the Canadian landscape movement, that the 'solitary tree is a stand-in for the specular witness' (Bordo, 2002, p. 299). For Bordo, witnessing is determinant in modern picturing, as indicated by the constitutive framing operation of picturing, and is connected with the notion of wilderness in colonial art. In paintings such as *The Jack Pine*, the single tree figures the witness of wilderness, before European human presence in North America; this figure obliterates history by positing testimony as the rupturing event that inaugurates human presence in the land. Where in modernity 'the subject as a witness comes to organize the space, frame, and contents of visual arts' (Bordo, 2002, p. 299), the postmodern posthumanist eye of the drone shifts the witness figure of the single tree to a singular being with its dose of uncertainty. The tree is no longer a static stand-in witness that attracts, thanks to the painting's composition, the spectators' gaze and in which the spectators

can project themselves. Instead, the camera movement, showing the tree from different angles and distances, presents a singular being, more similar to a character (or a point of view, in Zhong Mengual's terms). The special effects used by the artist to alter the tree's appearance enhance its character-like features, described as mysterious and almost magical by critics (Lévesque, 2020). These effects increase the uncertainty of the tree: we are unsure whether it is dead or alive, so that it appears as an in-between, unstable figure. Not only does the tree become a being with a singular existence, it also displays an ontological indeterminacy that points to identity as something performed rather than given (Barad, 2012, p. 41), based on the 'ongoing differentiation of the world' (Barad, 2012, p. 47).

Unsurprisingly, the ontological indeterminacy that marks the current period is made visible in artistic landscapes, which are emblematic of certain processes typical of the Anthropocene for David Matless (2018). As a geological epoch defined by the human impact on Earth, the Anthropocene draws attention to the intricate entanglements of humans and nonhumans and how they take place. In this context, the 'anthroposcenic' (Matless, 2018) can help visualise the epoch and its new geographical imaginaries of altered natures. Rather than the mainly photographic familiar 'working landscapes' examined by Matless, Rajotte's video works present at first sight remote locations that are not as much 'in use'. At the same time, the UAV footage used in both videos could easily originate from control UAVs that check, for instance, water level, especially close to a dam (in *Stem*). Moreover, *Blanc* includes visible spatial practices, as if reminding us that the Canadian North is not an empty land belonging to no one. Strikingly, the non-anthropocentric perspective provided by the UAV does not erase the past enfolded in the territory but instead exposes it through the surveillance imaginary that it summons. The title of *Blanc* ('white' in French) points to the connection between the 'pure' white snowy northern landscapes and the colonial power that created this historical visual medium. *Blanc* thus shows how the natural is connected to the political, how the land retains traces of exploitation, its material agency (Bennett, 2010) highlighted by a camera device intended for watching humans and nonhumans

alike. Instead of prolonging the 'conquering gaze from nowhere […] that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, [that] signifies the unmarked positions of Man and White' (Haraway, 1988, p. 581), this video work proposes a 'critical habitat', i.e. 'art informed by geopoetics […] that critiques the relationship between media and environment and explores forms of global identification' (Apter, 2002, p. 22).

Conclusion

To conclude briefly on this exploratory analysis of two video artworks by Quebec artist Nelly-Eve Rajotte, I endeavoured to show how they support the hypothesis of a nonhuman landscape, as a non or less anthropocentric representation of the natural environment. Building on new materialisms, I suggested that landscape, in the first place, is a habitat that emerges from the relations taking place in a given location, and that it can be represented through various artistic media. Video art seems to be an appropriate medium to reverse the modern inattention towards the natural environment and its inhabitants, especially through specific uses of UAVs. By dehumanising the camera effect, the drone creates the possibilities of showing nonhuman elements as singular points of view, reversing the usual obvious and obtuse meanings of representation while involving the viewers within the landscape to meet with the elements represented and possibly being affected by this encounter. As seen with the works analysed, presenting elements as points of view can sometimes create an uncanny return of the gaze towards the viewer (Didi-Huberman, 1992) and highlight the ontological indeterminacy of the elements presented. The drone can also offer an alien perspective that enhances the shared materiality of the human and nonhuman, while the large or monumental format of the works immerse the viewers in the altered environments that they show. When comparing Nelly-Eve Rajotte's works with Snow's and Rosefeldt's, it appeared that they create an alternative spacetime more suited to a disanthropocentric approach to the natural environment. Moreover, *Blanc* and *Stem* deconstruct the assumption of wilderness that usually comes with representations of the Canadian North, by revealing traces of

human activity (the dam in *Stem*) and human dwelling (the Inuit in *Blanc*). They produce an alternative narrative of the northern spaces in Canada, critical of the colonial legacy and its ongoing effects on the landscapes. The northern forest that they present contributes to reveal 'the vegetal foundations of capitalism and colonialism' (Sandilands, 2017, p. 25) and the commodification of people and plants alike by the political and economic ambitions of European imperialism. At a time when human activity is altering the planet at a geological level, artworks such as these 'muddl[e] the commonsensical assumption that the world exists as a background for the human subject' (Alaimo, 2016, p. 1).

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5. Eco-Memory and the Anthropocene Imagination: Ed O'Loughlin's *Minds of Winter*

Rūta Šlapkauskaitė

Abstract

Despite the relative dearth of ecocritical readings of Canadian literature, environmental concerns have long been part of the bedrock of theorising about Canadian culture and identity. Northrop Frye's *The Bush Garden*, Margaret Atwood's *Survival*, and Sherrill Grace's *Canada and the Idea of North* are just three titles which highlight the foundational relationship between Canadian nature and the social order, calling our attention to the precarious enmeshments between humans and nonhumans and the discursive, physical, and biological legacies borne by the land. This chapter gives a brief overview of the conceptual stakes of Anthropocene discourse in regard to reading Canadian cultural frames and employs the lens of eco-memory to examine relationships between nature, culture, and power in contemporary English Canadian fiction. Guided by the tenets of material ecocriticism, I attend to the ways Ed O'Loughlin's novel *Minds of Winter* opens avenues of the Anthropocene imagination where we can rethink the interplay of human and nonhuman historical agencies and reconceive memory as an ethical mode of ecological relationality.

Keywords

Canada, material ecocriticism, Anthropocene, eco-memory, Ed O'Loughlin.

The Anthropocene and Canadian Literary Ecologies

Since its coinage by Paul Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer in 2000, the term *Anthropocene* has become an epistemic ground for measuring the critical valence of most, if not all, of our considerations about the implications of human-induced climate change, environmental collapse, and species extinction. Ecocriticism and the expanding field of environmental humanities (Bate, 2000; Garrard, 2004; Buell, 2005; Bennett, 2010; Huggan & Tiffin, 2010; Iovino & Oppermann, 2014; Clark, 2015; Colebrook, 2014; Alaimo, 2016; Haraway, 2016; Malm, 2016; Albrecht, 2019) have drawn attention to the discursive inscriptions of the Anthropocene as a powerful diagnostic of the disruption of the material and moral bonds that bring the entanglements of places, subjectivities, historicities, and technologies into being. As Adam Trexler observed in 2015,

> The term *Anthropocene* has appeared in nearly two hundred peer-reviewed articles, become the title of a new academic journal, and is the focus of a study group convened by the International Union of Geological Sciences to decide by 2016 whether the term should be officially adopted. Yet *Anthropocene* is also anticipatory, indicating humanity's probable impacts on geophysical and biological systems for millennia to come (2015, p. 1).

By now scientifically sanctioned as an era in which humanity acts as 'a decisive geological and climatological force' (Clark, 2018, p. 16), our anthropogenic epoch heralds environmental degradation as 'a loss of proportion *tout court*, vertiginously and as yet without any clear alternative' (2018, p. 147). Implicit in cultural theory's environmental turn, therefore, is an attempt 'to unsettle normative thinking about environmental status quos' (Buell, 2005, p. 24), re-examine the 'crucial categories by which people have made sense of the world and their lives' (Clark, 2018, p. 9), rethink the patterns of extinction as tied to the 'calculative conceptual base' (Colebrook, 2014, p. 54) of (post)industrial modernity, and refigure the affective and ethical ties that link living beings to the world. Because, to use Timothy Clark's phrasing, the Anthropocene 'puts in crisis the lines between culture and nature, fact and value, and between the human and the geological or meteorological' (Clark,

2018, p. 9), the world in which we dwell, as Claire Colebrook seconds, 'is becoming increasingly impossible to know and imagine' (2014, p. 33). As a challenge to imagination and understanding, then, the Anthropocene is not only a geo-historical, but also a hermeneutic, category, one that calls the meaning of life itself into question.

Given the significance our ability to articulate our imaginations has to our capacity to act, the hermeneutic dimension of the Anthropocene seems key to its conceptual ambivalence as a boundary category. This pertains both to the scientific debate over the adequacy of the term, which sidesteps the contingencies of region, economy, class, race, and gender, and the rise of Anthropocene fiction as a literary genre set to address 'the historical tension between the existence of catastrophic global warming and the failed obligation to act' (Trexler, 2015, p. 9). The interpretive weight of the Anthropocene discourse balances over a conceptual wedge, splitting scholars who highlight the global character of climate change as derived from long-lasting anthropocentric activities from those who call for a more nuanced appreciation of the Anthropocene as the legacy of specific social praxis. A host of neighbouring concepts, such as Capitolocene (Moore, 2016), Chthulucene (Haraway, 2016), Novacene (Lovelock, 2019), 'carbon democracy' (Mitchell, 2009), and 'fossil economy' (Malm, 2016), take issue with the seeming universality of the term *Anthropocene*, which, in their view, fails to acknowledge how transnational global capitalism works to extract and appropriate the earth's resources, including human and nonhuman life. Andreas Malm deftly sums up the argument by showing how the trope of the fossil welds the natural world to the social formation and sets up a system of 'self-sustaining growth predicated on the growing consumption of fossil fuels, and therefore generating a sustained growth in emissions of carbon dioxide' (2016, p. 11). In contrast, historian Dipesh Chakrabarty has reservations about such critical equations, suggesting that the logic of capitalism underlying (post)industrial modernity falls short of explaining climate change as a collision of time scales because emphasis on human activity overlooks the agency of the planet, whose deep time exceeds any frame of reference that privileges

humans. Building on the dialectic of *global/planetary* as homologous with *human/nonhuman*, Chakrabarty maintains that 'Our current warming is an instance of planetary warming that has happened both on this planet and on other planets, humans or no humans, and with different consequences. It just happens that the current warming of the earth is of human doing' (Chakrabarty, 2014, p. 22).

Clearly, Anthropocene discourse is inextricable from the stories through which we organise our physical, intellectual, and affective relays with the world. In this respect, material ecocriticism offers a particularly apt conceptualisation of storytelling as 'an ongoing process of embodiment that involves and mutually determines cognitions, social constructions, scientific practices, and ethical attitudes' (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 5). If we accept the contention that the environment is host to multi-scalar time events and material-semiotic agencies that exceed the human, then we may also think of the sedimentary character of the Anthropocene as a form of signification in which 'bodily natures and discursive forces *express* their interaction whether in representations or in their concrete reality' (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 2). In other words, even the narratives which do not explicitly thematise the Anthropocene may be shown to perform diagnostic work through an aesthetic structuring of lived experience. As Jennifer Wenzel reminds us in *The Disposition of Nature*, narrative is the cognitive mechanism through which we make sense of our environment and 'particular literary genres, aesthetic modes, and narrative templates provide the forms through which human understandings of nonhuman nature and its dispositions are forged' (2020, p. 15). This is to say that narrative patterns take heart from and find form in *matter*, soliciting readerly response as a process of responsibility for meaning-making, which Wenzel calls 'reading for the planet' (2020, p. 2). Her understanding of 'reading for the planet', as both an environmentalist *praxis* and an interpretive rubric, aligns with Lawrence Buell's argument that 'the subject of a text's representation of its environmental ground *matters* – matters aesthetically, conceptually, ideologically. Language never replicates extratextual landscapes, but it can be bent toward or away from them' (2005, p. 33).

In material ecocritical terms, narrative hubs load into discourse the material-semiotic ties that constitute the structural beams of 'our storied world' (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 5), bringing to consciousness the ways in which

> material forms – bodies, things, elements, toxic substances, chemicals, organic and inorganic matter, landscapes, and biological entities – intra-act with each other and with the human dimension, producing configurations of meanings and discourses that we can interpret as stories (Iovino & Opperman, 2014, p. 7).

Thinking about narrative and environment as co-constitutive of lived experience has important implications for our ideas about interactions of place, body, and historical subjectivity, which unravel along the conceptual axes of *nature/culture, human/ nonhuman, present/past*, and *life/death*. In Canada, as Simon Estok observes, ecocritical thought has been long dominated by 'a clear and disproportionate imbalance weighing heavily toward celebrating American landscapes, American poetry, and American ecocriticism' (2009, p. 85), with Susie O'Brien's ecocritical work being an early notable exception. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm's inaugural anthology *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), for example, features only one essay by a Canadian scholar and none on specifically Canadian contexts. In this respect, *Greening the Maple. Canadian Ecocriticism in Context*, edited by Ella Soper and Nicholas Bradley and published in 2013, marks an important critical milestone, which not only gathers together a panoply of essays that examine the complexities of Canadian and Quebecois ecocritical thought, but also warrants a renewed attention to the environmental dimension of Canadian cultural production and critical theory, especially vis à vis the country's relation to the United States. As Gabrielle Helms notes in her essay, 'It is not difficult to find environmentally conscious poetry in Canada today, but critics of Canadian literature seem to lag behind in its analysis.' (as cited in Soper and Bradley, 2013, p. 145). For Estok, as for many of the contributors to *Greening the Maple*, the scarcity of ecocritical work in Canada is proportional to the country's role as 'a "pimp" lured by American dollars, erasing its own identity and selling its own geographies to

Hollywood' (2009, p. 87), so that, as O'Brien shows, the image of Canada 'as a natural resource, outside (but available to) the practices of American consumers' becomes 'a variation on a familiar imperialist trope' (as cited in Soper and Bradley, 2013, p. 171). This is sadly ironic, given that Joseph Meeker's theorising in *The Comedy of Survival* (1972) of 'the biological circumstances of life' (1974, p. 23) and comedy as a narrative of 'a ritual renewal of biological welfare' (1974, p. 24), which he published while teaching at Athabasca University, Canada, was well in advance of the intellectual consolidation of ecocriticism as a field of research in its own right. His celebration of the comic view as commensurate with ecological enmeshment and interspecies ethics also fell out of step with the dominant tenor of the Canadian literary criticism of the day, as epitomised in the work of Northrop Frye's *The Bush Garden* and Margaret Atwood's *Survival*, both of which cast man's relations to the environment as a dramatic conflict with unhappy consequences.

Although lacking in distinctly ecocritical aspirations, Frye's 1965 essay 'Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada' remains an important attempt to reflect on Canadian literature as a cultural formation derived from the colonial project of nationhood. His insistence that Canadian literature, 'whatever its inherent merits, is an indispensable aid to the knowledge of Canada' (1995, p. 217), seeks to bring home the idea that the country's social imagination developed in response to the frontier anxiety underpinning the settlers' engagement with the colonial space conceived as wilderness: 'To feel "Canadian" was to feel part of a no-man's-land with huge rivers, lakes, and islands that very few Canadians had ever seen' (Frye, p. 222). Nick Mount's recent reminder in *Arrival: The Story of CanLit*, that 'By the 1950s, Canadian art had a "distinct canon of images": the lonely pine, the snow-covered village church, the canoe, the mountain' (2017, pp. 5–6) synchs in with Frye's reading of the 'deep terror in regard to nature' (1995, p. 227) in Canadian writing, which he sees as a consequence of a 'garrison mentality' (1995, p. 233) that posits nature as an enemy and thus constrains society's creativity within the bounds of 'the conservative idealism of its ruling class' (1995, p. 238). For Frye, even the processes of industrial and urban expansion are

consonant with a shift towards 'a revolutionary garrison within a metropolitan society' (1995, p. 233), sustaining a community that 'accepts…conventional standards' (1995, p. 233) and dreams of a 'pastoral myth' (1995, p. 242), which sublimates environmental threats into a vision of 'human kinship with the animal and vegetable world, which is so prominent a part of the Canadian frontier' (1995, p. 242). As many of the English Canadian novels published since the turn of the century show, Canadian fascination with nonhumans, especially animals, seems still to hold true. Consider, for example, Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* (1998), Katherine Govier's *Creation* (2002), Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2002), Carla Gunn's *Amphibian* (2009), André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs* (2015), Alissa York's *The Naturalist* (2016), and Melissa Barbeau's *The Luminous Sea* (2018). Even Esi Edugyan's Giller-Prize-winning *Washington Black* (2017), a novel that thematises the legacy of slavery and nineteenth-century racism in Canada and beyond, employs the figure of the octopus to highlight the ethical complicity of Western science in defining life as a fungible resource. As Janice Fiamengo writes in *Other Selves: Animals in the Canadian Imagination*, 'Animals are so fundamental to [Canadian] writing that it might indeed be said that our literature is founded on the bodies of animals – alive or dead; anthropomorphized or "realistic"; indigenous or exotic; sentimental, tragic, magical, and mythical' (2007, pp. 5–6).

Atwood's *Survival. A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* recalls Frye's arguments about the material conditions of Canadian life, suggesting that the foundational guilt of the fur trade gave basis for the affective register of the early animal stories in Canada. Canadians, Atwood argues, 'feel threatened and nearly extinct as a nation, and suffer also from life-denying experience as individuals – the culture threatens the "animal" within them – and … their identification with animals is the expression of a deep-seated cultural fear' (1972, p. 79).

The imperative of survival, which organises Atwood's thinking about Canadian literature in the 1970s, develops Frye's reasoning into further generalisations about Canada's cultural predicament and aesthetic imaginary, exfoliating them from a psychological conflict with the environment as either indifferent or actively

hostile to man. The only two alternatives she finds in Canadian literary ecologies are either an isolated and alienated individual or a dead one (1972, p. 54). Pervaded by environmental antagonism, Canadian literature in this account emerges as a record of victimisation shared by humans and animals alike.

Both Frye's and Atwood's views have since received a series of critiques ranging from Frank Davey's analysis of the reductive character of thematic criticism to Noah Richler's take on the 'garrison mentality' as 'a stigma on the Canadian literary psyche' (2006, p. 7). Ironically, as Soper and Bradley observe, 'skepticism about the merits of thematic approaches to Canadian literary criticism [may have] served to inhibit the emergence of an ecocritical tradition in Canada', whereas thematic criticism 'pointed…in that direction' (2013, p. xxvii). Sherrie Malisch's rereading of the 'garrison mentality' stands out in this context, highlighting, as it does, the ecocritical and ideological implications of Frye's thinking. Borrowing from Estok's reasoning about ecophobia as a historical mode of responding 'to what we perceive as environmental threats and as menacing alienness' (as cited in Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 131), Malisch pries open Frye's ecological assumptions about how the settlers' fear of the natural world stifled creativity and led 'to a particular type of ecological harm, namely the forging of overly rational and mechanistic built environments' (2014, p. 186). In contrast to Frye's reasoning that turning the environment into home is only possible through the overcoming of the fear of nature, Malisch recasts ecophobia as an ethos of earthcare, suggesting that 'restraints on individual desires and creative ambitions, based on collective need, will be a critical component in facing climate change' (2014, p. 194). The environment, in her reading, is not only hospitable to human fear, but, in fact, solicits it as a form of responsibility to the coeval multiplicities of life. Far from oppressive, in other words, fear may be bioethical, working in tandem with dictional jokes and asyndetic aplomb, like the ones we find in Dennis Lee's Anthropocene poetry: 'Icecaps shrink in the brain-/rays; noetic/infarction; clots in the tropic hominid./ Synapse events on the pampas, while/consciousness voids itself in the bowl of sky' (2003, p. 7).

Canada's Colonial Legacies and Eco-Memory

In material ecocritical terms, theorising about Canada's literary ecologies must also take the measure of the material and epistemic violence of colonialism and environmental racism, whose institutional intersections pattern the troubles of English Canadian literature as an industry and cultural formation. Nick Mount's account of the literary boom in Canada after the Second World War is explicitly mindful of the environmental basis of the country's economic prosperity:

> With oil in Leduc, iron in Ungava, uranium in Blind River, aluminium in Kitimat, salt in Goderich, and the construction of a national pipeline and an international seaway, more Canadians than ever before had more disposable income than ever before, and they spent much of it on America's new resource: mass-market consumer products, from Barbie dolls to paperback novels (2017, p. 14).

A recent collection of essays in *Refuse: CanLit in Ruins*, edited by Hannah McGregor, Julie Rak, and Erin Wunker, similarly alerts us to how CanLit operates as 'a multitiered system of power, influence, reputation, selling power, and fame' (2018, p. 124), where exclusion, elitism, and resistance, as Laura Moss demonstrates, have always been part of its episteme (2018, p. 147). By zeroing in on the toxic sediments in the cultural formation, these essays magnify the intersections between discourses on nationhood, race, gender, and culture and the implications they have for the conception of identity and social order arising from the ambivalence of 'refuse' as simultaneously a process of rejection, waste, and rewiring. A number of essays in the collection ponder what Phoebe Wang identifies as 'the disjunction between the pervading discourse of diversity and the meagre acknowledgment of the real barriers they face' (as cited in McGregor, Rak, & Wunker, 2018, p. 151), but I would like to highlight the poignancy of Kristen Darch and Fazeela Jiwa's observation that Canada's literary scene and its critical apparatus are unthinkable without the broader context of imperial conquest: 'The canon and the mainstream literary community that emerged has been built alongside genocide and ongoing settler colonialism' (as cited in McGregor, Rak, &

Wunker, 2018, p. 178). This is why in his own essay in the collection the Cree writer Joshua Whitehead says Canada 'is a graveyard is a haunted house is a necropolis' (as cited in McGregor, Rak, & Wunker, 2018, p. 191), built on the erasure of Indigenous ecologies. Unlike the colonial settlers, Whitehead points out, Indigenous people 'acknowledge rocks, trees, rivers, and skies as living things' and are therefore 'beholden and accountable to them, they are our relations' (as cited in McGregor, Rak, & Wunker, 2018, p. 191). What this means is that the legacy of colonialism in Canada is a concern that runs across the arc of the Anthropocene narrative, alerting ecocriticism to the need 'to take account of itself as a piece of the postcolonial puzzle' (Estok, 2009, p. 90). This is certainly a sensibility shared by Indigenous writers in Canada, some of whom, like Thomas King (*The Back of the Turtle*), Eden Robinson (*Son of a Trickster*), Waubgeshig Rice (*Moon of the Crusted Snow*), and Cherrie Dimaline (*The Marrow Thieves*), have directly addressed it in their recent Anthropocene fictions.

The political stakes of placing the global spike of the Anthropocene in the context of colonial history, as Heather Davis and Zoe Todd argue in their article 'On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene', are no less far-reaching. Members of the Working Group on the Anthropocene, the two Canadian scholars question the proposal to accept 'the mid-twentieth century as the optimal boundary' (Davis & Todd, 2017, p. 762), suggesting 1610 as a more capacious demarcation, one that magnifies the Anthropocene as correlative with the historical displacement of Indigenous systems of thought and ethical practice:

> We make the case for colonialism as the start date of the Anthropocene for two reasons: the first is to open up the geologic questions and implications of the Anthropocene beyond the realm of Western and European epistemology to think with Indigenous knowledges from North America; the second is to make a claim that to use a date that coincides with colonialism in the Americas allows us to understand the current state of ecological crisis as inherently invested in a specific ideology defined by proto-capitalist logics based on extraction and accumulation through dispossession – logics that continue to shape the world we live in and that have produced our current era (Davis & Todd, 2017, p. 764).

The intellectual thrust of this reasoning probes the logical knots that tie different scales and modes of remembrance into an institutional web of geo-social history that underwrites the Anthropocene narrative. By folding the Anthropocene events into the morphology of settler colonialism, Davis and Todd transcribe the ambit of lived experience into a gambit of eco-memory, a cognitive infrastructure of interlocking agencies of matter, wherein negotiations over knowledge, understanding, and remembering produce the institutional discourse of world affairs. Tracking the origins of the present environmental collapse back to colonial history calls for a recalibration of the epistemic resources and interpretive practices in the service of which certain material inscriptions are treated as instructive moments while others are systematically ignored for their power as mnemonic prompts.

Given the emphasis material ecocriticism places on the human entanglements with 'a hybrid, vibrant, and living world' (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014, p. 3), its ethics of care articulates a need to think the Anthropocene itself as a mode of remembering, constituted through material-semiotic relays between consciousness and the physical environment. A good case in point is the recently published collection of essays *Planetary Memory in Contemporary American Fiction*, whose editors stipulate the need to acknowledge the mutual imbrication of private and planetary time events under the auspices of planetary memory:

> By registering the literary inscription of individual and collective memories of climate change experience alongside the growing archive of vanishing landscapes and species that characterise the emerging planetary conditions of the Anthropocene, the notion of planetary memory enables us to join macro-, meso- and microscopic perspectives (Bond, De Bruyn, & Rapson, 2020, p. 859).

Framed as an injunction to 'read[…] for the planet' (Wenzel, 2020, p. 2), planetary memory performs important conceptual work in showing how 'historical violence might be geologically inscribed' (Bond, De Bruyn, & Rapson, 2020, p. 859) and human acts of remembering unfold in relation to nonhuman scales, archives, and transactions. Whilst recognising the usefulness of this concept for the study of mnemonic processes in Anthropocene narratives,

I nevertheless opt for the more socially-oriented notion of eco-memory, which is less concerned with the collision of scales than it is with the processes of inscription, whereby the environment is transformed into an *oikos*.[1] As a form of hermeneutic activity solicited by the ecological crisis, such eco-memory reaffirms Edward Casey's phenomenological reasoning about how memory is 'naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported' (2000, pp. 186–187) and Vanessa Watts's call to embrace the Indigenous notion of Place-Thought, which highlights the material and ethical bonds tying living bodies to the land. Like Casey, who foregrounds the significance of the living body as a mediator between memory and place (2000, p. 189), Watts speaks against the separation of place and thought, reminding us that 'land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts' (2013, p. 21). Understanding land as a historical agent through Place-Thought lines up with the work of memory in postcolonial criticism, launching ethical queries into the structural homologies between the histories of settler colonialism, industrial capitalism, and environmental emergency. Conceived as a living body of storied matter, land figures as no less than a catalyst of eco-memory, delegating humans and nonhumans to preserve the ontological continuities of different modes of life and their creative becomings.

As an environmental trope, land has had a structurally highlighted position in Canadian literature, heaving into view the colonial attempts to map its geography both physically and conceptually. The ethical dimension of human orientation in space and positioning in place marks a distinction between *land* and *territory* that characterises the cartographic ambitions of much of colonial endeavour at social arrangement. In Canada, as W. H. New argues in *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing, land* has long served as a verbal trope, which underlay the relations of power that measured it in

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[1] Though falling out of the scope of this chapter, Rosanne Kennedy's theorising of 'multidirectional eco-memory' bears important conceptual weight. See her essay 'Multidirectional Eco-Memory in an Era of Extinction' in *The Routledge Companion to Environmental Humanities*, edited by Ursula K. Heise, Jon Christensen and Michelle Niemann.

terms of ownership and instrumental use. *Territory*, by contrast, was 'a designation of claim over land, of *jurisdiction*, the power to *say the law*' (1997, p. 21). Yet, conceptually lodged in terms such as '*new world, savage wilderness*, and *virgin territory*' (New, 1997, p. 23), *land* too must be understood as part of the vocabulary that produced colonial space by relying on the epistemological assumptions, social attitudes, and judgments guiding the voyages of exploration and the successive waves of European settlers. In material-ecocritical terms, narrative was instrumental in setting up and maintaining the asymmetries of social power, which relegated both the Indigenous peoples and their lands to the status of political pawns and property.

New's concern for the colonial transformations of Canada's cultural ecologies and subjectivities resonates in Sherrill Grace's analysis of North as a discursive formation, which has long defined Canada as an imagined community. In *Canada and the Idea of North*, she demonstrates how both scientific and literary cartographies have been pivotal to the discursive formation of North as a spatiotemporal anchor of Canadian identity, one that, in the words of the geographer Rob Shields, 'forms the mythic "heartland" of Canada but remains a zone of Otherness in the spatial system of Canadian culture' (as cited in Grace, 2007, p. 42). Grace echoes this observation by pointing out how the North operates as what we may call a hub of eco-memory, deriving its identity from different signifying systems, ideological interests, historical moments, and subjectivities invested in negotiations over man's relations to nature. This is to say that beyond the physical fact of the Arctic region that dominates Canada's physical and conceptual geography, North is also a matter of historical experience and aesthetic engagement with the environment, all of which speaks of the multiple points of convergence of space, time, and representation in our growing understanding of circumpolar regions and their cultures. As Grace reminds us, 'North is both historically lived and changing *and* spatially configured, even if (for all but specialists) *very* vaguely and imprecisely' (2007, p. 22).

This is particularly important when examining written records – historiography, travel writing, and fiction – about the North and its inhabitants, whose limited agency in discourse testifies to the legacy of colonialism that has continually deprived northern

subjectivity of adequate means of self-representation. Racism, sexism, and imperialism, Grace notes, are recurrent aspects of the master narrative of North, even if: 'The representations of North are as beautiful, powerful, inviting, disturbing, exclusionary, and exploitative as the individuals creating and using them *according to accepted standards and ideas of the day*' (2007, p. 23).

Though more likely to live in southern metropolises than in northern communities, Canadian writers like Rudy Wiebe, Aritha van Herk, Robert Kroetsch, and Mordecai Richler, to name but a few, have addressed the issue of (mis)representation of the North by revisiting and revising this master narrative, which has long been supplying cultural memory with ideological figures and tropes and thus conceiving an illusion of the North as 'a stable, material, or social reality' (Grace, 2007, p. 24) rather than a spatial configuration that is complex, 'multiple, shifting and elastic' (2007, p. 16). In Grace's reading, by negotiating physical boundaries, affective ties, and modes of knowledge, Canadian discourse on nordicity performs the labour of eco-memory, where the crossovers of human and nonhuman historical agencies and Indigenous and settler epistemologies not only shape the complexities of nation as narration, but also stage the voice of the Anthropocene, tracing the ethical ligatures of the material-semiotic networks that define humans as ecologically bounded beings. Figured as a hub of eco-memory, land and its tropological extensions in Canadian literature, as I argue, have the power to speak back to what Estok calls 'a lack of presence, a hyphenation…and under-representedness attached to Canadian ecocriticism' (Estok, 2009, p. 93) and cast in relief the material syntax of the environment in which humans and nonhumans build their abodes.

As I now turn to Ed O'Loughlin's *Minds of Winter*, my attention falls on how this historical fiction figures ecological agencies and environmental precarity as sign-events of the Anthropocene. In bringing this novel under the rubric of eco-memory, I attempt to show how it reconsiders the historical legacy of European expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic and calls our attention to the visceral links between territorial incursions and resource extraction and the embeddedness of social histories in the tissues of terrestrial life.

Mapping Memory in Ed O'Loughlin's *Minds of Winter*

Revolving around the Greenwich meridian, an imaginary line that connects the Arctic to the Antarctic, *Minds of Winter* sets its protagonists' quest for the truth about their family histories in the context of the voyages of Arctic and Antarctic exploration associated with John Franklin, Francis Crozier, Robert Scott, Lawrence Oates, Cecil Meares, and Roald Amundsen. In doing so, O'Loughlin's novel visually maps these explorers' itineraries, problematising not only the relationship between images and words, but also the discursive authority of cartography as a colonial epistemology, in which power takes up residence in the guise of scientific truth. The evocative use of maps, both as metaphors and material figures, in *Minds of Winter* measures the labour of memory as a site of conflicting historical experiences, cultural subjectivities, and truth claims. Echoing Grace's thinking about North as 'a geographical proteus' (2007, p. 43), O'Loughlin dramatises the human encounters with the nonhuman environment in an attempt to reappraise polar exploration as a vehicle of the extractive economy which defines the geopolitical significance of nature for the age of the Anthropocene.

To the extent that histories of exploration, navigation, trade, and imperial control inform the novel's framing of space, my interpretive focus lies on the relay of meaning resulting from the dialectic of the visual and verbal components of the narrative, on the one hand, and the significance of place as a mnemonic agent, on the other. In examining the tropological significance attributed to the circumpolar regions in *Minds of Winter*, I am following Sarah Wylie Krotz's probing of the linguistic performance of surveillance and settlement in early English Canadian literature, which 'attest[s] to a cartographic subjectivity that was expressed not just in maps, but in small gestures that arise from an impulse to map: tracing lines, naming places, and visually ordering spaces such that one might sense one's position in a larger (and largely invisible) geography' (2018, p. 13). Apart from laying bare the evocative power of narrative to conjure up cognitive maps that convey the spatial perception and experience of 'the geo-coded world' (2018, p. 14), Krotz unravels the dialectic of movement and settlement in the hermeneutic perimeter of the life of

colonial settlers in Canada, for whom territorial occupation 'involved not just inscribing, but also attempting to read, a terrain that for settlers as well as Indigenous peoples included overlapping and frequently conflicting layers of meaning' (2018, p. 19). This complexity of territorial negotiations brings to surface a set of conceptual dichotomies in the legibility of space – namely, *territory/land*, *occupation/inhabitation*, and *transport/wayfaring* – that organise the modes of spatial accommodation characteristic of the geo-bodies in early English Canadian literature as much as in O'Loughlin's novel. Crucially, also, they recall Ronald Bordessa's enduring observation that Canadian authors' thematic and figural engagement with landscape poses the question of 'what constitutes morally justifiable ways of living' (as cited in Simpson-Housley & Norcliffe, 1992, p. 58). As in much of post-war English Canadian critical thought (Frye, 1971; Atwood, 1972; Moss, 1974), inbuilt in Bordessa's argument is the idea that landscape inheres in the Canadian experience and man's relation to nature is pivotal to Canadian identity.

O'Loughlin's concern for the cognitive ecology of polar regions draws our attention to the conceptual links between verbal and visual frames that set up the architecture of the story. At the heart of *Minds of Winter* is the enigma of a chronometer designed for Franklin's last and lost expedition, which resurfaces at an auction in 2009 disguised as a carriage clock and is purchased by the Royal Observatory and exhibited at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. The novel's Prologue, which reproduces an article from the *Guardian*, mines this object for its mnemonic powers, exposing the gaps in historical knowledge about the fate of Franklin's crew and conveying the rationale behind the actions of the novel's fictional protagonists, an English woman called Fay and a Canadian man called Nelson. Its key question is 'When and how did the timepiece return to Britain, is it evidence that somebody survived the disaster, or of a crime – even murder?' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 1). The mystery of the portable naval object orients our reading of the novel along the axes of travel and navigation, of commerce and conquest, of thought and affect, which interconnect the lives of Arctic and Antarctic explorers and (missing) fictional characters in a narrative fabric of 'stories

converging at the poles, like meridians. Or like the meshes of a net' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 407).

The uncertainties surrounding the Victorian chronometer are part of the archive of tropes O'Loughlin employs to highlight the enduring appeal and agency of the polar regions across time. For example, at the novel's outset in Van Diemen's Land, Franklin's niece Sophia ruminates on John Ross's exploratory feats in the Arctic: 'The Nimrod islands. Aurora. Cold beauty that waited, shrouded from knowledge, in secret vaults of ice' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 33). This sentiment is refracted in Fay's getting blinded by the snow in Inuvik more than a century later: 'A haze had softened the stars and now Fay could see neither coast nor horizon; she couldn't tell where the sky met the frozen sea or where the sea met the frozen land' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 52). Prompted by the elements, her disorientation cues a later reminder of the Weather War during WWII, when German navy 'inserted secret teams of weathermen into the fjords of eastern Greenland to transmit weather reports for as long as they could' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 141). Contiguous with the fragmentary nature of the narrative, the novel's weather patterns heave into view the polar environments as a scene of human-nonhuman encounters that call into question the anthropocentric accounts of historical experience, echoing anthropologist Tim Ingold's contention that 'weathering is what things and persons undergo on exposure to the elements' (Ingold, 2015, p. 71). If we accept 'weathering' as a material-semiotic drive of eco-memory, the novel's visceral description of Oates's experience on Ross Island in Antarctica similarly highlights the confounding effect of the environment on the living body:

> It was the sky above that shocked him. The sea ice, the western mountains, the island where he stood, were shades of black and grey and pastel, like a half-remembered dream. But the abyss above him blazed with life and business. Far above, a band of nacreous cloud caught the last of the year's civil twilight, a gauzy patch of iridescent pinks and mauves. The stars burned so fiercely that it seemed to Oates if he held his breath he would hear them. They shone so hard that he wanted to duck (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 207).

As suggested in the episode, it is the co-extensiveness of landscape and weather that tropes polar places for the sublime, an idea foregrounded in the novel's two epigraphs, the first of which quotes Wallace Stevens's poem *The Snow Man*, from which the novel derives its title, and the second, which reads 'One cannot map the sublime, or give it place names', cites from Chauncey C. Loomis's book, *Weird and Tragic Shores*, which narrates Charles Francis Hall's several attempts to find the survivors of Franklin's expedition. Both epigraphs convey a concern for place memory, visually reinforced by the deployment of two maps of the Canadian North. This intermedial crossover, which functions as a framing device as much as an architectonic principle of meaning, invites us to consider what the novel has to say about representational practices, territorial values, and 'maps as agents of space-discipline' (Krotz, 2018, p. 24) in the mnemonic dialectic of show and tell.

The narrative threads, which connect the travails of historical adventurers to those of the protagonists' relatives – Fay's grandfather and Nelson's geographer brother –, unfold along the material-semiotic lines of the polar regions. What assembles them together is the figure of the chronometer, which, through its metonymic links to polar places and explorers, establishes a line of descent encapsulated in the idea of the mysterious Room 38, a secret organisation, whose cartographic activities since the nineteenth century have involved navigation, exploration, land surveillance, and radar detection, among others. Cropping up at different sites and sightings along the Greenwich meridian, the chronometer materialises a geopolitical genealogy, where everyone following in the footsteps of Franklin's expedition becomes an heir to the imperatives of industrial modernity and partners in the narrative of eco-memory. Thus Crozier writes to James Ross about having built message cairns on Beechey Island in 1848 and in 1851 the American explorer Elisha Kent Kane locates them and takes hold of the timepiece, which he then shows to the search expedition led by William Kennedy and Ensign Bellot. In 1871, the chronometer is passed on to Hall and is saved from perishing by Taqulittuq, an Inuit woman, whose husband accompanies the American in his search for Franklin's remains. Next, the object resurfaces during Scott's 1911 expedition to Antarctica,

where Meares tells Oates that 'It was lent to Douglas Mawson – the Australian geologist who was here two years back with Shackleton's lot' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 215). In turn, Meares entrusts the chronometer to Amundsen on his voyage to Siberia in 1919 and in 1932 reclaims it in Arctic Canada from a man deemed to be Albert Johnson, the notorious criminal. Given the geography of the chronometer's travelling, it is hardly surprising that Fay remarks to Nelson about the web of circumpolar links: 'And if you look at the maps of the Arctic, and Antarctic too, you'll see the same people's names repeated over and over again. And most of those people were connected to each other' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 225). In fact, Nelson's missing brother, who had 'once passed a winter at Alert, the most northerly inhabited place on the planet, [and] had spent several seasons in Antarctica' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 293), and Fay's grandfather, who worked on the DEW lines in the 1950s and was the last to own the 'old brass carriage clock' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 445), are inextricably part of the same record of people who had died or disappeared in the Arctic and Antarctic. Bound to the narrative arc of the Anthropocene, the novel's geographical spread of human activity patterns the global distribution of topographical alterations and social inscriptions of meaning that have reshaped the material composition of circumpolar life. In this way the novel's chronometer performs important diagnostic work as regards the value and status of environmental posterity in the era of anthropogenic climate change.

   Both a material object and cultural signifier, the chronometer magnifies the catachrestic slips of reference through which the Arctic and Antarctic spaces escape cartographic appropriation. The story of Bellot Strait is an interesting example of the novel's 'phantom places'. Discovered by Kennedy, a Canadian fur trader who led an expedition searching for Franklin, and named after his ship's French cartographer, the existence of the place is contested by Bellot himself: 'But why would Kennedy insist on seeing something that was not there?' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 110). In fact, his learning of Kennedy's reliance on the occult in the discovery of the strait – the captain followed an Irish girl's map-sketch reproduced in the novel – may have contributed to Bellot's own disappearance in the region of Lancaster Sound: 'He walked

away from the snow-house they were building on the floe and was not seen again' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 126). Fay's grandfather, too, bears accounts of phantom places: 'Frobisher Bay had been lost for three hundred years before Charles Hall rediscovered it. Whereas Elizabeth Island, after Drake left it, had never been seen again at all' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 430). The sailors' name for such phantom lands, we learn, is *Cape Flyaway* (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 323), reinforcing the novel's thinking about the sublime as a material-semiotic agency of place and ice as 'a keeper of the Earth's secrets' (Dodds, 2018, p. 49).

O'Loughlin's critique of Western technologies of mapping in *Minds of Winter* accords with his figuring of different modes of mobility as embodying man's relationship with the environment and the living technologies of care. Ingold's theorising about *lines* as an ethic of movement is helpful here. He distinguishes between *traces*, enduring marks left on surfaces 'by a continuous movement', and *threads*, filaments 'suspended between points in three-dimensional space, which compose the world as texture or tissue, a *meshwork* rather than a *route*' (Ingold, 2016, p. 42). This dialectic has a material-semiotic basis in that the living bodies are conceived as stitched into 'the texture of the lifeworld' (Ingold, 2011, p. 70), taking their bearings from a nascent environment that is 'continually coming into being through processes of growth and movement' (Ingold, 2015, p. 14). In other words, life itself amounts to 'a hive of activity' (Ingold, 2011, p. 17) that is ever spilling out into the world rather than spreading onto its surface. Human sentience is understood as coextensive with the sentience of the world. For material ecocriticism, this chiasmic relation defines man as a mode of dwelling because 'the world we inhabit is never complete but continually surpassing itself' (Ingold, 2011, p. 13), movement may be thought of as an ontological condition that awakens us to the dialectic of surface and depth, occupation and inhabitation, places and paths, intention and attention (Ingold, 2015, p. 133). Conceived as continuous motion, life itself partakes of the sublime and veers off the cartographic grid.

As organising structures of movement and understanding, *traces* and *threads* show us how the cartographic medium becomes coterminous with the Anthropocene ethos of occupation,

exploitation, and information. In Ingold's terms, the novel's maps, which depict the explorers' itineraries, enact the ethic of *transport* – a goal-oriented activity that enables bodily mobility within a grid of destination points – as opposed to *wayfaring*, which 'is the most fundamental mode by which living beings, both human and non-human, inhabit the earth' (Ingold, 2016, p. 83). By implication, then, the ethic of *transport*, which underlies territorial appropriation and its attendant failures, is oblivious to how the movable subject as 'a vehicular unit' (Ingold 2011, p. 43) differs from a walking 'footslogger' (Ingold, 2011, p. 44).

The conceptual perspective of the 'ontology of the line' (Ingold, 2015, p. 16) runs through *Minds of Winter* by measuring Western modes of travel against those of the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic. As Klaus Dodds observes in *Ice*, 'Inuit trails and tracks are not marked in the same way as roads, railways and airports. They are not permanent or semi-permanent features akin to modern infrastructure; rather, the routes are often seasonal, subtle to outsiders' (2018, p. 136). For Western explorers, by contrast, polar places offer 'a cornucopia of awe, pleasure, loathing, fear and revulsion' (Dodds, 2018, p. 11), subject to the seemingly superior endurance of the human spirit. Erected by the explorers as monuments of success and failure, the stone cairns are a good example of the techniques of surveillance through which Western cartography gets hold of the Arctic land. Traces of material interest, they construct knowledge that produces space through occupation rather than inhabitation and are thus reminiscent of the colonial appropriation of Indigenous land. Through their contiguity with the chronometer, the novel's cairns work in tandem with Western cartography, which transforms weathering *threads* into scientific *traces*, i.e. substance into surface, thus converting the travellers into material cargo fit or unfit for *transport*. Unlike the cairns, by contrast, the *inuksuks*[2] are conceptually linked to the ethic of *wayfaring* as practised by the Inuit. This is highlighted in the chapter narrated by Ipiirviq, the Inuk who helps Hall search for Franklin's expedition. Despite his own reluctance, Ipiirviq

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[2] *Inuksuks* are stone markers built by the Inuit to guide travellers and hunters through the Arctic landscape.

accompanies Hall to Lok's Land, a taboo place, where Hall thinks he has discovered Frobisher's cairn. The narrative brings to our eyes a clash of perspectives as resulting from opposing ways of relating to the land. Where Hall sees *traces* of the explorer's route, Ipiirviq sees *threads* in a meshwork of lines as made manifest in the figure of the *inuksuk*, a remnant of ancestral *wayfaring*:

> But it seemed to me that the stones were set together more loosely than the cairns built by white sailors, and when I moved around to the seaward side, to the edge of the cliff itself, the stones no longer resembled a cross but rather the figure of a human, arms outstretched to the sea. I thought of inuksuks, the stone statues built by our people as markers or decoys, and I remembered the story of the strangers who had all been taken by the ice. Or perhaps not all: someone had built this stone thing to mourn for them (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 153).

Ipiirviq's thinking is consonant with his own setting up of an *inuksuk* to mark his son's burial place: 'I made a small inuksuk, like a stone child, to stand over his grave' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 156). Reminiscent of Watts's reasoning about Place-Thought, the novel's *inuksuks* encapsulate the ontological reciprocity between humans and the land through which they move, reinforcing the ecological link between place and memory in the lived experience of bodies and their ecosystems. Reading the Arctic landscape as a source of his own being, Ipiirviq, unlike Hall and most Western explorers, who only recognise cartographic surfaces, sees spatial depth and agency in the movement of the elements: 'When the mist scatters the moonlight, or when there is no moon and only the light of the stars or the aurora, every hummock and ridge in the ice becomes a stalking bear, and indeed might conceal one' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 171). Like the sentient beings and the elements, the *inuksuks* are part of an affective geography, signs of an ecumenical practice, which the novel opposes to the act of surveying associated with Western cartography. The lines of grief that crosshatch the lines of Inuit *wayfaring* in the Arctic are shown to bring space and time together in an environmental meshwork, which is also a place of embodied eco-memory that the European explorers fail to grasp.

Both Fay and Nelson, the novel's fictional agents of remembering, recognise the meshwork composition of the Arctic and Antarctic worlds, but their attempts to understand what happened to their family members run aground when confronted with the power infrastructure that maintains the ethic of *transport* in the Arctic under the guise of scientific research, national security, and capitalist trade. By showing how the Western practices of mapping contributed to the physical and cognitive appropriation of polar regions in the global political rivalry over resource extraction, *Minds of Winter* impels us to consider the connections between wasted lives and the production of waste as a mechanism of historical inscription. When in 1851 Elisha Kent Kane recalls the discovery 'of three graves on the beach, marked with the names of men of *Erebus* and *Terror*' (O'Loughlin, 2017, pp. 97–98), his account of the heroism of Franklin's crew slides over the ecological implications of the discovery of two cairns, one of which is made of empty food tins, 'some six or seven hundred of them, filled with gravel and arranged in a pyramid' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 98). Congealed in the legacy of the find is the sense of loss, which witnesses the mutual imbrication of human and nonhuman activity in the expanded history of polar expeditions. The polluting trail of exploratory work on the terrain of bodies human and nonhuman here culminates in the record of death past and future, making visible the haunting character of the ecological afterlife produced by industrial ingestion and excretion. The material imprint of post-war geopolitics in the Canadian North troubles Fay's grandfather too as he surveys the DEW lines in the 1950s: 'The wooden telephone poles, which carried phone lines to the airstrip and construction camp and to the RCMP post in the nearby Inuvialuit settlement, groaned and tutted like old men and women enjoying their own slow decay' (O'Loughlin, 2017, p. 439). Living technologies of surveillance, as the simile seems to suggest, these means of communication are routed through social geographies that turn the Arctic and the Antarctic into a testing ground for anthropocentric activity, the moral upshot of which is the ecological degradation and ultimate disappearance of both humans and places.

Conclusion

In the interpretative arc of the Anthropocene, the mystery of the chronometer in *Minds of Winter* amplifies the material-semiotic significance of the polar regions both in Canadian and global geo-imaginaries in a way that prompts several concluding remarks. As a figure of the novel's cognitive footing and carbon footprint, the chronometer conflates human and nonhuman agencies, bringing into view the epistemic legacy of the colonial maps in the destruction of local Indigenous ecologies and the ecological ramifications of industrial modernity's extractive economy. Framed as a means of remembrance, the timepiece also magnifies the relational character of eco-memory through which *Minds of Winter* rethinks the ideological parameters of the Canadian discourse on the North, calling attention to the conceptual slippages between accounts of national history, on the one hand, and the figuring of place memory, on the other. Read in light of the ethical dialectic of *transport/wayfaring* underlying the novel's view of subjectivity, the fate of the novel's protagonists ultimately seems to suggest that humans, too, are but one of the many events comprising the environment's multiple scales of creation, care, and collapse. The vibrancy of the land far exceeds the vigour of the novel's historical adventurers, whose legacy, as O'Loughlin shows us, has irretrievably transformed the morphology of polar landscapes and increased the precarity of their geologic future.

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6. Canadian Immersion, Baltic Transitional Bilingual Education and European Plurilingualism

Tatjana Bicjutko

Abstract

The chapter presents a comparative story of bilingual education in Canada, Estonia and Latvia with a focus on French immersion and transitional bilingualism as adopted in Latvia and Estonia. With a view to global processes and concomitant sociolinguistic change, the intention is to look at the future of immersion in Canada and the Baltics.

Keywords

Plurilingualism, bilingualism, language immersion, sociolinguistics.

Introduction

What is bilingual education? The popular misconception about bilingual education as a purely 20th century phenomenon is widespread though it varies from country to country on different continents. Contrary to the received view, bilingual education did not start in a Canadian elementary school in 1965, and neither was it invented in the USA in the 1960s. It would also be a mistake to record its North American history from the first known bilingual schools of Virginia in the 17th century (Seidner, 1976). Mackey

argues that in Europe, 'bilingual schooling is at least four to five thousand years old' (Mackey, 1978, p. 2), but other scholars claim that it originated in the Near East and trace it back to the Old Babylonian scribal school encouraging its upper-level pupils to be 'radically bilingual, constantly switching back and forth, even within the same text, between Sumerian and Akkadian' (Griffith, 2015, p. 9), and evidently using pedagogical translanguaging[1] so passionately debated today.

Given the antiquity and wide spread of bilingual education, every instance of teaching academic content in two (or more) languages should be framed in its socio-historical context. For example, in universities, the initial practice of giving formal instruction in classical languages made education essentially bi- or multilingual. In general education, however, multilingualism or mother-tongue-based multilingual education started proliferating with colonisation, though, in truth, it rather helped to create language inequality, minorising indigenous languages and majorising those of colonisers (see, e.g., Milloy, 1999; Richardson, 1993; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2017). Whereas multilingualism is an early characteristic of human societies, monolingualism is a result of recent social, cultural, and ethnocentric developments (Lewis, 1977, p. 22; see also Pavlenko, nd), and as such is closely linked to the appearance of the nation state. At the time of rampant industrialisation, the spread of the 'one united nation – one language' ideology coincided with the growth of general formal education and had multiple lingering side effects, including the appearance of boarding schools for indigenous people (Milloy, 1999).

The tumultuous 20th century saw the end of colonialism in its classical form and the subsequent change in the system of territorial, political, cultural, and linguistic domination. Newly founded nation states aimed at cultural homogeneity and practiced systematic linguistic discrimination in favour of the titular language (Giordano, 2018). In turn, globalisation and increased migration problematised the monolingualism of the nation state, and

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[1] i.e., pedagogies encouraging '*multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage in order to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*' (Garcia, 2009, p. 45, emphasis in original).

multilingualism legally resurfaced in the form of the fundamental right of every child 'to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language' (UN, 1989). It should be noted however that in granting linguistic minority children the right to education in their mother tongue, Article 30 left measures for its implementation undiscussed. In the 1990s, the need for language regulation in multilingual societies prompted the development of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992), and later adopted the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1994), the first legally binding multilateral instrument. Nevertheless, the ideal of a culturally homogeneous nation state seems to have been regaining its popularity, with European countries, the Baltic states including, often reprimanded by the EU for not enacting laws regulating the recognition of minorities (Giordano, 2018; Pavlenko, 2008, 2011).

Having the same Soviet legacy, the Baltic countries differ in other respects. In contrast to Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia are more than neighbouring states which joined the European Union in the same year. After regaining their independence, the two happened to be in a similar linguistic predicament: a quarter of their citizens were ethnically Russian and the number of those speaking Russian as their first (and often their only) language was even higher. Focusing on derussification and assimilation of their Russian-speaking minorities, Estonian and Latvian governments adopted *ius sanguinis* citizenship laws and became officially monolingual, the revised legislation imposing occupation restrictions and affecting education policies and practices (Lazdiņa & Marten, 2019; Pavlenko, 2008, 2011).

Concerning their language laws, both Estonia and Latvia adopted them at the end of the perestroika, i.e., in 1989. Without sufficient expertise, local legislators resorted to external sources, and their first choice was to draw on Quebec experience. Thus, *La Charte de la langue française* or *Loi 101* (1977) became one of the cornerstones of language legislation in the Baltic countries in general and Latvia in particular (Rannut, 2002; Druviete, 2002). Whereas the 1989 language policies were meant to modify the existing language hierarchy, the language laws amended after

Latvia and Estonia became sovereign in 1991 made Estonian and Latvian the sole languages of government and administration as well as the primary languages of education. Despite the Baltic Republics being autonomous countries and Quebec a province, both governments further drew upon its experience and created institutions responsible for the implementation of language policies, and just like those of Quebec, their language policies have been criticised for intervening in the social sphere and segregating linguistic minorities (Druviete, 2002).

Pourquoi le Québec? The explanation is in linguistic similarity, i.e., French as well as Estonian and Latvian are minoritised majority languages with English and Russian being majorised minority languages respectively (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994). The second reason is the availability of legal documents and contacts with Canadian applied linguists, hence, the potential of further collaboration between Baltic and Quebec language policy makers and language education specialists (Druviete, 2002; Rannut, 2002). Given the political and ethno-demographic situation in the Baltic region, the application of a sound language policy, including in education, has been deemed paramount for the titular language survival (Druviete, 2002; Ozolins, 2018). In turn, the languages of schooling, their ratio, and the starting point of teaching the titular languages to the Russian-speaking minorities became highly politicised issues.

Apart from the geopolitical and socioeconomic transformation, the 20th century became marked by the systematic research of education, including bilingual practices. In the context of Canada, it was research on motivation in second language (L2) acquisition which flourished and helped the socio-psychological model to dominate in the field from 1959 through to 1990.[2] Thus, when in 1965 a group of Anglophone middle-class parents in St Lambert near Montreal decided to provide their children with the advantage of bilingualism and set up an experimental kindergarten class

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[2] More on the legacy of the model can be found in *Contemporary Language Motivation Theory: 60 Years Since Gardner and Lambert* (1959) edited by Al-Hoorie and MacIntyre.

for that purpose,[3] the initiative, later to be known as immersion, attracted the interest of university researchers (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). The education experiments of exposing students to full instruction through the target language, and making L2 both a subject to learn and a tool to communicate, demonstrated that not only do immersion children effectively learn French, their English proficiency may also benefit. Generally recognised as a resounding success, the model of immersion bilingual education was adapted and spread throughout Canada, across North America, and around the world.

Seeing the success of immersion education, it is appropriate to ponder on its potential in the two Baltic countries struggling 'to (re-)establish their national languages in de facto multilingual surroundings' (Vihalemm & Hogan-Brun, 2013, p. 55). The broadly popularised Estonian language immersion programme was conducted both on the basis of the French Canadian immersion approach and with the assistance of Canadian specialists (Mehisto, 2015a, 2015b). Although there is no similar programme in Latvia, the two Baltic states have many common features. Apart from the topicality of language and Russian minority integration issues, both countries have a *de jure* unified education system, but de facto refer to two types – with instruction in titular languages and in Russian (Khavenson, 2018). Additionally, their substantial education reforms as part of de-sovietisation were first implemented in the national language schools, whereas for Russian-medium schools the reform started later and coincided with the introduction of bilingual education policies. The latter factor undeniably aggravated the response of the Russian-speaking population to change (ibid.).

Finally, the promise of additive bilingualism[4] offered by Canadian immersion has never been fully realised, in addition to which Quebec can hardly be a paragon of language maintenance. The most recent instance is the debate expanded around Bill 96 (an act respecting French, the official and common language of

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[3] On the parents' role, read the blog of one of the founding parents of the St. Lambert experiment, Olga Melikoff at https://olgamelikoff.com/
[4] See it explained in *A note on terminology and methods*.

Quebec), which was tabled in May 2021 and introduced a serious overhaul of Bill 101. Being in line with attempts to establish a particular Quebec identity, Bill 96 is a response to the growing concern among the French-speaking population (Francophones) about the decline of French in Quebec. The draft immediately raised multiple concerns for English speakers (Anglophones) who harshly criticised the proposed upgrade of Quebec's language law for '[going] far beyond what is necessary or appropriate to protect the French language' and assaulting fundamental rights and freedoms (Eliadis, 2021, online).

In light of the above, the chapter presents a comparative cross-disciplinary study of bilingual education in Canada, Estonia and Latvia with a focus on French immersion and transitional bilingualism adopted in Latvia and Estonia. Seeing the success of immersion education as contingent on multiple political, social and cultural factors, this chapter delves into the success of Canadian immersion programmes, examines the implementation or non-implementation of such programmes in Estonia and Latvia and discusses the global prospects of the method in view of ever-increasing migration and European commitment to plurilingual education. Using Baker's taxonomy of bilingual education (Baker, 2001; Mwaniki et al., 2017; Wright & Baker, 2017), Cummins' insight on language development (2014; 2019; 2021) and Spolsky's (2004) conceptualisation of main forces or conditions co-occurring with language policies, the goal is to compare the immersion and transitional bilingual education in Canada, Estonia, and Latvia. The study raises the following questions:

- What factors may facilitate the implementation of immersion in the Baltics?
- Are there any similarities in the future of immersion in Canada and the Baltics?

A note on terminology and methods

Before discussing immersion, language policies and other factors affecting choice and implementation of bilingual education, the field of bilingual education should be mapped and the most important terms and concepts used in the chapter defined.

When defining bilingualism in a country, it is important to account for a possible difference between language situation and language policy governing language use. At the national level, Spolsky singles out four forces that co-exist or co-occur with language policies: 1) a sociolinguistic situation with 'the number and kinds of languages, the number and kinds of speakers of each, the communicative value of each language both inside and outside the community being studied'; 2) 'the working' of a national or ethnic identity; 3) globalisation, and 'the consequent tidal wave of English'; and, finally, 4) 'the gradually increasing recognition that language choice is an important component of human and civil rights' (Spolsky, 2004, pp. 219–220). All four factors are to be considered when comparing the state of bilingual education in the three countries.

The language policy orientation defines the language(s) of instruction and determines the type of education designed for language minority students. Generally speaking, bilingual education is the use of a native and second language for instruction, or, in other words, the delivery of content-based subjects through the medium of a second language, with the subsequent division of education programmes into those fostering bilingualism and others for language minority children. A detailed classification might be done by looking at certain features such as a typical type of student and language(s) of the classroom (minority/majority/mixed), societal and education aim, and language outcome (Baker, 2001, p. 194). A further distinction is into 'weak' and 'strong' forms of education for bilingualism, with 'weak' ones aiming at assimilation of language minority students by imposing the majority language or recognising the minority language but for a limited period of time (Mwaniki et al., 2017, p. 40). In the context of this chapter, a weak form of specific interest is transitional bilingual education, the form where students' use of their home language in the classroom is temporarily allowed but decreases with time, and the share of majority language use grows proportionately until the child is deemed to be ready for mainstream education in the school language (hence the 'early exit' and 'late exit' types). The regularly offered rationale for transitional bilingualism is the equality of opportunity in view of the child's future functioning in the majority language, whereas the criticism comes for the

semi-hidden agenda of majority language monolingualism, with 'the dominant aim [being] for the student to move to learning in the dominant language of the region and not for the development of the home language' (Wright & Baker, 2017, p. 69).

The relevant sociolinguistic and socio-political constructs are of additive and subtractive bilingualism, with the subtractive form considered to occur in the case of pressure to replace or demote the first language (Baker, 2001). In its turn, additive bilingualism is used 'in the discursive context of challenging monolingual submersion programmes that promote subtractive bilingualism among minoritized students' (Cummins, 2021, p. 299).

In the realm of minority rights, another important concept is asymmetrical bilingualism. For instance, in the Soviet Union, all languages were formally equal, but in the Baltic republics their bilingualism was asymmetrical, with the titular nations speaking fluent Russian and immigrant Russians hardly using any titular language. After the restoration of Baltic independence, the Soviet legacy of asymmetric bilingualism seriously obstructed the national plans to create integrated societies in Estonia and Latvia. In Canada, Francophones in the Anglophone provinces find themselves in the same linguistic predicament, and it is asymmetrical bilingualism that has been used to explain so-called positive discrimination, i.e., the application of the asymmetrical principle in giving more rights to minoritised language (French) speakers and fewer to the speakers of the majority language (English).

In turn, immersion education is categorised as a form promoting additive bilingualism and therefore representing a 'strong' form which aims at overcoming any bilingual asymmetry. The approach is usually praised for providing functional bilingualism and biculturality, and it is the genesis and development of this form that is to be discussed next.

Canadian French Immersion

A comparatively young nation, Canada was founded by European settlers on land originally populated by indigenous peoples (First Nations and Inuit). The fall of New France to the British catalysed the parallel development of French and British linguistic communities, with the language contact necessitating the appearance

of bilingual schools in the 19th century (Sissins, 1917). Since the majority of French speakers lived in the province of Quebec, it was the only province where both English and French languages received legal recognition when the confederation was formed in 1867. Having no official status outside of Quebec, French had a secondary role and comparatively low status. With limited interactions between English speaking and French speaking populations, bilingualism was more commonplace among the outnumbered Francophones, which brought the viability of French into question (Genesee, 2015). The situation changed with the Official Languages Act (1969) granting both languages official status, consequently raising the prestige of French and increasing the interest of Anglophone Canadians in learning the language (ibid.).

The enactment occurred during the so-called Quiet Revolution, a period of intense socio-political and socio-cultural transformation in Quebec. In the post WWII period, the low level of formal education and slower economic growth than in the rest of Canada led to the perceived necessity of reforms. The *Révolution tranquille* of the 1960s became a time of rapid change and dramatic development of government institutions. The increased role of the state in the province's economic, social, and cultural life had major consequences, such as the diminishing role of the Catholic Church, increasing prosperity for French-speaking Québécois, and, notably, an expanding nationalist consciousness (Durocher, 2015). Ensuing pressures led to an education reform, while research and the education experiments into the linguistic situation initiated by Professor Wallace E. Lambert and his graduate students Robert C. Gardner and G. Richard Tucker at McGill University became part of the general movement towards change. What is significant in the context of the present chapter is that all the developments led to the birth of what is widely known today as the Canadian French Immersion model.

So, the above-mentioned parental initiative in St Lambert and ensuing set of bilingual interventions in grades 1–4 (Lambert & Tucker, 1972) demonstrated the effectiveness of early French immersion. The success of the experiment gave rise to similar grassroots movements, which, in their turn, induced the foundation of such organisations as Canadian Parents for French (CPF) and the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers,

both becoming important players in the field of education policy. Meanwhile, federal and provincial governments became equally eager to support the education trend as it helped to bridge the 'two solitudes',[5] two distinct founding cultures of French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians. Although bilingual education was not viewed positively by all,[6] it received recognition and became 'seen to increase social cohesion throughout Canada' (Ballinger et al., 2017, p. 31).

The immersion experience grew, and its forms variegated, but the essential core of a minimum 50% of instruction in the second language remained unchanged. Other characteristic features were a growing share of the first language in secondary school and permissive, at least initially, attitudes towards the use of students' home language (Baker, 2001). In terms of the variation, the difference might be in the age when a child begins the programme, that is, *early*, delayed or *middle* (at the age of 9–10), and *late* (at the secondary level) immersion, with the classical French immersion model starting in kindergarten and Grade 1 (Cummins, 2021). The last parameter is the amount of time spent in immersion, with *total* immersion starting with teaching fully in the second language and then a gradual reduction to 50% immersion at the end of junior school, and *partial* immersion maintaining 50% immersion throughout the whole period of pre- and junior schooling (Baker, 2001).

Overall, French immersion rapidly spread not only in North America but across Europe, too. To explain this phenomenon, Baker (2001) made a list of features conducive to such speedy education growth, with additive bilingualism and French and English as two majority languages of high prestige making the top. Whereas a sociolinguistic situation and working of a national/ethnic identity are factors co-occurring with and

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[5] The cultural divide between Canada's Francophone and Anglophone cultures was famously referred to as the 'Two Solitudes' by Canadian writer Hugh MacLennan in his eponymous novel written in 1945.
[6] For example, the Association of Catholic Principals of Montreal proclaimed 'that the average child cannot cope with two languages of instruction and to try to do so leads to insecurity, language interference, and academic retardation' (1969, cited in Lambert & Tucker, 1972, p. 5).

thus facilitating or contravening government language policy (Spolsky, 2004), the choice of languages with high communicative value and provision of sustenance for national/ethnic identity are bound to have a broad support at all social levels. The rest of Baker's list details important technicalities concerning how to succeed; they include optionality of the programme, bilingual teaching staff (preferably trained in bilingual education), and permissive attitude to the use of the first language outside of the classroom as well as inside the early immersion classroom, though for a short period of time only. A similar lack of experience and the same curriculum as in mainstream education are on the list of features leading to the success of an immersion programme (Baker, 2001).

Coming back to Canada, many of the points raised above indiscriminately relate to immersion as implemented not in the French-speaking province of Quebec but in the rest of Canada, where French is a minority language. The linguistic shift makes the two contexts highly different, the change in sociolinguistic situation affects the overall value of bilingualism. Thus, outside Quebec, immersion students do not frequently use the second language (i.e., French) in public and private spheres, and the dropout rate from immersion programmes before high school are high due to no apparent need for bilingualism to enter university. However, despite a certain dominance of neoliberal ideologies in majority-language Anglophone students' investment in French, which tends to '[limit] the full potential of their development of identity as legitimate bi/multilingual speakers' (Marshall & Bokhorst–Heng, 2020, p. 613), the latest available statistics for the pre-pandemic 2018–2019 school year shows unchanged student enrolment in French as a Second Language programmes with some growth in French immersion (CPF, 2021). The seeming status quo is a good result in view of the global significance of English and growing attention to the language rights of minorities other than French. Moreover, recent initiatives such as, for example, the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy in French Immersion and French Second-Language Programs funded under the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023, or the pilot project French Second Language Learning from Early Childhood with funding

in Budget 2021, support and strengthen the position of French immersion programmes.[7]

Another interesting question is the non-existence of English immersion programmes in mainstream education. In Quebec, it is obviously due to *La Charte de la langue française* aka *Loi 101* restricting the use of other than French languages in education.[8] However, the search in New Brunswick, the only Canadian province with both French and English as its official languages, yields a similar result. There exist stately funded spring/summer intensive language immersion programmes both for Francophone and Anglophone students,[9] but these programmes are immersion in name only, exploiting the metaphor of success.

It has been over fifty years since the Official Languages Act came into force, and the vision of official bilingualism has undergone changes. One of the assumptions the immersion programmes for majority language students is based on is that '[l]earning through two languages and learning about the target-language culture … help resolve societal power imbalances and bridge divides between language speakers' (Ballinger et al., 2017, p. 40), and this postulate corresponds to the societal demands where the minority rights are concerned. With Canadian multiculturalism being both a sociological fact and a federal public policy, Canada may correspond to Spolsky's vision of a nation as necessarily interested in developing and implementing permissive language rights for its minorities.

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[7] More information on the two official languages funding programmes is at https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/official -languages.html.

[8] Although the evolution of the language laws in Quebec exceeds the scope of the present chapter, the transition from the simple requirement of working knowledge of French to Bill 101 positioning French as the language of government, education, commerce and even workplace is noteworthy. Notwithstanding court challenges, the preservation of French peaked with even more astringent Bill 96, having entered into force on 1 June 2022 (Behiels & Hudon, 2022).

[9] See *Government of Canada Language Immersion Programmes* at https:// www.canada.ca/en/services/culture/cultural-youth-programs/language -immersion.html.

It was not until the second part of the 20th century that ethnic diversity became recognised and started being accommodated. In 1988, the gradual movement towards its acceptance resulted in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1998) setting out the legal framework. The shift to multiculturalism in the federal policy[10] affected the national language policy concerning indigenous languages and changed the language management. Due to the popularity of French immersion, unsurprisingly, its model was adapted for indigenous language bilingual programmes. The peculiarity is that in addition to typical immersion goals, such programmes seek to ensure the survival of indigenous languages and cultures (Dicks & Genesee, 2017, p. 457).

In Canada, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their ancestral land came hand in hand with immigration. Due to the vastness of the land, the need to accommodate ethnically and linguistically diverse immigrants has never been a burden, and the idea of multiculturalism, that all immigrant groups 'should retain their individuality and each make its contribution to the national character' (Government of Canada, 2011), appeared even before WWII. Enshrined in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1998), the provision to 'preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada' (Government of Canada, 2021) makes language policy provide for all languages spoken in Canada. Hence, languages other than official and indigenous ones received the name of 'heritage' languages with the first heritage language programmes opened in Ontario in the 1977 (Stern et al., 2016). Italian, Portuguese, Ukrainian, Polish, Arabic and Mandarin are only some of the languages in which the programmes are offered today, though, compared to immersion, heritage language bilingual education is quite a different 'strong' form of education for bilingualism.[11]

The context has been changing and the immersion method has been questioned repeatedly. For example, Cummins (2021) extolls

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[10] For example, the recognition of a large zone of the Northwest Territories as an autonomous, self-governing unit of native peoples.
[11] See, for example, Baker (2001) for detail.

the virtues of additive bilingualism but draws attention to the fact that a home-language switch may lead to a different outcome in minority and majority language situations. He warns that 'the lack of opportunity to develop L1 literacy skills results in a weak foundation upon which to build L2 literacy skills' (p. 24) and demonstrates that early-exit transitional bilingual programmes are logically incoherent and disadvantageous for learners.

There are new challenges to overcome, among them the linguistic heterogeneity of students coming to French immersion classes. Selective immigration policies brought a new flow of immigrants who are often more educated and skilled than average citizens in Canada (Kalan, 2021, p. 61). The most recent discussion is about the ways to eliminate the inherent monolingualism in language immersion pedagogy, that is, the essential separation of two languages (Cummins, 2014, 2019), and to apply a cross-linguistic methodology (Ballinger et al., 2017).

Even though the existing theories of language acquisition and methods of linguistic pedagogy have been constantly re-examined, the research in bilingual – and specifically immersion – education continues to be in high demand in Canada and around the world.[12] In Canada, the immersion approach still appears to be viable for it answers the demands of the forces affecting national language policy, but how it could serve Baltic language policies is the question to reflect on further.

The Baltic background

To give a better understanding of the language policies governing education in Estonia and Latvia today, it is appropriate to examine their language situation when they were part of the Russian empire and, later, the Soviet Union. This background is indispensable to understand 'a unique sociolinguistic experiment' (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 276) staged by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the ensuing language shift in the Baltics. Here and further in the chapter, the Baltics is used to address Latvia and Estonia, and exclude Lithuania due to the differences in the geopolitical

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[12] See, for example, *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education, International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*.

and ethno-demographic situation of the latter (also discussed in the introduction).

For quite some time in the Tsarist Empire, the Baltic territories were not affected by Russian language policy, and German – the language of the elite – remained the official language. Russification started in the mid-nineteenth century and aimed to reduce the influence of Germans as well as to prevent any nationalist upsurge. Thus, by the end of the 19th century, secular secondary and higher education could only be obtained in Russian; later, Russian replaced German as the language of primary education too. Starting in 1890, in Latvia, all subjects except for religion were taught in Russian starting from the first grade (Ābelnieks, 2012). However, after the 1905 revolution, minority language schools were granted more freedom and their number increased (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 279). The higher literacy rate aided the growth of nationalism and stood the Baltic peoples in good stead as a unifying factor. When at the end of WWI, Latvia and Estonia proclaimed their independence, for the first time in their history they started realising their one nation – one language dream.

Independent statehood did not last long, though during that time both countries managed to extend the use of their national languages across all public domains. Whereas Estonian immediately became the state language, Latvian, first, received the same status as German and Russian, and became the language of the state only in 1935, after the country turned into a dictatorship. The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact led to short-term Soviet annexation and was followed by Nazi invasion. At the end of WWII, when the Soviet Army returned, it brought legions of linguistically and culturally different Russian-speaking Soviets for permanent residence in the previously independent Republics. Thus, the occupation regime dramatically changed the language situation in the Baltics (see Zamyatin, 2015). Although the Soviet government maintained national institutions and even introduced a form of bilingual education with the titular languages taught in Russian-medium schools and Russian in the titular school curricula, the number of Russian classes was bigger as well as the overall prestige of the titular languages diminishing. Newcomers were disincentivised to learn Estonian or Latvian, whereas the titulars 'engaged

in passive resistance, refusing to either learn Russian or to use it even when they knew it (Raun, 1985; Suny, 1994)' (Pavlenko, 2008, p. 281). Still, ethnic Latvians and Estonians were made to acquire the language, which in turn led to the situation of asymmetric bilingualism similar to the situation with the Francophones living in the Anglophone provinces of Canada. In the Baltics, the presence of the largely monolingual Russian-speaking population was doomed to create major challenges.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of the independence in 1991 turned the tide, and de-Russification, or a 'Reversal of Language Shift' (Pavlenko, 2008), became part of the de-Sovietisation process. While both Estonia and Latvia were successful in restoring the status of their titular languages, they were not equally successful in raising titular-language competence of their Russian speakers (Pavlenko, 2008). With politics and history permeating all public and academic debates on language policy, the discussion essentially comes down to the question of the degree to which 'nation-building based on a common language and culture is still adequate in the twenty-first century, [and] whether Soviet-time migrants to the Baltics should politically and morally be compared to autochthonous minorities in other parts of the world' (Lazdiņa & Martin, 2019, p. 9).

Since the restoration of independence, Baltic policy makers have been attracting aggressive criticism from Russia on one hand. On the other hand, they have been occasionally reprimanded by the EU authorities for 'restrictive policies … driven by a political agenda' with regard to the use of national minority languages, and for the way the policies found their place in the education system (Council of Europe, 2021; see also 2015). Notwithstanding the criticism, the aim of the national language policies has remained to fully re-establish the titular languages as the main languages in the respective countries, and this goal has shaped language management in education, caused reforms followed by mixed internal and external response but succeeded to considerably increase the knowledge of the titular languages among minorities. The way Estonian and Latvian education systems attempt to re-orient language practices and manage multilingualism is to be discussed in the following sections.

Estonian Language Immersion

The protection, promotion, and development of the Estonian language is stated as a goal in Estonia's Lifelong Learning Strategy, the document that guided the most important developments in the area of education in the 2014–2020 period and was concordant with the Estonia 2020 national reform programme (Government of Estonia). Referring to the insufficient Estonian language skills of graduates from Russian-medium schools, the document mentions special support to be given to those and other students speaking a native language other than Estonian. With a Russian-speaking minority comprising about 30 % of the population, Estonia has both Estonian-medium and Russian-medium kindergartens and basic (primary and lower-secondary) schools. In upper-secondary education, however, at least 60 % of instruction has to be conducted in the state language. Mainstream education has often been blamed for its inability to provide the necessary state language support to Russian-speaking students, and this became a stimulus for the 2000 launch of the language immersion programme, with the Canadian language immersion model as an example.

However, to prepare the Immersion Programme, 1.5 years was spent on teacher training and developing teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, the programme developers and coordinators managed to procure the support and involvement of the main stakeholders, which is believed to have contributed to the programme's success (Mehisto, 2015a). The opening of the Estonian Language Immersion Center in October 2000 became a widely covered event and was a sign of the systematic and systemic support that immersion education would enjoy from then on. Three years later, the first voluntary early immersion programme was joined by a late immersion programme, and due to the growing number of refugees and asylum seekers, the approach extended to Estonian-medium schools. Thus, within 20 years, the programme was used by 63 kindergartens and 37 schools, with about 10,000 students educated in different immersion models and through CLIL[13] at all stages of education (Golubeva, 2018).

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[13] In Europe, immersion very often goes under the name of CLIL or Content and Language Integrated Learning, although CLIL is an approach originally and still mainly meant for teaching foreign languages.

To sum up, driven by interested stakeholders, the Estonian programme has proven to be a well-functioning, research-based mechanism that has paid off all the investments in textbooks and in-service training (Mehisto, 2015b). In a situation with decreasing numbers of students and merging schools,[14] immersion can be a good pedagogical solution for teaching minority students the official language as well as a means of ensuring their social and cultural integration. The voluntary nature of the programme and the possibility to return to 40 % of subjects in Russian in upper secondary school create additional appeal. Importantly, the project also presupposes the support of Estonian-language schools in those geographic areas where the titulars are in the minority (Mehisto, 2015a). Evidently, the sustainable Estonian variant of immersion fulfils the criteria posed by Spolsky's conceptualisation, with the demand for linguistic competence satisfied without threat to ethnic identity.

Latvian Transitional Bilingualism

Despite the similarity of the Estonian and Latvian situations, there is a significant difference in the voiced concerns. Thus, whereas in Estonia, the establishment of the immersion programme as well as the overall transition to Estonian-medium education and the integration of Russian-speakers into Estonian society have been conceptualised as central security topics (Mehisto, 2015a; Siiner & L'nyavskiy-Ekelund, 2016, p. 26), Latvia's emphasis has always been on protecting national identity. Although the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021–2027 views the strength of the nation as lying in 'the richness of the Latvian language and people's knowledge of other languages' (p. 5), with the Latvian state ensuring 'the right to self-determination of the Latvian people' (p. 8), nevertheless nearly all measures directed at language learning at school have been meant to strengthen the national identity.

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[14] See one such example given by the media portal Re:Baltica (Mihelson, 2019).

In Latvia, bilingual education for the minority population started in the 1990s (Lazdiņa, 2015, p. 8). With the Latvian language defined as fundamental for an integrated society (NDP, 2020, p. 77), transitional bilingual education can never have the additive character of French immersion. In view of the global linguistic competition, strengthening the Latvian language and raising its prestige are paramount and definitory for language management. The 2004 education reform for minority schools to transit to the 60 to 40 model, i.e., to teach up to 60 % of the subjects in Latvian and up to 40 % in Russian, was subject to protest and debate but was implemented notwithstanding. The amendment to the General Education Law adopted on 2 April 2018 made primary schools provide 50 % of subjects in the mother tongue and made lower secondary school transition to an 80/20 model. From the 2021–2022 academic year, in forms 10–12 (i.e., in upper-secondary education), all subjects except minority language, culture and history, were to be taught in Latvian, thus, concluding the transition (Laganovskis, 2019).

To sum up, the Latvian version of transitional bilingualism seems to have nearly grown into submersion, and its slow acceptance could easily be explained by the lack of 'reciprocal co-evolution'[15] at societal as well as systemic and institutional levels. Highly unpopular among minorities, in fact, both Latvian and Estonian bilingual models for mainstream education have neither been sufficiently promoted nor supported by continuous education research, thus, undermining the systematicity of the reform. Whereas in French immersion programmes the role of pedagogical support has always been perceived as important, recognised as crucial for further success, and generally present (Dicks & Genesee, 2017), the lack of pedagogical skills for teaching in Russian minority schools is an often-heard complaint, although it is a topic for different research.

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[15] 'Reciprocal co-evolution is a process where stakeholders, their understandings, actions, and the forces they are subject to and influence, and the mechanisms stakeholders produce, all evolve in response to one another and in response to other external stimuli' (Mehisto, 2015b, p. xxi).

Plurilingual Education and English as a Threat

Whereas the intricacies of sociolinguistic situation and identity working have received lavish attention, globalisation and 'the consequent tidal wave of English' (Spolsky, 2004, p. 220) have not been examined. This section will briefly discuss the response of the Baltic states to the growing role of English and concerns in respect of the EU policy of multilingualism.

With a view to the ambitious linguistic agenda of the European Union, which is 'that, by 2025, all young Europeans finishing upper secondary education [should] have a good knowledge of two languages, in addition to their mother tongue(s)' (European Commission, 2017, p. 13), it is appropriate to look at the applicability of immersion programmes for promoting foreign language learning in the Baltics. Despite the potential of choosing any European language, in reality, it is mainly English which is taken as the first foreign language.[16] Although in the public consciousness the notion of bilingual education is still generally linked to learning Latvian, CLIL started playing a prominent role in foreign language teaching at Latvian schools (Lapinska, 2015). Introduced in 2011, the advanced methodology of content and language integrated learning is occasionally paralleled with immersion, particularly for its attractiveness in view of the European policy of multilingualism. In Estonia, the parallel between CLIL and immersion is evident in the involvement of immersion specialists in the development and promotion of CLIL programmes.[17] Furthermore, it is CLIL methodology that is used to teach migrants the Latvian language. Here, the openness and readiness to experiment with language education only points at the composite, layered nature of minorities as in Latvia so in other Baltic states.

CLIL can also be found in higher education, where due to rampant internationalisation and general population decline, universities in the Baltics turned to English instruction. However,

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[16] Due to accelerating internationalisation, English becomes the only foreign language in the tertiary education.

[17] A recent example is sharing best practices of remote learning in CLIL within the Estonian initiative Education Nation at https://www.hm.ee/en/news/estonia-shares-its-best-practices-remote-learning-clil

the more programmes are taught through English, the less attention is paid to furthering students' language skills, and presently the CLIL approach has been practically ousted by English Medium Instruction. In any case, university programmes have a strong focus on content and pay close to no attention to language, thus, they are not to be discussed in the given framework of bilingual education.

Overall, globalisation and global migration problematise the nation state paradigm and native speakerism. In view of naturally proliferating multilingualism, mainstream education should respond and introduce corrections to the existing bilingual models. In the context of the 21st century, more voices are discussing the need for a new, translanguaging pedagogy, a pedagogy that moves away from one-language-at-a-time monolingual focus and treats the learning environment as an open multilingual space (Cummins, 2021; Kalan, 2021; Wei, 2018), thus achieving the leap from bi-/multilingualism to effective plurilingualism. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence, that is, the expression of multilingualism at the individual level, is actively researched in Quebec, advocated by the European Council and integrated in the Common European Framework of Reference. One thing is clear, however, and it is that in the existing system of language policies, the *de juro* move towards integrating plurilingualism into mainstream education seems to be equally problematic in both Quebec and the Baltic states.

Concerning immersion, being a form of additive bilingualism and for many decades used to challenge submersion programmes, the approach will stay though significantly enriched by translanguaging theory. Whether the term will remain or fall victim to criticism and modernisation and become bilingual education history is to be seen in the next decade.

Conclusions

Notwithstanding the demonstrated effectiveness of immersion programmes as an approach to learning L2, they are complex to implement in second-language education, as language management, part of language policy, is much affected by the sociolinguistic

situation, the definition of national identity, globalisation, and the understanding of human rights (Spolsky, 2004).

Whereas Canada's federal language policy is multilingual, at the provincial level, provision may differ, something that is reflected in language education, immersion included. Whereas French immersion in Quebec has a credible record of raising bilinguals, for English Canada, the same approach is less effective. At the same time, there are no English immersion programmes, which points to the unequal status and current position of English and French in Canada.

In the Baltics, language issues rise from the collective memory, and diversity is often seen as a threat rather than an opportunity, most immediately when it concerns Russian-language minorities. In view of the declining populations, Baltic policies as well as academic discourse frequently position their national languages as international minorities requiring protection. Additionally, the Russian threat, always lurking close by, motivates much of Latvian and Estonian language management. The focus of national-level documents on explicit ideologies is translated into ethno-centric approaches to language in education, with Estonian policies to protect, promote and develop Estonian, and Latvian polices to strengthen and maintain the position of Latvian both at home and abroad. In view of their large minority populations, language management occasionally clashes with the EU orientation towards multilingualism. Despite apparent similarities, there are significant differences in the types of bilingual education model employed, the way they are implemented and how change is administered.

The success of any programme, bilingualism included, depends on the support of its stakeholders. Thus, in the case of bilingual education, the teacher should be both bilingual (speaking at least two languages) and qualified to teach bilingually. The latter might be one of the reasons for the negative response to the transitional bilingual programmes for the minority schools in Latvia and Estonia, the failure becoming especially apparent when compared with the positive experience of immersion in the latter country. As '[t]he quality and the depth of education reform implementation strongly depend on whether all actors

accept this new wave' (Khavenson, 2018, p. 99), another nega-
tive aspect arising from the Baltic experience is insufficient com-
munication with minority parents, who feel threatened by 'early
exit' in the Latvian bilingual model, incompetence of teachers
and assimilation rhetoric. Their apprehensions are not dissimilar
to those experienced by Anglophones in Quebec in view of the
newly proposed Bill 96.

Quebec French, Estonian, and Latvians are facing the challenge
of withstanding the tidal wave of English, although the degree
and immediacy of danger are different. With more than half a
century of immersion education and research, the experience of
calling into question monolingual instructional approaches could
be enriched and adapted into dynamic models of multilingual-
ism. At this new stage, not only an appropriation of the Canadian
experience, but also collaborative research with the participation
of the Baltic countries, seem to be promising.

Post scriptum

The study of language immersion and success of its application is
linked to the discussion of language policy. While the development
of a workable policy is proverbially difficult, its further imple-
mentation is commonly affected by various non-linguistic forces.
2022 became a year when both Estonia and Latvia took the last
legal steps towards state-language education. Whereas the seem-
ingly gradual transition to Estonian as a language of instruction
will start in 2024 and will be completed by the beginning of the
2029/2030 academic year, the amendments to Latvian education
laws are part of a wider de-Russification effort after the Russian
invasion to Ukraine, with Latvian becoming the only language of
schooling by September 2025. The change seems to put closure on
the history of Russian bilingual education in the Baltics.

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7. Riddlings: Newfoundland Examples

Jonathan Roper

Abstract

While researchers have produced lists of riddles recorded from oral tradition, few have documented how riddles play out in practice. This chapter is an attempt to suggest what some of the 'rules of riddling' that people who riddle implicitly know and follow, and is based on fieldwork in Newfoundland at the start of this century.

Keywords

Riddles, riddling, speech play, fieldwork, Newfoundland.

Introduction[1]

The Nordic and Baltic countries have long been one of the key areas of the world for the study of folklore and oral literature. In addition to the tale and the ballad, one genre that numerous specialists from this area have addressed is the riddle. Substantial collections of riddles in the Nordic area include those by Árnason (1887), Kristensen (1913), Ström (1937), Olsson (1944), Wessman (1949), and Virtanen, Kaivola-Bregenhøj and Nyman (1977). There have been various substantial collections in the Baltic

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countries as well, including Ancelāne (1954), Kensminienė (2018), and Krikmann and Saukas (2001–2013). And we can also mention one or two of the various studies produced in this region, for example the pioneering research by Aarne on comparative riddle research (1918–1920), as well as the informative genre study by Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2001). Typically studies of riddles to date have attempted to document riddles as text, to discuss the various sub-genres of riddles (and other enigmatica) and to place them in a comparative and historical context by listing parallels and speculating as to their origins. Early Nordic research on riddles was so substantial that just after mid-century it was felt necessary to produce a volume on the terminology involved in such research (Bødker, 1964).

Nevertheless, while riddles have been given much attention as a genre, riddlings, that is the interactions in which riddles are posed and answered, have not been the focus of research. We might also wish to know how, for example, riddling sessions begin and end, (or how individual riddle-questionings begin and end), what stylistic and semantic links (if any) exist between successive riddles, and what else goes on when people are riddling, as well as being able to read the texts of the riddles themselves. This lack of living data on riddlings is by no means only typical of the Nordic and Baltic area. If we turn to the anglophone world, for example, we find again that there are few studies that focus upon riddling. Distinguished researcher Archer Taylor, who produced a series of valuable articles on the riddle genre (1938a, 1938b, 1939, 1943, 1949, 1953), which though never collected together in book form still constitute a ghost-monograph on the genre, never got beyond what he himself designated as the initial stage of research: 'The problems in the study of riddles are concerned primarily with the arrangement of texts and the collection of parallels. When these tasks have been completed, we can undertake more fundamental investigations' (Taylor, 1952, p. 285).

So, while he did manage to produce an admirable catalogue (1951) of anglophone riddles and their analogues with 959 pages covering 1749 riddle types, he never wrote on riddlings. The few exceptions in the scholarly literature that focus on riddlings include the pieces by Evans (1976) in Mississippi and Abrahams (1983)

on St. Vincent, and there is also the notable audio recording made by Alan Jabbour, Fleischauer and Diller (1973) of members of the Harmon family riddling in West Virginia. In this chapter I wish to add to this scholarship by discussing my observation of riddlings in Newfoundland (and indeed, like Jabbour, my participation in the riddlings). Before getting to this, it would be beneficial to say something about Newfoundland's vernacular culture, and the history of its study.

Newfoundland

What is now the Canadian Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has been recognised as one of the most significant areas in the anglophone world for traditional verbal art since at least the time of Patterson (1895). An early work of local scholarship was Kinsella's *Some Superstitions and Traditions of Newfoundland* (1919). At this time Newfoundland was a British Dominion; after Confederation in 1949, it became Canada's tenth and newest Province, and its most easterly. Historically, it has never been a wealthy area (though recent oil discoveries hold out the promise that this may change), and the most important economic activities were fishery and forestry (often the same person would be involved in first one, then the other, according to the season). Outside the local capital, St. John's, much of the population lived in small, often isolated, settlements, locally known as 'outports'. The inhabitants of these outports typically had ancestors from the eastern side of the Atlantic, overwhelmingly from south-western England and south-eastern Ireland. In recent years, these settlements have experienced depopulation, which has gone hand in hand with a loss of their original economic *raison d'être*, most especially following the moratorium on cod fishing that began in 1992.

Within Canada, the Province is well-known for its distinctive and varied local lexis, something which is richly documented in the substantial *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Story, Kirwin, & Widdowson, 1990). Leading works on folklore genres on the island of Newfoundland include the excellent annotated two-volume collection *The Folktales of Newfoundland*

(Halpert & Widdowson, 1996) and the folksong collections of Greenleaf (1933) and Leach (1965), Peacock (1965), and Lehr and Best (1985). Also worthy of note is a study of its midwinter house-visiting customs (Halpert & Story, 1969). There has also been a significant folklore department at Memorial University Newfoundland in St John's since 1968 (McNeill, 2020), which holds an important archive of local folklore and language known by the acronym MUNFLA. A fuller overview of Newfoundland studies is provided by Webb (2015), but in a word we can say here that in terms of vernacular culture, it is one of the best documented Canadian provinces.

As far as the genre of riddles is concerned, the most important single work for Newfoundland is an article written by Elisabeth Bristol Greenleaf (1976 [1938]) based on her experiences gained while living as a volunteer teacher in the settlement of Sally's Cove in the west of the island during the summers of 1920 and 1921, and when visiting in the island of Fogo in 1929. As well as the 80 riddles and eight conundrums that she prints (together with their solutions), Greenleaf also makes some general observations, commenting for instance on her surprise at finding herself 'in a village where everyone knew a great many riddles, and for pastime invented new ones from events of daily life' (Greenleaf, 1976 [1938], p. 131), and she gives the example of local woman Fanny Jane Endicott who 'came in one day from working in the garden' and 'propounded' a riddle about the rhubarb 'she was bringing in with her' (pp. 131–132). She mentions hearing riddles while berrying, and also 'in the long evenings' (p. 132). Although she testifies as to the thriving nature of riddling in her account, there is not so much detail about its practice beyond her highlighting of its to-and-fro dynamic: 'one boy would ask this riddle … I might come back with this familiar one …' (p. 131). The use of 'would ask' and 'might come back' show that this to-and-fro was habitual. Unfortunately, since this important article published more than eight decades ago, there has been little attention given to Newfoundland riddles. Research into vernacular culture in the province began with a concentration on the genres grander than riddles, such as long tales and songs, and in more recent times (in line with the general turn in North American folklore studies)

it then moved away from the rural and toward the urban, and also from traditional genres to emergent ones. Neither of these emphases favoured the study of riddles.

As the graduate student of one of the authors of the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* and *The Folktales of Newfoundland*, I found myself drawn to the Province. Between 2000 and 2015, I paid 10 visits to eastern Canada, conducting episodic fieldwork mainly in English-derived outports in the west and north of the island of Newfoundland, but also in similar settlements on the south-east coast of Labrador and an adjacent anglophone part of the lower north shore of Quebec. Riddles were one of the many topics that I discussed with the people I met. Typically, asking people if they knew any riddles was like drawing teeth, just as much as it would be if one were to ask someone cold if they knew any jokes, rather than beginning the exchange by first telling them a joke. I learnt to come forearmed with a couple of riddles myself, which sometimes led to modest recognition. Twice, however, things really took on a life of their own. While these two occasions do not represent the 'natural context' that eavesdropping on riddling between insiders might, surely this kind of participatory-observational data is also valid. Indeed, the sound recording issued by Jabbour, Fleischauer and Diller (1973) not only has the voices of the Hammons family but also that of Jabbour himself, and Greenleaf too participated in riddling rather than remaining a silent observer – after all, riddling is an unavoidably dialogic activity. Furthermore, given that riddles are only fun if you don't all know the answer, riddling is likely to remain dormant until fresh riddles emerge. Indeed, a newcomer arriving with fresh riddles amounts to a traditional situation where familiar riddles can be tried out on a fresh set of ears, and where you yourself might learn riddles you could add to your own repertoire. And interaction with a stranger might well allow for a greater run of riddles than usual. I am reminded here of what a member of the Couch family of West Virginia told Leonard Roberts: 'they was allas good to try on strangers' (Roberts, 1959, p. 101). And, sure enough, in each of the cases I was a stranger.

To use Kenneth Goldstein's terms, these events were examples of 'induced natural context' (1964, pp. 87–90). Indeed as Finnish-born

folklorist Elli Köngäs-Maranda, herself also a riddle-researcher, has observed: 'the "real" context and the "real" process can never be documented because the observer influences the event in many unavoidable ways even when he is accepted as a stranger' (Köngäs-Maranda, 1976, p. 135). Furthermore, it would seem that my selection of riddles during my participation was not completely alien either. In response to a riddle I posed, I was told by my host 'I heard that one before. I've heard it before. I heard that one before.' And about another riddle, I was told 'I've heard 'e but don't remember'. And on yet another occasion, some of the words of my riddle were corrected by my host: I had said 'deep as a pail', but 'should have' said 'deep as a well'. That she was able to say I got this bit 'wrong' shows the riddle as a whole was familiar to her. (It also perhaps suggests that the notion of variants has more currency amongst folklorists than it does amongst the folk.) And, likewise, just as various of my riddles were recognised by my interlocutors, so I recognised some of the riddles they posed me.

This chapter draws on the sound recordings of these two occasions in Newfoundland, which took place in the summer of 2001 in the north coast community of Wild Cove and the west coast community of St. Paul's. As two cases may seem a small number, I will supplement them by also drawing occasionally on the sound recording of a similar lively riddling encounter in another traditional part of anglophone North America (Beech Mountain, North Carolina) that took place the year before. Even this move, which increases the corpus to draw on by fifty per cent, still leaves a total of just three riddlings, which in many areas of scholarship would seem to be a suspiciously small number of cases to work from. But given the absolute paucity of audio-documented anglophone riddlings it is, nevertheless, a substantial number for this subject.

In a real sense, I was in the right place for riddles in that one of these villages, which was the next place to the south of my chief fieldwork village, was itself neighboured to the south by the settlement of Sandy Cove, where eighty years previously Greenleaf had recorded most of her riddles. Furthermore, both of the Newfoundland main riddlers had connections with the island of Fogo, where Greenleaf collected the remainder of her riddles

(one had been born there, the other, born in St. Paul's, had spent some years in Fogo). All three of these interactions happened in the homes of the hosts. All of them took place during the afternoon, all with people with time to spare during the day to riddle (mainly retired people, one homemaker, several children). All of them were the first meetings between the hosts (who I had been recommended to drop in on, as they might be able to tell me about local traditions) and me. In each case, no riddling began until we had been talking for at least an hour, and a good level of rapport had been established between us.

Sources and old world connections

When asked about where they learnt their riddles, the main riddler at St. Paul's mentioned her father, a man no longer alive, but renowned within the community for his knowledge of traditional tales and songs. The main riddler at Wild Cove mentioned that she learnt some of her riddles from a Mr Small: 'He was a wonderful man for telling these sort of riddles. Well, he was a United [i.e. a member of The United Church of Canada], but he come from England'.

Note that she refers to this man as 'Mr Small', formal nomenclature which suggests vertical transmission across generations rather than horizontal transmission between people of the same age. If we did not know of this personal transatlantic connection, we might still suspect that Old World–New World connections existed from the riddles themselves. For example, the frying pan riddle that this woman posed was also recorded in Herefordshire around 1900, with a minor difference, the pan being black 'as a coal' rather than 'as a crow' (Taylor, 1951, p. 545).

A riddle I was posed in St. Paul's that, as might be expected by its opening, turns up in Old World collections begins 'Flower from England, Fruit from Spain'. And yet the very setting of these words to paper forces a text-maker to disambiguate the riddle's key misdirection: we have to decide whether to write 'flower' or 'flour'. Archer Taylor mentions in his discussion of this riddle (1951, p. 449) that this word when spoken closely followed by 'fruit' is likely to suggest a bloom to the hearer rather than a

foodstuff. This is exactly what happened to me when I heard it in St. Paul's, and this is why I transcribed it here as 'flower' not as 'flour'. The riddle also occurs in Halliwell's *The Nursery Rhymes of England* (1846, p. 82), where he opts to spell the operative word as 'flour', which somewhat gives the game away. But as well as similarities between the Old and New World there are also differences of course. In the case of this riddle, they concern the solution: Halliwell gives 'plum pudding', whereas my informants in Newfoundland suggested a marshberry pudding.

How the riddlings began

Having made clear that my presence was a form of intervention in local social life, it is also worth noting that I did not myself initiate any of the three riddlings. (There may be a fieldwork moral here, relating to the near-impossibility of 'inducing a natural context' out of thin air, but the advisability of being ready to seize the opportunity should one heave into view.) How did these riddlings begin? One occasion seemed to begin with my chief interlocutor and star informant, a skilful storyteller accustomed to being granted extended turns at talk, and who had been the central focus of my visit, attempting to seize back the spotlight, which was temporarily with his wife. She had gained it by relating the words of a verbal charm, something I had clearly found very interesting. Her husband then stepped back in with the words 'Well, did you ever hear our riddle on churning milk?' No. 'Here it is and you ought to get it taped off.'

Another occasion began with the older male host telling my co-fieldworker a riddle off-mike, and then his wife telling him to tell me that same riddle so it could be documented. After he failed to respond to his wife's request at three times of asking, she then took the initiative by adopting the role of riddler with me herself. The third occasion began seemingly apropos of nothing with the words 'I'm going to ask you this one now'. But listening back to the few minutes before this remark on the recording, there was an exchange that seems relevant:

> -Are you married?

> -No, I'm not married.

-Oh [*wistfully, as if it was a pity a man my age should not be married*]

-Not yet anyway

-[*laughter*] I had to ask coz I didn't know.

> -No, no, ask away. I ask you all sort of questions, so it's only fair.

-[*mmm's and laughs*] Yeah.

This exchange had established that face-threatening questions could be asked of me, their guest. And this in turn paved the way for the challenge of riddling, which is more of a face-threatening act than the activity we had been involved in, talking about the old days. But listening yet one time more to the recording, it also seems that the interjection 'I'm going to ask you this one now' by the older female also served to curtail a discussion of illegitimacy that was just beginning to open out. In other words, changing the subject from this worrisome topic to something fresh and all-involving may have been her chief purpose in posing the riddle.

Something can be said about the people in the houses at the time the conversation turned to riddles. The first event involved an old married couple, their slightly younger male friend and me. The second again involved an old married couple, their friend of a similar age (this time a woman) and me and another fieldworker. The third event featured an old woman, her married daughter and two grandchildren, along with one or two more visiting children and me. In each of these cases, two 'sides' always developed in the riddling: (1) the hosts, and, (2) me (and, in one case, another fieldworker as well). In this sense, the riddling somewhat resembled the back and forth of a game of tennis. Speaking of two sides somewhat covers up the fact that there was always one person who was the 'main riddler' and who carried the session. In each of the three cases, this seemed to be the oldest person present. (In two cases I am sure of this, in one case, I'm not sure if it was the oldest, or second oldest, person who was the main riddler). Another thing that needs saying is that in addition to these two sides, there was always a third side, made up of people who just watched and listened without posing riddles or attempting to

answer them. This complements our tennis analogy, in that they might be thought of as the spectators.

There is one way that the context of these three events does differ. In only two of them was riddling something they might still do, according to their own testimony or that of others. In St. Paul's, this was convincingly backed up by a remark one local person made to another: 'What was that one you said the other night?'. In Wild Cove, riddling was more part of memory culture, and the riddles that were given were remembered from childhood, and riddles had most recently been used some time back when the older female was bringing up her own children. This was probably three decades ago, but in the heat of the moment these riddles came to mind. In the other cases, the main riddler is what, in von Sydow's terms (1948), would be termed an 'active tradition-bearer'. But with such a dialogic genre, however, such a clear division between active and passive tradition-bearer is hard to draw.

We can back up the notion of main riddler with some numbers. In the Beech Mountain session, where 8 riddles were posed in 10 minutes, three-quarters of the riddles came from the main riddler. In the Wild Cove session, where 14 riddles were posed over 27 minutes, about two-thirds of the riddles came from the mouth of the main riddler. And in the St. Paul's session, where 12 riddles were posed over 31 minutes, once again three-quarters were asked by the main riddler.

What people say when they riddle

One of the most important things about these riddlings is that more goes on than posing riddles, offering solutions, and giving the correct answers, which is what one might imagine if one's only source of information was published collections of riddles and solutions. Most notably, the riddles cannot simply be spoken, but they need to be *presented* as a question and a challenge. In other words, it needs to be made clear that this odd set of words is not something like a proverb or a lullaby that can simply be listened to, but is rather something requiring a verbal response. Sometimes this presentation of the riddle takes place *within* the riddle itself. This is most especially the case with rhymed riddles. For example,

one riddle I was posed ended with the formula 'Tell me this riddle/ And I'll give you a ring'. Other versions of this challenging offer in the scholarly literature include 'give you a penny', 'a pin', or 'a ten pound ring'. In another riddle, a series of letters was stated ('Two O's, Two N's, a D, and an L'). What turned this into a riddle was the closing question 'and what will it spell?', giving the riddlee the idea they need to compose a word from those letters. At other times, the presentation of what otherwise would be a self-contained statement as a riddle comes at the start of the riddle: 'Riddle me riddle me this …'.

If such prompts are not found within the riddle itself, they will often need to be added. Beforehand someone might say: 'You know what this is then?' before giving the formulaic language of the riddle. After saying the riddle, the speaker would add a phrase such as 'What is it?' or 'That's a riddle'. Hearing such utterances after a riddle always felt like a shift in register, down from crafted remembered words to plain everyday ones, or to put it another way, down from the poetic to the prosaic, from the frequently rhymed, metrical riddles to informal ametrical speech. It might also be worth noting here that while people obviously know the word 'riddle', when in the midst of riddlings they tend not to use the word when referring to riddles as much as its replacement 'one'. In one sense, this is only to be expected: at similar events where someone might ask, Do you know that one? rather than, Do you know this joke? or Do you know that song? However, it seems to me that something different is going on here, and that 'riddle' is more of a word that would be found *inside* riddles ('Tell me this riddle', 'Riddle me this') or immediately after them ('That's a riddle' occurred more than once) than it would be used in general reference to them. After all, riddles often contain the word 'riddle', whereas jokes do not feature the word 'joke' and songs do not often feature the word 'song'. The occurrence of the word 'riddle' within riddles may be an additional reason for avoiding that word in between riddles proper.

To a Martian folklorist, it might seem that the main activity in riddling is the *repeating* of the riddle. This is done both by the riddler and the riddlee(s). The riddle is repeated at the start by the riddler if they misremember it the first time. There is the

piecemeal repetition of it by the riddlee, confirming that they have heard it all correctly. This in turn prompts the riddler to repeat it fluently. To say *something* to fill the silence while they puzzle over it, the riddlee now and again repeats words from the riddle. And finally, the riddle is repeated together with its solution by the riddler *after* it has been correctly solved. The riddler's delight in going over the logic of the riddle is reminiscent of the way that the set-up and punchline of a good joke can be savoured further after its telling by its repetition.

What *else* do people say when riddling? The riddlee(s) suggests answers. Sometimes the riddlee presents what they are sure must be wrong answers ('Well, it's not …') simply in order to keep the channels of communication open and prevent silence descending. Silence might be taken as the riddlee being irremediably puzzled, and thus mark the end of that particular riddle exchange. Another common type of remark is the riddler (or anyone who already knows the answer) giving clues as to the solution, some of which are more helpful than others, for example the minimally inform-ative 'Everyone got one'. This spinning out of the process, rather than giving the answer straightway is also part of the pleasure taken in riddling. To make sure this process is not short-circuited, onlookers are often warned to keep quiet: 'If you know that one, don't say' or 'Don't tell en. Make him guess at it'. Something else that may be uttered are formulaic reproofs of the riddlee's dull-wittedness. This is also part of the riddler's joy. In one case, it was said of me 'If he'd get any slower, we'd call him an Irishman'. I guess these formulaic words were said as the utterer thought that I, as an Englishman, might enjoy them, in which case the reproof would be taken more as an occasion for laughter than annoyance. Along with such reproofs, we can note expressions of triumph in riddling, such as 'Now we got you!'

After the solution has finally been stated, explanations of why it is the correct answer often follow, especially when this is less than obvious. So after a riddle running 'Round as a hoop, black as a crow,/ A long tail and a buttonhole' was solved (the solution being a frying pan), the 'long tail' and 'buttonhole' were explained by the main riddler with the words 'He's got a long handle'. (The roundness and blackness of the pan were not seen as needing

exegesis.) Similarly a riddle with the grisly-seeming line 'I took off his head and then let his body still stand' was revealed to denote an innocuous redberry: 'When you picked the berry off see, his body was still standing'. This end-stage may also encompass debate about the validity of other possible answers to the riddle: 'Well an apple would do, but it's a walnut. Apple's close, but a walnut's got a bitter hood.'

Register

Another characteristic of riddlings is that they do not only consist of riddles and riddle-related speech. Somehow the well-formed, figurative language of the riddles calls forth other examples of well-formed, figurative language. For instance, in one session anecdotes about foolish errands were also told, for example being told to search for a 'skyhook'. It is intriguing that fool's errands with their deliberate misdirections should be recalled in the context of enigmatica, which also make use of misdirection. Another time a party game in which one person in a ring had a button that had been passed around the people in the circle, which the player then had to find was mentioned. Again this may have been mentioned due to perceived similarities with the guessing game of riddles, similarly involving imperfect knowledge and guessing.

Other genres would crop up. A joke and traditional reproofs were uttered in one of the sessions. A watching boy, who clearly wanted to get in on the fun, took the opportunity to recite a rude rhyme. The rhyme was right in terms of register: it was a short, pre-constructed piece of rhymed traditional language. But it was wrong in terms of genre. And furthermore, it was not delivered correctly, lacking the necessary addressee. Nevertheless, vulgar allusions could certainly be made during the riddlings, if done correctly. As Archer Taylor has explained, there are various kinds of riddle. There are 'true riddles', riddles 'in the strict sense' that compare an object 'to an entirely different object' using metaphor (1943, p. 129). And there are trick questions and conundrums, which often occur in riddlings, but are not true riddles and do not use metaphor. But there is also a sub-class of true riddles known

as 'catch riddles', that deliberately point toward a rude answer, but which have an innocuous solution. In the riddling sessions described here, there were roughly equal numbers of true riddles, catch riddles, and conundrums (13, 9, and 10, respectively). But these three kinds of enigma were not distributed evenly over time. The sessions began with conundrums and true riddles. Catch riddles were only introduced after some riddle-rapport had been established, and with a little apology for the change in tone: 'It's nothing bad', 'It's not bad, it's only just simple', 'It's not blaggard'. These remarks also provided hints for the riddlee on how to respond to dubious sets of words such as 'There was a man upon a bed/ A-doing of a thing/ The more he worked and wiggled his arse/ The more he shoved it in.' Such riddles are great fun in practice, laughter coming from suppression of the rude answer that everyone knows, and perhaps especially from the riddler and the audience enjoying the amused discomfort of the riddlee who has half a mind to say the rude solution, but cannot bring himself to, as well as the riddlee enjoying being put off the track of the acceptable solution by the omnipresence of the obvious response. The laughter and bonhomie that typified the exchange of riddles was perhaps at its height during these moments. (The answer was 'a man setting potatoes'.)

Abrahams, writing about his experience of a riddling session in the Caribbean, noted that 'one riddle will sometimes suggest another': this suggestion can result from a framing element, from a method of description, from a technique of making the answer difficult, or simply from the subject (Abrahams, 1983, p. 275).

This modest observation was restated much more strongly by a later researcher, who said the message from riddlings 'was clear … [that] performed riddles fall into groups that either belong together thematically or that resemble one another in structure' (Kaivola-Bregenhøj, 2001, p. 109). The only trend observable by me in the three sessions was the delay in presenting catch riddles. They did not seem to be any observable links between the riddles semantically or stylistically. No doubt riddles do sometimes suggest one another in the human mind, but it is hard for an observer to say how. And the links we may be able to draw semantically or formally between successive riddles may be nothing more than

what might expected given the relatively limited number of riddle subjects (and riddle formats).

Taylor (1943, p. 145) also lists various other kinds of riddle I did not come across on these occasions (the alternative, the dialogue riddle, the message riddle, the wisdom question), as well as one that I did, the 'neck riddle'. The neck riddle is perhaps the most unusual kind of riddle – it is the riddle that a protagonist in a story sets to save his life (his 'neck'). In other words, unlike other riddles which have everyday objects such as pans, berries, chairs, or handles as their solutions, the answer to neck riddles is unguessable by those who have not heard it before. It serves in practice as the prologue to a narrative which explains the somewhat convoluted solution, bearing out the observation made by Norton: 'in many of the recorded examples the riddle was set to the audience and the story then offered as an explanation' (1942–3, p. 27).

Neck riddles are not the only riddles to have convoluted explanations. For example, I was posed this riddle: 'Bob stood behind the door, in came Sis, and made her piss'. The less-than-obvious solution was: 'A man got a case of rum behind the door, and Sis come in open the jar and pulled it off'. But neck riddles have further unusual characteristics that differentiate them: the 'speaker' of the riddle is identified as is the 'addressee' of the riddle – in the case of the neck riddle I heard ('Love I stand, Love I see, Love I hold in my right hand'), these were a man and his beloved, respectively, while the 'love' mentioned in the riddle turned out, unguessably, to be the remains of a dog. The shift from dialogue to monologue in which the riddler holds forth with the explanatory story makes a natural halting place in interaction, and it is surely not by chance that this relatively long form of riddle was the final one in two of the riddlings I was at.

When asking other Newfoundlanders about riddles on other occasions, it was this particular riddle beginning 'Love I stand' that I heard the most often, albeit now in isolation rather than as a part of a lively to-and-fro. More than one of the people who told me it thought that they might have learnt it at school in one of the old-time elementary school textbooks known as 'Royal Readers'. Here we are reminded once again of the interaction between

literary and oral traditions. But it is not at all certain that the riddlers I met, who had minimal formal schooling, would have come across this riddle in a school textbook themselves. We are reminded once again that the interactions between literate and oral traditions is complex: things can go back and forth, and back again. An oral example may predate a riddle's appearance in print, for example, and some of those who read a riddle (for example at school, though this reading may well have been aloud and something the whole classroom participated in) may then pass it on to other people orally.

How riddlings end

As mentioned, the two cases I was posed a neck riddle came at the end of their two respective riddlings. In the third case, the session was beginning to fizzle out after half an hour, and though both sides tried to sustain it by reaching back in memory for more riddles, they failed to find them readily. And the arrival of two visitors further interrupted things. Its natural conclusion was marked by the main riddler saying: 'What I knows I told him. That's all I could do.'

The other two sessions were shorter, and unlike the St. Paul's session where I'd arrived under my own steam, I reached the homes involved in the Wild Cove and on Beech Mountain sessions by car, driven in one case by a fellow fieldworker, and in another case by a mutual acquaintance. In both cases these sessions were cut short by my drivers at first signalling subtly, and then stating outright, that it was time to get back. In fact, we had been needing to leave for some time, and just after the more elaborate neck-riddles and their exegesis seemed an appropriate point to go. Indeed in one case, our mutual acquaintance who'd brought us together said 'He never runs out! You can stay here two days and he'll still be going.' This remark could be taken both as praise to the main riddler and as a hint to me that there was not going to be any more of a culmination (which we might be able to just hang on for) than what we'd heard.

The riddling began in both these cases after the recording machines had been turned off at least once, something which supposedly marked the end of our interaction. I have suggested that

riddlings can be attempts to divert attention from sensitive topics, to reclaim the centre of attention, and to display virtuosity, but in these two cases it seems right to think of them as leave-taking gifts from our hosts. Rapport had been established, they had gained an idea of what kind of thing I was interested in hearing from them (something which often takes a while), and this was the now-or-never chance to let rip. It was also an exchange of bonhomie, and the opportunity to end on a high note.

Close

Writing in 1983, Abrahams said 'we have no record of riddling in English, that I know of, that gives the details of how riddles are organized and presented' (p. 272). He attempted to provide such a record for one Caribbean riddling he took part in it the 1960s. He did this by providing an introduction to the riddling, then a rather full, though still not complete, transcription; I have here attempted to do something similar for a total of three riddlings using more description and fewer transcribed excerpts. So, to close this chapter, we might gather together what characterised the riddlings I witnessed (and indeed took part in) at the beginning of the twenty-first century in rural areas of anglophone eastern North America.

On the basis of this data, we can say that while riddlings are events involving riddles, they often feature other short verbal genres, such as jokes, taunts, reproofs, as well. The words of the riddles themselves were often repeated by both sides. Part of the etiquette of riddling as I saw it seems to be that silence cannot be allowed to descend for too long, so riddlees will think aloud. This might be because being silent could be taken as a sign of being completely baffled or having given up, but it may also be as too much silence would detract from the bonhomie typical of these exchanges. Riddlings, while fun, are also agonistic – they are a to-and-fro involving two sides both attempting to get the better of one another by baffling them and by displaying their own ingenious wit. As time goes on, riddlings also involve the sides trying to trick the others into speaking aloud the obvious, but taboo, answers to catch riddles. It seems that the side that enjoys

the exchanges the most may be the 'third side' – the onlookers. Another aspect of the agonistic nature of riddling, is that riddles are not just said, they are posed as challenges. It seemed to me that there was also an unspoken rule about how long riddlees could decently take in attempting to provide solutions to a riddle, without the fun dissolving. To be sure about this, and to identify other features of riddlings, further such audio documentation (or even video documentation), would be highly desirable. There is potentially much more work to be done on riddlings, if we can do it. Yet it is far from clear that it will be possible to produce such documentation, given that riddling seems to be a semi-moribund practice in much of the province, remembering that my knowledgeable informant in Wild Cover had not riddled for years. It would be fine to be proven wrong about the currency of riddling, but until such time attending to such audio data as does exist, and squeezing it for what we might learn from it, would seem to be a valuable activity.

To return at the last to the local Newfoundland situation, we can note that while half of the riddles posed by the main riddler in St Paul's were featured in Greenleaf's documentation of riddles from the neighbouring village eighty years earlier, only one of the riddles posed by the main riddler in distant Wild Cove had a counterpart in Greenleaf. This observation would seem to have both a geographic and a historical significance. It would seem, in other words, that there may have been some regionality to the distribution of riddles within Newfoundland. It would also seem that there has been resilience in the retention of this repertoire over time.

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The challenge of this book is to go beyond the realm of cultural diplomacy when it comes to outlining Canadian studies. Based on renewed research into the imaginary of the North, the book explores transnordic narrative spaces between Canada, the Nordic countries and the Baltic states.

Although the book takes cultural studies as its theoretical basis, opposing a diplomatic perspective and arguing that there is a specificity to Canadian culture that requires the attention of the academic world, each chapter draws on theories and methods specific to the various fields of the humanities and social sciences concerned with addressing the narratives (understood in a broad sense and including visual narratives) of this northern space.

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